

# ORANGE CITY NEWS DIRECTORY

County Register

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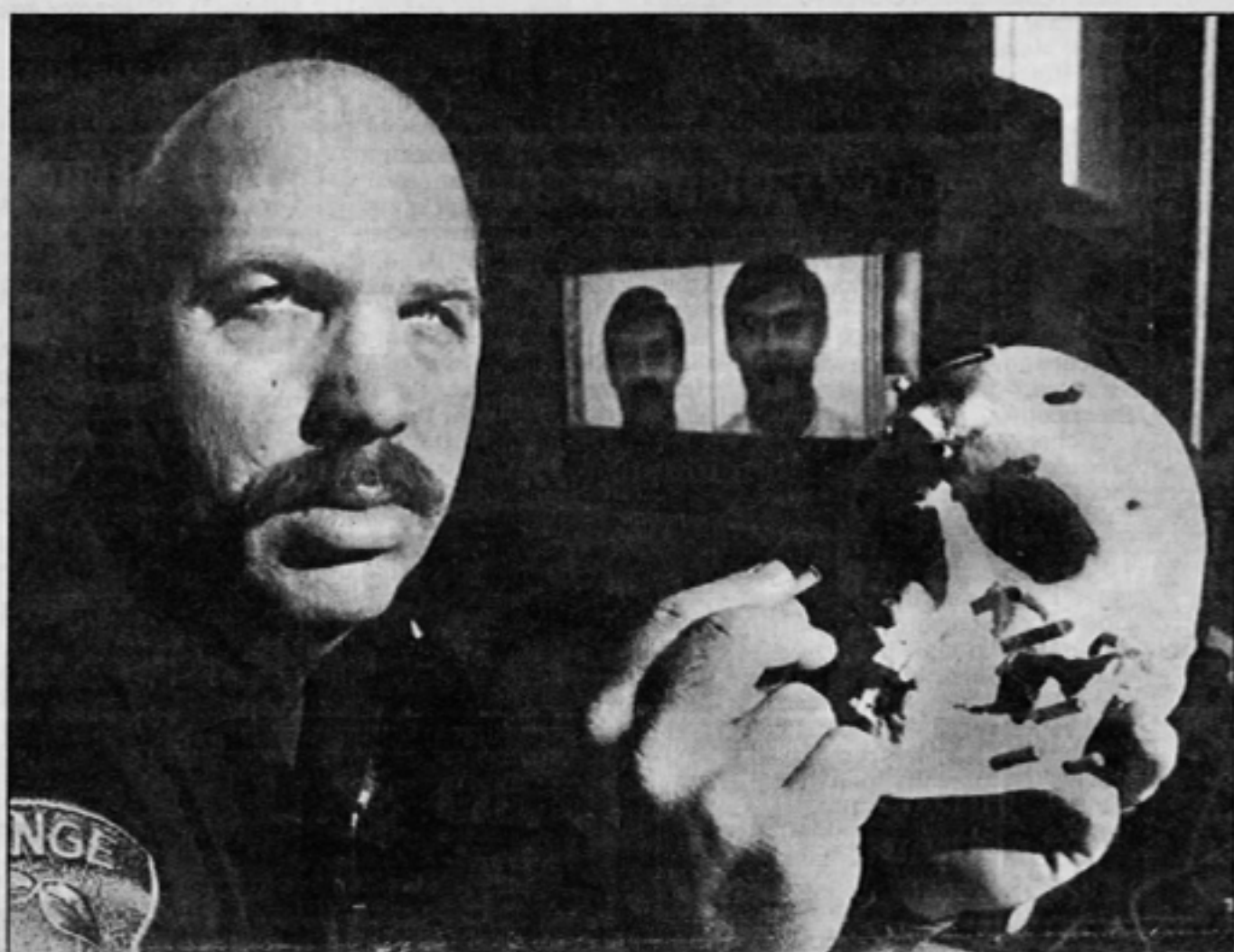
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Forensic specialist Mike Streed of the Orange Police Department uses skeletal remains and state-of-the-art technology to create age progression images.

# The imagemaker

By Vivian LeTran ■ Orange City News

**M**ike Streed specializes in putting faces to names of missing children, runaways, crime suspects and skeletal remains.

On Streed's desk at the Orange Police Department is a human skull mapped with pencil erasers like dot-to-dot points and on his wall hangs a picture of himself with John Walsh from "America's Most Wanted" television show.

As a forensic artist and patrol officer at the Orange Police Department, Streed's expertise combines law enforcement with art.

"People relate to what they can see," Streed said, emphasizing the importance of the show as a vehicle to showcase his sketches of faces, age progressions and fugitive updates.

The Orange Police Department is one of two police departments, next to the San Jose Police Department, in California with state-of-the-art computerized age progression technology. There are only about 14 programs similar to Orange's throughout the world.

## State-of-the-art progression technology helps forensic specialist Mike Streed put a face on missing children

The Orange Police forensic artist program recently received \$7,600, mostly from community donations, for Streed's extensive training and to purchase new hardware to improve the program. The department is waiting to receive software that would help in age progression techniques.

"There are a lot of mechanisms for identification in place, such as fingerprinting, DNA labs and ballistic labs," Streed said. "But there's no real facial identification system or technology in place in Orange County or California. The face changes so much. We need ways to keep up with these people to find fresh leads. I want to set up a component here to identify all facial com-

posites."

Streed works closely with the National Center for Missing and Exploited Children in Orange, formerly known as the Adam Walsh Center.

"Mike has been trained in our national headquarters in Arlington, Virginia on the age progression of children who have been missing for a long time," said Estella Avima, director of volunteer services and case assistant at the center.

"Say a child is taken at age 2 or 3, and it has been 10 years since (the child was missing). It's really important to update the photo-age progression so you can have a good idea of what they look like today. The artists take photographs of the mom and dad and other siblings and structure the features to what the child looks like today.

"It's mind boggling how close these age progressions get to how the child looks like today. The technology is fascinating. Children have been found because of those age progressions."

Please see **IMAGEMAKER/2**

## IMAGEMAKER

FROM 1

For 17 years, Streed has trained in forensic art field and investigative disciplines including homicide, sexual assault, child abuse and robbery. Last year, Streed worked on 45 cases using composite sketches, facial reconstruction and fugitive aging.

Streed specializes in three methods of facial identification: composite sketches, facial reconstruction and computerized age progression. Composite sketches only require an eyewitness to describe a person's face from any angle.

In some investigations, particularly with victims of homicide, Streed uses a skull and erasers to map out distinct features and molds the features with clay to create a facial likeness of the victim. Streed consults with a forensic anthropologist to determine the age, sex, build and ethnicity of the victim. Age progressions of fugitives or missing children require past photographs, family pictures and lifestyle profiles.

"The whole idea is not just to identify people, but to help us eliminate generic descriptions and focus on a more specific part of the population," Streed said.

Last year, Streed helped solve a 17-year-old kidnapping mystery of two Huntington Beach brothers. From skeletal remains, Streed molded and sketched the faces of how the brothers would have looked in 1978. A woman who knew the brothers, saw the sketches and identified the victims.

The state-of-the-art program is still considered in its development stages and Streed will continue to work as a forensic artist parttime.

"It's not the type of program you use everyday, but when you need it, it's invaluable," said Police Chief John Robertson.

## FOR THE RECORD

The California State Assembly will discuss time frame changes for local school board elections. Because of a reporting error, the wrong governmental agency was given in the Jan. 11 issue of the Orange City News.