



**FBI Salt Lake City Division**  
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**Originating Office:** SAC Robert C. Pope  
**Date:** 10/01/1997  
**Distribution:** SA Russel T White (Lead) and investigating agents  
**Subject:** Human remains recovered from U-Penn archeological site

**Summary:**

In all instances, all of the bones are present and tinted an odd green/orange color due to the beginnings of fossilization. Located approx. thirty feet down, in Pliocene strata consistent with about 5.1m years ago.

Given the movement of the bones through the rigours of time and ground action the height of the bodies is difficult to determine exactly, but all are above average height compared to current US averages.

No evidence of violent death, all breaks / fractures noted had healed prior to death, in all cases.

Male Skeleton #1

Unearthed by Dr. Thorly and his team on July 9. The skeleton belongs to a white male, with evidence of modern surgical and dental work. A steel surgical pin was found embedded in the skeleton's left femur and two fillings were found in the skeleton's middle right molar. Also, a pair of what appear to be twisted and destroyed aviator glasses frames were found in the box with the skeleton, and from reports by Michael Richards, these glasses were removed from the ground with the skeleton itself.

Male Skeleton #2

Unearthed by Dr. Wilson and his team on August 19. The skeleton belongs to a white male, with evidence of modern surgical and dental work.

The tailbone is slightly malformed but appears to have been corrected by a brace. When excavated, the skeleton had a ring on his right hand, worn to smoothness by time.

Male Skeleton #3

Unearthed by Dr. Wilson and his team on August 20. The skeleton belongs to a white male, with evidence of modern surgical and dental work.

Male Skeleton #4

Unearthed by Dr. Wilson and his team on August 21. The skeleton belongs to a white male, with evidence of modern surgical and dental work.

Male Skeleton #5

Unearthed by Dr. Wilson and his team on August 22. The skeleton belongs to a white male, with evidence of modern dental work. A ruined lump of silver metal about the size of a bottlecap was located within the remains.

Male Skeleton #6

Unearthed by Dr. Wilson and his team on August 23. The skeleton belongs to a white male, with evidence of modern surgical work. A healed fracture to the temple is evident. A crushed silver lump was also found near the skeleton.

Female Skeleton #1

Unearthed by Dr. Wilson and his team on August 29. The skeleton belongs to a white female, with evidence of modern dental work.



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**Originating Office:** SAC Robert C. Pope  
**Date:** 10/01/1997  
**Distribution:** SA Russel T White (Lead) and investigating agents  
**Subject:** Missing: Dr Thomas Thorley

Dr. Thomas Thorley was born in Eugene, Oregon, in 1949 and attended the University of Montana-Helena for his bachelor's degree in archeology. He went on to complete his doctoral researches at the University of Pennsylvania, from which he graduated in 1971. Thorly spent time travelling the world, investigating sites of early man. In 1972, Thorly assisted in a dig with the University of Copenhagen in an area of western Zealand, Denmark, where a large megalithic site was uncovered. The Bildso dig, as it was called, was popularized in the press and won Thorly limited acclaim in archeological circles. He wrote two scholarly articles on the dig that were well-received by his peers.

Thorley returned to Helena in 1974 to teach at the University of Montana-Helena. He settled into a routine in Helena, often leading small field expeditions of students into the wilds of Montana to search for Native American sites. What few friends he had were associates from the university, and as far as is known he did not date. Although not particularly popular with students, Thorly was considered a competent and accomplished teacher, and was a favorite of those few serious students of archeology to be found at Helena.

On June 18, 1997, Thorly was contacted by the Lewiston Prospecting Corporation of Helena and informed about their anomalous readings at Big Porcupine Creek. Thorly and two research assistants who were completing graduate work over the summer went out to the site on June 27 and made readings of their own with a ground-mapping seismograph. Thorly found the site intriguing and with his assistants, Michael Richards and Franklin Opetz, set about excavating the area. Thorly composed a letter to an associate at U-Penn, Dr. Wilson, inviting him to join the team on the leisurely summer dig. Apparently, Thorly thought he had uncovered some sort of "erratics," deposit of artifacts in anachronistic stratum.

Dr. Thorly and his team unearthed various bits of tempered steel and set about cataloging them. In addition, on July 9 the team uncovered the remains of a modern human skeleton in Pliocene strata. From that point on Thorly became strange and swore his two assistants to secrecy about the event, threatening their funding if they spoke about the skeleton to anyone. Thorly closed the site, encouraged the Lewiston company to sell it off, and returned to Helena, hiding the skeleton in his own garage.

On August 1 Franklin Opetz disappeared from his dorm room on campus. After his disappearance became public the second assistant, Michael Richards, went immediately to the police and informed them of the threats that Dr. Thorly had made. Dr. Thorly was questioned extensively by the Helena Police, who were sure he'd crack under interrogation, but to no avail. The police backed off and waited for the doctor to make a mistake.

On August 15, Dr. Wilson and his team of researchers from U-Penn showed up in Helena, to dig at Big Porcupine Creek. Wilson had obtained permission from the Lewiston company and Thorly was incensed.

On the afternoon of September 3 Dr. Thorly appeared at the dig at Big Porcupine Creek, brandishing a newly-acquired shotgun, and demanded to see what Dr. Wilson and his team had uncovered. Upon seeing a particular skeleton, Dr. Thorly was overcome with emotion and was subdued by those at the dig after collapsing.

Thorly was arrested by deputies and incarcerated in the small Wheatland County Jail in Harlowton. His home in Helena was searched for evidence by Helena Police Department detectives in the ongoing Franklin Opetz investigation and the skeleton was found (see attached, Male skeleton 1.)

On September 5 Thorly was "observed" to vanish from his cell by three other inmates. Although the cell was unopened and completely intact, the deputies believe that Thorly escaped, and a national APB has been released to federal and state police forces in the hopes of his recapture.

## **Physical Description**

Dr. Thorly is a male caucasian in his late forties, with graying brown hair, a short, carefully-trimmed beard, steel aviator sunglasses, and a pronounced limp on his left side. He often dresses in casual "outdoorsy" clothing, and rarely wears a suit or tie. He is 5'9" tall and weighs about 155 lbs. This description has been circulated to law-enforcement departments nationwide.

## **Alibi**

Dr. Thorly was busy on campus during the day of Franklin Opetz's disappearance. After work he had dinner with one of his few friends, his physician and fellow Masonic lodge member Dr. Henry Sadier. During the dinner, Thorly complained of pain from his leg injury, and seemed distracted and upset. He persuaded the affable Sadier to a brief exam at his office following dinner, around 7:30 P.M. Sadier performed a cursory examination and provided Thorly with sedatives, though he later told police he secretly offered them more for "nerves" than for pain. He administered the first sedative at his office and then drove Thorly home.

Concerned for his friend, Sadier stayed the night. He tried to persuade Thorly to explain why he was so distressed, but to no avail. Eventually the sedatives took hold and Sadier put Thorly to bed. He watched television until it was time for another pill, around one A.M. When that was administered, Sadier went to sleep on the couch. Thorly was still out cold when he awoke the next morning, at which point Opetz's disappearance was noticed.

Dr. Sadier is a life-long resident of Helena and is well regarded by the community.

## **Arrest Report**

The arrest report of Dr. Thorly from the Wheatland Sheriff's Department has a few facts relevant to the case in it. The arresting officer, Mark Tyler Brown, when he arrived at the site, summoned by Dr. Wilson, noted Thorly's uncontrollable, nearly manic behavior. When the officer arrived, Thorly had already been disarmed. He was pleading to not be touched, that he was somehow "infected" by something he would not, or could not elaborate on.

Deputy Brown attempted to handcuff Dr. Thorly, who struggled and pleaded for several minutes before succumbing. Past that point, Brown reports, Thorly was silent and well behaved.

The basic gist of the attack by Thorly on the crew of U-Penn scientists is recounted in the file. The doctor strode into camp and demanded to see what else the U-Penn researchers had dug up, and, seeing that he had a 12-gauge shotgun, they complied with his demands. Thorly broke down after seeing skeleton #4 (subsequently renumbered by the FBI as #5, thanks to the skeleton found in Thorly's home).

## **Personal Effects**

When Dr. Thorly was booked by the Wheatland Sheriff Department, the items he carried were taken and inventoried. The locker containing these items was turned over to the Helena FBI. The notes on the locker indicates that there are a pair of keys, four quarters, a pen, a Mossberg 500 12-gauge with five shells of buckshot, and a wallet containing three fives, a single, a driver's license, two credit cards, assorted business and video-rental cards. Also included in the list is the titanium Rolex with the inscription "For Thomas, from a proud father."

## **Associates**

Dr. Thorly's associates at the University speak fondly of him, at least in the past tense, and often comment that he seemed so normal before the dig at Big Porcupine Creek. Most now believe that Thorly was somehow involved in the disappearance of Franklin Opetz, thanks mostly to the local news.

Before the incident Thorly was thought of as a quiet, well-respected member of the Masonic lodge in town, who sometimes volunteered for summer youth programs run by the Helena City Council and attended a local Methodist church. No one, however, was much closer to Thorly than that.

## **Residence**

Thorly's modest home was thoroughly searched by police in the ongoing investigation into the disappearance of Franklin Opetz. The house is still considered a crime scene, though it is not guarded.

The interior of the house was well decorated and maintained, at least until shortly before Thorly's arrest. Boxes of take-out food, copious amounts of alcohol, and evidence of vomiting were found in the kitchen, living room, and bathroom, suggesting a recent state of emotional distress.

## **Other Secrets**

Dr. Thorly lived a double existence. A closet homosexual, Thorly maintained a separate life in nearby Butte, Montana. There, several times a month, Thorly would openly enjoy his lifestyle. In Butte, he was known to homosexual clubgoers as George Baker. FBI Helena has discovered this fact by perusing the doctor's credit-card records and questioning several people in Butte about his activities.



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**Originating Office:** SAC Robert C. Pope  
**Date:** 10/01/1997  
**Distribution:** SA Russel T White (Lead) and investigating agents  
**Subject:** Missing: Franklin "Frankie" Opetz Jr.

Born in Billings, Montana, in 1972, Franklin Opetz attended the University of Montana-Helena for his bachelor's degree in anthropology and archeology. At the time of his disappearance he was completing his graduate work in the same subject under the direction of Dr. Thorly.

Opetz led a mundane existence. What little social life he had was spent on campus in the local pub, drinking with friends, or driving into town to play pool with locals. Opetz dated a few women, most of whom worked in or around the university, but had no serious ties to the area. Everyone who knew him in Helena called him "Frankie."

His parents, Elaine and Franklin Opetz, Sr., still live in Billings and have kept in close touch with their son over the years.

#### **Physical Description**

Franklin Opetz is a male caucasian in his mid-twenties with frizzy brown hair, a small goatee, and thick-framed "Buddy Holly" glasses. Opetz is always casually dressed in J. Crew/Gap/Land's End gear and never wears anything more restrictive. He is 5'11" and weighs about 172 lbs. He wears a Billings, Montana, George Washington High School class of 1990 ring on his right hand.

This description, along with a photograph, has been distributed to every major police force in the United States. Opetz is officially sought after and is thought to be the subject of either a kidnapping or murder. His parents are offering a \$10,000 reward for his safe return.

#### **Dorm Room**

On July 30, 1997, Franklin Opetz was last seen entering his room at Tierney Dorm located on campus, about 9 P.M. by several other residents. Two days later, when the usually garrulous Opetz was not seen by his neighbors coming or going from his apartment and knocking on his door brought no response, the Resident Assistant on the floor was alerted.

Opetz's door was unlocked but the chain was locked from the inside. The Helena police were called when no one responded to shouts directed into the apartment.

No signs of foul play could be located in the dorm room, and nothing out of sorts was discovered in the police search. Opetz was nowhere to be found. When the case was lumped in with the disappearances at Big Porcupine Creek, the crime scene changed hands to the FBI. It is still closed off and is being examined at length by FBI experts.

#### **Personal Effects**

Nothing out of sorts was noticed by the police among Opetz's personal effects. When the FBI took over the crime scene, several objects were found to be missing, including a doorknob to the bathroom door—which the Helena police insist was there before the FBI arrived.

## **Witnesses**

The few people who saw Opetz before his disappearance have all made statements to the police. The dorm was sparsely populated due to the fact that most classes were out for summer break. Only three other people on Opetz's floor were present during the dates of his disappearance.

Michael Roth, age twenty-eight, lived in the room across from Opetz and knew him quite well. Roth was majoring in geology and often helped out with Opetz's more difficult studies in geologic surveying (which Opetz was taking over summer semester). He remembers seeing Franklin (Frankie, as he calls him) going into his room on the evening of July 30 at about seven. The two exchanged brief hellos and Frankie claimed he was exhausted and didn't feel well. Frankie then retired to his room. Roth is one of the men who, two days later, knocked on Franklin's door and eventually alerted the police.

Sandra Friedrich, age twenty-four, saw Opetz in the hall on the same floor of his room at 2 A.M. the morning of July 31. He purchased a Sprite at the soda machine, said hello to her, and went back to his room looking tired. She did not hear anything more about him until the police showed up to knock down his door.

Easton Campbell, age twenty-six, exchanged words with Opetz on the evening of July 30 at about 6:45, as Opetz was coming down the hall to go to his room. Opetz said something which Campbell recalled as strange. Campbell, who also is in the graduate archeology department under Dr. Thorly, recalls that Opetz said something to the effect of "Thorly really lost it out on the dig, I'll tell you later," which he assumed referred to the dig at Big Porcupine Creek. Campbell was one of the men to alert the RA and police.

## **Associates**

Franklin Opetz had numerous friends and associates on campus. Those within the small archeology department number only six. Of those only Richards, Opetz and Thorly went to the site. The others were either off campus or out for summer semester.

Yolanda Young, age twenty-five, was off campus until the day before Opetz's disappearance and talked with Opetz and Richards about the dig at Big Porcupine Creek. Opetz claimed that something odd had been dug up out there but that "Thorly had a shit-fit and doesn't want to release the info till he's checked it out at length." Richards refused to speak about what had been found, but did say "I wish we never went out there."

Ryu Horakumi, age twenty-nine, saw Opetz once two days before his disappearance at a bar in Helena. They spoke briefly about the dig at Big Porcupine Creek and Opetz, slightly drunk, said that "Thorly lost it out there. The old man went nuts like a goddamned rabid dog." Nothing more was said between the two.

Thomas "Tom" Jablonski, age twenty-six, returned to campus the day after Opetz's disappearance and had nothing to add to the police report, except that in his eyes there was bad blood between Opetz and Dr. Thorly for some time.

## **Opetz's Car**

Opetz's car, a blue 1974 VW Bug, was found parked on campus in Opetz's parking space the day he was discovered to be missing. Opetz used this car to drive back and forth from Big Porcupine Creek. The police searched it for further clues but found nothing. The keys to the vehicle could not be found.

The vehicle was impounded as evidence and was later transported to the Helena office of the FBI for a thorough search. Odd details of the car's state were noticed by the agents assigned to look at the vehicle. The driver's-side mirror and the rear-view mirror were missing, as if those components had been removed carefully by hand.



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**Originating Office:** SAC Robert C. Pope  
**Date:** 10/01/1997  
**Distribution:** SA Russel T White (Lead) and investigating agents  
**Subject:** Missing: Gareth Wylin

Born in Decatur, Illinois, in 1970, Wylin enjoyed a faultless childhood and excelled in schoolwork, gathering top honors from a small boys' finishing school in Lovington. Wylin went on to study anthropology at the University of Chicago, but his interests shifted during his tenure there and soon he became engaged in the study of archeology. In 1994 he applied and was accepted to the University of Pennsylvania for a graduate degree program in archeology.

In August of 1997 Wylin accompanied the head of his program Dr. Wilson, to Big Porcupine Creek in Montana to dig on a site.

#### **Physical Description**

Gareth Wylin is a male caucasian, age twenty-seven, with short red hair and a false front right tooth on a removable bridge. Wylin is a casual dresser and rarely wears anything more formal than a t-shirt and jeans. He is 6'2" and weighs about 205 lbs.

This description, along with a photograph, has been distributed to every major police force in the United States. Wylin is officially sought after and is thought to be the subject of either a kidnapping or murder.

#### **Associates**

Before 1995, Wylin had numerous friends and dated several women seriously. An outdoorsy sportsman type despite his natural clumsy streak, Wylin was popular with the ladies. After 1995, however, his attitude changed completely, and he is known today as an introverted loner. Those who knew him from before the winter of 1995 speak of him as if he were a different man altogether after that particular winter break, although nothing of import seemed to have occurred in his life. A new bleak worldview was a distinctly different attitude in Wylin, which was easily noticed by his friends.

Wylin's parents, Elise (56) and Charles (55), divorced in 1991 and live in Decatur, Illinois. They had not spoken to Gareth in some time and frankly did not care to, as their son "made it plain their relationship ended when he left Illinois."

#### **Phone Calls**

The last call made from Wylin's phone placed at 3:35pm on September 8. The call lasted less than a minute and with the help of the cell phone provider been tracked to a calling-card service provider in Costa Rica. A representative for Remote Data Inc has politely, but firmly denied access to the FBI to the companies records "on general principles". As Remote Data Inc. is not subject to U.S. law the FBI is unable to obtain a warrant in Costa Rica.



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**Originating Office:** SAC Robert C. Pope  
**Date:** 10/01/1997  
**Distribution:** SA Russel T White (Lead) and investigating agents  
**Subject:** Missing: Larry Kazal

Born in New York city in 1972, Larry Kazal grew up always knowing he would pursue a career in archeology. His post-high-school education took him first to Columbia University and then to Bard College, where he excelled in the study of early American cultures. For his graduate degree Kazal moved to the University of Pennsylvania at Philadelphia to finish a four-year program under the tutelage of Dr. Emmet Wilson, whose work he had admired for some time.

Kazal was one of Wilson's favorite assistants and spent his time pursuing his love of the field. Kazal worked on more than twenty digs in his two years at U-Penn, and wrote thirty-six papers on varying archeological subjects with mixed success. Despite his obsession with the archeological sciences, Kazal found enough time to court and become engaged to Miriam Graham, a geology student at U-Penn. The two planned to marry in the summer of 1998.

Kazal disappeared on the dig at Big Porcupine Creek along with his compatriots. His whereabouts remain unknown.

#### **Physical Description**

Larry Kazal is a male caucasian, age twenty-five, with long blond hair, a short well-groomed mustache, and thin wire-frame glasses. Kazal is a casual dresser but is not above dressing up if the occasion is correct. He is 6' and weighs 169 lbs.

This description, along with a photograph, has been distributed to every major police force in the United States. Kazal is officially sought after and is thought to be the subject of either a kidnapping or murder.

#### **Associates**

Kazal had few close friends outside of the archeology program at U-Penn. His colleagues found him engaging and accomplished if a bit over-anxious at times, and he was thought to be a promising field archeologist in the making, despite his attempts to try everything at least once. The only major complaint anyone has of him was that "he could never focus on less than nine things at once."

His fiancée, Miriam Graham, has flown to Helena to follow the investigation as closely as possible. She is residing in a Quality Inn near the airport, waiting for any news.



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**Originating Office:** SAC Robert C. Pope  
**Date:** 10/01/1997  
**Distribution:** SA Russel T White (Lead) and investigating agents  
**Subject:** Missing: Dr. Emmet Wilson

Dr. Wilson was born in Susquehanna, Pennsylvania, in 1945 and attended the University of Pennsylvania for his bachelor's and graduate degrees in archeology. Wilson specialized in Native American sites and was on the excavation of the Roby River Mound in Arkansas in 1967. His paper on the subject is still widely taught today.

Dr. Wilson worked with Dr. Thorly during Thorly's doctoral researches at U-Penn. The two were friends and shared an apartment for a school season in 1969. Dr. Wilson went on to work at several high-profile digs in the U.S. and returned to teach at U-Penn in 1976. Wilson was only one of many archeology/anthropology professors on campus, but was considered a specialist in American cultures and was held in high regard.

Wilson married a research assistant, Corrine Brightem, in 1979. The couple was still together at the time of Wilson's disappearance and have two children. Their family life appeared to be ideal. Corrine is one of the parties who filed a missing-persons report with the FBI in Pennsylvania.

In 1997 Dr. Wilson was called to Montana by his former associate Dr. Thorly. Wilson and a small team traveled out to the site at Big Porcupine Creek despite a dispute with their host, Dr. Thorly. Wilson and his team spent the last two weeks of August and the first week of September digging. An incident involving the U-Penn team and a disgruntled Dr. Thorly led to his arrest by the local Wheatland Sheriff. The dig continued. The U-Penn team uncovered six fossilized skeletons of modern humans, and finally, a bent and ruined antenna-like device from Pliocene strata.

Dr. Wilson and his small team of researchers disappeared suddenly between September 6 and 8. Their whereabouts remain unknown.

### **Physical Description**

Dr. Wilson is a male caucasian, age fifty-two, with gray hair, a mustache, small "John Lennon" glasses, and a scar across his right brow. Wilson fluctuates between outdoorsy clothing and suits and ties, which he wears while teaching class. He is 5'11" and weighs 189 lbs.

The U-Penn Alumni Association is offering a \$25,000 reward for his safe return.

### **Witnesses**

Those few people who interacted with Dr. Wilson and his team were either employed at the Motel 6 they were staying at or at the diner they would frequent after their daily digs.

The staff of the hotel remember very little of import about the group except that they were quiet, did not drink or keep late hours, and often ordered pizza and movies from the front desk. Besides this, they have little to say.

Those at the 'Monterey' diner recall an incident when Dr. Wilson and his associates got into a verbal argument with two local Indians over the "ownership of land and remains" on August 29, which became quite heated, but ended before the police were called. The diner staff had never seen the Indians before, but the waitress noticed they drove a truck with a Northern Cheyenne Indian Reservation sticker on it. The Indians seemed intent on listening in on Wilson's conversation, and started the argument after something was said which offended them. No one got the license plate of the truck. The police and FBI have met with dead ends on the reservation front.



**Personal Effects**

Dr. Wilson and his four graduate assistants were staying in nearby Harlowton at a Motel 6. The rooms have been cleared by the Helena FBI and the evidence was carefully collected and cataloged. It now rests in a storage room in Helena FBI headquarters.

**Phone Calls**

Records of Dr. Wilson's phone calls show nothing but mundane calls to his wife and children, two to the university at Helena, and one to the motel. Besides these everyday calls, there are no other records of Wilson using the phone in Montana.

**Associates**

Dr. Wilson was held in high esteem by all who knew him. Students and teachers who worked with him remember him as a kind, courteous, and accomplished archeologist.

He lived in a small town called Carlton, twenty-three miles from the University of Pennsylvania, and had no known enemies or disputes with anyone in the area. There are no clues to be found here.

His wife Corrine is out of her mind with worry, and Wilson's two children, Michael (12) and Zoe (18), are being cared for by Wilson's brother Horatio while Corrine braces herself for bad news. All expect at any moment to hear about the discovery of Wilson's body.

**Car**

Dr. Wilson's rental car was located at the dig at Big Porcupine Creek with the keys in it. A 1992 red Camry, it was rented at Helena International Airport by Wilson using a U-Penn faculty credit card. The keys have vanished while in police possession and have not been relocated. The car is currently being examined at length for clues by the Helena FBI crime lab.



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**Originating Office:** SAC Robert C. Pope  
**Date:** 10/01/1997  
**Distribution:** SA Russel T White (Lead) and investigating agents  
**Subject:** Missing: Denise Oester

Born in Reston, Virginia, in 1972, Denise Oester was a transfer student from the University of Maryland's archeology/anthropology department to U-Penn and had only been in the graduate program at Philadelphia for four months when she agreed to travel along on a dig at Big P orcupine Creek.

Oester was quite happy to have been accepted into U-Penn and was looking forward to studying under Dr. Wilson, although they had spent little time together up until the trip. Oester was something of an odd man out among the U-Penn group, being female and the only one not in the program for more than a year.

#### **Physical Description**

Denise Oester is a female caucasian, age twenty-five, with long red hair and large aviator glasses. Oester is a casual dresser and tends to wear hiking boots and outdoorsy clothes at all times. She is 5'9" tall and weighs about 145 lbs.

This description, along with a photograph, has been distributed to every major police force in the United States. Oester is officially sought after and is thought to be the subject of either a kidnapping or murder.

#### **Associates**

Denise Oester had just gotten out of a long-term relationship with a man in Maryland, Derek Lewis, before she left to join the graduate program at U-Penn. The FBI have already checked this man out and have cleared him of any possible involvement with the Big Porcupine Creek incident.

Besides this, only Oester's mother remained close to her. Mimi Oester still lives in Reston, Virginia, and is terribly worried about the disappearance of her daughter.



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**Originating Office:** SAC Robert C. Pope  
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**Distribution:** SA Russel T White (Lead) and investigating agents  
**Subject:** Michael Richards, witness suicide

Michael Richards was born in Lofton, Vermont in 1970. He moved to Helena to complete his graduate degree in archeology after his funding was cut at the University of Ann Arbor. He worked closely with both Dr Thorly and Franklin Opetz and enjoyed a good relationship with most others in his department.

On July 3 1997, Richards, Opetz and Dr Thorly set out to survey and excavate a site at Big Porcupine Creek. They reportedly uncovering hundreds of 'erratics', small bits of what appeared to be warped and twisted pieces of tempered steel in strata inconsistent with their modern age.

On July 8, the trio uncovered an adult male skeleton in the Pliocene strata, consistent with a period in history approx 5 million years ago. After it was removed and examined Dr Thorly's attitude changed dramatically. He threatened both Opetz's and Richard's funding if they mentioned any of the discoveries at Big Porcupine Creek to anyone. Richard's, fearing a repeat of his exit from Ann Arbor, kept quiet until Franklin Opetz disappeared.

Richards then went to the local police, Harlowton Sheriff's Dept, on the morning of August 2 and informed them of the threat Dr. Thorly had made.

Richards spent the next two weeks around campus, before returning to the dig site where he had arranged with Dr Wilson that his continued presence at the dig would qualify him for course funding.

Richards was at the Big Porcupine Creek dig site when Dr. Thorly arrived on September 3 brandishing a shotgun. Thorly confronted the archeologists on site and demanded to see recent excavations before breaking down, being disarmed and eventually arrested by local police.

Richards continued work at the site until September 8, the day of his suicide. According to witness statements Richards returned from the dig site at approximately 6pm. Evidence in his motel room suggest he ran a bath, climbed in and pulled the hair dryer into the tub, causing electrocution and his death. His body was discovered, naked in the bathtub except for a St. Christopher medallion, by local police following up on the disappearances from the Big Porcupine Creek dig site on September 9. (See attached coroner's report for information).

#### **Physical Description**

Michael Richards was a male Caucasian, age twenty-seven, with short blonde/brown hair, a small moustache and wore contact lenses. He was 6' 1", weighed 191lbs.

#### **Police interest**

Neither the local police or Helena FBI currently suspect Richards of involvement in the disappearances but are looking into his background just in case.

#### **Motel 6**

When the local Deputy arrived at the Motel 6 on the morning of September 9 he found Richards' door locked, with the doorkey on the inside and with the security chain on. Later investigations of the room by forensics technicians agreed with the attending officer's opinion that this was a suicide. There was no sign of forced entry, and there is no physical evidence to suggest anyone other than Richards had been in the room recently. Given this evidence foul play seems unlikely but has not yet been ruled out.

### Coroner's Report

DATE AND HOUR DIED <i>08/09/'97 approx 6-8pm</i>	A.M. P.M.	DATE AND HOUR AUTOPSY PERFORMED <i>09/11/'97 12.45pm</i>	A.M. P.M.	CHECK ONE		
PROSECTOR <i>D Solis</i>		ASSISTANT <i>A Divarro</i>		FULL AUTOPSY	HEAD ONLY	TRUNK ONLY

CLINICAL DIAGNOSIS (Including operations)

*Michael Richards's medical records were obtained from Blue Cross/Blue Shield and indicate subject has little in the way of medical treatment in his life, other than a cut to his hand requiring nine stitches during his teens in Vermont.*

*His dental work is another matter. Records indicate extensive corrective surgery, and corrective braces during teenage years (copies of X-Rays attached).*

*Other than this the subject was in good physical health pre-mortem.*

PATHOLOGICAL DIAGNOSIS

*Cause of death was a massive cardiac arrest caused by electrocution. Extensive pruning of the skin and postmortem lividity to the buttocks and lower extremities indicate the subject died in his bathtub. The cheery, pink colour of lividity, as opposed to the usual purple/black, is common to bodies recovered from water.*

*There is no significant burns or blistering, which is consistent with a low voltage electrocution of this type.*

*Water found in the lungs is undoubtedly the result of the subjects immersion following electrocution.*

APPROVED - SIGNATURE

*D Solis*

MILITARY ORGANIZATION (When required)

*None*

AGE

*27*

AUTOPSY NO.

*97-09-11.4*

DEPART./SERVICE

*Wheatland County Sheriff Dept.*

HOSPITAL OR MEDICAL FACILITY

*Harlowton Medical Center*

RECORDS MAINTAINED AT

*as left*

PATIENT'S IDENTIFICATION: ( For typed or written entries, give: Name - last, first, middle; ID No or SSN; Sex; Date of Birth; Rank/Grade)

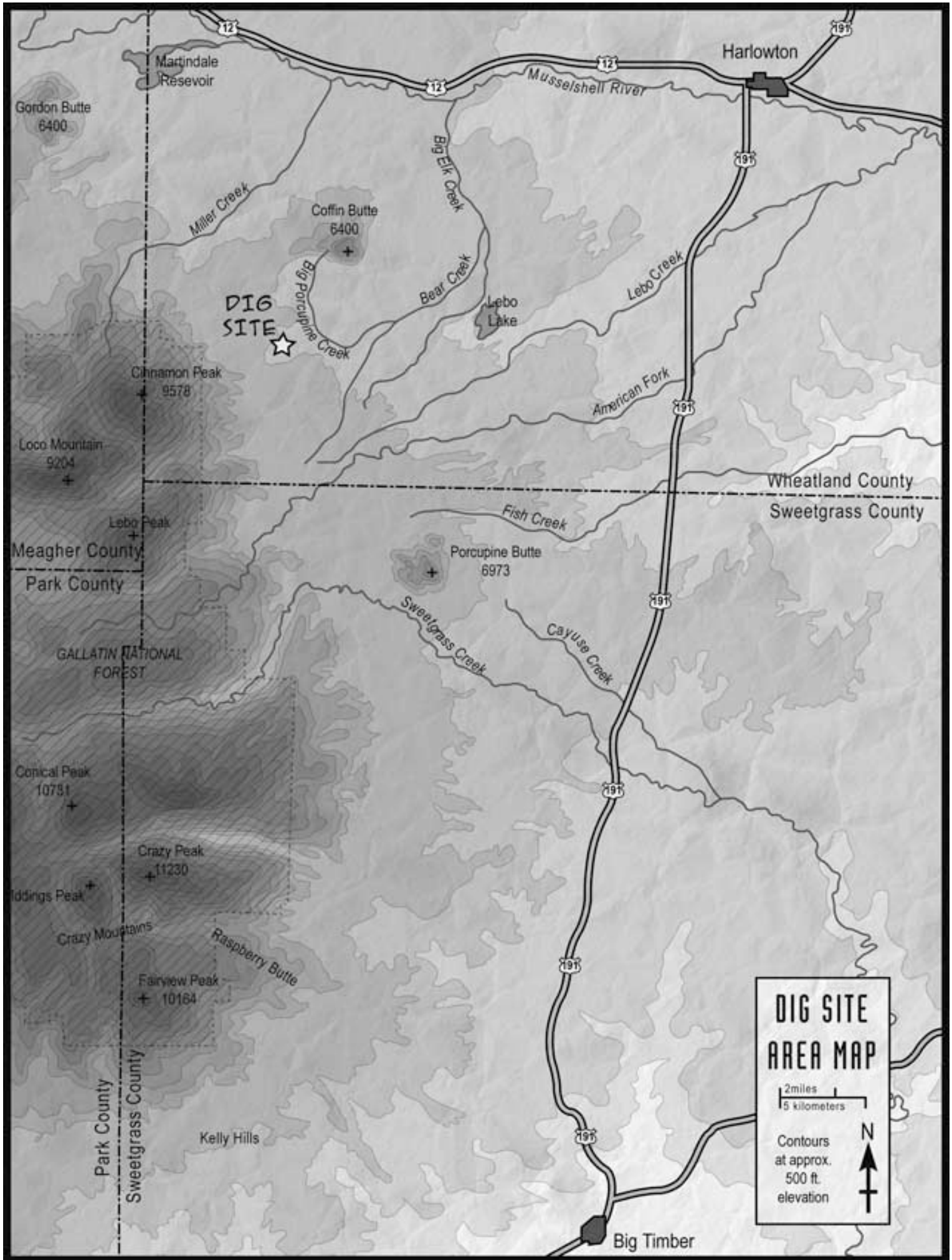
REGISTER NO.

WARD NO.

Richards, Michael  
Sex: Male  
DOB: 03/29/1970  
SSN: 678-12-8901

AUTOPSY PROTOCOL  
Medical Record

STANDARD FORM 503 (REV. 7-1977)  
Prescribed by GSA/ICMR FPMR(41 CFR) 101-11.203



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