

INTRADEPARTMENTAL CORRESPONDENCE

January 19, 2016

8.6

TO: Honorable Board of Police Commissioners

FROM: Chief of Police

SUBJECT: REVIEW OF REQUEST FOR PAYMENT OF REWARD OFFER ON CITY COUNCIL FILE NO. 11-0010-S40

RECOMMENDED ACTIONS

1. That the Board of Police Commission REVIEW and APPROVE the request for payment of reward offer on City Council File No. 11-0010-S40.
2. That the Board TRANSMIT to the Mayor and City Council the appreciation for special reward payment for review and approval.

DISCUSSION

As requested by the Honorable members of the Board of Police Commissioners, I have conducted a review of Mr. Harlan Hobbs' claim for payment of the reward related to the August 8, 2011, murders of John Lee and Oletta Williams.

Mr. Hobbs has asserted that he is entitled to the entire \$75,000 reward based on his actions in this case. However, my review of the investigation does not support that assertion, and I believe that the Devonshire Detectives' recommendation for the disbursement of \$17,500 to Mr. Hobbs is appropriate.

The basis for the reward was information leading to "the arrest and conviction" of the individual responsible for the murders of John Lee and Oletta Williams. From the review of this case, it is clear that Mr. Hobbs' actions aided in the apprehension of Brent Zubek, but that is the extent of his contribution to the case. The key witness, who was pivotal to the arrest and conviction of Brent Zubek, was not Mr. Hobbs. That individual provided direct testimony that held Brent Zubek accountable for his crimes.

I would respectfully recommend that the Board endorse the reward disbursement presented to you by Devonshire Detectives.

Should you require any additional information in this matter, please contact William P. Hayes, Commanding Officer, Robbery-Homicide Division, at (213) 486-6850.

Respectfully,



CHARLIE BECK
Chief of Police

Attachments

FACTSHEET
City Council Reward
Homicide Investigation
Devonshire Area DR No. 1117-15572
December 10, 2015

BACKGROUND:

On August 8, 2011, Devonshire Area Detectives received information from an anonymous source, related to a possible double homicide in the area of Lassen Street and Corbin Avenue. According to the anonymous source, the homicides occurred during a dispute over a \$50,000 check or some type of fraud. The anonymous source assisted with locating an individual, hereafter referred to as Amy Harder, who stated Brent Darrin Zubek shot and killed his roommates, a Caucasian male named "John Lee" and his African-American girlfriend "Oletta," in the residence located at 20410 Lassen Street, in the City of Chatsworth.

Devonshire Homicide Detectives launched a criminal investigation. The detectives' investigation revealed that in July 2011, Suspect Brent Zubek shot and killed his two roommates, Oletta Williams and John Lee. Zubek cleaned the crime scene and retained the bodies for seven weeks in trash barrels.

Detectives served several warrants at the crime scene location and recovered the victims' bodies from the trash containers. Zubek fled the scene, prompting Councilmember Englander to offer, and the City Council to approve a reward of \$75,000 for information leading to the "arrest and conviction of the person or persons who committed a vicious double homicide in the San Fernando Valley." A press conference was held on August 19, 2011, and the information was released to the public.

Note: Devonshire Homicide Detectives were able to identify the suspect (Zubek) and solve the murder based on an eyewitness account provided by Witness Amy Harder. Zubek was an outstanding suspect at this point.

On August 21, 2011, Amy Harder walked into Devonshire Area Police Station and advised Devonshire personnel, she was with Zubek on August 20, 2011. When asked to do so, Harder refused to call Zubek in order to arrange a meet with him. Harder ultimately left the Police Station and Major Crimes Division (MCD) started a moving surveillance on Harder while she drove a Jeep Cherokee, License Plate No. 5VPL840.

MCD officers were in the area of Ventura Boulevard and Libbit Avenue, when they observed Zubek in the front passenger seat of the Jeep Cherokee Harder was driving. The vehicle was being driven by Harder south on Libbit Avenue, from Ventura Boulevard. Then, the vehicle stopped on Libbit Avenue, south of Ventura Boulevard. The officers decided to conduct a traffic stop while the vehicle was stopped.

Zubek possibly observed the officers, because he exited the vehicle and ran south. Zubek then turned west in the driveway of the residence located at 4739 Libbit Avenue. The officers pursued Zubek on foot. Zubek jumped over a retaining wall along the north property line of the driveway and entered a storage yard located at 4741 Ventura

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Boulevard, out of view. Zubek subsequently fired a single shot at the pursuing officers. The officers were unable to visually locate Zubek and a perimeter was established. Various police personnel from the Department, including officers from Metropolitan Division and SWAT, responded to the perimeter.

SWAT officers and a K-9 handler entered the yard of the residence located at 4641 Libbit Avenue. The officers and the police dog proceeded to the yard on the east side of the residence where the police dog alerted along the east wall of the residence. Zubek suddenly appeared on the roof of the residence holding a pistol in his right hand, which he pointed at the officers. A SWAT officer, believing Zubek was going to shoot him or the other officers, fired one round at Zubek from his Heckler and Koch 416 Rifle. The officers lost sight of Zubek, but he was subsequently located in a prone position on the roof. The officers were able to take Zubek into custody.

Zubek suffered a gunshot wound to his right side and was transported to Northridge Hospital by ambulance, where he was treated for his injury and released. Zubek was interviewed at Devonshire Station, and later booked at Van Nuys Jail for 245 (d) (1) P.C., Assault with a Deadly Weapon on a Peace Officer.

On December 16, 2011, the case was presented to the District Attorney's Office and Deputy District Attorney Blake filed two counts of 187 PC, Murder, and one count of 12021(a) PC, Ex- Convict with a Gun.

On January 27, 2015, Zubek is found guilty on all counts of 187 PC, 664/187 PC and weapons violations at a jury trial.

On March 6, 2015, Zubek was sentenced to two terms of life without the possibility of parole (LWOP), plus nine life terms, plus 495 years. Zubek is currently housed at Pleasant Valley State Prison.

SUMMARY:

Mr. Harlan Hobbs submitted a claim for the \$75, 000 reward offered by the City Council. Hobbs contentions are as follows:

- Hobbs met with detectives / SIS, and he arranged for a tracking device to be placed on his vehicle (The Jeep License Plate No. 5VPL840);
- Hobbs devised a plan with "Detectives" to lend Amy Harder the vehicle and that would allow her transportation to connect with Zubek. Then ultimately Zubek was spotted in the jeep and arrested shortly thereafter. In Hobbs words, "It worked;"
- Hobbs has put himself at great risk by becoming involved in the case; and,
- Hobbs feels that the case has "changed hands" and detectives may have "forgotten."

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Meetings between Homicide Detectives and Deputy District Attorney Michael Blake determined that Hobbs' involvement was "Helpful, but not essential information." Therefore, an award of \$17,500 "could be an objective and proportionate remuneration." During the aforementioned discussions, no formula was used to determine the amount. Detectives considered the following:

- Witness Amy Harder met with Harlan Hobbs, and Hobbs provided the Jeep to Amy Harder for her to drive and potentially meet with Zubek;
- Harder drove to Devonshire Station and briefly met with Devonshire personnel;
- Major Crimes Division picked up surveillance, and followed Amy Harder to meet Zubek;
- MCD detectives testified at trial that they did not use and were unaware of a tracking device. Harder was followed from Devonshire Station utilizing old fashion surveillance techniques;
- During Zubek's Preliminary Hearing, Harder testified; however, Hobbs did not;
- Hobbs is not called as a prosecution witness;
- Hobbs is called as Defense Witness, ultimately he testifies largely in favor of the prosecution, and Hobbs testified that he provided the Jeep, and worked in conjunction with the police department for tracker installation;
- Hobbs has a video of what appear to be undercover officers/detectives placing a possible device on his vehicle (Jeep) and telephone logs; and,
- Homicide detectives were unable to identify the surveillance component Hobbs was referring to and/or have on video. Devonshire Homicide detectives determined that this had no role in the overall investigation.

CONCLUSION:

After reviewing the case in its' entirety as it relates to Hobbs' claim for the reward, there is no disputing the fact that Hobbs loaned his vehicle to Harder. As stated earlier, Hobbs' role in the case was helpful, but not essential. Hobbs did not provide information leading to the arrest (identification) and conviction of Zubek. Amy Harder was vital to this investigation and it was her eyewitness testimony, which lead to the arrest and conviction of Zubek.

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City Council Reward
Homicide Investigation
Devonshire Area DR No. 1117-15572
December 10, 2015

ADDENDA:

1. Photocopy of LAPD News Advisory
2. Photocopy of Hobbs' Application for reward

Prepared by:
Devonshire Detective Division

CITY OF LOS ANGELES
APPLICATION FOR SPECIAL REWARD PAYMENT

DISTRIBUTION
ORIG -- LAPD
DUPE -- City Clerk
DUPE -- Claimant

Neither the filing nor submitting of information, nor the receipt or consideration thereof by the City, shall establish legal claim to, or right of recovery of, any reward offered. The provision of payment shall be governed by Chapter 12, Division 19 of the Los Angeles Administrative Code.

1. PRINT NAME OF APPLICANT:
Last, Anonymous A First, Middle

2. ADDRESS: (Street) (City) (State - Zip)
Daytime Phone & Contact Person

3. TODAY'S DATE: 03/24/2015 4. OCCUPATION:

5. DRIVER'S LICENSE # or CALIF ID #: 6. SOCIAL SECURITY #: (For payment purposes)

DESCRIPTION OF CIRCUMSTANCES (Fill in or mark ALL that apply)

NOTE: The applicant is responsible for providing ALL of the following required information. A claim that does not provide the following required information may be disapproved for insufficient information.

7. DATE OF INCIDENT: 08/13/2011 8. TIME OF INCIDENT: 0800 AM PM
 NOON MIDNIGHT

LOCATION OF INCIDENT: 20410 Lassen Street Chatworth, CA 91325

TYPE OF CRIME/INVESTIGATION: Murder

9. DESCRIPTION OF INCIDENT: Brent Zubek shot and killed Oletta Williams and John Lee, and retained their bodies until their discovery on 08/31/2011.

12. X APPLICANT SIGNATURE 13. X PARENT OR GUARDIAN SIGNATURE (under 18 years)

DO NOT WRITE BELOW THIS LINE FOR OFFICIAL USE ONLY

INVESTIGATING OFFICER: Name R. Moakley Serial # 34292 Agency LAPD
Phone # (818)832-0556

NAME OF VICTIM OR CASE:
Oletta Williams and John Lee

RECOMMENDATION: APPROVAL DISAPPROVAL INVESTIGATION CHECKLIST ATTACHED: Yes No
 INSUFFICIENT INVOLVEMENT
 INSUFFICIENT INFORMATION

BRIEF EXPLANATION OR COMMENTS:

During the murder investigation, Zubek went on the run and a \$75,000 reward was offered. The reward applicant, provided, in part, the conveyance that Zubek was eventually apprehended in. He was called as a defense witness during the trial. Zubek has been sentenced to two life terms without parole, nine life terms, plus 495 years, for the murders.

REVIEWED AND APPROVED BY: (Signature) 25373

CITY OF LOS ANGELES
REWARD CLAIM CHECKLIST

This form must be submitted with the Department's recommendation concerning payment of the reward.
One checklist must be submitted for each claimant.

COUNCIL FILE NUMBER: 11-0010-S40 DR/AGENCY FILE NUMBER: 1117-15572
TYPE OF CRIME/INVESTIGATION: Murder REWARD AMOUNT: \$ 75,000
REWARD EFFECTIVE DATE: 08/19/2011 REWARD EXPIRATION DATE: 02/29/2012
INFO RECEIVED WHILE REWARD IN EFFECT: YES NO DATE RECEIVED: 08/13/2011
(Check one)
CLAIMANT: Anonymous A CLAIMANT'S OCCUPATION: _____
(Name or "Anonymous." If multiple anonymous claimants, indicate as "Claimant A, Claimant B," etc.)
CASE INVEST. BY: LAPD Devonshire Homicide OTHER CITY DEPARTMENT: _____
(Div/Section)
Investigator(s) Assigned: R. Moakley #34292 Telephone: (818) 832-0556

(Name and Serial No.) Telephone: () _____

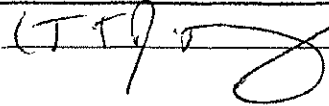
The above claimant is ELIGIBLE NOT ELIGIBLE to receive payment of a reward pursuant to the Los Angeles Administrative Code Division 19, Chapter 12, Sections 19.120 through 19.129.4.

Reason(s) for claimant being NOT ELIGIBLE to receive payment

- | | |
|--|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Claimant is a City Officer, employee, or public officer or employee whose employment includes duties of law enforcement. | <input type="checkbox"/> Claimant obtained information for a relative who is a City Officer, employee, or public officer or employee, and that person obtained the information in the course of his/her employment. |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Claimant is a dependent of a City Officer, employee, or public officer or employee whose duties include law enforcement. | <input type="checkbox"/> Claimant has not provided continued cooperation within the criminal justice system relative to the case for which the offer of reward is made. |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Claimant has already been compensated by his/her employer in some other manner for the actions which are the basis for claiming the reward. | <input type="checkbox"/> Claimant is co-suspect in the crime for which the reward is offered. |
| <input type="checkbox"/> The suspect would benefit from payment of the reward to the claimant. | <input type="checkbox"/> Other: _____ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> The claimant is acting as an agent for the suspect. | |

Explanation:

(If additional space is needed, use next page.)

APPROVED BY  RANK/TITLE Lt. II, C/O, Devonshire Detective Division



Los Angeles Police Department
Los Angeles, California

News Advisory

August 18, 2011

NA11194an

Councilmember Englander/LAPD Hold Press Conference to Announce \$75,000 Reward Regarding Vicious San Fernando Valley Double Homicide

- WHAT:** News Conference to ask for public's help and announce \$75K Reward
- WHEN:** Friday, August 19, 2011
3:00 p.m.
- WHERE:** City Council Media Room,
City Hall, 3rd Floor, behind Council Chambers (Room 330)
200 N. Spring St.
Los Angeles, 90012
- WHO:** Councilmember Mitchell Englander, Chair of City Council Public Safety Committee
Commander Jim Cansler, Assistant Commanding Officer OVB
Captain Kris Pitcher, Commanding Officer Devonshire Area
Captain Maureen Ryan, Commanding Officer Devonshire Patrol
Lieutenant Tim Torsney, Commanding Officer Devonshire Detectives
- WHY:** Councilmember Englander to Hold Press Conference to Announce \$75,000
Reward to Catch Perpetrator of Vicious Double Homicide in San Fernando
Valley

Los Angeles – Los Angeles Councilmember Mitchell Englander will hold a press conference on Friday, August 19, at in the City Council Media Room in City Hall to announce a \$75,000 reward for information leading to the arrest and conviction of the person or persons who committed a vicious double homicide in the San Fernando Valley.

Councilmember Englander, Chair of the City Council's Public Safety Committee, represents the area where the murder was committed. He will introduce the motion for the \$75,000 reward on Friday, August 19 in City Council.

Councilmember Englander will be joined by LAPD Commander Jim Cansler, Operations Valley Bureau, Lt. Tim Torsney, Commanding Officer of Devonshire Detectives, Capt. Kris Pitcher, Commanding Officer of Devonshire Division and Capt. Maureen Ryan of Devonshire Division.

Anyone with information relevant to the case is urged to contact Devonshire Division Detectives at (818) 832-0609 or (877) LAPD-24-7.

100 West First Street • Los Angeles • California • 90012
Office: (213) 486-5910 • Fax: (213) 486-5925 • Email: pio@lapd.lacity.org



Los Angeles Police Department
Los Angeles, California

News Advisory

Anonymous tips can be made through Crime Stoppers at (800) 222-8477 or by texting to phone number 274637 (C-R-I-M-E-S) with the letters "LAPD."

CONTACT: For more information, please contact Media Relations at (213) 486-5910 Lt. Andy Neiman 25146@lapd.lacity.org or Matt Myerhoff, Communications Director for Councilmember Mitchell Englander, Twelfth District. Cell (818) 293-8962 // Matt.Myerhoff@lacity.org.

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INTRADEPARTMENTAL CORRESPONDENCE

November 12, 2015

1.1

TO: Honorable Board of Police Commissioners

FROM: Chief of Police

SUBJECT: REQUEST FOR PAYMENT OF REWARD OFFER ON CITY COUNCIL
FILE NO. 11-0010-S40

RECOMMENDED ACTIONS

1. That the Board of Police Commissioners (Board) REVIEW and APPROVE the attached Application for Special Reward Payment.
2. That the Board TRANSMIT to the Mayor and City Council the Application for Special Reward Payment for review and approval.

DISCUSSION

It is requested that the Board approve and transmit to the City Council the recommendation that a previously approved reward offer be paid to a citizen for providing assistance that contributed to the defendant's apprehension in the murder of Oletta Williams and John Lee, City Council File No. 11-0010-S40. On or about July 2, 2011, Oletta Williams and John Lee were shot and killed inside a residence located at 20410 Lassen Street. Their bodies were retained by the perpetrator, Brent Zubek, for more than six weeks. Upon discovery of the bodies, Brent Zubek fled. The reward of \$75,000 was offered on a motion passed by the Los Angeles City Council on August 19, 2011.

A citizen came forward and provided helpful, but not essential material which led to the capture of Brent Zubek. This individual provided, in part, the conveyance that Brent Zubek was eventually apprehended in. He was called as a defense witness during the criminal trial and appeared to testify truthfully. The claimant has been the only involved party known to Devonshire Homicide to lay claim to this reward.

It is the opinion of the Investigating Officers and the Deputy District Attorney assigned to this case that the assistance of this citizen resulted, at least in part, to the apprehension and arrest of Brent Zubek. It is recommended that the claimant receive a monetary award commensurate to his contribution to the case. An award of \$17,500 could be an objective and proportionate remuneration. Brent Zubek has been sentenced to two life terms without parole, nine life terms, plus 495 years, for the murders.

Respectfully,

CHARLIE BECK
Chief of Police

Attachments

CITY OF LOS ANGELES
APPLICATION FOR SPECIAL REWARD PAYMENT

DISTRIBUTION
ORIG -- LAPD
DUPE -- City Clerk
DUPE -- Claimant

Neither the filing nor submitting of information, nor the receipt or consideration thereof by the City, shall establish legal claim to, or right of recovery of, any reward offered. The provision of payment shall be governed by Chapter 12, Division 19 of the Los Angeles Administrative Code.

1. PRINT NAME OF APPLICANT: Last, Anonymous A First, Middle

2. ADDRESS: (Street) (City) (State - Zip)
Daytime Phone & Contact Person

3. TODAY'S DATE: 03/24/2015 4. OCCUPATION:

5. DRIVER'S LICENSE # or CALIF ID #: 6. SOCIAL SECURITY #: (For payment purposes)

DESCRIPTION OF CIRCUMSTANCES (Fill in or mark ALL that apply)

NOTE: The applicant is responsible for providing ALL of the following required information. A claim that does not provide the following required information may be disapproved for insufficient information.

7. DATE OF INCIDENT: 08/13/2011 8. TIME OF INCIDENT: 0800 AM PM
 NOON MIDNIGHT

LOCATION OF INCIDENT: 20410 Lassen Street Chatworth, CA 91325

TYPE OF CRIME/INVESTIGATION: Murder

9. DESCRIPTION OF INCIDENT: Brent Zubek shot and killed Oletta Williams and John Lee, and retained their bodies until their discovery on 08/31/2011.

12. X APPLICANT SIGNATURE 13. X PARENT OR GUARDIAN SIGNATURE (under 18 years)

DO NOT WRITE BELOW THIS LINE - FOR OFFICIAL USE ONLY


INVESTIGATING OFFICER: Name R. Moakley Serial # 34292 Agency LAPD
Phone # (818)832-0556

NAME OF VICTIM OR CASE:
Oletta Williams and John Lee

RECOMMENDATION: APPROVAL DISAPPROVAL INSUFFICIENT INVOLVEMENT INSUFFICIENT INFORMATION
INVESTIGATION CHECKLIST ATTACHED: Yes No

BRIEF EXPLANATION OR COMMENTS:

During the murder investigation, Zubek went on the run and a \$75,000 reward was offered. The reward applicant, provided, in part, the conveyance that Zubek was eventually apprehended in. He was called as a defense witness during the trial. Zubek has been sentenced to two life terms without parole, nine life terms, plus 495 years, for the murders.

REVIEWED AND APPROVED BY: CTT  25383

**CITY OF LOS ANGELES
REWARD CLAIM CHECKLIST**

**This form must be submitted with the Department's recommendation concerning payment of the reward.
One checklist must be submitted for each claimant.**

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INFO RECEIVED WHILE REWARD IN EFFECT: YES NO DATE RECEIVED: 08/13/2011
(Check one)
CLAIMANT: Anonymous A CLAIMANT'S OCCUPATION: _____
(Name or "Anonymous." If multiple anonymous claimants, indicate as "Claimant A, Claimant B," etc.).
CASE INVEST. BY: LAPD Devonshire Homicide OTHER CITY DEPARTMENT: _____
(Div/Section)
Investigator(s) Assigned: R. Moakley #34292 Telephone: (818) 832-0556

(Name and Serial No.) Telephone: () _____

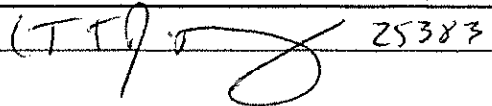
The above claimant is **ELIGIBLE** **NOT ELIGIBLE** to receive payment of a reward pursuant to the Los Angeles Administrative Code Division 19, Chapter 12, Sections 19.120 through 19.129.4.

Reason(s) for claimant being NOT ELIGIBLE to receive payment

- | | |
|--|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Claimant is a City Officer, employee, or public officer or employee whose employment includes duties of law enforcement. | <input type="checkbox"/> Claimant obtained information for a relative who is a City Officer, employee, or public officer or employee, and that person obtained the information in the course of his/her employment. |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Claimant is a dependent of a City Officer, employee, or public officer or employee whose duties include law enforcement. | <input type="checkbox"/> Claimant has not provided continued cooperation within the criminal justice system relative to the case for which the offer of reward is made. |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Claimant has already been compensated by his/her employer in some other manner for the actions which are the basis for claiming the reward. | <input type="checkbox"/> Claimant is co-suspect in the crime for which the reward is offered. |
| <input type="checkbox"/> The suspect would benefit from payment of the reward to the claimant. | <input type="checkbox"/> Other: _____ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> The claimant is acting as an agent for the suspect. | |

Explanation:

(If additional space is needed, use next page.)

APPROVED BY  RANK/TITLE Lt. II, C/O, Devonshire Detective Division