



## PRESS RELEASE

Pursuant to CA Gov't. Code Sect. 6254(f)  
San Jose Police Department  
Press Information Office  
201 W. Mission Street, San Jose, CA 95110  
Phone (408) 277-5339 / Fax (408) 286-0923

---

**TYPE OF CRIME:** Cold Case Homicide 1981  
**LOCATION:** 1900 block Poco Way, San Jose

**CASE NUMBER:** 81-001-0593  
**DATE:** 9-21-06     **TIME:**

**VICTIM:** Ines Sailer  
**ADDRESS:** San Francisco Resident

**AGE:** 23 years

**SUSPECT:** Melvin Forte (In Custody)  
**ADDRESS:**

**AGE:** 35 years in 1981 (DOB 2-26-46)

### DETAILS:

Ines Sailer, age 23, a German national living in the United States, had an apartment in the 200 block of Pierce Street in San Francisco. On New Years Eve 1980, she went to a party with friends in the 500 block of 8<sup>th</sup> Avenue, also in San Francisco. She left the party alone at about 1:30AM on January 1, 1981. Her apartment was within walking distance about 2.5 miles away from the party.

Later that morning, her body was found in a carport on Poco Way in an east San Jose neighborhood. She had been shot multiple times. Ballistics showed that the firearm was a small caliber handgun. Investigators believed that she was killed elsewhere and her body dropped in San Jose.

The case remained unsolved until advances in DNA forensic science led police to resubmit Ms. Sailer's clothing to the Santa Clara County Crime Lab. Forensic evidence was discovered on Ms. Sailer's clothing and body. A DNA profile sufficient for matching to an individual was found on her clothing. The DNA profile was entered into the state database and a match was found in 2005. The donor of that sample is a convicted felon named Melvin Forte.

BY: Sgt. Nick Muyo #2086  
DATE: 9-22-06     TIME: 11:00AM

AUTHORIZED BY: Lt. JR Gamez  
DATE: 9-22-06     TIME: 11:00AM

Once Forte was identified, investigators began looking into his background. They discovered that he had been arrested in San Francisco eight months after the death of Ms. Sailer. Found in his car at the time, was a loaded small caliber handgun and extra rounds of ammunition.

In February 1982, Forte gunned down a couple as they returned to their Bay Area home. The man died and the woman lived. The next day, Forte committed an armed robbery at a business in Milpitas.

On March 6, 1982, Forte committed another armed robbery, this time in Los Altos. During this robbery, he fired a shot into the ground. Then on March 23, 1982, he committed an armed robbery in Burlingame, shooting a security guard.

Ballistics tests matched bullets from the Los Altos and Burlingame robberies and shootings to the 1982 San Francisco homicide. Convicted of his 1982 crimes, Forte is now in prison.

Investigators learned that between the mid-1970's and 1982, Forte had family and friends living in east San Jose and was a frequent visitor to the area. Forte was then charged with the murder of Ines Sailer.

Members of the Santa Clara County District Attorney's Office, the Santa Clara County Crime Lab and the San Jose Police Department's Homicide Unit worked in a collaborative effort to identify and arrest the suspect in this case. Specifically worth noting was the exceptional work done by Santa Clara County Deputy District Attorney Charles Constantinides and San Jose Police Homicide Sergeants Tom Morales and Pete Ramirez.

This investigation is one of seventeen (17) cold case homicides featured at the San Jose P.D. Homicide Unit website at <http://sjpdhomicide.com>, "They Are Not Forgotten." Members of the community are encouraged to visit and review these cases on-line and provide detectives with information that could assist in solving cold case investigations.

Anyone with information on this case is urged to call Detective Sgt. Pete Ramirez or Detective Sgt. Tom Morales of the San Jose Police Dept.'s Homicide Unit at (408) 277-5283. Persons wishing to remain anonymous may call Crime Stoppers at (408) 947-STOP.

BY: Sgt. Nick Muyo #2086  
DATE: 9-22-06 TIME: 11:00AM

AUTHORIZED BY: Lt. JR Gamez  
DATE: 9-22-06 TIME: 11:00AM



BY: Sgt. Nick Muyo #2086

DATE: 9-22-06

TIME: 11:00AM

AUTHORIZED BY: Lt. JR Gamez

DATE: 9-22-06

TIME: 11:00AM