Bob Hardesty public records request

REVIEW COPY - NOT PUBLISHED

California Public Records Act | PRA 24-1222RE | May 2024

This review packet preserves the request and LASD correspondence about access to records concerning Robert Bruce Hardesty. LASD withheld records in May 2024 and referred questions to Lieutenant Modica. This packet does not establish the investigation's current status.

Document chronology

April 10, 2024: handwritten date on the signed request attachment. This is not the verified transmission date.

May 10: request emailed to LASD; the agency letters confirm receipt on May 10.

May 13: LASD acknowledged receipt and assigned a PRA number.

May 14: LASD extension letter issued and emailed that afternoon Pacific time.

May 23: LASD withheld records, citing an ongoing and active investigation and statutory exemptions.

May 24: Sherri sent an initial reconsideration request, a detailed challenge and a follow-up addendum.

May 28: LASD maintained its decision, concluded the PRA request and referred questions to Lieutenant Modica of the Homicide Bureau.

How to read these review copies

Private identifying request details (items 8 and 9), personal contact information and handwritten signatures have been removed. Each omission is labeled. Agency names, dates, request number and substantive response paragraphs remain. Email excerpts omit routing headers, personal addresses, signatures and repeated quoted history. Probate attachments are not reproduced.

A quotation of the requester's allegation in an agency letter is not agency confirmation. The May 24 assertion about inactivity is Sherri's position, not a verified finding. The agency's contrary description is its historical 2024 position. Neither establishes current status, guilt or innocence.

Selected email excerpts

Dates below use Pacific time for LASD messages and Central time for Sherri's sent messages. Excerpts retain the original wording, with line wrapping normalized. These are not complete email reproductions.

May 10, 2024 at 2:45 p.m. Central

Sherri to LASD Public Records Act Unit

“I am Sherri (Hardesty) Renon, writing to request access to all records related to the homicide of my late husband, Robert Bruce Hardesty, DOB 10/31/1954. The incident occurred on April 28, 1981, in unincorporated Redondo Beach, CA.”

May 13, 2024 at 11:37 a.m. Pacific

LASD Public Records Act Unit to Sherri

“LASD Public Records Act Unit has received your PRA request. It has been assigned PRA number 24-1222.”

May 14, 2024 at 5:01 p.m. Pacific

LASD Public Records Act Unit to Sherri

“Attached is an LASD letter regarding your request for records pursuant to the California Public Records Act.”

May 23, 2024 at 1:10 p.m. Pacific

LASD Public Records Act Unit to Sherri

“Attached is a response from the Los Angeles Sheriff’s Department regarding your request pursuant to the California Public Records Act.”

The signed request and all three LASD letters follow. Private request details and quoted repetitions are omitted from these excerpts; see the labeled removals on the document pages.

Reconsideration and final email excerpts

May 24, 2024 at 5:57 p.m. Central

Sherri to LASD Public Records Act Unit

“Please reconsider my request. I understand the need to redact documents, as this is an unsolved case.”

May 24, 2024 at 7:02 p.m. Central

Sherri to LASD Public Records Act Unit

“I am writing in response to the letter dated May 23, 2024 regarding my Public Records Act request, initially received on May 10, 2024, seeking records related to the homicide of my late husband, Robert Bruce Hardesty (DOB 10/31/1954).”

May 24, 2024 at 8:42 p.m. Central

Sherri to LASD Public Records Act Unit, copied to Jamie

“I am following up on my earlier response regarding the denial of my Public Records Act request concerning the records related to the homicide of my late husband, Robert Bruce Hardesty, received on May 10, 2024, with a formal challenge to the grounds for denial as outlined in your letter dated May 23, 2024.”

May 28, 2024 at 2:09 p.m. Pacific

LASD Public Records Act Unit to Sherri

“Attached is a response from the Los Angeles Sheriff’s Department regarding your request pursuant to the California Public Records Act.”

The May 24 messages are the requester's submissions, not legal determinations. The final letter's referral says “contact” Lieutenant Modica; it does not itself document a telephone call or what was said on a call.

4-10-2024

Dear Discovery Unit,

I am Sherri (Hardesty) Renon, writing to request access to all records related to the homicide of my late husband, Robert Bruce Hardesty, DOB 10/31/1954. The incident occurred on April 28, 1981, in unincorporated Redondo Beach, CA.

This request is filed under the authority as the legal spouse and representative, along with our daughter, Jamie F. Hardesty. Please see the attached official probate document confirming our legal representation.

We are requesting the following information:

1. Initial Police Reports: Copies of all initial police reports related to Robert Bruce Hardesty's homicide on April 28, 1981.
2. Investigation Reports:All investigation reports compiled by LASD or other relevant agencies.
3. Interviews: Records of interviews with witnesses, suspects, or persons of interest.
4. Witness Statements: Any witness statements recorded during the investigation.
5. Autopsy Reports: Complete autopsy reports including conclusions about the cause of death.
6. Photographic, Sketch, and Audio/Video Evidence: Any photos, sketches, videos, or audio recordings concerning the crime scene or subsequent investigations.
7. Additional Documents and Records: Any other related documents, evidence, or records tied to this case.

Items 8 and 9: private identifying request detail omitted

Please provide these requested documents in any available format within the timeframe specified by the Public Records Act. Should there be any associated fees for processing this request, kindly contact me for payment information. If further information or clarification is needed to process this request quickly, please contact me at:

Personal contact details omitted

Thank you for your attention to this pressing matter. I anticipate your prompt cooperation.

Warm regards,

Handwritten signature omitted

Sherri (Hardesty) Renon

Personal contact details omitted

Attachments:

- Official_Probate_Document_for_Robert_Hardesty.pdf
- Signed_PRA.pdf - '@

OFFICE OF THE SHERIFF

COUNTY OF LOS ANGELES

HALL OF JUSTICE

ROBERT G. LUNA, SHERIFF

May 14, 2024

Sherri (Hardesty) Renon

Personal contact details omitted

Dear Ms. Renon:

PUBLIC RECORDS ACT REQUEST #24-1222RE

This letter is in response to your request for records under the California Public Records Act (CPRA) dated and received by the Los Angeles County Sheriff's Department (LASD), Public Records Act Unit on May 10, 2024.

In your request, you are seeking the following:

> ...access to all records related to the homicide of my late husband, Robert Bruce Hardesty. The incident occurred on April 28, 1981, in unincorporated Redondo Beach, CA.
>
> 1. Initial Police Reports: Copies of all initial police reports related to Robert Bruce Hardesty's homicide on April 28, 1981.
> 2. Investigation Reports:All investigation reports compiled by LASD or other relevant agencies.
> 3. Interviews: Records of interviews with witnesses, suspects, or persons of interest.
> 4. Witness Statements: Any witness statements recorded during the investigation.
> 5. Autopsy Reports: Complete autopsy reports including conclusions about the cause of death.

6. Photographic, Sketch, and Audio/Video Evidence: Any photos, sketches, videos, or audio recordings concerning the crime scene or subsequent investigations.

7. Additional Documents and Records: Any other related documents, evidence, or records tied to this case.

Items 8 and 9: private identifying request detail omitted

Although the Sheriff's Department is obligated to respond within 10 days of receipt of the request, this time limit is subject to an extension of up to fourteen (14) days under the following circumstances as defined in Government Code § 7922.535(a).

> The need to search for, and collect, the requested records from field facilities or other establishments that are separate from the office processing the request, and the need to appropriately examine potentially voluminous amounts of records.

Currently, the Los Angeles County Sheriff's Department is receiving an exceptionally large volume of PRA requests and is currently experiencing an extended delay in processing them. Upon completion, we will advise you, if any, as to the availability of the responsive records.

Please note that we may redact or withhold records if there are any exempt matters impacting the privacy rights of individuals (California Constitution, matters will include those protected by the attorney-client, official information, and deliberative process privileges, pending litigation exemption, personnel exemption, or other matters otherwise protected from disclosure by law or where the particular facts and circumstances warrant nondisclosure of the information (Government Code §§ 7927.200, 7927.700, 7927.705, and 7922.000).

If you have any questions, please contact the Public Records Act Unit via email at DiscoveryUnitPRArequests@lasd.org or phone at (323) 890-5050.

Sincerely,

ROBERT G. LUNA, SHERIFF

Handwritten signature omitted

Julia M. Valdes, Acting Captain
Risk Management Bureau

OFFICE OF THE SHERIFF

COUNTY OF LOS ANGELES

HALL OF JUSTICE

ROBERT G. LUNA, SHERIFF

May 23, 2024

Sherri Renon

Personal email omitted

Dear Ms. Renon:

PUBLIC RECORDS ACT REQUEST – #24-1222RE

This letter is in response to your request for records under the California Public Records Act dated and received by the Los Angeles County Sheriff's Department (LASD), Public Records Act Unit on May 10, 2024.

In your request you are seeking the following:

> All records related to the homicide of my late husband, Robert Bruce Hardesty, DOB 10/31/1954. The incident occurred on April 28, 1981, in unincorporated Redondo Beach, CA.
>
> We are requesting the following information:
>
> 1. Initial Police Reports: Copies of all initial police reports related to Robert Bruce Hardesty's homicide on April 28, 1981
> 2. Investigation Reports: All investigation reports compiled by LASD or other relevant agencies.
> 3. Interviews: Records of interviews with witnesses, suspects, or persons of interest
> 4. Witness Statements: Any witness statements recorded during the investigation
> 5. Autopsy Reports: Complete autopsy reports including conclusions about the cause of death.
> 6. Photographic, sketch, and audio/video evidence: Any photos, sketches, videos, or audio recordings concerning the crime scene or subsequent investigations
> 7. Additional Documents and Records: Any other related documents, evidence, or records tied to tis case

Item 8: private identifying detail omitted

Private details removed by requester for this review copy; agency text is historical May 2024.

Item 9: private request detail omitted

Response to Nos. 1 through 9: The records requested are part of an ongoing and active criminal investigation by the Los Angeles County Sheriff's Department and are therefore exempt from disclosure based on, but not limited to, the following authorities: Government Code sections 7923.600, 7927.705, and 7922.000. The exemption under Government Code section 7923.600 does not end when the investigation has been concluded. See *Williams v. Superior Court* (1993) 5 Cal.4th 337, 355; *Rackauckas v. Superior Court* (2002) 104 Cal.App.4th 169, 174. These records are also exempt under Government Code section 7927.705 because they are protected from disclosure by federal, state, and common law privileges, including, but not limited to, the privilege for official information set forth in Evidence Code section 1040. Further, disclosure of the records requested before the criminal investigation has been completed would substantially interfere with the investigation and/or criminal enforcement proceeding by threatening the integrity of the evidence, endangering the safety of victims and witnesses, tainting witnesses and the jury pool, and precluding a fair trial, if an individual is charged with a crime. Based on the foregoing reasons, the public interest in preventing interference with this active investigation outweighs the public interest in disclosure of the requested records under Government Code section 7922.000.

If you have any questions, please contact the Public Records Act Unit via email at DiscoveryUnitPRArequests@lasd.org or phone at (323) 890-5050.

Sincerely,

ROBERT G. LUNA, SHERIFF

Handwritten signature omitted

Julia M. Valdes, Acting Captain
Risk Management Bureau

OFFICE OF THE SHERIFF

COUNTY OF LOS ANGELES

HALL OF JUSTICE

ROBERT G. LUNA, SHERIFF

May 28, 2024

Sherri Renon

Personal email omitted

Dear Ms. Renon:

PUBLIC RECORDS ACT REQUEST – #24-1222RE

This letter is in response to your request for records under the California Public Records Act dated and received by the Los Angeles County Sheriff's Department (LASD), Public Records Act Unit on May 10, 2024.

In your request you are seeking the following:

On May 10, 2024, you submitted the following PRA request:

> All records related to the homicide of my late husband, Robert Bruce Hardesty, DOB 10/31/1954. The incident occurred on April 28, 1981, in unincorporated Redondo Beach, CA.
>
> We are requesting the following information:
>
> 1. Initial Police Reports: Copies of all initial police reports related to Robert Bruce Hardesty's homicide on April 28, 1981
> 2. Investigation Reports: All investigation reports compiled by LASD or other relevant agencies.
> 3. Interviews: Records of interviews with witnesses, suspects, or persons of interest
> 4. Witness Statements: Any witness statements recorded during the investigation
> 5. Autopsy Reports: Complete autopsy reports including conclusions about the cause of death.
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> 7. Additional Documents and Records: Any other related documents, evidence, or records tied to tis case

Private details removed by requester for this review copy; agency text is historical May 2024.

Items 8 and 9: private identifying request detail omitted

On May 23, 2024, LASD responded to your PRA request informing you records are exempt from disclosure due to the active and ongoing status.

On May 24, 2024, you rebuttal the following:

1. As his legal representatives, we are for all intents and purposes are the victim, Bob Hardesty.
2. This is a very cold case of 43 years, which is not under current investigation, and has not been active for decades.
3. I'm his 67 year old widow, and Jamie is his now 45 year old daughter. We are wish to know what happened to our loved one that night. We are haunted by rumors and half truths

Response: We have assessed your request and we stand firm on the exemptions that we previously cited. The records requested are part of an ongoing and active criminal investigation by the Los Angeles County Sheriff's Department and are therefore exempt from disclosure based on, but not limited to, the following authorities: Government Code sections 7923.600, 7927.705, and 7922.000. The exemption under Government Code section 7923.600 does not end when the investigation has been concluded. See *Williams v. Superior Court* (1993) 5 Cal.4th 337, 355; *Rackauckas v. Superior Court* (2002) 104 Cal.App.4th 169, 174. These records are also exempt under Government Code section 7927.705 because they are protected from disclosure by federal, state, and common law privileges, including, but not limited to, the privilege for official information set forth in Evidence Code section 1040. Further, disclosure of the records requested before the criminal investigation has been completed would substantially interfere with the investigation and/or criminal enforcement proceeding by threatening the integrity of the evidence, endangering the safety of victims and witnesses, tainting witnesses and the jury pool, and precluding a fair trial, if an individual is charged with a crime. Based on the foregoing reasons, the public interest in preventing interference with this active investigation outweighs the public interest in disclosure of the requested records under Government Code section 7922.000.

In addition, portions of these records are being withheld under California Law including, but not limited to the following authorities: California Constitution, article I, section 1, and Government Code section 7922.000. This concludes your PRA request.

If you have any questions, please contact Lieutenant Modica of the Homicide Bureau at (323) 890-5500.

Sincerely,

ROBERT G. LUNA, SHERIFF

Handwritten signature omitted

Julia M. Valdes, Acting Captain
Risk Management Bureau