

No signs in 18 years pointed to Garrido as suspect



Phillip and
Nancy Garrido

By Kathryn Reed

Despite Phillip Garrido's now-well publicized criminal exploits with women, his name was never one that crossed the desks of law enforcement after Jaycee Lee Dugard was abducted June 10, 1991.

"We didn't have anything that was remotely close to these people. These people just did not come up on the radar screen at all, for whatever reason," Lake Tahoe-based FBI agent Chris Campion said of Phillip and Nancy Garrido in a podcast released Aug. 31.

Phillip Garrido, 58, and Nancy Garrido, 54, face 29 felony counts of kidnapping someone under 14 years of age, kidnapping for sexual purposes, forcible rape and forcible lewd acts on a child. The maximum penalty is life imprisonment.

Both pleaded not guilty to all charges.

The Garridos were transferred from the Bay Area on Aug. 27 to the El Dorado County Jail in Placerville. They are being held without bail. They have been under suicide watch.

El Dorado County Superior Court Judge Suzanne Kingsbury will decide if the case is heard in Placerville or South Lake Tahoe. The Garridos' attorneys could petition for a change in venue.

Phillip Garrido once lived in South Lake Tahoe. This was in the 1970s with his first wife, Christine Perreira Murphy.

In 1976 he was sent to prison for kidnapping Katie Callaway Hall of South Tahoe and raping her in a Reno storage shed. Murphy subsequently divorced him.

Garrido was sent to Leavenworth Federal Penitentiary in Kansas for those crimes. He found religion behind bars, as well as his current wife. Nancy Garrido was at the prison visiting a family member when the romance between them began.

He was paroled in 1988. Sentencing and parole regulations have become stricter in the ensuing years. The couple then made their home in Antioch.

El Dorado County Undersheriff Fred Kollar spent part of the morning of Aug. 27 at that house which is where Dugard apparently lived for the last 18 years. He had an hour to look through the single-story house on the outskirts of Antioch in the East Bay of San Francisco.

After the press conference that afternoon at the county fairgrounds, Kollar said it would have been easy to not know the tent-shed compound existed because of the false back fence.

However, had law enforcement in the Bay Area followed up on neighbors' calls, this case may have been resolved years ago.

A simple search on GoogleEarth also would have told the story in a picture. The makeshift living quarters are clearly visible on the Internet.

Lt. Les Lovell of the El Dorado County Sheriff's Department was one of the original people on the investigation. He had recently finished a stint with the DEA, so the leads he followed had to do with drugs.

"One lead at the time was a possible drug, white slavery type

of connection," Lovell said. "That was my focus the first couple of months – narcotics related tips."

He said more than 30 investigators were on the case at one time. Thousands of leads filtered in.

During the 10-year anniversary walk in South Lake Tahoe to remember Dugard, a slew of undercover officers were in the crowd. Past experience has proved that suspects like to return to the scene – even years later.

Authorities questioned one person, but he was let go – and he was not Phillip Garrido.

Campion was also part of the investigation from the get-go. He was unavailable for an in-depth interview. He was one of the more than 2,500 people who walked in a parade of pink through South Lake Tahoe on Sept. 6

"I can say that Terry Probyn, Jaycee's mom, is very grateful to the South Lake Tahoe community for all their support over the years," Campion said in an email to *Lake Tahoe News*.

It was Lovell who got the call from the Concord Police Department on Aug. 26 saying they thought they had the now 29-year-old Dugard. Lovell put them in contact with the cold case specialists in Placerville.

From there, the truth started to come out about the last 18 years.