

El Dorado County sheriff's detectives unhappily reassigned to patrol

By Peter Hecht, Sacramento Bee

Five veteran El Dorado County sheriff's investigators, including a detective who worked on the Jaycee Lee Dugard kidnapping case and the teen lovers' murder saga of Steven Colver and Tylar Witt, have been reassigned to patrol units.

The reassignment of nearly half of the sheriff's detective division has triggered the filing of a contract grievance by the deputy sheriffs' association. And it fueled a media event Tuesday, in which union representatives and some advocates for crime victims blasted El Dorado County Sheriff John D'Agostini as undermining public safety by rotating undertrained officers into the coveted detective positions.

Among those sent to patrol was Detective Rick Fitzgerald, whose 18-year-tenure included the Dugard and Colver/Witt investigations and the cold case of Philip Arthur Thompson, who was convicted in 2008 in the killing of Elizabeth Marie "Betty" Cloe, a 22-year-old Oregon woman whose shot and bludgeoned body was found in Cameron Park in 1971.

Also reassigned was the entire five-member property crimes unit, with four going to patrol. A fifth member was reassigned within the investigative division, the deputy sheriffs' association said.

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