



Missing 52 Year Old Male

January 9, 2003
Whitewater Canyon
2003-003

By David Webb

R.M.R.U. was asked to meet on the north side of the 10 FWY off the White Water exit at 09:00. At that time we were informed that a 52 yr. Old Latino male had been reported missing for 11 day's, he was also H.I.V. positive and diabetic. His car had just been located the day before high centered on a rock in the river bed a little over 1 mile north of the freeway.

Upon arriving at the scene it was decided to begin with a grid search in the area where the car had been found. Before long the search line started to fall apart and everyone began searching their own areas while spreading out. It was about this time that Jeri Sanchez showed up at base and heard about a known gathering spot 2 miles up the canyon from a supporting Deputy. Being fairly close to base I radioed in that I would return to the command center and go with Jeri to that location. We would begin a search there and work our way back south. We went about a mile down stream as another unit was working their way up. At this time I started coming into an area that had a lot of little party spots. And by the painting's on the trees and other evidence quickly lead me to believe that there had been a lot of private activity going on around there. Unfortunately our team and the team working their way up the canyon never got a chance to meet up before we were called in for a lunch / reorganization break. This left a gap between the north search area and the south. At 12:30 two helicopters were now on the scene to assist in the search. As we discussed our next plan of attack I realized that a number of people were coming up with all kinds of very valid sinarios of what this guy might have done and where we should search.

About 13:30 as different teams organized and set out to explore their different theories. I was remembering what I had found earlier. The party spots, the gap between the north and south search area's, and the fact that even though we now had two helicopters in the air they wouldn't be able to effectively search this place because of the trees. I went into the command center and received permission to go on my own to continue the search of that area. At 14:15 as I was working my way north through the trees I found a little path heading west to a clearing on the other side. I almost continued on but at the last second decided to take the path. I felt that if I progressed through and into the clearing I would be able to see the road again and get my bearings on how far north I had moved. As I worked my way through to the clearing I began to spot something up ahead and to my left. In about 4 or 5 steps I went from wondering to

confirmation that I had found our subject. It also became quickly apparent that the subject had been deceased for a number of days and that the indigenous wildlife had also been aware of this fact.

After gathering my thoughts for a moment I radioed into base that the subject had been located. I then began giving my location to one of the aviation units so that they could pin point my spot and assist other ground units to my location. Soon several unit members were with me and they then returned to the road to assist deputies to the scene. About 15:00 Phil Thompson arrived with two deputies who then took over the scene and upon getting the necessary information they needed thankfully and graciously dismissed R.M.R.U.

RMRU is a volunteer search and rescue team that covers Riverside County and assists other teams with search and rescue efforts in other counties. Each member purchases their own equipment and takes time off work, without compensation, to participate in search and rescue missions. Team equipment is purchased from contributions from the community. We are a non-profit organization and are funded by [donations](#) from people like you.