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JOINT NEWS RELEASE

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COLD CASE FROM 1981 IS 100TH DENVER COLD CASE FILED

The Denver Cold Case Project reached an important milestone today when its 100th DNA case was filed. Denver District Attorney Mitch Morrissey formally charged a 53-year-old man in connection with a sexual assault and murder that occurred in Denver in 1981. The charges are the direct result of work by the Denver Police Department's cold case detectives and crime lab personnel.

Hector Bencomo-Hinojos (dob: 10-15-1959) is charged with *first-degree murder after deliberation* (F1) and *first-degree murder, felony murder* (F1) in the death of 32-year Patricia Beard.

Beard lived in a one-room apartment in the 500 block of East 11th Avenue. She had not been seen for several days. A family member who went to check on her found her body in her room on March 27, 1981. The case was unsolved until a DNA match identified Bencomo-Hinojos as a suspect. He is currently in federal custody in Pennsylvania and now faces extradition.

"DPD detectives, Denver Crime Lab scientists, and members of the Denver District Attorney's Office worked tirelessly to solve this and other crimes – and have done an unbelievable job," said Denver District Attorney Mitch Morrissey.

This groundbreaking collaboration between the National Institute of Justice and the City of Denver has brought more rapists and murderers to justice than any other place in the world. In addition to bringing criminal charges in one hundred rape and murder cases, Denver's Cold Case Project has solved many other cold cases and brought closure to victims and families.

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The Cold Case DNA Project is an ongoing collaborative effort involving Denver Police detectives, the Denver Police Department Crime Lab and the Denver District Attorney's Office with grant funding through the National Institute of Justice.