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Unsolved Cases: 'Baby Joseph' Froze to Death in 1996

The newborn infant was left near a Hazelwood church. His mother was never found.

By [Zandy Dudiak](#) | [Email the author](#) | October 7, 2012

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Easter Sunday is the day that Christians observe Christ's triumph over death and the renewal of life for all beings.

That day of celebration turned dark just before Easter services on April 7, 1996, at [St. Paul's Evangelical Lutheran Church](#) in the Pittsburgh neighborhood of [Hazelwood](#). Two church members discovered the body of a newborn infant in an alley between the church and the adjacent property at Mansion Street and Gate Lodge Way.

The baby boy seemed to have been swaddled in a pink towel but rolled out of it at some point during the chilly April night when the thermometer registered a low of 26 degrees. He was unclothed, next to the towel, when they discovered him frozen to death.

[Dr. Cyril Wecht](#), then-[Allegheny County coroner](#), ruled that the child died of "cold exposure due to neglect of the newborn," [the Pittsburgh Post-Gazette reported](#). His death was ruled a homicide.

[More than 175 people attended a memorial service](#) held at the church on April 14, one week after the baby's tiny body was found.

The [Allegheny County Morgue](#) kept him for almost 3 months with the hope that someone would come forward to claim him. No one did.

But the baby didn't go to his grave without a caring family. The residents of Hazelwood "adopted" him, naming him "Baby Joseph" to honor the husband of Jesus' mother. Hazelwood funeral director Mark V. Sauvageot donated a tiny cream-and-black casket.

An anonymous woman clothed him with a white Christening gown, cap, socks and booties, according to the [Pennsylvania Missing Persons website](#). Residents donated a teddy bear, a rattle, a pink afghan and a large white Easter bunny with a blue bow. Some women wrote poems.

They even donated a book to the local library, dedicated in the name that the citizens of Hazelwood had given him.

Baby Joseph was buried at [The Homewood Cemetery](#) on June 28, 1996. Cemetery officials donated the grave site near the edge of a level plot where 50 other babies who died before him are buried.

Had he lived, Baby Joseph would be 16 today.

If you have any information that could lead to the identity of Baby Joseph, contact the [Pittsburgh Bureau of Police](#) Homicide Division at 412-323-7161.

For more information about this and other missing and unidentified person cases, visit the websites for [Pennsylvania Missing Persons](#), [NamUs](#) and [The Doe Network](#).

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Billee

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2:58 pm on Monday, October 8, 2012

Homicide...really? Wouldn't this be a premature ruling? The weakest among us are discarded on many occasions. How do you know this mothers intentions were not to abort and she couldn't gain access to a legal abortion? Babies survive failed abortions on occasion and are born alive and left to die alone in distress. The babies who are born alive from failed abortions are denied basic constitutional protections. So why would this case be ruled homicide when the mothers intentions were unknown? Oh I know... that disordered law of protected homicide -vs- homicide. I understand medical necessity for abortion at times. However since the disordered law of the land was passed ...failed abortions should be mandated with the complete quality care standards of comfort measures until the child CTB. Any less such standard of care should be deemed neglect and abuse of a corpse. May our Dear Lord watch over the mother of baby Joseph as he rest in tender peace.



cc

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9:30 pm on Monday, October 8, 2012

Billee yes it was homicide as you don't leave a baby outside in the cold wrapped in a pink towel when it is below freezing..

Did you not read what Cyril Weck said that killed the baby? People from all over the United States use Cyril Weck as a coroner, as he is one of the leading ones in the US.

If this monster would of called CYS, dropped the baby off at the hospital or the Police Station this child would be living today she should be charged with homicide. She could of made arrangements to give the child up for adoption before the baby was born, but she was a coward for killing an innocent child.

Abortions have been legal for how many years, so don't make excuses for her her intentions could of been a legal abortion. How do we know this mother wasn't a drunk, on drugs and forgot where she left her baby???

Billee there is nothing in this article about partial birth abortions that have been illegal for the last 20 or so years now. If you actually know what they did in a partial birth abortion, then you know that the cut the back of the babies head and suck out the brains. If a doctor does one on a pregnant woman illegally, then him and the parents of the baby should be charged with murder. ?

Billee here is an article with diagram of how they are done. <http://www.nrlc.org/abortion/pba/diagram.html>

and here is an article on them http://www.abortionfacts.com/partial_birth/procedure.asp

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