

Father of Arizona Man Missing in Desert Won't Give Up

PHOENIX, AZ - Unlike thousands of missing person's cases, the 1997 disappearance of Daniel Adam's 29-year-old son – Mitchell Adams and his three friends - prompted hundreds of volunteers to help police search and spawned local media coverage which resulted in an outpouring of sympathy across Arizona.

Over a decade later, the attention has died down, and people have forgotten about the disappearance of the four local men in the Estrella Mountain range. But Mitch Adams remains missing, and his father still waits and searches. "People don't ask anymore," Daniel Adams said. "And I don't bring it up."

Mitch Adams has not been seen since the evening of March 13, 1997 after a night of off-roading with his friends in the Estrella Mountains near Avondale, Arizona. Although the case was thought to have been resolved in 2001, Maricopa County examiners say an investigation remains open.

In a brief interview with the Phoenix Sun Report, Adams told the Report he believes his son is dead, but he said he and his wife are keeping the case active because they want to find Mitch's body and put him "to rest in a proper grave." An official statement from the Maricopa County Medical Examiner claimed there was not enough physical evidence for the remains to be conclusive.

"I don't know if the pain will ever go away," Daniel Adams said. "But I spend most nights awake over not knowing (what happened). It is upsetting to talk about but I know Mitch would do the same for me. He would never give up."

Mitch Adams is the younger of Daniel Adam's two boys. The family moved to the Phoenix area in 1991 when Daniel Adam's position with the Air Force transferred him to Arizona.

On the night he disappeared, Mitch Adams had been drinking and off-roading with a group of friends in the Estrella Mountains. His three friends, Glenn Lauder, Ryan Stone, and Jacob Reynolds also remain missing. "I believe they got lost in the desert," Daniel Adam said. "I just wish he would have stayed home."

In the following years, a network of family and friends organized a public awareness campaign. Since 1997 there have been many unsuccessful searches. Avondale Police would not discuss details of the case.

Daniel Adams said he hopes a witness will come forward with information. "Someone must know what happened." he said.

Anyone with information should call 855-2FIND-THEM. Tips can be anonymous.

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The Arizona Missing Database in partnership with the International Community Identification Network established a national long term record of missing and unidentified persons. Utilizing forensic and coroner's information on missing persons and unidentified remains, the resource is designed to give families, law enforcement, medical examiners, and the public the ability to become actively involved in unresolved cases.

Anyone having information should contact the AMD Department:
855-2FIND-THEM. info@maricopamissing.com