

Sheriff's investigators looking to ID possible murder suspect

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McKinley County Sheriff Office Investigator Anthony Ashley is seeking the public's help in identifying a man seen with Sergio Perez-Prieto just days before his body was discovered north of Hassler Valley Road, not far from ATV Motocross road July 9.

Investigators determined that Perez-Prieto was the victim of foul play.

Video surveillance shows Perez-Prieto withdrawing money from a Wells Fargo ATM machine July 4. Ashley said investigators want to talk with the unidentified passenger, seen in the photo donning a thick black leather bracelet, black clothing, and long hair.

"He's a murder suspect," MCSO Investigator Merle Bates said.

Perez-Prieto was reported missing by family members on July 4, when he left a barbecue in the Red Hills area to take a friend home. The friend was dropped off on East Hill Avenue at around 8 pm, and that's the last Perez-Prieto was seen.

Perez-Prieto's car was discovered July 5 in the parking lot of the El Rancho Hotel along East Historic Highway 66. A man was seen on video exiting the vehicle and then walking east toward the commercial area along Hwy 66, Ashley said.

Ashley said the body was discovered around 12:50 pm on July 9 by a passerby who smelled a strong, unusual odor coming from the side of the roadway. He said the death appears to be the result of blunt-force trauma.

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Ashley said anyone with information about the identity of the man seen with Perez-Prieto or further information on his death can call the sheriff's office at (505) 722-8514, or make an anonymous tip through Crime Stoppers (505) 722-6161.