

Sheriff seeks man seen at site once owned by casino heir

Written by Administrator
Thursday, 11 April 2019 20:36 -

LAS VEGAS — Authorities said Thursday they are seeking a man who once worked at a sprawling rural Nevada ranch owned by a Las Vegas casino heir who buried millions of dollars' worth of silver before his mysterious death 20 years ago.

Richard Cleaves, 56, of Pahrump, was being sought on felony burglary, conspiracy and destruction of property charges after he and two other men were seen on surveillance cameras March 30 at the property once owned by Ted Binion, Nye County sheriff's Lt. David Boruchowitz said.

The three men had shovels, according to a video news release about the investigation.

The other two men were not immediately identified. They're being sought for questioning.

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Binion's death in 1998 at 55 sparked a media spectacle mixing tales of sex, drugs, Las Vegas history and buried treasure with trials, appeals and eventual murder acquittals for his stripper girlfriend Sandy Murphy and her lover Rick Tabish.

Binion was a wealthy, heroin-using son of famed downtown casino owner Benny Binion, namesake of Binion's Horseshoe casino.

His death at home in Las Vegas was initially ruled a drug overdose.

But Tabish, a contractor, was found two days later digging for some \$7 million in silver in an underground vault he had built for Binion in Pahrump, about 60 miles (97 kilometers) west of Las Vegas.

Prosecutors accused Tabish and Murphy of forcing him to overdose in a plot to kill him and steal his riches. They were found guilty of lesser charges of conspiracy, burglary and grand larceny.

The sheriff's video said that in 1998, officials located \$5 million worth of silver at a different Binion property in Pahrump.

Boruchowitz said investigators found three holes last week that were several feet deep at the 138-acre former Binion ranch.

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The video statement said holes were found in the main structure and next to a demolished brick barbecue smoker.

The statement said Cleaves was identified by the property manager as a former worker at the site, and had been arrested in 2017 for digging holes on the property.

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