

1995

Detective David Luhta
Detective Robert Sayer
Lieutenant Darryl Dunlap

Painesville Police Department

On April 6, 1994, violence touched the City of Painesville in a way that most Lake County residents would never expect. A 24 year old man, was caught in a cross fire from a drive by shooting, outside of a Painesville convenience store. These things just don't happen in the suburbs.

At the time, Painesville's detective bureau consisted of three officers - two of whom could be considerer "walking wounded" with one on crutches and another nursing an aching back. However, this situation did not impede the efforts of Lieutenant Darryl Dunlap and Detectives Luhta and Sayer. They immersed themselves into a grueling investigation and within a week, had arrested the first of four suspects in the homicide. Tracking four suspects seemed like working four homicide investigations according to the detectives.

The three detectives credited Willoughby private investigator Lee Feathers for his help in the investigation. Feathers was highly regarded among Lake County police officers for his polygraph work and his expertise in interview and interrogation. Feathers, using the investigatory details uncovered by the detectives, was able to get confessions from all of the suspects including the triggerman. Feathers had passed away in February 1996.

Painesville Police Chief Jerry White nominated the trio for the Jorge Medina award for their work on this case. After consideration, the awards committee selected them as recipients. They were honored at the Blue Coats annual banquet on February 21, 1996.

Luhta succeeded White as Chief of the Painesville Police Department. All three have since retired from police work.