

# The MSP Sauna Report

## Redaction Theories

Here it is: the inaugural post of our Bytes of Analysis. We hope that by bringing special focus to certain documents and data, we can crowd source some answers. Many people contribute to this site, so expect that many people will be contributing their thoughts and analysis in this space.

This first post is dedicated to a Michigan State Police evidence log that was part of the FOIA filing received by Cathy Broad. This document is so provocative that there was simply no other choice than to use it to kick-off this endeavor.

On April 2, 1996, The Michigan State Police created this report logging into evidence hair and fibers collected from a sauna. It does not take long with this report for some strange things to stand out:

- Something happened during the investigation in 1996 that led to the collection of hair and fibers in a sauna
- This evidence has been reviewed repeatedly by the MSP over the years
- The name of the place is redacted
- The case was all but dormant by the mid 1990s, so what exactly occurred that led the police to collect evidence from this location? DNA testing was not up to the standards we know today, so what led them there and what were they hoping to find?

Michigan State Police  
**REPORT / RECEIPT**

<input type="checkbox"/> Property Receipt	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Seized/ Confiscated	<input type="checkbox"/> Recovered Stolen	<input type="checkbox"/> Found	<input type="checkbox"/> Other	<input type="checkbox"/>
District Detective Bureau				County	Off
Sauna room at				Wayne	Date
Place of Incident				Wayne County	4/
Oakland County Child Killings					Lab. 110
Property Status				Bin No.	Seiz
Name & Address of Owner					Sp. Pistr
ITEM NO.	DESCRIPTION OF PROPERTY - Describe Fully (Manufacturer/Make/Serial No. - Denomination/Amount of Money)				
-01	Hairs/fibers from surfaces of bench.//				
-02	Hairs/fibers from floor beneath, and bottom surfaces of, bench.//				
-03	Hairs/fibers from floor near doorway to sauna.//				
	//NOTHING TO FOLLOW//				

20-196-015

A11

Received By (Signature)	Work Unit	Date	Time	Received By (Signature)
<i>[Signature]</i>	Lab	4/2/96		6.
<i>[Signature]</i>	Lab	4/3/96		7.
<i>[Signature]</i>	NOHQ	9-2-97	1020A	8.
<i>[Signature]</i>	NOHQ	11-02	3:30P	9.
<i>[Signature]</i>	MSP 21	3/20/09	2:45P	<i>[Signature]</i> Commanding Officer (Signature)

Offense Statute:     Narcotics     Federal Narcotics     Auto Theft     Omnibus    EXPENSE D

Offense Action:     Administrative     Circuit Court     Refused

Date of Claim Filed Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>	Date Filed	Prosecution Sought? Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>	Prosecutor OK to Release? Yes <input type="checkbox"/> Not needed <input type="checkbox"/>
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Property is Hereby Granted to:     Release     Sell     Retain     Destroy the Property Listed    Authorizing Officer (Signature & F

**STATE OF MICHIGAN**

Received by (Signature) \_\_\_\_\_ Date Released \_\_\_\_\_

Received by (Signature) \_\_\_\_\_ Received by (Type or Print Legibly) \_\_\_\_\_

Look at the evidence log signatures that states who has reviewed this evidence over time. Other than collection and processing on April 2 and 3 1996, the evidence is sent to Headquarters nearly 18 months later in 1997, is reviewed again in 2002, and reviewed a final time in 2009 by Gary Gray who worked closely with Cory Williams prior to Williams' move to the Wayne County Prosecutor's Office. Nothing else in the FOIA package explains the existence of this report, but clearly there is something about this evidence that prompts investigators to revisit it again and again and *again*.

Why is the name of the place redacted? Understandable if it were a person in a private residence, but clearly it is not. Note the location where it was obtained: "the sauna room at..." To me, this signifies some place of business, and why would that be removed? I think what we can determine from this report is that it is likely a commercial entity in Wayne County.

In thinking about what businesses existed at the time in Wayne County that would have saunas, there is the The Schvitz and the YMCA downtown and in Southgate.

The Schvitz (<https://schvitzdetroit.com/>) is an obviously first choice, but with its very public and seamy past (<https://www.freep.com/story/news/local/michigan/detroit/2017/10/02/detroit-bathhouse-schvitz-purple-gang-mobsters-reopens/721360001/>), why would anyone bother removing the name? And was it even open in 1996? I could also see the YMCAs as being possibilities as pedophiles would be attracted to locations with lots of children around, but their saunas are right off their pools and very public. That, and any YMCA I ever visited prohibit children from saunas and hot tubs. Now either are still a possibility, but again, why redact the name?

So here is my theory: Detroit has a legacy of many private clubs that were supported by the rich elite of the area. And of course, many of the same men also facilitated crimes against children too numerous to count. If it were one of these clubs, it would be easy to see why a place name was redacted on this report.

Consider these private clubs, the Detroit Yacht Club, Detroit Athletic Club, The Masonic Temple, The Recess Club, Renaissance Club, University Club, The Savoyard Club, and the Yandotega.

Let's eliminate a few right off the bat: The Masonic Temple is in the heart of the notorious Cass Corridor with its prolific pedophile and child porn rings, but while it had plans for a sauna (<https://detroit.curbed.com/2017/5/17/15642538/masonic-temple-rare-photos>), it never came to fruition. The Savoyard Club (<https://www.historicdetroit.org/buildings/buhl-building>), which occupied the top of the Buhl Building on Griswold Street, was only ever an eating club with no athletic facilities.

The Detroit Club (<https://www.freep.com/story/money/business/michigan/2017/12/18/detroit-club-renovations-membership/949857001/>), located on Cass Avenue, but in the downtown area, has a genealogical connection to this case in the form of General Russell A. Alger (<https://detroithistorical.org/learn/encyclopedia-of-detroit/alger-russell>), a powerhouse and not-too-distant ancestor of Francis Sheldon (<https://www.newspapers.com/clip/25551139/shelden-family-history-in-the-detroit/>). However, the club, prior to closing, was only ever an eating club, although the new owners have added spa facilities in 2017, it does not appear to have them historically, so it is eliminated from consideration.

The Yandotega Club (<https://www.theyon.com/default.aspx?p=dynamicmodule&pageid=390228&ssid=311089&vnf=1>) is another intriguing entity. In operation since 1892 (<https://detroithistorical.pastperfectonline.com/bysearchterm?keyword=Yandotega+Club>), it remains one of the most exclusive clubs in the country, where new membership is spurred only by the death of an existing member. It is conveniently located near the residence of two persons of interest in the case (Richard George Tarnow and Josiah Tazelaar), and another of Francis Duffield Sheldon's esteemed ancestors, Henry Duffield ([https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Henry\\_M.\\_Duffield](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Henry_M._Duffield)), was a member during his lifetime. However, the club is really only a meeting place with eating (<https://www.flickr.com/photos/71288712@N00/8029257964>) facilities with no known sauna on its premises.

The Renaissance Club, formerly housed in the Detroit (now GM) RenCen, did not open until the late 1970s, and coincidentally, was bought out by GM in 2010 (<https://www.crainsdetroit.com/article/20101217/BLOG006/101219881/renaissance-club-unable-to-withstand-gm-buyouts>), which as we all know, has unique ties to this case. That said, the club itself appears to only be a dinner club. However, there has always been a hotel in the RenCen, I believe Westin Hotels? Still a possibility if they have saunas.

The University Club (<https://historicdetroit.org/buildings/university-club>) located near Yandotega on East Jefferson is an interesting organization in this Detroit mini-history. You needed a college degree to join back in the day, not something many people had. The club suffered many financial difficulties over the years, filed Chapter 11, and was assumed by the YWCA in 1992. Most YWCAs have saunas, but did this one? We know the original club had squash and racketball courts, and saunas being *de rigueur* back in the day, it is possible one existed. The structure was abandoned by the YWCA sometime around 2010, and burned down in 2013. No online sources show or state whether or not a sauna was on the premises.

This leaves the Detroit Yacht Club and the Detroit Athletic Club, which leads us to the 64 thousand dollar question: While they have saunas *now*, did they have saunas *then*? Information I have been unable to find.

When recently asked about this report, a person closely associated with this case suggested a sauna at a police station as a possibility. Not something anyone could easily determine over the Web, but I have to say, that stopped me cold. I have always wondered about Detroit Police Department Detective Richard Clayton (see Wayne County Prosecutor Narrative Notes) and his relationship with Arch Sloan. His actions were criminal and highly suspect, and to the public's knowledge, no one ever fully investigated him. If this has something to do with him, you can imagine the "blue wall" immediately going up, and that would certainly explain the redaction.

So what do you think, readers? Anyone with additional knowledge or clarifications, please leave them in the comments.