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RIDDLE OF MAN IN MORGUE

POLICE stopped a man's funeral following a couple's amazing claim that they had spoken to him eight days **AFTER** he died.

The cremation of 26-year-old chef Gerald Marten was just about to go ahead when an urgent message was flashed to the crematorium.

The hearse was diverted and the body taken to a mortuary, but the funeral service itself went ahead without the body.

The drama happened after bachelor Gerald was discovered dead in the garage of his home.

A story of his death appeared in a local newspaper at Braintree, Essex . . . and stunned a couple who had been the dead man's friends.

They told police they had spoken to him in the street — more than a week after he had died.

Police halted the funeral in case the

Sunday Mirror Reporter

wrong man was in the coffin.

But now, after tests, they are convinced that the victim **WAS** Gerald.

And they admit they cannot explain the bizarre sighting.

Said a spokesman: "We do not doubt that the couple are telling the truth. They made three separate statements to me and are absolutely convinced

that the person they met was Gerald, whom they had known for three years."

Gerald's 'body' was found in a car in the garage of his mother's home at High Garrett, Braintree.

Forensic scientists said it had been there for about eight days before being found.

But the friends have told police: "We are sure we saw him after he was supposed to be dead.

"It can't be Gerald.

We were talking to him and he was alive and well at the time when he was supposed to have been dead for more than a week."

Said the police spokesman: "As a result of what the couple told us we obviously could not let the cremation go ahead in case we were mistaken about the victim.

"There seems little doubt now as to the identity of the body, as the victim tallies with palm print

records. So that leaves us with the mystery of the conversation

"They are a respectable, responsible man and woman who have excellent powers of recall."

Police are not naming the couple and the victim's mother, Mrs Pauline Heath, said: "I have no reason to disbelieve their story.

"I have an open mind on the supernatural.



GERALD MARTEN