

Clues elude Mounties

Exhaustive investigations haven't solved murders

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Deena Lyn Braem was last seen alive Sept. 24, 1999 walking along North Fraser Drive towards Bouchie Lake.

Dec. 10, a hunter stumbled upon human remains buried under a pile of brush in a wooded area near Pinnacles Park. A police forensic investigation established the body was that of 17-year-old Deena. She was murdered.

It's a murder investigation that still bugs RCMP Staff Sgt. Keith Hildebrand. One case he'd like to solve before he retires next year.

"It's frustrating in my 36 years of police work," he said. "In the initial part of the

investigation, we were led off in the wrong path. Little quirks in the investigation took up a lot of time and resources and we came to a dead end."

Deena's case is among six unsolved mysteries we profile in the next eight pages, in cooperation with Quesnel RCMP.

We want to bring these cases back into the light of day in an effort to perhaps tweak the memory of someone who has a vital clue that will crack open one of these cases and bring justice to the victim and their families.

In Deena's case, police have 65 boxes of files and spent more than \$1 million in the investigation.

It continues to be an open file, one that has been reviewed twice, including one done by

the Unsolved Homicide Unit in Vancouver in 2005.

Police believe someone out there knows something.

"Two kids were identified in the initial inquiries who were hitch hiking ahead of her on North Fraser Drive," Quesnel RCMP Const. Ray Kinloch said.

"People coming and going from work recognized Deena. Up the highway one of the guys talked to her. Who are those two guys? What were they talking about? We sure would love to know who they are."

Police have received more than 1,000 tips and UHU is again going over the file, tip by tip catching up to old witnesses.

The most recent unsolved missing person case is that of Julie Oakley Parker who

disappeared from a residence on Willow Ave. Aug. 2, 2006.

With more than 300 tips collected, the case is still an active file.

"The two main witnesses won't talk to us," Hildebrand said.

"We would like to talk to them but we don't have enough evidence to arrest them or talk to them."

Kinloch commends Julie's family for keeping their sister in the public eye.

"The Oakley family is instrumental in that. That's a good thing."

After Julie disappeared, RCMP were assisted for a month by the Major Crimes section in Prince George.

But still no clues surfaced about where she might be.

"We need to get a firm commitment if anybody saw her. Please talk to us," Kinloch said.

"All the publicity has to put an extreme amount of pressure on these two witnesses. They have to be talking to their friends."

Amanda Gore was found unconscious near Garner Road, March 19, 2005. She later died at G.R. Baker Hospital. The cause of death was from exposure.

But the mystery remains as to how she got to Garner Road after taking a taxi home to her residence on Doherty Drive.

Other cases we profile, include Dale Melvin Johnson, Wayne Albert Taylor and Laurie Blanchard.

- with Observer files