

# ***New Hampshire Cold Case Unit***

## **Status Report**

For the Year 2017



NEW HAMPSHIRE  
**Department of Justice**  
Office of the Attorney General



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# CCU Annual Report 2017

## Introduction

On July 29, 2009, Governor John Lynch signed HB 690 into law, creating the first Cold Case Unit (CCU) in New Hampshire's history. The CCU was specifically designed to investigate and prosecute unsolved homicide cases. *See*, RSA 21-M:8-m (2017 Supp.). That law also requires the N.H. Attorney General's Office and the Department of Safety to issue a joint report annually to the Governor, the Speaker of the House of Representatives, the President of the Senate, and the State Librarian "on activities and results of the cold case unit." This report provides a background of the CCU and its activities in 2017.

A cold case is a homicide investigation that has not resulted in an arrest and due to a lack of viable or unexplored leads, has lost its initial momentum. New Hampshire has approximately 130 unsolved homicide cases from jurisdictions across the State. A cold case may be reviewed and re-investigated periodically over the course of time as new leads emerge or new forensic testing techniques become available. This report cannot discuss the specifics of all of the activities of the CCU, as these investigations involve on-going homicide investigations. Many more cases were under review and re-investigation by the CCU in 2017, than can be discussed in this report. However, the report below is an overview of some of the activity of the CCU that can be discussed publicly.

2017 was one of the most productive years since the creation of the New Hampshire Cold Case Unit. During this period, the CCU continued to advance its priority investigations, and was able to publicly share a major break-through in one of its highest profile cases. The field work, research, and collaboration laced throughout 2017's initiatives exemplify the challenges and accomplishments that can materialize when focused attention is directed to an unsolved murder. This report serves as a general overview of the CCU activities for the year, and is intended to provide the public with a view into how unsolved murders are investigated in our state and the results of some of those investigations.

## Staffing

There were no substantive staffing changes within the CCU during 2017. The Department of Safety positions include two full time investigating troopers (Sgt. Michael Kokoski and TFC Richard Perreault). DOS also continues to provide funding for the CCU intelligence analyst. This position was added in 2016 after recognizing that it would greatly assist the CCU to have a dedicated employee providing analytical and research support. The analyst position is part-time and is currently filled by Tracey Flaherty. Ms. Flaherty has already proven herself invaluable to the CCU. She assists the field operations of investigators by analyzing trends and patterns within

cases, identifying and locating persons, researching historical facts regarding persons and places, and interpreting electronic data records.

Senior Assistant Attorney General (SAAG) Susan Morrell continues her role as the CCU prosecutor on a part-time basis, while also prosecuting active homicide cases for the Criminal Justice Bureau. Victim/Witness advocate, Joelle Donnelly-Wiggin, remains as the point of contact for, and representative of, victim family members. Her position is also part-time. In addition to these positions, the Department of Justice also contributes the CCU's third detective position, which continues to be filled by Detective Charles West. Detective West is a retired NH State Police Lieutenant and currently serves the CCU in a part-time capacity.

After 7 years of service, the CCU said goodbye to one of its long-time volunteers. After diligently assisting the CCU in indexing cases, Ms. Verne Greene decided to truly retire. Ms. Greene's service began in 2010, where she single-handedly took on the task of sorting through and organizing all of the historic autopsy reports (some as old as 1923) found in the State archives and at the Attorney General's Office. This project was successful in locating autopsy materials from several unsolved cases, and her project provided a natural segue into volunteering with the CCU. As the autopsy project concluded, Ms. Greene turned her attention to painstaking tasks; scanning, organizing, and indexing some of CCU's most voluminous cases. Ms. Greene's enthusiasm for her work was plain to see, particularly her interest in the unsolved cases from her home area of Cheshire County. The CCU deeply appreciates Ms. Greene's years of service and wishes her well in retirement.

Thankfully, the CCU retains the services of its other long-time volunteer, Milli Knudsen. Ms. Knudsen was instrumental this year in indexing incoming material on the Allenstown Unidentified Bodies case, as well as providing paralegal support to SAAG Morrell as she prepared for the trials of Anthony Barnaby and David Caplin.

In addition to the personnel assigned to the CCU, other resources from within the State Police Major Crime Unit and the Department of Justice Criminal Justice Bureau were utilized to assist with the State's large volume of unsolved cases. In some instances, detectives from the Major Crime Unit were assigned as lead investigators on an unsolved homicide, reporting to and working with the CCU detectives. Similarly, in some instances attorneys from the Criminal Justice Bureau were assigned to assist with the investigation and prosecution of a cold case homicide.

The unsolved homicides from large municipal police agencies are also an important component of the CCU. Detectives from police departments in Manchester, Nashua, Portsmouth, Concord, Dover, and Keene work closely with SAAG Morrell to advance their respective cases. The CCU detectives also work collaboratively to assist these departments as needed. The working relationship amongst the homicide investigators from all agencies across the state is exceptional. Given that New Hampshire is a relatively small state, the persons associated with these crimes

have often traveled to or had police contact in neighboring jurisdictions. As a result, communication and awareness of potential overlap between agency cases is imperative.

### Prosecutions

The prosecution of Anthony Barnaby and David Caplin for the murders of Brenda Warner and Charlene Ranstrom in 1988 in Nashua remained ongoing in 2017. The Attorney General's Office filed an appeal to the NH Supreme Court in 2016, challenging the trial court's order denying the State's request to take video trial depositions of witnesses now living in Canada. In October of 2017, the Supreme Court remanded this case to the trial court with new legal guidance to assess the State's request. *State v. Barnaby*, 170 N.H. 379 (2017). After a hearing in December, the trial court granted the State's Motion to take the video trial depositions of 5 witnesses currently living in Canada. This is a highly unusual request that must be coordinated through the U.S. Department of Justice and the Canadian Ministers of Justice. In addition, the court set new trial dates for each defendant. The court set a February, 2018 trial date for David Caplin and a May, 2018 trial date for Anthony Barnaby.

### Investigative Efforts

It is difficult to quantify and summarize all of the day to day efforts that are put forth on unsolved cases. Activity on a case on any given day can include any one or more of the following: receipt and documentation of a tip; research into historic locations, persons and activities; field interviews of witnesses; collection of physical evidence; consultation with lab personnel; consultation with prosecutorial personnel; communicating with victims' families; reviewing materials from the case file; and properly documenting efforts associated with all of these tasks. Members of the CCU do their best to direct limited resources to the leads and cases most likely to yield a case resolution. Making that choice is not always easy. Sadly, work on one case will sometimes wait, as work on another case takes precedence. The below synopses highlight the cases that occupied the bulk of CCU's time in 2017 that can be discussed publicly.

#### 1. Allenstown Unidentified/Terry Rasmussen

One of the CCU'S highest profile cases is that of four unidentified females who were murdered and deposited in barrels in the woods of Bear Brook State Park in Allenstown. The first two victims (adult age 23-33, and child age 5-11) were found by a hunter on November 10, 1985. They had been killed by blunt force trauma, dismembered, and placed in barrels. In May of 2000, Trooper John Cody was working on the case and returned to the scene. He located another barrel in the park that contained two additional child victims (ages 3-4 and 1-3). Both of the children had also suffered blunt force trauma. Between 1985 and 2016, the central investigative focus of this case was to identify the victims from the forensic information gleaned from the crime scene and the victims themselves. Specifically, DNA samples from the victims were extracted and tested. These tests determined that the adult female was maternally related to the oldest and youngest of the two children. The adult did not appear related to the middle child. In

addition to DNA work, more recent testing was conducted on the victim's remains, this time examining what could be learned from isotope material found therein. In November of 2015, the CCU publicly released the latest isotope results, which showed differences in results between the three related victims and the middle child. The detectives originally assigned to the case and those who would work the case as decades past were all troubled by one question: how could an entire family disappear without anyone knowing? Baffling as that may be, it appeared to be the reality, as no open missing person cases were associated with the victims. The case stayed cold.



When the CCU formed in 2009, detectives made every effort to advance the Allentown case. Most notably, the CCU partnered more closely with the National Center for Missing and Exploited Children (NCMEC) in an effort to bring external resources to bear. This resulted in State Police personnel traveling to Alexandria, VA, in 2012 for a detailed, in-person case review with NCMEC staff. As time progressed, NCMEC was able to facilitate relationships with Bode Technology and the University of South Florida, who provided DNA and isotope analysis respectively. Despite a renewed interest in the case, and a new team of investigators, the overall progress remained stagnant.

The stagnation broke in July of 2016, when the NH State Police detectives were contacted by the San Bernardino County Sheriff's Office (SBCSO) regarding a male subject who had apparently spent time in New Hampshire. SBCSO had been investigating the case of a "living Jane Doe" named Lisa, who had been abandoned in California in 1986 by a man who claimed to be her father when she was 5 years old. The man who had abandoned Lisa had lived in California under multiple aliases (primarily Curtis Kimball/Gordon Jenson). In 2002, he had been living in Richmond, CA, using the name Larry Vanner. Vanner was arrested that year for killing his common-law wife, Eunsoon Jun, and burying her in their basement. He pled guilty to Jun's murder and was sentenced to state prison where he died in 2010.

Following Vanner's arrest, DNA testing showed that he was not the biological father of Lisa. Though he had been caught, it was clear to all authorities involved that no one knew exactly who Vanner was, where he had come from, and the circumstances as to why he was traveling with Lisa.

Around 2015, the SBCSO enlisted a genetic genealogist to assist Lisa in locating relatives utilizing her DNA. These efforts resulted in the identification of Lisa's grandfather, who was alive and residing in New Hampshire. Further investigation identified Lisa as Dawn Beaudin. Dawn and her mother Denise Beaudin (age 23) had left Manchester, NH, in late 1981 in the company of Denise's boyfriend, "Bob Evans." Upon learning this information, the Manchester Police Department initiated a missing person's investigation into the whereabouts of Denise Beaudin, and detectives from the CCU began exploring what, if any, connection Evans may have had to the Allenstown case. Of most interest were the facts that Evans was a convicted murderer (using the name of Larry Vanner), he had lived and worked in Manchester (a short distance from Allenstown), while in California he had lived a transient lifestyle (often out of his vehicle), and he had a history of child abuse and abandonment of "Lisa," now identified as Dawn Beaudin.



Photo of Denise Beaudin and her last known address in Manchester, NH.

As CCU detectives began researching Evans's life in New Hampshire, NCMEC facilitated DNA comparisons between Evans (DNA taken from Larry Vanner) and the Allenstown victims. In October of 2016, the test results revealed that Evans was the father of the middle child from the Allenstown barrels. In addition to this case-cracking bombshell, CCU investigators linked Evans



to the Allenstown property where the victims were deposited. During his time in New Hampshire, Evans was employed as the head electrician for the Waumbec Mill, which was then in the process of closing. While there, Evans's immediate supervisor was the owner of the property in Allenstown. Evans was familiar with the property, as he had assisted the owner with some electrical work at a camp store located there.

As 2016 drew to a close, the Allenstown case was top priority. The CCU partnered with Manchester PD and NCMEC to create a task force approach in learning everything possible about Evans, his connections to Allenstown, and the disappearance of Denise Beaudin. These efforts culminated in a press conference on January 26, 2017, where many of the facts discovered in the investigation were made public in the hopes that citizen tips could help reveal the identities of the Allenstown victims and the true identity of Bob Evans. Following the press conference, dozens of tips and leads were received. Much of the Winter and Spring of 2017 was spent evaluating and investigating the incoming material. Investigators also worked closely with the FBI Evidence Response Team, who helped coordinate a final thorough search of the Allenstown property in April, 2017.



Associate Attorney General, Jeffery Strelzin, at the Allenstown Press Conference.



In June of 2017, the case saw another development. A combination of DNA results and investigative efforts led CCU detectives to identify “Bob Evans” as Terry Peder Rasmussen. Detectives learned that Terry Rasmussen was born in Colorado in 1943, and spent most of his early life between Hawaii and Arizona. Perhaps most surprising was that Rasmussen had a wife and four children whom he had abandoned sometime around 1975. CCU detectives traveled out of state to meet with these family members and interview them about Rasmussen’s past. On August 18, 2017, a press release was issued detailing what had been learned about Rasmussen’s life.

Identifying the Allentown victims remains a top priority for the CCU. Investigators have pieced together much of Rasmussen’s life, but are still trying to fill in the critical few years where he likely met the three related victims, and fathered the daughter he would later kill. The CCU is dedicated to seeing this case through, and continues to work closely with NCMEC to exhaust all avenues that may help identify these victims. The progress on these murders has been immense, and has garnered national interest due to the complexity of the case and the fascinating manner in which it unfolded. The CCU is proud to be part of the “coast to coast” law enforcement collaboration on this case, and looks forward to the day when these victims are given back their names and dignity.



Terry Rasmussen a/k/a Bob Evans, a/k/a Larry Vanner, a/k/a Curtis Kimball, a/k/a Gordon Jenson (Left To Right): 1973, 1985, and 2002.

## 2. Christopher Bird

Continuing the work begun in 2016, CCU detectives devoted a significant amount of time investigating the disappearance of Christopher Bird. Mr. Bird disappeared in the summer of 1984 after going on a camping trip with a friend. The CCU knew little of this case before last year. Since then, investigators have been able to locate and interview all available witnesses in the matter. This included trips to both Florida and Indiana. In 1984, Mr. Bird resided in

Haverhill, MA, but was last seen alive in New Hampshire. Since it is not yet known where Mr. Bird was murdered, the CCU has partnered with the Massachusetts State Police (Essex District Attorney's Office). The two agencies have conducted interviews together and shared all evidence/documentation in an effort to present a complete picture surrounding the circumstances of Mr. Bird's disappearance. Efforts on this case continue.

### 3. Patty Wood

In the fall of 2017, CCU detectives completed a search on a property in Swanzey, NH in the hopes of finding the remains of a missing child, Patty Wood. Patty lived with her father and step-mother, John and Judith Wood, in Swanzey during the mid-1970s. Sometime around 1976, Patty disappeared. Her absence was not noticed by authorities until 1987, as her father and step-mother told area residents that Patty was living out of state with her mother. This was not true. The day that the police began asking the Wood's about Patty's whereabouts, the Woods committed suicide. In 1987, State Police officials dug an area of the Wood property looking for Patty, but did not find her.

In 2015, CCU personnel began exploring the possibility that Patty may be buried on the property (in a location separate from the 1987 search) or that perhaps she was on an adjoining property where the family had also lived. The CCU once again enlisted the help of the National Center for Missing and Exploited Children. Through this relationship, cadaver dogs and ground penetrating radar (GPR) were utilized in searching these properties in June, 2017. The dogs did not show any interest in the adjoining property, but they did identify an area of the 1987 Wood family lot as worthy of potential follow-up. This area corresponded with anomalies shown on the GPR data of the 1987 Wood family lot, and is approximately 20 yards from where investigators dug in 1987.

The CCU team returned to the property in October of 2017, and conducted a two-day search where the area in question was dug and sifted for anything of evidentiary value. This effort was made possible with assistance from the New Hampshire Department of Cultural Resources, who provided anthropological expertise as the digging was underway. Sadly, Patty's remains were not recovered. CCU detectives have insured that family DNA samples are available for comparison in the event that Patty's remains are located in the future.



Sgt. Kokoski and TFC Perreault review GPR data in Swanzey.

#### 4. Maura Murray

On February 9, 2004, Maura Murray disappeared after crashing her car along Rte. 112 in Haverhill, NH. This complex investigation has garnered extensive media coverage and international attention. An unprecedented number of people use social media as a platform to follow and discuss the case, and as a result, the CCU receives a great deal of information and inquiries pertaining to it. The detectives of the CCU continue to expend many hours trying to unravel this mystery, both investigating incoming leads as well as revisiting the work of years past. In March of 2017, the CCU and the Attorney General's Office participated in documentary series entitled, "The Disappearance of Maura Murray." This program aired in six-parts on the Oxygen Network and presented many perspectives about this case and the people who follow it.

#### 5. Kathy Gloddy

As mentioned in the 2016 CCU Annual Report, the Unit had made arrangements to present the Kathy Gloddy homicide case (Franklin, 1971) to the Vidocq Society in the hopes of generating new leads and ideas. Sgt. Kokoski and Lt. Scott Gilbert (a former CCU member) traveled to Philadelphia and presented the case on February 16, 2017. It was well-received by the membership, and investigators returned with several new ideas for follow-up. This case remains active.

## 6. David Oldham

With the passage of time, it is inevitable that some relatively recent homicide cases change their status and become officially added to the Cold Case list. This is not a reflection on the quality of evidence within the case, nor is it an indicator that the case is inactive. It is a realization that the initial momentum of the case has been exhausted, and it is time for a fresh perspective and new resources.

Such is the case with the homicide of David Oldham. Mr. Oldham, age 55, was found shot to death at his home in Columbia, NH, on July 1, 2015. Detectives have conducted hundreds of interviews in this case, and extensive forensic testing has been completed. In October, 2017, the CCU detectives began assisting with the follow-up efforts. Several new leads are currently being explored, and it is our hope that these efforts will provide justice for Mr. Oldham and his family.



Press Conference Announcing Reward for Information Leading to the Arrest of the Person Responsible for the Death of David Oldham.

## 7. Brian Watson

In the summer of 2017, CCU detectives met with the Boston, MA, Police Department's Cold Case Unit (BPD) to discuss and share information concerning the 1984 homicide of Brian Watson. Mr. Watson, age 23, was from South Boston, and was found shot to death along I-93 in Manchester on September 16, 1984. The CCU is working closely with BPD to determine the course of events leading up to Mr. Watson's death.

## 8. Antrim Baby Death

Every so often, the CCU becomes aware of a case which had not previously been included on the master case list. In reviewing files from the Forensic Lab, detectives discovered the case of a newborn (and otherwise healthy) baby boy, who was discarded at a motel in Antrim, in May of 1978. The CCU is currently reviewing the file on this case, and ascertaining what forensic avenues may be available to advance this investigation.

### Suspicious Deaths

In addition to investigating homicides and suspicious disappearances, the CCU is regularly called upon to review and research historic death cases that have a potentially suspicious element. In 2017, the CCU was asked to review 4 such cases. In addition to these requests, the Unit sometimes receives information that is not immediately attributable to any known crime. For instance, detectives from the Maine State Police contacted the CCU regarding information from a subject at their state prison. This inmate claimed to have knowledge of a woman's death in New Hampshire. Such leads can be time-consuming while trying to determine the credibility of the information, and whether the details therein match any open cases in New Hampshire or elsewhere.

### Anthony Imondi Case

In September, the CCU detectives assisted the NH State Police-Troop F detectives and the NH Fish and Game Department in locating the remains of missing person, Anthony Imondi. Mr. Imondi, age 26, was last seen on July 1, 1998, after leaving a horseshoe game in Errol. Over the 19 years since his disappearance, the detectives of Troop F conducted numerous searches for Imondi and investigated many leads as to his whereabouts. In September, 2017, NH State Police partnered with NH Fish and Game to search for Imondi in an area of the Androscoggin River along Rte. 16 in Errol. Using side-scan sonar, an object consistent with Imondi's missing Ford Ranger pick-up truck was located. Close inspection by Fish and Game divers confirmed that the object was in fact Imondi's truck. On September 19, 2017, CCU detectives and members of the State Police Major Crime Unit responded to Errol as the vehicle was towed from the river. It



was then taken to a nearby location where the contents of the vehicle were systematically searched and recovered. Imondi's remains were located within the cab. There is no foul play suspected in his death.



Sgt. Belanger of Troop F as Imondi's truck is removed.



NHSP personnel recover Imondi's remains.



### Forensic Testing-NMS Contract

The CCU renewed its contract with NMS Labs in order to pursue “touch DNA” analysis and other services outside the capabilities of the State Forensic Laboratory. Often forensic evidence is sent to a laboratory from a cold case in the hopes that a new examination or test result could break a case open and serve as a catalyst for renewed, directed efforts. Cases are constantly revisited to determine whether new forensic tests are available and whether old examinations should be revisited. The integrity of the results of such testing are contingent upon the state of the evidence, how it was collected, how it was packaged, and whether proper chain of custody was maintained.

In light of the developments on the Allentown case, investigators are re-examining new forensic methods to assist in identifying two other Jane Does found in Bedford (1971) and Marlborough (1974).

### Media Relations

Homicide detectives are always hoping that a tip or lead from the public will open a new door within their investigation. This is particularly true of historic unsolved homicides, where that one piece of new information can set in motion a new, re-energized approach to a case that is otherwise dormant. As a result, the CCU strives to participate in media coverage which highlights the Unit’s mission and individual cases.

The progress in the Allentown case provided a number of opportunities to highlight the case facts and attempt to reach target populations who would be more likely to have information on Rasmussen or his victims. CCU personnel participated in many interviews with local and regional media, but also partnered with NCMEC to publicize the case in targeted west coast states, specifically California, Arizona, and Texas.

Other efforts included the CCU appearing on the NH Today radio show with host Jack Heath and the New Hampshire State Police highlighting some of the Unit’s unsolved cases on its social media outlets. In November of 2017, Sgt. Kokoski and SAAG Susan Morrell recorded a podcast with journalist Kevin Flynn in which the general work of the Unit was discussed, with particular attention paid to past success stories.

### Conclusion

The Cold Case Unit looks back on 2017 as a year that clearly illustrated all that can be accomplished by tenacity and dedication. The identification of Terry Rasmussen more than 30 years after his victims were killed serves as a quintessential example of a cold case success. The

answers behind these crimes are out there waiting to be found. The members of the CCU look forward to 2018, not only as an opportunity to continue work on the Allenstown case, but also to generate progress on other cases and to persist in obtaining justice for these New Hampshire victims and their families.