

Investigators still working Cheryl Ann Kenney case

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By Rusty Murry Nevada/Daily Mail

Nevada, Mo. -- Investigators from several law enforcement agencies are still investigating the Feb. 27, 1991, disappearance of Cheryl Ann Kenney from an Austin Boulevard convenience store.

The "missing person" case turned cold many years ago, but on Monday, Jan. 31, 2011, Nevada Police Chief Graham Burnley announced that his department was going to open a cold case investigation, led by Nevada Police Sgt. Jeff Baker in cooperation with the Vernon County Sheriff's Office, the Missouri State Highway Patrol and the Federal Bureau of Investigation.

Baker said after the NPD announced it was reopening the investigation, calls from the public with tips and information came pouring in but tapered off after about four months. Baker said that he has personally followed about 25 leads and the other agencies have taken other leads to their conclusion.

Investigators have re-interviewed people questioned during the initial investigation and conducted first-time interviews with others. Baker said that an investigation of this sort is difficult. "Going back 20 years is rough, especially when you didn't have anything then," he said.

That lack of information has made the case hard all along, but Baker said new information has been followed up on, and he's preparing to follow another lead, now. "I don't know where it will lead," he said, "it may be a dead end."

Regardless of where the new lead takes him, Baker said, "we're going to keep looking. Hopefully, someone will come forward."

That is what Joshua Darnell, Kenney's son, hopes as well.

Darnell, 31, of Catalina, Ariz., has been very active in pressing for answers about his mother. Darnell was 10 when Kenney went missing and has spent a lot of time in the past years trying to find out what happened. He made a trip back to Nevada last year on the 20th anniversary of his mother's disappearance to stage a rally and help get the word out about his mother and the investigation.

Darnell has "been in constant contact" with the Nevada Police Department and said they have been very cooperative over the last year. Darnell and his sister Kristi have also had the help of radio and TV and the Missouri Missing organization.

Right now Darnell is trying to get some larger news organizations to look at the story. "I want to get some word back out there," he said, because "I think the answer is somewhere there around home."

With or without media attention the investigation will go on, said Baker. "We're going to keep it open and keep at it," he said.

Anyone with information regarding the Cheryl Ann Kenney case or any crime can contact the Nevada Police Department at [\(417\) 448-2710](tel:(417)448-2710) or contact the TIPS hotline at [\(417\) 448-5117](tel:(417)448-5117).