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Cold Case Investigators Seek Information for 1982 Murder

Eileen Wafer was a typical teenager, living in the small coastal town of Haines when she disappeared 27 years ago today. She was last seen at home on June 10, 1982, baby sitting her younger brothers as her mother went out for the evening. When her mother came home later, the two boys were in bed, but her 14-year-old daughter was gone. Friends told investigators Eileen would have never left her brothers at the apartment alone. Eileen's body was found by her older brother and her boyfriend four days later. Her body was left in some bushes along the beach frontage of Portage Cove just several hundred feet from the apartment where she lived. Investigators believe her murderer possibly knew her and coaxed her out of the apartment before killing her. His identity remains a mystery, but Cold Case Investigators are determined to find him.

Eileen's murder is another one of the cases getting another look by the Alaska Bureau of Investigation's Cold Case Unit. Investigator Tim Hunyor hopes the efforts will shed new light on a case that is almost three decades old.

"Sometimes a new fresh set of eyes looks at the case and something pops out," Hunyor said. "Sometimes people will recall some information that they thought they had told someone before or something they may have heard over the years."

It helps that general investigative and questioning methods have changed since her death. For example, investigators now ask broader questions instead of focusing on one theory. There is also the addition of DNA testing. The Combined DNA Index System, or CODIS, is the national repository for the DNA profiles from casework and offender samples from all 50 states. CODIS was crucial in helping charge a man with the murder of Bonnie Craig, a case Hunyor worked on. So far, CODIS has not found a match for DNA from Eileen's case.

Meanwhile, investigators continue to comb through evidence from the crime scene and track down people who knew Eileen, or may have seen something that seems odd or heard something among the rumor mill that runs through the small town of Haines.

"People may not have thought something was strange at the time, but over the years, maybe something sticks out as not being quite right," Hunyor said. "It may be a person they've often wondered about, someone they just had a weird feeling about, or just something that developed when talking to a friend" about Eileen's murder.

Anyone with information can call Investigator Tim Hunyor at 269-5677 or Investigator Jim Gallen at 269-5078 at the Cold Case Unit in Anchorage. Contacts for the Cold Case Unit in Soldotna are Investigator Jim Stogsdill at 260-2716 or Investigator Lindy Minnick at 260-2710.