

# Catching Sophie's Killer

## Cold Case Investigators Search For More Clues

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As the 16<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Sophie Sergie's murder nears, Alaska State Trooper investigators hope the public can provide information that will help solve a case that remains a true mystery.

Cold Case Investigator Jim Stogsdill re-invigorated efforts to find her killer when he picked up the case in 2007. Stogsdill, with the help of Lindy Minnick who joined the Cold Case Unit's Soldotna office in September of 2008, is painstakingly combing through old evidence, cataloging it, re-interviewing people and gathering more information that will hopefully lead investigators to Sophie's murderer.

Sophie, who was a UAF student from 1990 to 1992, was staying with a friend at the UAF dorm Bartlett Hall while she was in town for a dental appointment. The 20-year old arrived in Fairbanks on Saturday, April 24 1993 and was scheduled to fly home to Pitkas Point shortly after her appointment ended on Monday, April 26. She never made it to the appointment. Instead, her body was found by janitors shortly after 2 p.m. on April 26. She had been sexually assaulted, shot and left in a bathtub of a second-story bathroom at Bartlett Hall. Indications are that she was killed sometime between 1 a.m. and 5 a.m.

Investigators believe Sophie Sergie was wearing a hooded Native-style sweater or sweatshirt with this brightly-colored fabric at the time of her death on April 26, 1993.



**This photo of Sophie Sergie was taken on April 25, 1993, the night before she was found dead in a bathroom at the Bartlett Hall dormitory on the University of Alaska-Fairbanks campus.**

Investigators discovered she was last seen around midnight, smoking a cigarette and talking to people outside in front of Hess Commons, the building that joins the Moore, Bartlett and Skarland dormitories. She was wearing navy blue sweatpants and a colorfully striped, hooded Native-style sweater or sweatshirt.

"We have a greater picture now than what they did back then, but we're still missing a number of people," Stogsdill said. "We're especially looking for people who might have been outside, in front of Hess Commons."

Another new piece of information is the possibility that there may be another crime scene. A crime scene forensic examiner independent from the Department of Public Safety did an extensive analysis of the crime scene evidence and determined Sophie may have been killed somewhere else in the dorm and not in the bathroom where her body was found.

"Although he wasn't able to say conclusively that she was killed elsewhere and brought there (to the bathroom), he said we should keep our eyes open for her having been killed at another location," Stogsdill said.

Armed with the new information, Stogsdill and Minnick, plus other Cold Case investigators within the Alaska Bureau of Investigation Tim Hunyor, James Gallen, have been trying to track down people who were at Bartlett Hall at the time. It doesn't matter whether the people were partying, just walking through or watching a movie with friends at the dorm, or whether a person believes they might have something to contribute. The smallest scrap of information could help put together another piece of the puzzle or help investigators narrow the number of leads to follow.

"We'd like everybody who was residing at Bartlett Hall in the spring of 1993, just simply call up and say, 'Hey, I was there, I was in whatever room number, this is what I heard, this is what I saw, this is what I heard people speak of afterwards,'" Stogsdill said. "We can filter all that out."

Interviewing people who might have something to add to the timeline leading up to Sophie's death has been a challenge from the start. Her murder occurred right around finals. Students quickly left for the summer, some of them never to return for another semester at UAF. Investigators have the difficult task of tracking down people, some of whom have moved Outside or joined the military in the almost 16 years since Sophie's death.

However, investigators are not willing to give up until Sophie's killer is behind bars.

Anyone who was in the area of Hess Commons or the Moore, Bartlett and Skarland Halls on April 26, 1993 can contact Stogsdill at (907)260-2716; Minnick at (907)260-2710 or [lindy.minnick@alaska.gov](mailto:lindy.minnick@alaska.gov); Gallen or Hunyor in Anchorage at (907)269-5611; or UAF Police Investigator Steve Goetz at (907)474-7721.

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Media: Contact Beth Ipsen at (907)269-5654, (907)351-5191 or [elizabeth.ipsen@alaska.gov](mailto:elizabeth.ipsen@alaska.gov) for more information, or for a copy of a videotaped interview with Stogsdill.