

Sunbury, Pa., Police Open Facebook Page to Assist in 28-Year Cold Case

May 12, 2017



(TNS) — SUNBURY, Pa. — Because she can't, Sunbury police Chief Tim Miller has opened a Facebook page for Barbara Miller.

The chief is hoping it will lead to closing a case that's been cold for what will be 28 years in July. The Facebook page is called [Barbara Miller-Cold Case](#), the chief said Tuesday at the city's police department.

Barbara Miller was 30 when she vanished on July 1, 1989. Her boyfriend, former Sunbury police detective Joseph Walter "Mike" Egan, dropped Miller off at a Milton bar and was the last person to see her. He reported her missing on July 4.

Tim Miller arrived in Sunbury last July and said one of the biggest things he wanted to do was resurrect this case, which has been discussed for nearly three decades. The chief, who is not related to her, said Tuesday he soon will begin conducting interviews with potential witnesses after spending three months reviewing the case files.

"I have been methodically going through the mountains of information looking for a needle in the haystack," Tim Miller said. "I have definitely seen a few things that have jumped out at me, and I believe there are some things yet to be done."

One of those, Tim Miller said, is to open a social media page in a bid to open some doors.

"Let's see what shakes loose and where this road leads us," he said. "Hopefully to the front door of the person or persons that hold the key."

The Facebook page will be a place where Tim Miller said people can leave tips, emails and information they believe will be useful to police. There will be a public section and a private message section, which the chief and other law enforcement officials will check.

'This won't hurt'

Tim Miller spoke with Northumberland County District Attorney Tony Matulewicz about opening the social media page in an attempt to find leads in the case. The DA agreed it is a good idea.

"It's another tool, and why not use everything technology has to offer?" Matulewicz asked. "It's free, it's well known and it's used by almost everybody."

He added: "This won't hurt. We will vet out the responses, and I think we will get information that we can use."

Chief Miller said he has seen several key pieces of information in the investigation files he has reviewed and believes social media will reach other people who may have information.

"It can reach from coast-to-coast and touch the far ends of the earth," he said. "We can go from just a couple of sets of eyes and ears to millions and millions. This can be a great tool and may just provide the vehicle necessary to break this thing wide open."

Matulewicz said the chief has been in contact with his office several times in the past few months, including using county detective Degg Stark.

"I said absolutely. No one in the world wants to solve this case more than Degg Stark," Matulewicz said.

Stark, a former Sunbury police officer, was one of the key investigators on the case.

Barbara Miller's son, Eddie Miller Jr., of Milton, spoke with The Daily Item in December 2015 and said he lives though each day wishing he could find out what happened to his mother.

"We are going to do everything we can to find out," Tim Miller said.

Barbara Miller didn't just wander off, but as the chief and other investigators before him believed, was murdered.

After years of investigations came up empty, county Judge Charles Saylor declared Barbara Miller dead on Oct. 10, 2002.

Her body has never been found.

Then-county District Attorney Robert Sacavage said in 1990 that Barbara Miller received several threats by mail accusing her of being a narcotics informant.

She reported those threats to city police 15 days before she vanished, according to police.

Police also believe Barbara Miller had information in a 1986 homicide that saw Rickey Wolfe, of Mifflinburg, beaten to death. Wolfe's body was found near Montandon in December 1986.

The chief and Matulewicz would not discuss details of the current Barbara Miller investigation, but Matulewicz said his office has met with the Pennsylvania State Police Criminal Investigation Assessment Unit, a group of troopers who work on unsolved homicides.

Matulewicz said the group agreed to look at the case. In the meantime, one of the top administrators of the unit took another job.

The group still is in the process of hiring an administrator, but Matulewicz said they will help Chief Miller in the future.

"It is a Sunbury case, but our office is here for whatever they need," the DA said. "We will provide any help we can."

©2017 The Daily Item (Sunbury, Pa.) Distributed by [Tribune Content Agency, LLC](#).

<http://www.govtech.com/social/Sunbury-Pa-Police-Open-Facebook-Page-to-Assist-in-28-Year-Cold-Case.html>