



# Cold Case Investigation

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## Overview

A cold case is typically a violent or major felony crime which is not subject to the statute of limitations. It has yet to be solved and may not necessarily be actively researched.

However new information can come from testimonies, reexamination, and other sources.

**Cold cases can suffer from numerous issues that prevent them from being completed, including:**

- Poor Evidence
- Tunnel Vision
- Time
- Lack of Solid DNA
- File organization
- Officers no longer on job

However, innovation and rapidly evolving technology has helped create more viable solutions.

## Methods

The reality of cold case investigation is that old resources and new resources must be used in tandem to solve cases. Historical maps, property records, old telephone directories and newspapers are often things that must be spooled over to solve an older case.

## Time

Time changes relationships, technology can evolve and new accounts might surface. Cases are most likely to be re-opened when a witness comes forth with new information. Sometimes cases are reviewed when new technology opens new venues as well.

## Issues

- Archaic formats of information
- Lack of investigators.
- Army of one cold case unit
- Cases end up on back burner
- 1980/90s when record keeping entered computer age
- 20% of agencies have protocol for initiating investigations
- Reliability of old facts
- Scattered data

## Progress

- Advances in Forensic Science
- Information on victims obtained more easily thanks to modern innovation.
- For example: Isotope Analysis on teeth can help determine where person grew up
- Cooperation with prosecutors
- Better data presentation, such as charts of complex relationships
- Databases: TLOxp, Google, Veromi, NOKR, SSDI, even Ancestry.com. Help locate individuals.

## Jane Doe



An example of a cold case from Livingston County:

- The person pictured above is assumed to be 15-19 years old
- She was found dead in Caledonia, Livingston County in 1979
- Shot in the head and back
- 30 years of effort has gone into solving this case
- It still has yet to be solved
- She has still not been unidentified
- No killer has been identified

## **References**

Pettem, Silvia. Cold Case Research : Cracking the Historical Record. London, GBR: CRC Press, 2012

Davis,Jensen & Kitchens Cold-Case Investigations. 2011 RAND corporation