

BURNED BODY IS THAT OF RAVEN JEFFRIES - DNA RESULTS CONFIRM HER IDENTITY AS POLICE TURN THEIR ATTENTION TO THE SEARCH FOR HER KILLER

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An altar of hope turned into a memorial Monday as a Detroit family's fears were confirmed: The burned body of a little girl found in a Romulus field is that of **Raven Jeffries** .

"My sister don't feel no pain no more," **Raven** 's brother, David Hosler, 19, said after police announced that DNA tests proved a match.

The 7-year-old Detroit girl was reported missing Aug. 4 from outside her home in the 6500 block of McDonald. Police found the body in Romulus a few days later, but the child's family held out hope that it wasn't **Raven** .

The family was mostly quiet after six police officers from Romulus and Detroit arrived at their home at 12:30 p.m. to give them the news.

Afterward, **Raven** 's mother, Brenda **Jeffries** , visited the compilation of stuffed animals, votive candles and well wishes for **Raven** on McDonald Street that is now a memorial.

"We're just trying to stay strong," Hosler said. "You know? We're trying to be strong. It's not that everybody's taking it really well. There's no explanation on how we feel."

Now that the body has been identified, police investigators have shifted their focus to determining who killed the child and why.

"It's every parent's worst nightmare to experience a missing child and then to have that confirmed. Their worst suspicions confirmed," Wayne County Prosecutor Kym L. Worthy said at a Monday afternoon news conference.

"We're not close to making an arrest at this time."

Romulus Police Lt. John Leacher said authorities are "looking at several people and we will be continuing with that investigation." The Detroit Police Department, Michigan State Police and the Wayne County Prosecutor's Office are working the case along with the Romulus Police Department.

He said no one, including family, has been ruled out as suspects and declined to say whether **Raven** 's death was linked to illegal drug dealing or to a child molester.

Said Worthy: "We don't want to tip our hat as to any of the suspects we may be investigating."

Hosler said he's bothered by the rumors that have circulated about the family and his sister's disappearance.

"They don't know what we're going through. You know? And nobody in my family would do anything to hurt her," he said. "That somebody in my family or a family friend had something to do with this, we don't know. What I can say though is that nobody in my family would do something like this.

"We loved her. We're not people that just do stuff like that. We don't have it in our heart. We help people. We don't destroy people."

(SIDEBAR)

How you can help

Contributions to help the family pay for funeral expenses can be made to the **Raven Jeffries** Fund at any Comerica Bank branch.

Also, anyone with information about the slaying of **Raven Jeffries** should call Romulus police at 734-942-6879 at anytime.

Contact CECIL ANGEL at 313-223-4531 or angel@freepress.com.

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CAPTION:

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Brenda **Jeffries** visits the memorial for her daughter **Raven** , 7, after learning that her body had been identified Monday.

CAPTIONWRITER: **Raven Jeffries** , 7, went missing Aug. 4.

MEMO: SIDEBAR ATTACHED

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