

New clues may expose girl's killer - Lack of arrest in nine months since 7-year-old's burned body found frustrates Detroit mom.

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DETROIT -- It's been nine months since the charred body of 7-year-old **Raven Jeffries** was discovered in a remote field in Romulus, and for her mother, the wait for justice has been agonizing.

"I'm just frustrated because no one is actually helping me get the people I feel did this to my daughter," said Brenda **Jeffries** .

New developments in the case may yield clues, however.

¥ Forensic tests expected back soon from the Michigan State Police Crime Laboratory in Northville may shed new light on the case. The tests are of blood and trace evidence found at the scene, said Romulus Police Detective Joshua Monte. He said police have received 50-60 tips in the case, but none has produced any reliable leads.

¥ In March, the case was featured on the Fox television show "America's Most Wanted." It generated 12 tips.

Raven was last seen alive Aug. 4, riding her bike a few doors away from her family's home in the 6500 block of McDonald on Detroit's southwest side.

The disappearance sparked an Amber Alert and 10 days of a torturous wait by neighbors and family for her return before her body was found.

Her body was discovered dumped in a field near Henry Ruff and Ecorse roads. The remains were so badly burned that it took DNA tests to positively identify her.

Early in the investigation into her death, police interviewed a person of interest who failed a polygraph test. No one has been arrested.

Since her daughter's disappearance, **Jeffries** has maintained a memorial to her youngest child in the dusty lot near her home.

"Nobody understands the pain that I feel," said **Jeffries** , a mother of six. "I watch her playmates come down here and kneel and pray, and it hurts."

Two large stuffed animals, 12 religious candles and an assortment of white ceramic angels surround the poster-size photo of little **Raven** .

Jeffries said it is the only place where she feels her daughter's presence.

She wants to buy the lot -- two parcels of land where homes once stood -- and turn it into a playground.

"This was where my daughter was last at," **Jeffries** said. "I would like it to be called **Raven** 's Playground."

Monte, of the Romulus police force, said he is confident **Raven** 's killer will be found.

"It's still on everybody's mind," he said.

How to help

¥ Anyone with information about **Raven** 's case may contact the Romulus Police Department at (734) 941-8400.

¥ Donations to the **Raven Jeffries** Fund can be made at any Comerica Bank branch.

Caption: Brenda **Jeffries** and her grandson, David Jr., visit the Detroit site -- now a memorial -- where her 7-year-old daughter **Raven** was last seen in August.

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