

murder investigation when a family was in the Maddox Cove area cutting a Christmas tree.

The man stumbled upon a body. Initially, he could see only feet and legs. After taking his wife and children back to their car, the man returned to the area to confirm what he'd suspected. Both the RNC and the RCMP responded to the crime scene.

Maddox Cove is located south of Shea Heights. The crime scene was several hundred yards west of the Cape Spear Highway on Route 11 leading to Petty Harbour. Because the crime had occurred in the RCMP's jurisdiction, that police force immediately took over the homicide investigation.

The Body Recovery Site

Off the main road, a pathway leads to a wooded area with a small clearing in the middle. Dana's body was found fully clothed. She'd been placed on her back, arms crossed, schoolbooks by her side. The police believe her body was brought to the recovery site after the murder occurred.

According to the primary investigator, to place the body in such a position may indicate a sign of remorse on the part of the offender.

"The person responsible for this crime displayed the body in a manner in which she probably looked when he first met her, holding her school books," MacNaughton explains.

"It's also a sign of how she would look when laid out for burial."

The Autopsy

The autopsy revealed Dana had died of multiple blunt force trauma to her head. Her death was believed to be instantaneous.

In late December 1981, police received a call from a man stating that on the evening of December 14, the same day Dana went missing, at approximately 11:30 p.m., the man and his wife were proceeding eastward in an area that is referred to as "the pit" on Maddox Cove road. They came upon a car parked on the south side of the road, the passenger door was open and the interior light was on. Both the husband and wife noted a male standing on the side of the embankment. Even though it was a cold night in December, the man wasn't wearing a jacket. The couple reported that the car was similar to an older model rusting Dodge Dart — the same type police were searching for.

Because Chrysler products under the name of Dodge Dart and Plymouth Valiant were identical in appearance from 1973 to 1976, the investigators expanded their search to include both models.

The focus of the investigation centred on locating not only the car but also all registered owners — each had to be ruled out as possible suspects. After checking over 2,000 vehicles matching the description of the vehicle in question, the police were left with no traces of Dana's killer.



Three years after the homicide with still no arrest in sight, the RCMP Criminal Analysis Branch in Ottawa was called upon to conduct a thorough review of the investigation. The detailed summary assists

Cst. Chris MacNaughton of the RCMP at the site where Dana Bradley's body was discovered December 18, 1981.