



Recent Cases: The Dana Bradley Murder

Finding New Clues

By Danette Dooley

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The office door looks identical to the others along the corridor of the Royal Canadian Mounted Police (RCMP) major crime section. But when you open the second door on your right and step inside, one glance around and it hits you right in the face why this room is known throughout headquarters as "The Bradley Room."

One wall holds a picture of Dana celebrating her 14th birthday with family and friends at The Fishing Admiral in St. John's. It would be the last birthday Dana would celebrate. The last time she'd smile for a camera. In his false statement to the police David Somerton once described Bradley's innocent look as a "peaches and cream complexion." He wasn't far off the mark.



Eighteen years after her tragic death, police continue to search for Dana Bradley's killer.

Below the picture is a newspaper clipping of Dana's casket being carried down the church steps. During the funeral service, her friends, family and teachers wept openly while singing the teenager's favourite hymn, appropriately titled: *Safe in the Arms of Jesus*.

Tracing the Killer

Pinned to an adjoining wall a large poster traces the various routes Dana's killer may have taken the day of her murder. More posters line yet another wall — eyewitness accounts of the last time she was seen alive — getting into a car after hitch hiking on Topsail Road.

On one desk sits a computer dedicated solely to this homicide. The hard drive contains almost two decades of Bradley-related material.

The drawers of the many filing cabinets are neatly labelled. Each refers to a particular point in the murder investigation.

Dana's schoolbooks, placed neatly by her side by her killer, are now stored in The Bradley Room. On the outside of a yellow Hilroy exercise the word *Le Français* is childishly scribbled on the subject line. But French was far from the young teen's mind when she began writing in her new exercise. The first page begins with a note to her best friend, Penny. The words cry out of innocence.

Eighteen years have passed since Dana wrote that note to her friend. Little has changed though when it comes to the purity of a child.