

WHITE CLOUD

1983 murder mystery draws state police task force review

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A year after securing convictions in the 1989 cold case murder of Shannon

Siders, some of the same investigators are tackling a 1983 homicide in which the victim's body never has been found.

Police on Wednesday announced a task force of Michigan State Police investigators, led by Detective Sgt. Scott Rios, the Newaygo County Sheriff's Department and the county prosecutor, is focused on the slaying of Richard Atwood.



Atwood

Atwood, 25, of White Cloud, vanished Aug. 10, 1983, and was reported missing 12 days later by family members, who had been trying to locate him on their own without success.

The task force has conducted multiple interviews, and authorities said evidence has been re-examined.

Investigators "are confident that advances in forensic science and information technology will generate new leads," in the case.

Rios declined to discuss why or how Atwood was killed.

Police periodically have worked the case over the years, most recently taking a closer look in 2004,

when Rios was the sole detective assigned to the investigation.

"The best approach is to take a team effort," he said.

Atwood's vehicle was recovered in the Grand Rapids area Oct. 17, 1983, but the task force has yet to involve Kent County agencies.

Police said cold cases often are solved as relationships change between witnesses and others, sometimes making them more likely to speak with investigators and less apt to cover for possible suspects.

Anyone with more information is urged to contact Rios at rios@michigan.gov, the Michigan State Police at 231-873-2171 or Silent Observer, 231-652-1121.