



# Baltimore County Police Department Media Release

## About the BCoPD Cold Case Unit and the Sister Catherine Ann Cesnik Homicide

The Baltimore County Homicide Cold Case Unit was established in 2002 and comprises three detectives responsible for reviewing case files of unsolved murders, conducting interviews, pursuing new tips and applying new technology to unsolved murder cases as it becomes available. These detectives also investigate current missing person cases.

BCoPD's policy is that cold cases remain open until they are solved, and are only assigned to the Cold Case Unit after the original detective retires or is transferred to a different section.

Baltimore County has 250 unsolved homicides on record. The oldest cold case on file dates back to 1916 – the unsolved double murder of husband and wife, Andrew and Marie Freyer. The next cold case on record dates to 1947.

This equates to an average of about 2.5 unsolved homicides per year since 1916, well below the national average. Baltimore County consistently achieves high homicide clearance rates.

Some cold cases are more active than others. The Sister Catherine Cesnik case has been one of BCoPD's most active cold murder cases since the 1990s.

### The Sister Catherine Ann Cesnik Case: Timeline

- **November 7, 1969:** Sister Catherine Ann Cesnik is last seen at her apartment (the Carriage House Apartments) in Baltimore City, MD.
- **November 8, 1969:** Sister Cesnik's roommate reports her missing to Baltimore City Police. The roommate says Sister Cesnik was going to the Edmondson Village Shopping Center.
- **January 3, 1970:** Sister Cesnik's body is discovered by two hunters, a father and son, at a dump in Lansdowne in Baltimore County, MD. Baltimore County Police begin the homicide investigation that remains open to this day.
- **Through 1977,** the case is extremely active. Detectives conduct numerous interviews and polygraphs. Physical evidence from the scene is collected and preserved; relatively little physical evidence is found at the crime scene. Because of the poor condition of the body, detectives are unable to determine if Sister Cesnik had been sexually assaulted.
- **After 1977,** with all leads exhausted, the case becomes dormant. During this period, detectives receive little new information. They receive no calls from witnesses nor from victims alleging sexual abuse from associates of Sister Cesnik's in the Catholic Church.
- **1992:** The first allegations of sexual abuse are made against Father A. Joseph Maskell by two former female students of Archbishop Keough High School. These allegations fall under the jurisdiction of Baltimore City Police and are investigated by Baltimore City Police.
- **1994:** The two former Keough students are listed as plaintiffs in a \$40 million suit alleging sexual abuse at the school by Maskell. One student alleges that Maskell took her to Sister Cesnik's body and threatened her. Detectives note inconsistencies in her account. Maskell is not considered a prime suspect at this time, but is interviewed at length. He dies in 2001.



# Baltimore County Police Department Media Release

## The Sister Catherine Ann Cesnik Case: Timeline

- **1994:** Detectives take a fresh look at the Sister Cesnik case. They are especially interested in the emergence of technology involving DNA evidence and how it might help advance this and other cold cases. A DNA profile was created from evidence found at the crime scene
- **1994-2000s:** DNA profiles of about a half-dozen suspects are developed and compared to the known sample, with negative results.
- **2016:** The Archdiocese of Baltimore acknowledges that settlements to people alleging abuse by Maskell have been paid since 2011.
- **2016:** BCoPD reassigns the Sister Cesnik case due to the retirement of previous detectives. Activity on the case intensifies as victims of sexual abuse discuss information about Sister Cesnik's circle, including Maskell. Numerous interviews are conducted. One living suspect is re-interviewed.
- **February 2011 and January 2017:** Detectives explore three similar unsolved murders for possible connections to the Sister Cesnik case:
  - Joyce Helen Malecki (20), who disappeared November 11, 1969 from Harundale Mall -- days after Cesnik disappeared – and was found dead November 13, 1969 at Fort Meade; investigated by FBI
  - Pamela Lynn Conyers (16) found October 20, 1970; last seen at Harundale Mall on October 16, 1970; investigated by Anne Arundel County Police
  - Grace Elizabeth Montanye (16), last seen at Franklin High School after meeting a stranger at a Reisterstown shopping center and found dead on September 29, 1971 in South Baltimore; investigated by Baltimore City Police
- **February 28, 2017:** After securing an order signed by the Baltimore County State's Attorney, detectives exhume Maskell's body from a local cemetery to obtain a DNA sample for comparison with the known sample. Results are expected in the summer of 2017.
- **May 2017:** A woman comes forward through an attorney and local news outlets, claiming to have been sexually abused in the early 1970s by a deceased Baltimore County Police officer; this officer was associated with the Sister Cesnik case and with Maskell. Contacted by Baltimore County Police Homicide Unit detectives, who wish to begin an investigation, the woman declined to be interviewed and wishes to stay anonymous.