

By JIM BREWER
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Police reports about the Smolinski Missing Person Love Triangle Case are scheduled to be released to the public next month, giving Billy Smolinski's family a shred of hope that the investigation will finally generate some results.

"The worst part is not knowing," Billy Smolinski's mother, Jan Smolinski, told The Cool Justice Report during a two-hour interview last month. "When Billy first disappeared, we knew something was wrong, but we couldn't get the police to do much.

"There are good days and bad days," she said. "The good thing is that we have met so many others that have experienced the same problems."

Billy Smolinski, a rugged six-footer at 200 pounds, disappeared from his house on Holly Street in Waterbury on Aug. 24, 2004. He was 31 years old. The tow truck driver was not known as someone who would go away quietly. He was also devoted to his German Shepherd, Harley. "Billy would never have left without taking care of his dog," Jan Smolinski said.

Andy Thibault, editor & publisher of The Cool Justice Report, requested copies of the Waterbury police file on the Smolinski case on July 28, 2006. Days later, when Thibault followed up with a formal complaint, Waterbury police wrote to the FBI asking for help to solve the case.

Some observers wondered if this was just a ploy to keep the file secret. "They obviously don't want you to know what they know or how little they actually worked on the case," a reader commented to The Cool Justice Report.

With the request to the FBI, Waterbury police acknowledged for the first time that they suspected foul play.

Still, not knowing what actually happened wears on the Smolinski's and isolates them.

“This is what I see and feel and what others who have missing loved ones see and feel on a daily basis,” Jan Smolinski said, explaining the family's thoughts and feelings about Billy. “It seems as though the broken hearts are never mended, the thoughts of what happened to you: Are you safe or did you suffer are constant reminders that the missing have been swallowed up in a society of people who have pushed us to the corner of the room.”

Most Documents To Be Released

Now, the state Freedom of Information Commission is ordering the Waterbury Police Department to release most of the documents in the Smolinski file.

Atty. Mary Schwind, hearing officer for the FOI Commission, had reviewed 17 documents “in camera” or privately following a complaint by The Cool Justice Report and a hearing last September.

In a decision dated March 9, 2007, Schwind ruled: “Other than a broad assertion of prejudice, the respondent has failed to prove how any of the requested records, specifically IC-2006-389-1, IC-2006-389-3 through IC-2006-389-9, and IC-2006-389-11 through IC-2006-389-17, would prejudice a law enforcement action if released.

“Accordingly, it is concluded that [these] records ... are not exempt from mandatory disclosure ... and that the respondent violated the FOI Act by denying the complainant copies thereof ...

“Forthwith, the respondent shall provide the complainant with a copy of the requested records ... at no cost.”

The FOI decision notes the documents requested were “any and all

reports ... mentioning Madeleine Gleason and / or Christian Sorensen.” Several high-ranking members of the Waterbury Police Department - including Chief Neil O’Leary - had confirmed to Waterbury Observer Publisher John Murray the identities of Gleason and Sorensen as part of a love triangle with Billy Smolinski.

Gleason, a bus driver in Woodbridge, went public with a bizarre legal action. After tearing down handbills about a reward for finding Billy Smolinski, Gleason sued Jan Smolinski and Murray, accusing them of violating her privacy. Murray had published photos of Gleason in public.

Compounding the absurdity and outrageousness of this case, Woodbridge arrested Jan Smolinski and accused her of disorderly conduct for posting reward flyers about her missing son. The case was dismissed.

Sorensen had served on the Woodbridge Board of Selectmen and was considered a frontrunner for first selectman. He resigned last year, saying he needed to spend more time with his family.

Waterbury police have a tape of a threatening call Billy Smolinski made to Sorensen after he learned Gleason and Sorensen were an item.

The FOI Commission is scheduled to vote on Schwind’s finding during its meeting scheduled April 11 at 2 p.m. at 18-20 Trinity St., Hartford.

Schwind also found that the Waterbury Police Department properly withheld two documents which are signed statements of witnesses. She ruled those documents are exempt from mandatory disclosure.

A Life of Constant Anxiety

For Billy’s parents, Jan and Bill, and their daughter, Paula Bell, life has been marked by a sense of constant anxiety. They jump at every phone call. They live a life of suffering and diminished hope.

Our interview was interrupted by a call from another new friend in a missing person's network. The caller reported progress in another state on legislation to help find missing adults.

Neither vandalism to the flyers about Bill Smolinski gone missing nor harassment by Woodbridge police can deter Jan Smolinski.

"I work on this every day now," Jan Smolinski said. "I put up signs anywhere I can. When they get torn down, I go back and put it up again. We try to get them up higher on the poles so they won't be as easy to tear down.

"I can't give a good reason why anyone would tear them down."

Despite their troubles, they still hold on to some faith in law enforcement.

"Now that the FBI is investigating," Jan Smolinski said, "I have to hope they will find out something. They tell me they are actively investigating the case."

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