

THE EVOLUTION OF COLD CASES IN MICHIGAN: STRUGGLES, SUCCESSES, AND ADVANCEMENTS

D/Sgt Larry Rothman, First District Cold Case Unit
Allison Rojek, Michigan State University
Kelly Hodges, MSP Cold Case Analyst



FIRST DISTRICT TEAM



D/Sgt Larry Rothman



Allison Rojek



Kelly Hodges



D/Sgt. Kailee Roskam



Det. Shannon Thielen

HOW IT STARTED

March
2020



Rothman requested to start working cold homicides in First District

April
2020



Rothman reaches out to MSU School of Criminal Justice for volunteers to work on cases

Summer
2020



MSP-MSU Cold Case Review Team created

Spring
2022



First group of MSU undergraduate students join the team

Fall
2022



MSU offers cold case experience with MSP as an internship program to expand opportunities

HOW THE UNIT WORKS

Staffing

- Two D/Sgts
- Student interns
- MSU faculty
- Addition of Lansing PD

Goals and objectives

Roles and responsibilities

Victim-centered unit



COLD CASE IN MICHIGAN

**Report by MSU on the
state of cold case
investigations in
Michigan, national
report coming soon!**



CHALLENGES IN COLD CASE INVESTIGATIONS

- Lack of resources
 - Case organization
 - Investigative personnel
- Locating case files, evidence and property
- Buy-in from command / decision-makers
- Prosecution
- Political climate
 - Internal
 - External
- True crime movement

DEFINING SUCCESS



Success means more than solving cases

- Case in a better state than it was when we started it
- Located missing pieces
- Organized and digitized
- Examined evidence
- Eliminated suspects
- Exhausted all technological avenues on evidence
- Pursued new investigative leads
- Victim's family

KIMBERLY LOUISELLE

- Went missing in March 20, 1982 from Livonia
- Remains found April 14, 1982
- Despite much investigation, the case went cold
- In 2023, DNA from evidence in Kim's case was again tested and matched DNA from another case in the area - Christina Castiglione
- Through the work of Livingston County Sheriff's Office and forensic genealogy, a suspect was identified and both cases are closed



MARY ALLICE ELLICOTT

- Went missing October 11, 1981
- Saline, MI
- Body was recovered almost two weeks later
- Multiple stab wounds, crushing injuries
- After multiple investigations, the case remained unsolved
- The investigation - 2020 to today



MOVING FORWARD IN COLD CASE INVESTIGATIONS



ANALYTICS

Using analysts as a resource in cold case investigations



LAB CAPABILITIES

Changing technology and expansion of lab testing



AGENCY SUPPORT

The role of command staff in dedicating resources to cold cases



CREATIVE THINKING

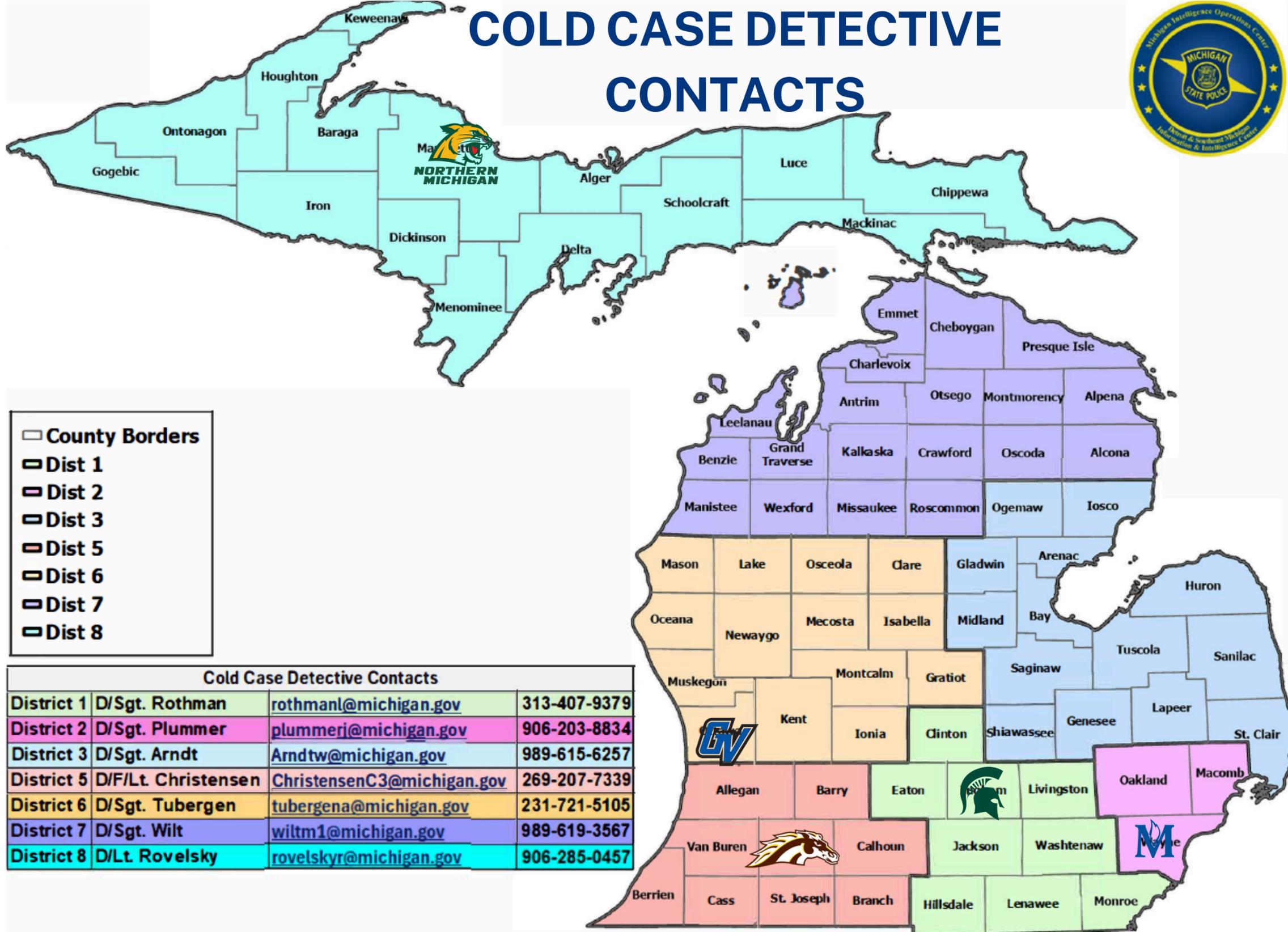
Thinking outside the box in terms of investigation and resources is critical

THE ROLE OF ANALYTICS

- Data Review and Case Organization
- Pattern and Link Analysis
- Technological Updates
- Suspect and Lead Development
- Victimology and Behavioral Analysis
- Collaboration and Inter-agency Support
- Presentation and Reporting



COLD CASE DETECTIVE CONTACTS



- County Borders
- ▣ Dist 1
- ▣ Dist 2
- ▣ Dist 3
- ▣ Dist 5
- ▣ Dist 6
- ▣ Dist 7
- ▣ Dist 8

Cold Case Detective Contacts			
District 1	D/Sgt. Rothman	rothmanl@michigan.gov	313-407-9379
District 2	D/Sgt. Plummer	plummerj@michigan.gov	906-203-8834
District 3	D/Sgt. Arndt	Arndtw@michigan.gov	989-615-6257
District 5	D/F/Lt. Christensen	ChristensenC3@michigan.gov	269-207-7339
District 6	D/Sgt. Tubergen	tubergena@michigan.gov	231-721-5105
District 7	D/Sgt. Wilt	wiltm1@michigan.gov	989-619-3567
District 8	D/Lt. Rovelsky	rovelskyr@michigan.gov	906-285-0457

LAB CAPABILITIES



Sit down meetings with lab personnel on a case

Establish a contact/point person

Be willing to ask questions

New technologies always developing

AGENCY SUPPORT

When is a homicide no longer important?

Open communication

Showing progress

Bringing the right people into the unit

Long-term sustainability

Cold cases are not a lack of resources issue,
they are a priority issue.



CREATIVE THINKING



Thinking outside the box

Traditional cop logic hasn't worked,
time to try something new.

What is the future of cold case?

THANK YOU



D/Sgt Larry Rothman
RothmanL@michigan.gov



Allison Rojek
rojekal1@msu.edu



Kelly Hodges
HodgesK4@michigan.gov



MSP Cold Case Tipline
MSP-ColdCase@michigan.gov



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more info**

