



Herald photo by Garth Pritchard

EVELYN THOMPSON WAITS FOR NEWS OF KIMBERLY (INSET)

... with sister Christine, 10 and brother Brad, 8

JAN. 25, 1980

Hundreds hunt for Kimberly

**By Vic Riding
and Joanne Ramondt**
(Herald staff writers)

When Kimberly Thompson didn't return from kindergarten Thursday the search started.

That search intensified through the night as hundreds of Calgarians joined police to scour Kimberly's Altadore neighborhood in southwest Calgary.

Their fears grew through the night as temperatures dropped and

there still wasn't any sign of the five-year-old.

At 8:30 a.m. today the little girl with the missing front tooth still hadn't been found.

Every available policeman was called in to knock on doors near Kimberly's house. The door-knocking was continuing this morning.

REACT — a citizen band radio club — sent out most of its members for lane and street searches.

Four-wheel drive club members flooded the police command post,

offering badly needed assistance to search such remote areas as Sandy Beach, near 50th Avenue S.W. and the Elbow River.

Late Thursday night, residents near Kimberly's home at 41st Avenue and 19th Street S.W. started to search their backyards in response to a police request.

During the massive search, Kimberly's mother, Evelyn Thompson sat at home wondering why her lit-

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Search

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the girl hadn't been there when she went to pick her up at school.

"I went to pick her up at school like I usually do but she didn't come out," Thompson said.

"Before I called police, I started to look for her, but I couldn't find her."

She called Kimberly's friends and classmates at Altadore Elementary School — only a five-minute walk from home — but no one had seen her since 11 a.m. when she was in a school washroom. Although she was seen there, she didn't attend class.

"I just hope they find her," the single mother, fighting tears, said Thursday evening.

Inspector Frank Mitchell, who headed the police search, said today that at first police thought the child was simply lost or had "wandered away."

Police, commending Calgarians for their help in the search, now want information. The little girl was wearing a blue snowsuit, green wool bonnet, red and white wool scarf, brown mitts and brown boots. She has brown hair and eyes and is three feet, seven inches tall and weighs 43 pounds.

'I wish we had something, but we don't'

Kimberly's killing still unsolved

By Joanne Ramondt
(Herald staff writer)

The slaying of five-year-old Kimberly Thompson remains unsolved today.

About 30 policemen, helped by city sanitation department crews, spent the weekend carefully checking truckloads of garbage collected from within 10 blocks of 4504 19th St. S.W.

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That's where Kimberly's nude body was found Friday at noon, hidden in a garbage bag just three blocks from her home.

As policemen unsuccessfully searched for Kimberly's clothes, about 30 detectives knocked on doors in the neighborhood looking for clues.

Herald offers \$5,000 reward

The Calgary Herald is posting a \$5,000 reward for information leading to the arrest and conviction of the murderer of Kimberly Thompson.

Frank G. Swanson, publisher of The Herald, said this morning the reward has been arranged through the Calgary Police Department in accordance with customary official procedures.

Swanson said the reward is being offered on behalf of the people of Calgary "who are united in their determination to resolve this tragic matter".

The reward was confirmed this morning with Police Chief Brian Sawyer, who asked anyone with information to contact his department at 268-2311.

"I wish we had something, but we don't," Staff Sergeant Roy Evans said, adding the effort will be continued today.

The cause, time and location of the five-year-old's death remain a mystery.

An autopsy was conducted Saturday, but the medical examiner was

unable to determine a cause of death, police said. They added there were "no obvious wounds or fractures to her body."

Police hope medical tests, being conducted by the RCMP crime laboratory in Edmonton, will give them

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Kimberly

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some answers but test results aren't expected until later this week.

Police hope finding the clothes Kimberly was wearing when she disappeared Thursday morning will bring them closer to finding her murderer, but the blue ski suit, green cap, red and white scarf and brown gloves or mitts haven't been located.

Because her body was found nude, police believe the killing was sexually-oriented.

And although police want anyone in the city who finds clothing which matches Kimberly's or who has information to call the homicide department, the search is concentrated within the few blocks surrounding her house, the alley where she was found and Altadore elementary school.

Evelyn Thompson, Kimberly's mother, told police she last saw her daughter at 8:40 Thursday morning when Kimberly left for the six-block walk to school.

Police haven't found anyone who saw her since then, although there were earlier reports that she was seen in a washroom at the school. Police now believe the youngsters who reported seeing her there were confused about the day.

When Kimberly didn't return from school at lunchtime, and her mother couldn't locate her at her friends' homes, she called police.

Police and citizen volunteers spent a frantic night looking for her, scouring alleys, riverbanks, parks and houses, before she was finally found.

As soon as the grim news circulated to area parents that the child was dead, the killing was linked by area residents to a man dubbed "southwest offender" by police.

However, Evans said Sunday it is "doubtful" the two are connected.

"That theory is not to be overlooked, but it's doubtful," Evans said.

Police had warned parents in southwest Calgary last December to be on the lookout for the man they believe may be responsible for as many as 20 indecent assaults on young girls in the area.

Inspector Roy Anderson suggested Sunday parents could assist each other in protecting their children until police make progress in the case.

"I suggest that if a parent is walking her kids to school and knows there is a working mother down the street who can't do the same, that it might be a good idea if they got together," Anderson said.

"It would certainly relieve the anxiety of those parents who can't be home when their kids are going to school."

Kimberly's death sparks massive police hunt

By Joanne Ramondt

(Herald staff writer)

The murder investigation into the tragic death of Kimberly Thompson continued early today with every available policeman looking for clues.

Though police worked round the clock, by 6:30 a.m. today police were releasing little information on how Kimberly met her death.

The search for the missing girl changed to a murder investigation at noon Friday when her body was found in a green plastic garbage bag behind a house at 4504 19th St. S.W. at noon.

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The bag, in a compartment built into a wooden fence behind the house, was found only about three blocks from Kimberly's house.

Police had searched the area twice before during their search for the missing girl but it was two citizens, assisting police in the search, who found the body.

Results of an autopsy were expected early today.

Until those results are released, police are reluctant to discuss the case. Inspector Jack Dardis said early today.

He said it was impossible, until the autopsy is completed, to say how long the body had been concealed or where Kimberly met her death.

"It's definitely a murder investigation, headed up by homicide and bolstered by every available policeman and general investigation member."

'Sharp object'

Dardis would not confirm reports that police, scouring the area after the body was found, were looking for a "sharp object."

Dardis also would not discuss what if any evidence police had garnered in their door-knocking campaign in Kimberly's neighborhood.

Police were questioning Kimberly's schoolmates, her neighbors and residents at Altadore Centre — a halfway house for parolees a few blocks from her house.

Dardis said parents' fears that the murder is linked to the stabbing of nine-year-old Cory Gurnsey two weeks ago or to a man known as the "southwest offender" are only suspicions.



"SHE'S IN THE GROUND.
I CAN NEVER GET OUT.
WHY SHOULD HE?"

EVELYN THOMPSON

Evelyn Thompson, whose daughter Kimmie was murdered by neighbour Harold Smeltzer Jan. 24, 1980 is photographed at her home on Gabriola Island, B.C. Smeltzer is eligible for day parole in September.

SHERRI ZICKEFOOSE
CALGARY HERALD
GABRIOLA ISLAND, B.C.

Evelyn Thompson covers her Gulf Island living room wall with prized photos of her children, marking major milestones in their lives. There's son Brad at his high school graduation, and daughter Tina with the family's first grandchild. And then there's the one child who never grew up.

Youngest daughter Kimmie is frozen in time, a grinning five-year-old girl with dark, curly pigtails.

The sun-faded school picture is her final portrait, taken months before the tiny Calgary schoolgirl was randomly abducted and murdered by a neighbourhood rapist in 1980 — still one of the most horrifying crimes in the city's history, according to veteran homicide investigators.

"The loss of her is the worst thing that could ever happen. It takes a toll on your whole life," Evelyn says.

"For years, I pushed it away by thinking of what it did to my kids more than to me. I think I'm paying for it now."

The 54-year-old former Calgarian has spent the better part of three decades struggling to overcome feelings of guilt and anguish due to her daughter's death.

Dark circles under her eyes never fade. Tears come easily.

Under the long shadow of the crime, Evelyn Thompson and her family remained imprisoned by the memories of 28 years earlier — when she was accused by some of playing a role in Kimmie's death, ostracized and eventually forced to abandon Calgary.

And while she lives with a painful past, her daughter's killer is now thinking about his future.

Twice a week, Harold Smeltzer leaves the confines of his minimum security jail in Prince Albert, Sask., to work at a local thrift shop, part of a bid for day parole to be heard by authorities this summer.

Forgiveness remains a long way off from Evelyn, though.

She wants Smeltzer to stay behind bars indefinitely and is preparing for the battle to keep him in jail.

For the first time, Evelyn is writing a victim impact statement to the National Parole Board and is coming to grips with the crime that unfolded on a snowy street in Altadore almost three decades ago.

She is ready to let her voice be heard in one of Calgary's most horrible crimes, committed by one of its most infamous criminals.

"He put us in a prison, too. People say it's been a long time, let it go," Evelyn says.

"But I don't get parole. She doesn't get parole. She's in the ground.

"I can never get out. Why should he?"

A MOTHER PUSHES BACK

The morning Evelyn sent Kimmie walking to kindergarten alone for the first time, she had an uneasy feeling.

It was Thursday, Jan. 24, 1980.

Altadore Elementary School was six blocks from home. Kimmie's teacher had said she was immature for her age and needed to be more independent.

Despite nagging fears, Evelyn bundled her little girl into a snowsuit for the five-minute stroll and kissed Kimmie goodbye at 8:40 a.m.

The young child didn't get far before she caught the eye of 24-year-old Harold Smeltzer.

He lived a block away with his elderly parents, had only completed Grade 5, and was regarded as slow. Like Kimmie, he was a neighbourhood fixture, playing soccer with young kids on the block and roaming the streets on his bicycle.

He also had dark secrets: for five years, he'd been molesting dozens of children and honing his skills as the neighbourhood rapist. By his own account, he sexually assaulted 40 women and children.

In December 1979, police warned parents about a man they believed was responsible for about 20 attacks on neighbourhood children.

One was a five-year-old Altadore schoolgirl held at knifepoint and molested in a garage after a Brownie meeting.

Two months earlier, Smeltzer attacked a 27-year-old school cleaning woman at night. He also dragged a 17-year-old girl off her back porch, making her wear swimming goggles covered with duct tape. He forced her to perform oral sex.

When he attacked another woman leaving the Alexander Calhoun public library, the goggle strap broke. He ran away.

What drove his deviant sexual desires is unclear. In his mid-teens, he had several run-ins with authorities.

Psychiatrists later diagnosed him a pedophile and said Smeltzer suffered from an anti-social personality disorder.

The one meaningful relationship he had as a teenager left him heartbroken, and with an estranged child. His daughter would have been about five, around the same age as Kimmie—a little girl Smeltzer recognized from the neighbourhood.

When he saw Kimmie playing in the snow that Thursday morning on his way to the Marda convenience store to get a pop, Smeltzer was struck.

"I could get her and have sex with her," Smeltzer said to himself, according to his lengthy confession to police.

Smeltzer followed her until she was near a lane behind his parent's house on 18th Street S.W., where the young child stopped to make snowballs.

He checked to make sure no one was watching and then made his move, running up and grabbing Kimmie from behind.

"I'm going to be late for school," she yelled at him.

To calm her, Smeltzer told the girl he would drive her to class. Instead, he took her by the hand and led her into his parents' home.

He undressed her down to her underpants and took her into the master bedroom where his parents slept.

As Kimmie cuddled and played with the family dog, Mitzi, the man with an IQ of 77 struggled to come up with a plan.

"I didn't know what to do with her," he said.

If he let Kimmie go, she would be able to show police where he lived. He thought about shooting her, or stabbing her—but that would have made too big of a mess and his mother was expected home soon.

"I didn't want her to suffer. She had to die gently," he said in his confession.

"She's in the tub playing with the water. She's got nothing on, so I got undressed and got in, too," he later explained to police.

"I can make it like a game and gently push her head under water."

As Kimmie struggled, Smeltzer, using both hands, held her head under water until she went limp.

Evelyn Thompson has spent the past quarter of a century waiting for Harold Smeltzer to be set free.

She hasn't heard a word from the National Parole Board, the body responsible for deciding his future, since he was handed a life sentence for first-degree murder with no chance for parole for 25 years.

That was 27 years ago.

"I knew it was coming, I know what 25 years is. I was told I would be kept up to date with anything that happened, but after the trial, there was nothing."

For many years and in many ways, she didn't want to know anything else about the man who took away her child.

Evelyn remained silent for decades. After the five-day murder trial in April 1981 where Smeltzer unsuccessfully pleaded insanity, she eventually ceased talking about Kimmie and her killer.

"I stopped saying anything because nobody gets it," she explains.

"I would start a conversation and I would be cut off. Nobody wanted to hear about it. It nearly killed me. That's why I didn't make friends. You tell them, 'This is how I lost my daughter,' and they look at you like you have your head screwed on backwards."

Indeed, Evelyn has been serving her own life sentence since burying her youngest child.

When first contacted last August to talk about Smeltzer's bid for day parole, her first reaction was fear.

She was in no hurry to speak publicly about the case or re-live the painful ordeal.

But months later, Evelyn felt compelled to talk, ready to unshackle herself from decades of victimization, heartache and regret.

Now, she has a mission: Unable to protect her daughter 28 years ago, Evelyn Thompson is fighting to keep the killer imprisoned.

"My baby doesn't come out of the grave and he wants out, it's just not fair," she says.

"I need to be heard now. I found my voice."

By the time Evelyn was fixing lunch for her children and their cousins, her niece was the first to notice.

"Where's Kimmie?"

Evelyn's eyes snapped to the kitchen clock. It was 12:15 p.m. Kimmie was late.

Evelyn searched the streets and schoolyard. Door knocks and phone calls to neighbours failed to produce any sign of the little brown-haired girl with the missing front tooth.

The kindergarten teacher said Kimmie didn't make it to school. With a cold snap blowing in, Evelyn grew frantic.

She phoned her sister, the only number she could remember.

"It's time to call the police," Evelyn said.

Police began retracing Kimmie's steps and learned she woke her best friend's mother, Hana Sebestyen, on her way to school.

Sebestyen was still half-asleep from her nightshift at the Tropicana bar when she opened the door.

"Pauline's already gone. You'd better hurry," Sebestyen told Kimmie.

"If I had just looked when she left. He was on the next corner. I felt so bad. Why did I go back to bed? Why didn't I watch her go through the window?" she recalled in a recent interview.

Every available police officer joined the neighbourhood hunt. City garbage crews looked under porches, in garden sheds and dog houses.

Smeltzer watched from the street as an investigator with a tracking dog sniffed near Kimmie's house.

"I decided I had to get rid of her fast," Smeltzer later told police.

As the hunt wore on, he scooped the body into a garbage bag and carted it away in a toy wagon he carried up from the basement.

Nobody noticed Smeltzer walking down the street, pulling the covered wagon through the freshly fallen snow.

He pulled it for two blocks before dumping the girl's lifeless body into a trash can.

He then erased the wagon tracks in the snow and returned home.

At the same time, the search for Kimmie took police with dogs to the shores of the Elbow River at nearby Sandy Beach.

Evelyn's boyfriend enlisted his army buddies to scour the cliffs and dense brush at River Park.

A citizen band radio club and four-wheel drive groups flooded the police command post, offering help. Kimmie's older brother Brad joined the army searchers along the ridge. The dark-haired Grade 3 boy called out his little sister's name over and over as night approached.

The temperature began dropping, dipping down that night to -12 C. Evelyn numbly sat at home waiting for word.

"I'll never forget that night," said Evelyn. "It was so cold. It was snowing. I just had a feeling."

Kimmie was never coming home.

CALGARY HERALD Sunday, May 18, 2008



Calgary Herald Archive

Clockwise from top: Kimmie Thompson in one of her last portraits before being murdered; police search in frigid winter weather for the five-year-old girl after her disappearance; Harold David Smeltzer, convicted in the first-degree murder of Kimmie.

CHRONOLOGY: HAROLD SMELTZER'S PATH OF TERROR

—○1972—

Harold David Smeltzer moves to Calgary from Montreal at age 14.

—○1978—

OCTOBER 27: Smeltzer attacks a 17-year-old high school student while she is unlocking the back door of her southwest house. He forces her to wear swim goggles covered with duct tape and to perform oral sex.

—○1979—

JANUARY 11: A 27-year-old woman leaving Alexander Calhoun public library after hours is grabbed by Smeltzer. He struggles to put swimming goggles on her, but the rubber strap breaks and he flees.

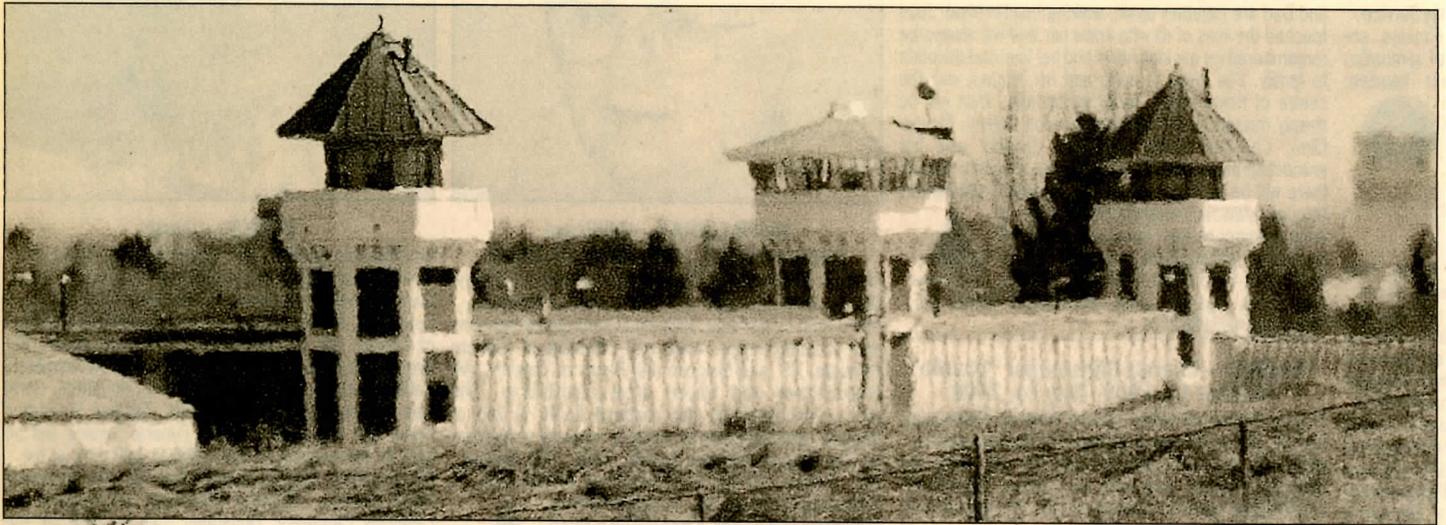
NOVEMBER 30: Smeltzer breaks into Lakeview elementary school and tries raping a 27-year-old night janitor. He threatens to slit her throat and puts a scarf over her eyes.

—○1980—

JANUARY 24: Smeltzer abducts five-year-old Kimmie Thompson as she walks to kindergarten class. He drowns her in the tub of his parents' home and hides her body in a neighbourhood trash can. Her body is found the next day.



JUNE 18: Smeltzer rapes two girls aged 10 and 11 as they bike home from Glenmore Dam park.



Ted Rhodes, Calgary Herald

Harold Smeltzer, Kimmie Thompson's killer, served the first 23 years of his life sentence in Prince Albert's Saskatchewan Penitentiary. In March 2003, he moved a couple dozen metres to the minimum-security Riverbend Institution, above.



Lance Sullivan for the Calgary Herald
Evelyn Thompson has spent nearly three decades quietly grieving the loss of her little girl. She's breaking that silence now and vows to try and keep Kimmie's killer behind bars.

Calgary Herald Archive

A grief-stricken Evelyn Thompson, second from right, weeps and her partner Don Irwin looks on as Pauline Sebestyen lays flowers on her friend Kimmie's casket.

Evelyn Thompson's only grandchild is a bright spot in an otherwise forlorn life.

She lives for the two-year-old dimpled boy's visits. She laughs as he runs and plays, chasing her little dogs.

As a grandmother, Evelyn can relax. It wasn't so easy raising her two remaining children, Brad and Tina, after Kimmie's killing.

Throughout Evelyn's life, her daughter's murder left her feeling isolated and fearful for her other children.

"I was so afraid that something would happen to the other two. They actually lived in a prison because of my rules and my fear. Mostly my fear," says Evelyn.

"They always had to be with someone, they could never be alone, they had to be together. Even in high school they had to call me wherever they went. I went into a state of panic."

Her oldest daughter Tina recalls living in fear.

"You couldn't trust even people that you might know. I thought that no person besides your family was 100 per cent safe," says Tina, 38.

"I suffered from nightmares for the longest time after it happened. I no longer would sleep in the room that we shared. I was too afraid he knew where I was and would come for me."

For years, Tina contemplated not having her own children because of her baby sister's death. But the birth of her son two years ago has brought the family closer together.

"He will never walk to school alone. And I will most likely be very aware of who he plays with and what he is doing. I will no doubt be overprotective," she said.

"That comes from fear."

A couple walking in the neighbourhood found the dead child at noon the next day.

Kimmie's body was naked and frozen solid, her wet brown hair stiffened into icicles.

The frozen girl's remains offered only the barest of clues.

The medical examiner had to wait a day for the 43-pound body to thaw, and even then, there were no tell-tale bruises or signs to show how the child died.

An autopsy shed less light — even though she'd drowned, there was very little water in her lungs. The medical examiner concluded she died of asphyxiation.

But two tiny clues spoke volumes to lead homicide detectives Darrell Wilson and his partner, Sid Shields.

A forensic garden flourished inside the green plastic trash bag, linking the killer to the victim.

Little brown dog hairs clung to Kimmie's skin.

And a traceable production serial number was stamped on the garbage bag's seam.

With no suspect or witnesses, the detectives felt the pressure from both police brass and a panicking public to solve the case quickly.

"It consumed my life," said Wilson, then a three-year veteran of homicide investigations.

As the city grew more alarmed by the random child murder, Wilson was clocking non-stop days in the hunt for the killer.

But the officer had another reason to make the collar. His middle daughter was around the same age and bore a resemblance to Kimmie.

Altadore went under lockdown as the days passed into weeks following the slaying.

Parents were terrified. They kept their children indoors and walked them to school. A local father of two immediately donated \$200 to a growing reward fund, saying "Who the hell knows where he's going to hit again?"

Smeltzer worried. He knew he had to get rid of the evidence and moved Kimmie's clothes around to various garbage bins. A week after the killing, he settled on a dumpster outside a supermarket.

"The clothes the police are looking for are out behind the store in the blue bin," Smeltzer said to Allwest junior assistant manager Roy Phinney on Jan. 30.

A tiny pair of girls' panties were found inside a bag.

Police examining the clothes found human hairs, dog hair, and carpet fibers.

Evidence was starting to stack up against Smeltzer — an unemployed 24-year-old still living with his parents.

"The killer wouldn't have left her and the clothes so close to home if he wasn't in the area, too," concluded Wilson.

Now, police had to find a house with a brown dog. Under the guise of checking for unlicensed dogs, bylaw officers and university students whittled down a list of 480 dogs in the area to 100 brown ones.

Detectives began the arduous task of door knocking in Altadore. As they asked questions, they squatted to pet every single brown-haired dog. Then, they carefully walked back to the car and bagged the pet hair samples off their sleeves or pant legs.

With a vicious killer on the loose and no arrests forthcoming, public sympathy evolved into rampant speculation about Evelyn and her boyfriend, Don Irwin — that somehow they were responsible.

The rumours were so persistent police had to publicly discount them.

Yet, suspicion oozed down into Brad and Tina's school. The kids were taunted so badly by classmates, Evelyn sent them to live with relatives in Saskatchewan.

The South Calgary Community Association refused to hand over the cash donated to help the grieving mother.

After a public backlash, though, the association relented and left the \$2,000 cheque on Evelyn's doorstep. She used it to buy Kimmie's grave marker and inscribed it with her nickname, Chicky, and the words: "Our darling little angel."

February went by with no arrests. Then March, April and May passed and pressure built on police.

By June, officers tracked the production number on the garbage bag to a mom-and-pop grocery shop a few blocks away from the crime scene.

Detectives were more convinced than ever that the killer was right under their nose.

They had seized hundreds of garbage bags and plastic clips from homes, including Smeltzer's. However, that serial number was misread by a co-ordinator and never matched up.

Police, however, were back at Smeltzer's door, collecting hair from his family's dog, Mitzi.

But instead of being sent to the Edmonton crime lab, the sample sat ignored in a desk drawer, another in a series of police missteps.

On June 18, police received more bad news.

Two little girls — ages 10 and 11 — had been raped at knife-point.

The assaults took place in Altadore.

To this day, Evelyn Thompson counts the months following her daughter's killing as

the worst in her life. Losing her child was shattering, but being accused of murdering Kimmie was unbearable.

The single mother's bond with her youngest had always been deep and emotional. Evelyn's husband abandoned her when she was six months pregnant with Kimmie.

"I was the only one she had," says Evelyn, who later found love and agreed to marry Don the month before Kimmie died.

By the time the five-day murder trial began in April 1981, Evelyn's family was all she had in the world.

Evelyn sat on one side of the courtroom, while Smeltzer's mother sat on the other; neighbours and mothers divided by evil.

Smeltzer pleaded not guilty by reason of insanity. Evelyn went on the stand and defended herself as the accused killer's lawyer tried to make her out to be a neglectful welfare mom.

When it was all over, a fresh start with a new life on the West Coast seemed like the answer. Her children, scarred by childhood tormentors and the loss of their baby sister, agreed.

They all thought it would be a new beginning. But life without Kimmie equalled anything but freedom.

Eleven-year-old Mary was silently staring out her mother's car window when she spotted him.

She could never forget the face of the man who dragged her and a friend off their bicycles and into the bushes a week before.

On June 18, 1980, Smeltzer raped both girls at knife-point. "Do whatever I say," he said, holding a knife to the tiny blond girl's throat while he clamped a hand over her mouth.

"He came out of nowhere," said Mary.

The girls were agonizingly close to home.

He forced them into the bushes and put a towel over one girl's eyes while he raped the other child. Then he blindfolded her and assaulted the other girl. He ordered Mary to perform oral sex on him. He told both girls if they opened their eyes and looked at him, he'd kill them.

"I peeked," said Mary. "It didn't stop me from telling."

What she saw stays with her to this day: his pimply skin,

fleshy round face, and unclean curly hair. The sickening smell of his sour body odor made her retch.

Now, seven days after the attack, as Mary and her mother drove along Elbow Drive near Mission, there he was — walking along the river with his older sister.

"That's him, that's him!" The words ran together as Mary found the breath to say them.

She reached into her back pocket for a policeman's business card; since the rape, she'd carried it with her every day like a talisman.

Her mother called from a payphone and police cars raced up.

Smeltzer was arrested on the spot. Mary and her mother watched from a distance as Smeltzer calmly climbed into the back of the police car.

Downtown at police headquarters, the new arrival in the interrogation room piqued the curiosity of homicide detectives Shields and Wilson.

"What's this guy look like? Where does he live?" Wilson asked his colleagues.

The homicide detective knew the moment he looked through the peep hole in the door. "This is our guy."

With Wilson playing the role of good cop, the homicide detectives sat down and took a turn questioning Smeltzer.

He readily confessed to raping the two elementary school girls on their bikes the week before. Shields followed his gut and pushed further: "Well, you know, we have to talk about Kimberley."

"Yeah, I know," Smeltzer answered, confirming himself as the little girl's killer.

Smeltzer's surprise confession erupted into a marathon — it was eight handwritten pages long.

"If you interrupted, he'd say, 'Wait a minute. I'll get to that in a minute.' He wanted to tell it the way he wanted to tell it," said Wilson.

"He remembered every detail of what he did. He was fairly proud of it."

To the officers who'd spent countless hours tracking Smeltzer, only one question remained: Why kill Kimmie?

"I couldn't let her go. She would tell you where I live," Smeltzer told them matter of factly.

When news of the arrest reached Evelyn's family, Kimmie's brother Brad began weeping.

"Don't be mad," he told his mother through tears. "I was playing soccer with him in the park a little while ago."

Mary, meantime, would later receive the reward money for leading police to Smeltzer's capture.

Her rape was worth \$38,098.

At home, Evelyn sits at her computer in a room the size of a cell. She often stares out the window into her back garden, imagining the white lillies that will soon spring up.

They remind her of the daughter that never grew up, the innocence of childhood matched by the purity of the flower petals.

The tiny room offers a quiet place to write the parole board, a plea to keep the man she despises behind prison walls.

Summing up a lifetime of heartache is harder than it sounds.

But she hopes that keeping her child's killer behind bars will help free her from years of guilt and grief that began in an Altadore alleyway in 1980.

Evelyn recently took medical leave from another low-paying job. She rarely sleeps through the night. Anxiety and gloom exact a toll.

"He knew what he'd done and he sat in that house. They were blaming everyone... they were blaming me, and he didn't come forward," she says.

"I carried guilt for years because I couldn't protect her."

After nearly three decades of maintaining silence, Evelyn is finally ready to be heard.

"I'm going to do everything and anything I can to keep him in prison," she says.

"If it takes until my dying breath I will fight him. He will not be out if I can help it, I tell you."

SZICKEFOOSE@THEHERALD.CANWEST.COM

0-1980

JUNE 24: The 11-year-old rape victim spots Smeltzer walking on Elbow Drive. Her mother calls police who quickly arrest him. He confesses to the rapes and to the murder.



0-1981

MAY 1: After a five-day trial, Smeltzer is convicted of first-degree murder and sentenced to life with no chance of parole for 25 years. Smeltzer also pleads guilty to two counts of rape, three counts of attempted rape, one of gross indecency, and one of possessing a dangerous weapon. He is sentenced 10 years for each rape, two for possessing a dangerous weapon, and five for attempted rape and gross indecency charges — to be served concurrently. He is sent to the medium-security Saskatchewan Penitentiary.

JUNE 26: Smeltzer pleads not guilty by reason of insanity.

0-2003

MARCH: Smeltzer is moved to the minimum security prison at Riverbend Institution. He is awarded unescorted temporary absences to work at a thrift store twice a week, and to attend sex offender maintenance therapy in the community.



0-2008

SEPTEMBER: Smeltzer is scheduled to appear before the National Parole Board in a hearing to address his application for day parole.

Child killer's parole sparks

Saskatchewan asks for review amid public safety fears

SHERRI ZICKEFOOSE
CALGARY HERALD

The release of one of Calgary's most notorious child killers and rapists has become a lightning rod for anger at the Canadian justice system.

From the detective who arrested him 28 years ago, to politicians, an anti-pedophile activist group, and his new neighbours around a Regina halfway house where he will be living in the next few weeks, Harold David Smeltzer's day parole release is sparking outrage.

"I'm really disappointed. It's ridiculous. I don't believe for a minute that he won't do it again," said Darrell Wilson, a retired Calgary homicide detective who investigated five-year-old Kimberley Thompson's murder by Smeltzer on Jan. 24, 1980. Smeltzer abducted the girl on an Altadore street intending to sexually assault her. He later drowned her and stuffed her body into a garbage bag.

In its written decision obtained by the Herald, the National Parole Board says it granted Smeltzer freedom from his life sentence for first-degree murder and rape Wednesday because he "impressed as aware and genuinely remorseful for your tragic choices in your past."



Kimberley Thompson

But to the man who hunted him for five months and took down the killer's startling eight-page confession 28 years ago, the release has come too soon.

"I certainly am concerned for society again. Regina, initially, but God only knows where

he's going after that."

Smeltzer continued his reign of terror in his Altadore neighbourhood after the killing. For five months after Kimberley's murder, he was free. He was arrested after raping two girls, ages 10 and 11, when one of them spotted him walking on the street a week after the attack.

Smeltzer, who covered his victim's eyes with scarves and swim goggles covered in duct tape, was charged with two counts of rape and attempted rape.

"To me, he's the sort of guy who I don't think really understands what he's done. I don't think he understands the impact he made on the family," said Wilson.

"I doubt whether he ever will."

Wilson is adding his voice to the call to sentence sex offenders differently.

"I think they are in a different category, they're motivated for different reasons," he said.

"They don't need money or drugs, it's a totally different motivation. A lot of it has to do with motivation, the need for sexual gratification. Until we get the public mad enough to call for changes, nothing is going to change."

Saskatchewan Justice Minister Don Morgan said his government is "troubled" that Smeltzer is being released on day parole to a Regina halfway house.

Morgan wrote Thursday to federal Public Safety Minister Peter Van Loan expressing the provincial government's "grave concern" with the board's decision.

"I strongly urge you to review this decision and consider all options you have available to protect our citizens' public safety, which may now be in jeopardy because of the release of this offender, who has been convicted of multiple sex offences and first-degree murder," Morgan stated in the letter.

In its five-page ruling, the National Parole Board wrote of Smeltzer: "You have demonstrated positive attitude, good motivation and you have addressed those factors that led to your offending."

It will likely take a week or two before he arrives in Regina.

During Smeltzer's gradual release program over the past five years, he has been out on 137 unescorted temporary absences with no problems.

"The board assesses that your risk has been reduced significantly to the point where it can be managed in the community on day parole. The board is satisfied day parole presents the least restrictive option consistent with public safety."

Carrie Kohan, founder of Alberta's Mad Mothers Against Pedophiles, said releasing a serial rapist and pedophile back onto the street is irresponsible.

"What we need is a civil commitment from Canada. How could they sit there and listen that he takes credit for 40 attacks and think he's not dangerous? That should be a huge alarm to the parole board."

outrage

Kohan would like to see serious sex offenders jailed indefinitely.

"We've got to look at incarceration for the rest of their life. Life meaning life. The current system is not working. We allow them to go back into the public, and they reoffend."

Smeltzer was released on the condition that he can't have any overnight privileges, he can't be around children under 18 unless accompanied by an adult who is aware of his criminal background, and he keeps up with sex offender therapy and counselling.

"We're troubled by the fact that somebody that is a murderer and rapist has been returned to the streets of Regina. We want to make sure that we do everything that we can to make the streets of our community safer," said Morgan.

"So we will work with the Regina city police, the Ministry of Corrections, Public Safety and Policing, the federal ministers to make sure that we do everything that we possibly can."

Morgan's letter asks the federal government look at implementing tougher sentences for offenders who commit crimes against children, consecutive sentences instead of concurrent sentences for certain serious offences and stricter registration and reporting requirements for sexual offenders.

"We want to look at all of the options to ensure that the shift goes away from rehabilitation toward public safety where there's long-term chronic violent offenders as this person was," Morgan said.

WITH FILES FROM THE REGINA LEADER POST
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Courtesy, Global TV Calgary

Murderer, rapist Harold Smeltzer is set to return to the streets of Regina

Friday, November 7, 2008

Saturday, January 7, 2012

Child killer back in custody as day parole revoked

SHERRI ZICKEFOOSE
CALGARY HERALD

A Calgary child killer and rapist is back behind bars after having day parole revoked.

Harold David Smeltzer was taken into custody by police in Regina on Friday afternoon.

"His parole officer directed revocation of his day parole and a warrant for his arrest was issued," said Regina Police Service Staff Sgt. Brent Ermel, adding Smeltzer is in custody at the provincial correctional centre.

"I can't tell you for long or what is going to happen with him next."

Smeltzer is serving a life sentence for murdering his five-year-old Calgary neighbour, Kimberley Thompson, in 1980.

Evelyn Thompson, Kimberley's mother, was alerted by Correctional Service of Canada officials following his arrest.

"I'm very happy with the news but I'm just afraid he's hurt somebody else, and that's a sad thing," she said from her Vancouver Island home. "I hope it's forever that he doesn't go back outside."



Herald Archive, Postmedia News

Evelyn Thompson's daughter Kimberley, 5, was murdered by Harold David Smeltzer in 1980.

Several Calgary relatives were also grappling with the news Friday.

Ermel said Regina police were planning to release more information Monday.

Smeltzer was noted to have been struggling with restrictions placed on him, according to the National Parole Board's report last summer.

Publicity about his past has led to anxiety and frustration because no one will hire him, the board wrote. The 55-year-old never found steady employment since being released to a halfway house in late 2008 after serving 28 years in prison in

Saskatchewan. He was earning an allowance for custodial work at a community correctional centre.

Smeltzer had been given a cellphone by volunteers who work with high-risk, high-needs sex offenders.

Smeltzer was allowed to leave his halfway house unescorted, provided he stay away from children. Smeltzer is not allowed near parks, swimming pools, schools and other gathering places.

He must return to the halfway house nightly.

Smeltzer is a pedophile with an anti-social personality disorder, according to the parole board.

In January 1980, Smeltzer abducted Kimberley as she was walking to kindergarten on an Altadore street in Calgary. He said he intended to sexually assault her, but she recognized him, so he drowned her and stuffed her body into a garbage can.

Smeltzer has admitted attacking nearly 40 girls and women during a five-year reign of terror in the Altadore and South Calgary area.

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Day parole extended for child killer

Board concerned about access to children

SHERRI ZICKEFOOSE
CALGARY HERALD

An aging child killer and rapist's attempt to make friends by joining a seniors' social club has authorities worried about his access to club members' grandchildren.

Harold David Smeltzer must report all friendships with members of a Regina 55-plus group who have youngsters in their care, the Parole Board of Canada has ruled.

"This could afford you access to children should you get involved with parents

who have younger children or grandchildren," the board wrote in a recent decision to approve another six months of day parole at a Regina halfway house.

To combat that risk, Smeltzer was given a new condition requiring him to report any friendships with people who have children in their homes.

Smeltzer, 57, is serving a life sentence for first-degree murder in the 1980 slaying of five-year-old Kimberley Thompson in Calgary in 1980.

Smeltzer kidnapped the neighbourhood girl as she was on her way to an Altadore kindergarten. He drowned her in a tub and hid her body in a trash can on Jan. 24, 1980. He continued raping girls until his arrest five months later, after an 11-year-old rape victim led



Calgary Herald/Files

Kimberley Thompson, 5, was killed by Harold David Smeltzer in 1980.

police to his capture. He later admitted to attacking 40 girls and women in southwest Calgary between 1975 and 1980.

Smeltzer also lost another bid for overnight leave privileges away from his halfway house.

He was seeking to spend a weekend with a pastor, but "the reverend may not always be present during the times you will be visiting and thus leaving you in the community unsupervised and alone," the board wrote.

Smeltzer's day parole was first revoked in 2011 after staff at the Oksana Community Correctional Centre in Regina discovered a DVD movie with racy sex scenes in his room during a search. He said he purchased the movie, which contained 14A sexual content, shortly after he was released to a halfway house in Regina in 2008 after serving 28 years in prison.

Smeltzer continues languishing in a halfway house with no job and few prospects for a reintegrated life.

"You have an extremely seri-



Calgary Herald/Files

Harold Smeltzer, 57, recently received approval for another six months of day parole.

ous criminal record and you remain a person who requires a prolonged and strictly structured gradual release ... any relaxing of your structured day parole release would be premature ... you continue to

require a prolonged release that only a strict and structured release plan can afford you."

Smeltzer has taken sex offender programming, however he remains a moderate risk to reoffend.

"Your offending was extremely serious and you left a wide swath of devastation and fear behind, resulting in many damaged victims and communities looking for answers," the board wrote.

Smeltzer has conditions to stay away from children, playgrounds, swimming pools, and is prohibited from possessing pornography and sexually explicit magazines and movies.

—SZICKEFOOSE

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