



CASE FILE ORGANIZATION

A NEW APPROACH TO COLD CASE INVESTIGATIONS

Presenter: Detective Zachary Farkas
Dayton Police Department
Cold Case Unit

The Old School Approach of Closing Homicide or Rape Cases

- **Case Detective retires:**
 - Case file gets stored away, and no one gets reassigned the case.
 - Case Detective's failure to complete supplemental reports prior to leaving.
- **Case goes cold:**
 - Case file is packed up with no consistent organization and was placed in multiple unsecured locations.
- **Evidence:**
 - No list of evidence
 - Failing to maintain written records or photos.
 - Evidence being left in case file.
- **Labs:** Never received by detective. Labs placed into the wrong case file. Labs never placed into the case file at all.

The Old School Approach of Closing Homicide or Rape Cases

- **Labs:**
 - No tracking system for labs.
 - Never received by detective.
 - Labs placed into the wrong case file.
 - Labs never placed into the case file at all.

Original Cold Case Unit Investigations

- Priority was put on “high notoriety/ sympathetic” cases even though there was no new evidence to move the case forward
- “Let’s throw all the evidence at the wall and see what sticks”, method
- Multiple copies of reports are made (no idea what was original or duplicate.)
- Detectives with no prior experience on prosecuting Homicide or Rape cases or training in DNA being assigned into these units.
- Detectives traveling on unnecessary follow up investigation where contacting a local agency would have worked. (Phone call/ email/ inter-agency cooperation)
- Cases files not stored in one central location.
- Case files moved multiple times causing files/documents to start disappearing.
- **DON’T SPEND MONEY JUST TO SPEND MONEY. BE GOOD FINANCIAL STEWARDS**

2022 through the end of 2023

Cold Case Unit

- Structured the same way as the old.
- 3 Retired Dayton Detectives are hired to assist two full time DPD Detectives.
- Prosecuting Cold Case Grant awarded 2023
- Media Based (TV and Podcasts)
- No known understanding of DNA or IGG investigations
- IGG was going to be turned over to private genealogists at considerable cost to the department
- Old case files are brought into one central location. A sign in and sign out sheet is created to track case files.
- One case is solved with the assistance of BCI and the MCSO

2024


New Cold Case Unit

- Det. Farkas assigned to revamp and restructure the unit.
- Det. Farkas had 14 years of experience in Homicide and Sexual Assault investigations. With a basic working knowledge of DNA cases.
- Positive relationship with FBI is built (Agent Sarah Deamron)
- Positive relationship with BCI is built
 - Given walk through of the lab and an understanding of how the lab works.
 - Don't be proud and ask the I don't know questions. (Thank You Hallie Dreyer)
- Meetings are held with other cold case units around the country
 - Getting pros and cons of each unit.
- Dayton Cold Case Unit starts IGG for the first time with major assistance coming from the FBI-IGG team.
- Dayton Cold Case Unit Investigations shuts down in January of 2025 until September of 2025.

Case Organization

- Each homicide case file was evaluated and reviewed starting from 1958 and going through 2023.
- Files are all organized and put into the same structure.
- Duplicates that are found are verified and cleaned out
- Six separate lists of Cold Cases existed all categorized differently
- Over 50 cases were discovered requiring additional follow up investigation.
- Over 30 of those cases had evidence that was never processed/evaluated or sent to any lab.
- We have already closed two separate cases with arrests. Both have been indicted on Murder charges.
- Time frames were established for when to move a case from active to cold.
 - DPD is set at 3 years for Homicides.
 - Rape cases do not have a set time frame as of now.

Case Organization


KEN PAXTON
ATTORNEY GENERAL of TEXAS

Cold Case and Missing Persons Unit Assessment Checklist and Referral Form

CASE NAME and AGENCY INCIDENT/CAUSE NUMBER:

REQUESTING AGENCY:

Instructions:
All criteria must be marked. If marked "No", please describe the reason under "Comments".

Case File Assessment	Yes	No	Comments
Does a complete original investigative file exist?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Was the case file classified as homicide, missing person, or unidentified remains?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
If a homicide or missing person investigation, was the victim's body recovered?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Are crime scene photographs available for the case file?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Is there physical evidence for the case and has it been located?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Was an autopsy performed, and is there an autopsy report and file? What is the cause and manner of death?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Has any investigative activity occurred within the past 12 months?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Were any other local, state, or federal agencies involved in the investigation?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Does this case have any media coverage or attention?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Were any judicial or legal proceedings utilized in this case, such as an arrest, grand jury, or coroner's inquest?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Does the case have known suspects?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Does the case have prosecutorial support? Please specify which county.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Have all current and viable leads and investigative activity been exhausted?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Are the original investigators from the investigation still available?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	

Laboratory Assessment	Yes	No	Comments
Does the case have laboratory submissions and analysis reports?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Latent print reports?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Polygraphs?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Firearms analysis? Projectiles? Casings?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Chemical or trace analysis?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Has any evidence been previously tested for DNA analysis?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Were any private laboratories utilized in the investigation? If so, please specify the lab.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Does the victim in the case have any surviving family members?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Has a cooperative and collaborative evidence review been conducted on the case file?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
If a sexual assault, was a rape kit collected and tested?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Criminal Intelligence Assessment	Yes	No	Comments
Has the case been entered into NamUs? Case #	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Has the case been submitted to VICAP? Case #	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Does the case have any digital or cellular evidence, analysis, or reports?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Does the case have outdated audio or video recordings?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Does an index of all individuals involved or related to the case file exist?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Does an evidence spreadsheet exist for the case file?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Has the original case file been digitized?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	

Provide a summary of the case and key points of the investigation on the space below. As part of your submission, please outline:

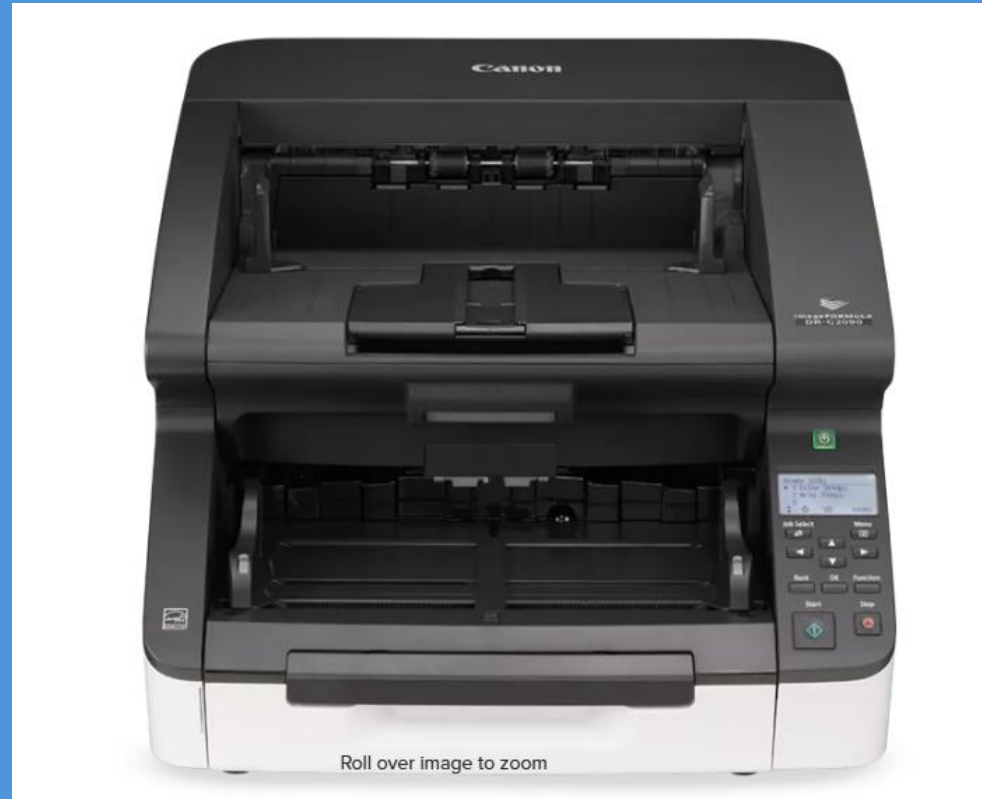
- The primary roadblocks you are encountering
- Why the case has stalled
- What specific assistance or resources are you seeking

Equipment Used

(I am not a sponsor for any product. This is what we used, and I can say it worked)

Digital Organization

- Once the cases are in the same structure we converted the case file into a digital format.
 - Reports
 - Labs
 - Photos
 - Field notes
- Cannon DR-G2090



Digital Organization

- Converting film to digital
- Model: Kodak slide n scan
Compatible 135,126 and 110 film



Digital Organization

- VHS to digital
- Model: Wolverine F2D Transmedia



Digital Organization

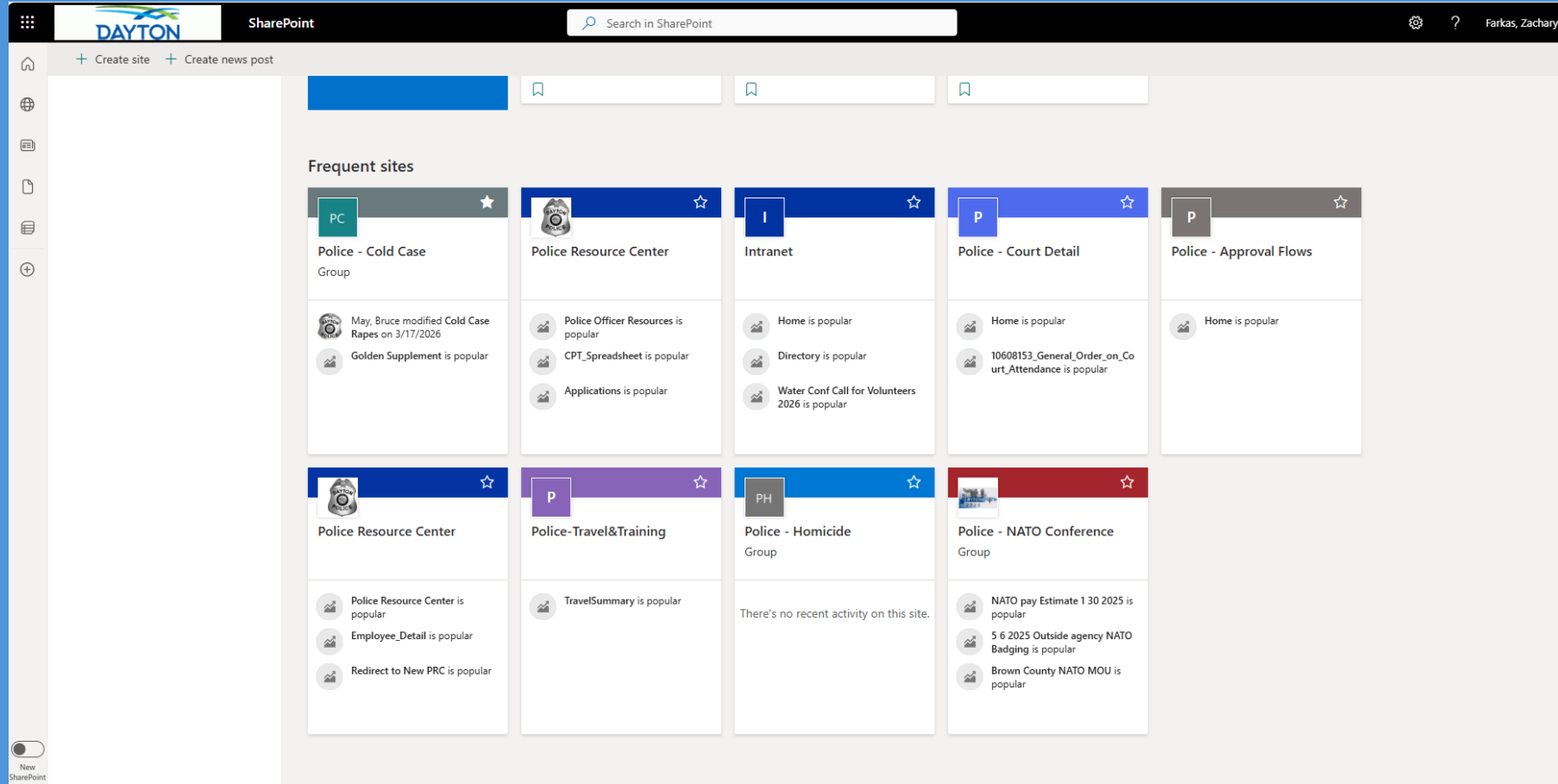
- Tapes to Digital
- Model: DIGITNOW



Digital Case File Setup

Using SharePoint

Folder created in SharePoint for Cold Case



Inside the Cold Case Folder

The screenshot displays a SharePoint dashboard for a user named Farkas, Zachary. The interface includes a top navigation bar with the 'DAYTON' logo, a search bar, and user profile information. Below the navigation bar, there are options to 'Create site' and 'Create news post'. The main content area is titled 'Frequent sites' and features a grid of site tiles. Each tile represents a site with a unique icon and color, and lists popular documents or activities. The sites shown are: 'Police - Cold Case Group', 'Police Resource Center', 'Intranet', 'Police - Court Detail', 'Police - Approval Flows', 'Police Resource Center', 'Police-Travel&Training', 'Police - Homicide Group', and 'Police - NATO Conference Group'. The 'Police - Cold Case Group' tile is highlighted with a blue header, indicating it is the current site. The 'Police - Cold Case Group' tile shows a document titled 'May, Bruce modified Cold Case Rapes on 3/17/2026' and another titled 'Golden Supplement is popular'. The 'Police Resource Center' tile shows 'Police Officer Resources is popular', 'CPT_Spreadsheet is popular', and 'Applications is popular'. The 'Intranet' tile shows 'Home is popular', 'Directory is popular', and 'Water Conf Call for Volunteers 2026 is popular'. The 'Police - Court Detail' tile shows 'Home is popular' and '10608153_General_Order_on_Court_Attendance is popular'. The 'Police - Approval Flows' tile shows 'Home is popular'. The 'Police Resource Center' tile shows 'Police Resource Center is popular', 'Employee_Detail is popular', and 'Redirect to New PRC is popular'. The 'Police-Travel&Training' tile shows 'TravelSummary is popular'. The 'Police - Homicide Group' tile shows 'There's no recent activity on this site.'. The 'Police - NATO Conference Group' tile shows 'NATO pay Estimate 1 30 2025 is popular', '5 6 2025 Outside agency NATO Badging is popular', and 'Brown County NATO MOU is popular'. A 'New SharePoint' toggle is visible in the bottom left corner.

DAYTON SharePoint Search in SharePoint Farkas, Zachary ZF

+ Create site + Create news post

1 views 3 views

Frequent sites

- Police - Cold Case Group**
 - May, Bruce modified Cold Case Rapes on 3/17/2026
 - Golden Supplement is popular
- Police Resource Center**
 - Police Officer Resources is popular
 - CPT_Spreadsheet is popular
 - Applications is popular
- Intranet**
 - Home is popular
 - Directory is popular
 - Water Conf Call for Volunteers 2026 is popular
- Police - Court Detail**
 - Home is popular
 - 10608153_General_Order_on_Court_Attendance is popular
- Police - Approval Flows**
 - Home is popular
- Police Resource Center**
 - Police Resource Center is popular
 - Employee_Detail is popular
 - Redirect to New PRC is popular
- Police-Travel&Training**
 - TravelSummary is popular
- Police - Homicide Group**
 - There's no recent activity on this site.
- Police - NATO Conference Group**
 - NATO pay Estimate 1 30 2025 is popular
 - 5 6 2025 Outside agency NATO Badging is popular
 - Brown County NATO MOU is popular

New SharePoint

Tracking Cold Cases

The screenshot shows a SharePoint document library interface for a site named 'Police - Cold Case'. The library contains a list of folders, each representing a cold case file number. The columns displayed are Name, Modified, Modified By, Created, and Created By. The folders are sorted by Modified date in descending order. The 'Modified By' and 'Created By' columns show the names of the users who last modified or created each folder.

Name	Modified	Modified By	Created	Created By
1958	January 3, 2025	Farkas, Zachary	January 3, 2025	Farkas, Zachary
1959	July 16, 2024	Roderick, Douglas	July 16, 2024	Roderick, Douglas
1960	January 3, 2025	Farkas, Zachary	January 3, 2025	Farkas, Zachary
1962	January 3, 2025	Farkas, Zachary	January 3, 2025	Farkas, Zachary
1964	February 20, 2025	Farkas, Zachary	February 20, 2025	Farkas, Zachary
1967	February 20, 2025	Farkas, Zachary	February 20, 2025	Farkas, Zachary
1968	February 20, 2025	Farkas, Zachary	February 20, 2025	Farkas, Zachary
1969	February 20, 2025	Farkas, Zachary	February 20, 2025	Farkas, Zachary
1970	July 16, 2024	Roderick, Douglas	July 16, 2024	Roderick, Douglas
1971	February 26, 2025	Farkas, Zachary	February 26, 2025	Farkas, Zachary
1972	February 28, 2025	Farkas, Zachary	February 28, 2025	Farkas, Zachary
1973	July 16, 2024	Roderick, Douglas	July 16, 2024	Roderick, Douglas
1974	March 10, 2025	Farkas, Zachary	March 10, 2025	Farkas, Zachary
1975	March 12, 2025	Farkas, Zachary	March 12, 2025	Farkas, Zachary

Tracking Cold Cases

- January of every year, a request is sent to the supervisors of both the Homicide and Sexual Assault unit.
- With homicide cases a request is made for any unsolved case files that are 3 years old.
- With Sexual Assault Unit a request is made for the list of any unsolved rapes or sexual assaults from the year previous.
 - The cases that have exceeded the statute of limitations and no John Doe/Jane Doe warrants are issued are in the system get redacted from the tracking system.
- With Missing Person Unit a request is made for any missing persons still not located from the previous year.
 - (The list of active missing persons is still being compiled)

Productivity in the past 24 months

- 3 suspects under Murder indictment from 3 different cases
- 1 suspect convicted of rape
- 4 IGG builds in progress
- 1 IGG solved (prosecutors refused charges)
- 3 cases at OTHRAM labs having SNP's constructed
- 4 cases at BCI Labs being worked
- 2 active homicide cold cases involving serial sexual offenders, both cases being over 15 years old, are being worked with arrests and indictments expected in the next two months.

QUESTIONS / COMMENTS ?