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Missing woman's family, friends still cling to hope

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In 1991, Shawna Condon, 10, and Todd Condon, 12, went to their Aunt Iris's house and were told their mother, Brenda, was missing. The 29-year-old bartender disappeared Feb. 27 after her shift at the bar formerly known as Carl's Bad Tavern in Bellefonte.

Nine years later, Shawna and Todd are still searching for the answers to solve the mystery.

"We want some closure in the case — we just need to know," said Todd Condon at a press conference yesterday at the Pennsylvania State Police barracks at Rockview.

Todd and his sister, who was embracing her 8-month-old daughter Brenda, both appeared distraught as they sat in front of several television, radio and newspaper reporters to discuss the case of their missing mother. The conference was held in an attempt to shed light on the case and bring forward new information that could lead to an answer, said Trp. Joseph G. Cigich, the investigating officer.

Since Brenda Condon's disappearance, state police have continued the investigation by interviewing bar patrons, family, friends and acquaintances of Condon.

Condon, who was described as a 110 pound, 5'4" white woman with reddish-brown, shoulder-length hair, was last seen by several local patrons of the bar between midnight and 1 a.m. Feb. 27, 1991. Prior to her disappearance, Condon was reportedly talking with a man unknown to the patrons at the bar, police said. Patrons completed composite sketches of the man, who remains unknown.

When a co-worker of Condon's arrived to open the bar at 3 p.m., he found her car in the parking lot and the door of the bar unlocked. While there were no obvious signs that foul play had occurred overnight, a pair of her gray cowboy boots were found in the men's restroom, police said.

"The rumor mill has run rampant," Cigich said. "We haven't substantiated any of the allegations."

Condon's sister Iris Myers and her best friend Bonnie Unch were at the press conference with Condon's children yesterday. All four have different ideas about what happened the night of Brenda Condon's disappearance and whether she is still alive.

"I'll never believe it," said a teary Shawna Condon of her mother's possible death. Condon added she will continue to believe her mother is alive until proven otherwise. After the press conference, Todd Condon was trembling when said he is optimistic about his mother. "I'm hopeful that she's still alive, but given the time frame, it's difficult," Todd Condon said.

Myers said she thinks she knows the person responsible for Condon's disappearance and also believes her older sister didn't leave the bar alive that night. "I've kind of made up my own mind," said Myers, adding Brenda was not the type of person who would have disappeared on her own will. However, Myers is optimistic her perpetrator will eventually be found.

Unch, who said she has been Condon's best friend since kindergarten, said she also has several ideas about the night of the disappearance. "It had to do with where she was," said Unch, adding she believes Condon was either kidnapped or never even left the bar. Unch holds onto the belief that Condon is still alive.

"I still have my hopes that the phone will ring and it will be her after all these years."

While Brenda Condon's family and friends have different ideas about her disappearance, they agree they need closure. Shawna Condon, who named her daughter after her mother, said her baby helps to ease the pain of the situation.

"Since she (Shawna's mother) can't be here, it's something that's a part of me," she said.

"These nine years have been atrocious," said Todd Condon. "We want some answers."

<http://www.collegian.psu.edu/archive/2000/02/02-25-00tdc/02-25-00dnews-10.asp>