

Missing person case hits a somber milestone

Written by gallupsun

Wednesday, 07 April 2021 11:44



A person going missing is something that can shake a community to its core. That someone can just disappear without a trace can stir a range of emotions from the locals. It also brings questions such as “Why?” and “Who?”

These feelings and questions have plagued long-time residents of Gallup and surrounding areas for over three decades in one of the most notorious missing persons cases in the state. April 6 marked 35 years since 9-year-old Anthonette Cayedito was taken from her home in the middle of the night.

Despite a bevy of tips and leads that have come up in years since, the fate of Cayedito is still unknown.

TIMELINE

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The early hours of April 6, 1986 were quiet for a family living on Aztec Avenue. But the day would soon take a tragic turn.

This much is known about the sequence of events, which was described by Anthonette's sister Wendy Montoya to crew and producers of the TV series *Unsolved Mysteries*: at some point in the middle of the night, Montoya said she heard two men knock on the door. One of them claimed to be their "Uncle Joe."

Montoya said that Cayedito opened the door and was immediately carried off. The men took Cayedito into a brown van that sped away from the residence, and she has not been seen since.

At the time, Anthonette's mother, Penny Cayedito, told law enforcement that she last saw her daughter asleep in her room at 3 am. Several hours later, she checked in Anthonette's room and her daughter was nowhere to be found.

THE INVESTIGATION BEGINS

There were a number of leads in the case early on, with the first major lead being a phone call that came in to Gallup Police Department about a year after the incident occurred from a frantic young girl claiming to be Cayedito, telling the dispatcher she was in Albuquerque.

However, before she could give any further information, a man yelled at her and then grabbed the phone. The young girl then screamed several times before the call was disconnected.

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As part of the Unsolved Mysteries segment that aired in 1992, Penny Cayedito, now deceased, told the crew the voice on the recording was indeed her daughter.

"And just by the way she says her last name, and the way she screamed sends chills all over my body," Penny Cayedito said on the show. "A mother knows, and I know that was her."

The next major lead came about four years later as a reported sighting of a young girl matching Cayedito's description in Carson City, Nev.

The young girl was seen with a couple at a diner, where she reportedly left a note on a napkin that read "Please help me." But by the time the waitress saw the note, the couple and young girl were gone.

THE SEARCH CONTINUES

The FBI announced it is renewing its request for the public's help in finding Anthonette Cayedito on the 35th anniversary of her disappearance.

"The FBI and our partners have checked out numerous tips as we continue to investigate this disappearance," Acting Special Agent in Charge Eric S. Brown Sr. of the Albuquerque FBI Division said April 6. "We are asking anyone who might have information about this case to come forward now and help us find Anthonette."

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The FBI continues to investigate this case with the Gallup Police Department and Navajo Nation Division of Public Safety.

FBI posters in English and Navajo with an age-progressed photo of Cayedito can be found at:
<https://www.fbi.gov/wanted/kidnap/anthonette-christine-cayedito>

Anyone with information on her whereabouts is asked to call the FBI (24 hours) at 505-889-1300, or go online, tips.fbi.gov.