



NEW ENGLAND MISSING PERSON BUREAU
PRESS ARCHIVES: SHAUN T. O'DONOGHUE

PRESS RELEASE DISCLOSURE STATEMENT: <SUPPRESSED INTENTIONALLY>



N.E.M.P.B. PRESS RELEASE

Middlesex News

One of America's Best Small Newspapers 1989: American Society of Newspaper Editors • Newspaper of the Year 1989-1990: New England Newspaper Association

THURSDAY, APRIL 19, 1990

FBI shifts tack on kidnap

By Stephen Thompson
NEWS STAFF WRITER

MILFORD — The FBI Wednesday began distributing a new poster of Kenneth Cole and the 5-year-old girl he is accused of kidnaping that is significantly different from the photograph released immediately after the abduction.

The new poster seems to focus on Cole as a wanted criminal — providing two photographs of him — while the old one accents the abduction itself, with only one photograph of kidnapper and victim posing together.

The old poster's head reads "Abducted Child," while the new one reads, "Wanted for Kidnapping."

The new poster is apparently the latest attempt to obtain information on Cole, 24, who is charged with kidnaping Nicole Ravesi April 3 while the girl was waiting for her mother to park a school bus. The Holliston man apparently grew obsessed with the girl while baby-sitting her and her three siblings.

Two weeks after the abduction, local police and the FBI continue to work on the case. Paul Cavanaugh, a spokesman for the FBI, said agents are following every lead to its "logical conclusion." And Milford Detective Brian Harris said police were poised around the clock to receive tips on the case.

The new poster also has one individual photograph of Nicole.

Harris, noting one photograph was of Cole wearing sunglasses, said authorities wanted to show "how easy it is to change his appearance."

The poster was put together by the New England Missing Persons Bureau. Harris said the FBI dropped on copies at the local police station early Wednesday morning.

WANTED FOR KIDNAPPING

KENNETH M. COLE II

ABDUCTED 5 YEAR OLD NICOLE RAVESI FROM MILFORD, MASSACHUSETTS
LAST SEEN APRIL 3, 1990



KENNETH M. COLE II

NICOLE RAVESI

DOB: 07/08/65 (age 24)
HEIGHT: 6' 0"
WEIGHT: 160 lbs
HAIR: Light Brown
EYES: Brown
SOC SEC #: 031-50-6599
NCIC #: W580496785 (Federal Kidnapping)

Former employment: School bus driver. Cole is very familiar with automobile repair and could work as a mechanic. May have in possession Massachusetts Registration Plate # 678-LZR.

DOB: 07/15/84 (age 5)
HEIGHT: 3' 8"
WEIGHT: 42 lbs
HAIR: Brown Curly Hair
EYES: Brown
DISTINGUISHING MARKS: Missing bottom front tooth

IF YOU HAVE ANY INFORMATION, CONTACT:

FBI - BOSTON OFFICE
1-617-742-5533
OR CONTACT YOUR LOCAL FBI OFFICE

OF
MILFORD POLICE DEPARTMENT
1-508-473-1113

OF
NATIONAL CENTER FOR MISSING & EXPLOITED CHILDREN
1-800-843-5678



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"It's just another appeal," Cavanaugh said. "I would assume they maybe feel that a man or an adult is more recognizable than a little girl."

The physical description of Cole and Nicole Ravesi is the same in both posters, but the new one has a short note on Cole's employment possibilities, saying the Holliston man is "very familiar with automobile repair and could work as a mechanic." At the time of the abduction, he was an unemployed bus driver.

CREDIT: STRATEGIC SHIFT AND POSTER DESIGN BY SHAUN O'DONOGHUE, INCLUDING THE RECOMMENDATION TO INVOLVE "AMERICA'S MOST WANTED" AND THE AIRING OF THE "WANTED POSTER" WHICH RESULTED IN THE SUCCESSFUL RECOVERY OF THE VICTIM AND THE APPREHENSION OF THE ABDUCTOR WITHOUT INCIDENT. OPERATIONAL COMMAND: FBI - BOSTON. SUPERVISORY SPECIAL AGENT: THOMAS MACGEORGE.



N.E.M.P.B. PRESS RELEASE



U.S. Department of Justice
Federal Bureau of Investigation

Office of the Director

Washington, D.C. 20535

June 20, 1990

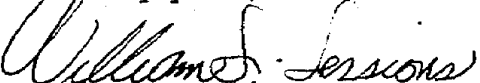
Mr. Shaun T. O'Donoghue
Recovery Specialist
New England Missing Persons Bureau
Boston, Massachusetts

Dear Mr. O'Donoghue:

You must have a great feeling of satisfaction in knowing that kidnap victim Nicole Ann Ravesi was returned safely to her parents, and I want to thank you for your efforts toward this end.

My colleagues in Boston have advised me that you spent much of your own time gathering information to be used on "Wanted" flyers and that you then personally distributed hundreds of these flyers up and down the East Coast. Your tireless efforts certainly enhanced the public's awareness of this very sensitive investigation, and we are grateful for your commitment to this project.

Sincerely yours,


William S. Sessions
Director

ALL AGENTS OF THE NEW ENGLAND MISSING PERSON BUREAU'S RAPID DEPLOYMENT UNIT & RECOVERY TASK FORCE, RECEIVED A COMMENDATION FROM WILLIAM SESSIONS, DIRECTOR OF THE FEDERAL BUREAU OF INVESTIGATION, ADDRESSED TO THE AGENCY AS A WHOLE.

AGENT'S STEPHEN P. CHASE, ANDREW A. GILLIS, AND SHAUN T. O'DONOGHUE, RECEIVED INDIVIDUAL WRITTEN COMMENDATIONS BY FBI DIRECTOR WILLIAM SESSIONS, ALONG WITH ADDITIONAL CITATIONS OF MERIT FROM THE CHIEF OF POLICE, THE MASSACHUSETTS STATE POLICE, AND VARIOUS ELECTED OFFICIALS.



N.E.M.P.B. PRESS RELEASE

250 join massive hunt for Kingston teenager

Patriot Ledger staff
SEP 18 1990

KINGSTON — Police, civil defense workers, high school students and other volunteers continued their day and night search for a 13-year-old girl who disappeared Saturday night.

Up to 250 people have joined the three-day search for Melissa Benoit, an eighth grader at Sacred Heart Junior High School.

Police believe the missing girl may have been visiting the Evergreen Cemetery, where her father is buried. Friday will be the first anniversary of his death.

She was last seen about 2:45 p.m. Saturday after returning to her home at 249 Main St. She had been watching television at a neighbor's house.

The Coast Guard provided a helicopter with infrared cameras to enable the searchers to work in the dark. Digital Equipment Corp. also provided a helicopter.

Most of the searchers took a short break at dawn today, but a full-scale effort resumed at 9 a.m. Volunteers were assigned to teams that would do a "grid search" of the town.

Many of them had been searching all night, according to Shaun O'Donoghue of the New England Missing Persons Bureau.

"Normally searches end at 10 or 11 at night, but because of the urgency of this case, and the potentially life-threatening situation, we did deploy dog teams and we had the helicopter search (all night), he said.

Please see LOST — Page 18

for girl continues

■ LOST SEP 18 1990
Continued from Page 1

Police have received dozens of calls, but no new information has surfaced since Benoit vanished. Police Chief Alan Ballinger said he would not rule out foul play.

"All of the Kingston police telephone lines have been lit up constantly," said Andrew Gillis of the Missing Persons Bureau.

"Right now the assumption is that she's out there somewhere and hurt," Gillis said.

Kingston Civil Defense Deputy Director Frederick Woodworth said his agency has received more than 120 calls from people volunteering to help.

"They come from all walks of life. People are coming from Carver, from West Bridgewater, from all over," Woodworth said.

The search has covered the entire area within 10 miles of Benoit's home. Searchers combed several woods in town.

Benoit lives with her mother, Diane, and sister, Erin. She is described as quiet and shy, an honors student with no family problems and no history of running away.

Her father, George Benoit, was 41 when he died of a heart attack.

Fliers with a photo and description of the missing girl have been circulating throughout the area.

Benoit is 5-foot-3, weighs 125 pounds, has blue eyes and brown, curly, shoulder-length hair. She was last seen wearing a pink T-shirt and flowered shorts. She was apparently barefoot when she disappeared.

The missing persons bureau has set up operations at the town's Civil Defense headquarters at 10 Maple Ave. Anyone with information on Benoit can call the headquarters at 585-7635 or Kingston police at 585-2121. The missing persons bureau also has a toll-free line at 800-272-1121.

Boston.com / News / Boston Globe Archives

Preliminary results of an
[Click for complete article](#) (233 words)

N.E. GROUP JOINING SEARCH FOR MISSING PITTSFIELD BOY
Published on November 1, 1990

Pittsfield police have called on the New England Missing Persons Bureau to aid them in the search for 12-year-old James Bernardo, who disappeared on Oct. 22.

The nonprofit, 1 1/2-year-old agency pools the expertise of people with law enforcement, social services and search operations backgrounds. Shaun O'Donoghue, a bureau recovery specialist, said yesterday that "we can't confirm either way" reports that James ran away after he left home to

[Click for complete article](#) (399 words)

MISSING PITTSFIELD BOY IS FOUND DEAD IN N.Y.
Published on November 23, 1990

NEWFIELD, N.Y. -- A 12-year-old Massachusetts boy missing for a month was apparently strangled in a remote area about 180 miles west of his home, state police said yesterday.

The body of James Bernardo of Pittsfield, Mass., was identified by his father yesterday, according to State Police in Ithaca. Bernardo's body was found Wednesday by three hunters in a heavily wooded area just south of Ithaca. The boy had been missing from his home since Oct. 22.



N.E.M.P.B. PRESS RELEASE

FBI joins search for Melissa Benoit; few clues after four days of searching

By Charles Mathewson
MPG Newspapers

KINGSTON — Melissa Benoit was reported missing from her Main Street home at 7:30 Saturday evening. By mid-morning Sunday, friends began examining every inch of town, and every resident in town began worrying for Melissa Benoit. By midweek, hundreds of volunteers and professionals had scoured the area, notice of the missing girl went nationwide, and Melissa was in the thoughts of nearly everyone in eastern Massachusetts.

Wednesday morning, finding no evidence of runaway, suicide, or injury, the FBI came to town to work on an apparent abduction.

Melissa, 13, lives with her mother, Dianne Richard, and her 10-year-old sister Erin in the big gray house at 249 Main St. It's across the street from the police station.

Saturday afternoon Dianne Richard went to an antique show in Plympton with her friend Connie Winter. They left Melissa and Erin just after 2 p.m. with the Benoit's neighbors, Bob and Susan Veracka.

"Dianne was more relaxed and easygoing than I've seen her all year," Winter said. Dianne's husband, George Be-

Missing

Melissa Benoit is 13-years-old, 5'6", 125 pounds. She has blue eyes and long, brown hair. She was last seen wearing a pink T-shirt, flowered shorts, and no shoes.

noit, died of a heart attack last year on Sept. 21.

The Benoit girls and the Veracka children watched TV until the overcast weather cleared at 3 p.m. Erin remembers Melissa saying she was going the few steps back to her own house. At about 3:10, Erin followed. She assumed her sister was upstairs, but never saw or heard her. She called a friend on Maple Avenue and went to play there.

When Dianne returned home a little after 4 p.m., the house was empty. She located Erin on Maple Avenue, but there was no trace of Melissa. When Melissa hadn't returned home in time for a baby-sitting job at 7:15, her mother called the police.

Sunday morning, Plymouth County Sheriffs Deputies and dogs searched the back yards and Evergreen Cemetery be-

yond the yards. They covered the train station, the town barn, and the blueberry patch next to the town barn. Friends posted hundreds of fliers with Melissa's photo and description in Kingston and surrounding towns. By noon, Kingston civil defense was coordinating more than 50 volunteer searchers. They found no trace of Melissa.

"We're just going through a punchlist, eliminating possibilities," said Kingston police Sgt. James Schilling, coordinating the case for the police department. "We put out the fliers, contact friends, search the house, check for notes, check for changes in behavior, determine if there are any friends or relatives at distant points, see if she had any money with her. We're chasing down every lead that comes in, regardless of how small. It's a time consuming, tedious job."

Police quickly determined that Melissa did not fit the profile of a runaway.

"She's obviously well cared for," Schilling said. "She's shy. She prefers to be home with her mother more than anywhere."

Eliminating more possibilities, the search resumed Monday

morning. Over 100 people joined the effort. By mid-day, spirits at civil defense sagged. With no reason to believe Melissa ran away or committed suicide, police called the FBI and reported a possible abduction.

Because there was no evidence of an abduction, the FBI could not get involved. Instead, they referred the case to the New England Missing Persons Bureau, a ~~volunteer~~ organization that coordinates "recovery."

"It's such a confusing case," said Stephen Chase, a recovery specialist with New England Missing Persons Bureau. "She fits none of the profiles and we have absolutely no physical evidence."

Chase moved into the civil defense emergency operations center with Shaun O'Donoghue and Andy Gillis. The three recently received commendations from the FBI for coordinating the search and successful recovery of Nicole Ravesi, the Massachusetts girl abducted to Florida. They came armed with experience and contacts. Working through the night Monday, they put a Coast Guard helicopter with infra-red detectors

in the sky over Kingston, bloodhounds from the Mount Washington rescue team in the woods, and a search and rescue group in the swamp.

To get an overview of the town, they brought civil defense director Dennis Tavares and a topographic map up in a helicopter loaned by Digital Equipment Corporation. They persuaded the Coast Guard to cancel a training exercise Tuesday to fly two helicopters over town all morning. They elicited an offer for technical assistance from the FBI. They managed another, highly organized, ground search. Over 160 people joined the force.

TV stations from Boston and Providence swarmed to town and put Melissa's face and story on the air. Chase and company notified missing person clearinghouses across the country, including the Adam Walsh Resource Centers. John Walsh, founder of the Adam Walsh centers, played a key role in the recovery of Nicole Ravesi when he featured the case on his national TV program *America's Most Wanted*.

Junior high schools in Plymouth and the Silver Lake
Please turn to page 5



N.E.M.P.B. PRESS RELEASE



RECOVERY SPECIALISTS — Scott Rodlin, Stephen Chase, and Shaun O'Donoghue, of New England Missing Persons Bureau, have spent many sleepless days and nights coordinating the search from the civil defense Emergency Operations Center. (Staff photo by Tom Santiago)

■ Missing

Continued from page 4
region, as well as Melissa's own Sacred Heart School, distributed fliers and reiterated warnings about abductions.

Tuesday afternoon divers from the Quincy Rescue Team searched the waters of Sampson Pond and the Jones River at the Elm Street dam. K-9 teams criss-crossed the town. Tuesday night police auxiliary units from across the state covered the same ground volunteers had walked Sunday, Monday and Tuesday. Wednesday morning they started over again. So many people were involved in the effort, the staging area had to be moved to the Smith Lane fire station.

In the process of locking under every bush in town, searchers found the usual discarded furniture and piles of beer cans. They also found several items of clothing, pieces of costume jewelry, and an altar adorned with satanic images. Nothing led to Melissa.

"It's a real tough area," Chase said Tuesday. "There's thick underbrush, woods, rivers, ponds, and swamps. We're looking for anything that will lead us in the right direction. In the immediate area, we're looking for anything we can find. We've sent information across the country to see if we can get a good sighting outside the area. As soon as we get anything, the FBI will be in."

As soon as Melissa's story began airing on Boston TV at noon on Monday, reports of sightings began coming into the Kingston police station. By Tuesday night, Kingston police were flooded with reported sightings outside the area. With the help of out of town police departments, all reports were investigated. None were confirmed.

As hours passed with no sign of Melissa, the most generally accepted theory among searchers, including Stephen Chase, was she was likely abducted from the Evergreen Cemetery. She walked a path behind her house to the cemetery, alone, every day. Her father's grave is

on the Green Street side. Cemetery workers clean beer cans from the cemetery every day. Police regularly respond to complaints about people loitering in the cemetery.

"There's no doubt in any of our minds, that she's been grabbed," said Ken Benoit, Melissa's uncle. "I'm glad they did such a thorough search and found nothing. It tells me that she's been grabbed and may be okay."

Wednesday morning, as fresh teams of searchers trooped through town, as helicopters and dogs continued to run their grid patterns, Kingston police briefed FBI agents on the case and the FBI started to retrace some of the steps already taken.



N.E.M.P.B. PRESS RELEASE

FD-597 (Rev. 3-29-84)

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE
FEDERAL BUREAU OF INVESTIGATION
Receipt for Property Received/Returned/Released/Seized

Page 1 of 1

On (date) April 8, 1990

- item(s) listed below were:
- Received From
 - Returned To
 - Released To
 - Seized

(Name) SHAUN O'DONOGHUE
(Street Address) NEW ENGLAND MISSING PERSONS BUREAU
(City) _____

Description of
Item(s):

\$ 201 DOLLARS U.S. CURRENCY

Received by: SA Paul T. Lambert (Signature) Received from: SL GJ (Signature)



N.E.M.P.B. PRESS RELEASE



FILE PHOTO: POLICE TACTICAL OPERATIONS — BODY RECOVERY . GILLIS, ODOGHUE, PRESTON

ACTIVATION BY FBI ON INTER-AGENCY EFFORT (FBI / DEA / NEMPB) & ADDITIONAL SUPPORT BY THE SOCIETY OF FORMER SPECIAL AGENTS (UNDERCOVER / SATELLITE IMAGERY / IRS SUPPORT / DRUG NETWORK / SURVEILLANCE)

MISSION: BODY RECOVERY / HOMICIDE. DISPATCHED > 48 HRS FROM TIME LAST SCENE. AIRLIFT & OPS.

TACTICAL COMMAND: A. GILLIS / S. ODOGHUE / D. PRESTON

RESPONSE: 10 AGENTS (LAW ENFORCEMENT ONLY, ARMED); HELICOPTER (STATE POLICE), MULTIPLE K-9 TEAMS, POLICE DIVERS, H.I.R.T - HI INCIDENT RESCUE TEAM DIVERS

OPERATIONAL SITUATION: MISSING 22YO WHITE MALE DISAPPEARED WITH \$10K BELIEVED TO BE DECEASED IN DRUG DEAL GONE BAD. SUBJECTS MOTOR VEHICLE FOUND ABANDONED. UNDERCOVER OPS WITH LINK TO FLORIDA DRUG TRADE.

CASE STATUS: CASE CLOSED. BODY RECOVERED. EVIDENCE SECURED.