

Caregiver charged in theft after jewelry, computer and money taken



Ashley Smith

see Theft pg. 2

Creative story not bought by authorities; victims injuries tell different story



James Turpin

see DV pg. 3

DUI charge follows wreck after taking meds and driving



Karen West

see Meds pg. 5

Clues Sought in Case of 9-Year-Old Who Disappeared 20 Years Ago

It was 20 years ago that Asha Degree, a shy 9-year-old North Carolina girl, went missing in the middle of the night. The spirited fourth-grader's disappearance in 2000 shook her rural community of Shelby and remains an enduring mystery, even as police, the FBI, and her family continue to actively search for clues. "After 20 years, I still

believe my daughter is alive," said Iquilla Degree, who, with her husband Harold, still harbors hope that Asha (pronounced Ayshuh) might find her way home. "I do not believe she is dead. And I know someone knows something. I'm

See missing P.4



From One Bar to Another; Driver charged with DUI



Cody Hawn

See Dui P.4

Verse of the Day

For the earth will be filled with the knowledge of the glory of the LORD, as the waters cover the sea.

—Habakkuk 2:14

Wazzup

Is the weather ever

gonna be consistent cold? warm? rain? who knows? Not any meteorologist on any TV station that's for sure. They are the most overpaid people in East Tennessee, we've

got relatives that can predict the weather better than them!

Weather

Today: Sunny and cool. High of 51F.
Tonight: Cold and clear. Low of 41F

Tuesday: Rain returns. High of 62F.

Tuesday night: Rain. Low of 52F.

Horoscopes

Aquarius 1/20-2/18
Your domestic life can be subject to sudden chang-

(Continued on page 6)

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Theft

Ashley Smith, 21, Sevierville Road Maryville, was charged with Theft of Property. Deputy Kevin Parks LCSO, responded to Riverview Road in reference to a theft of a ring and laptop. Upon arrival Deputy made contact with the victim who stated she had found some items missing from the residence, a engagement ring, laptop, and a candy tin

that had approx.. \$500.00 cash in it. Victim stated the only person who had been in the residence was her husband caregiver. After an investigation Ashley Smith was charged with Theft of Property.

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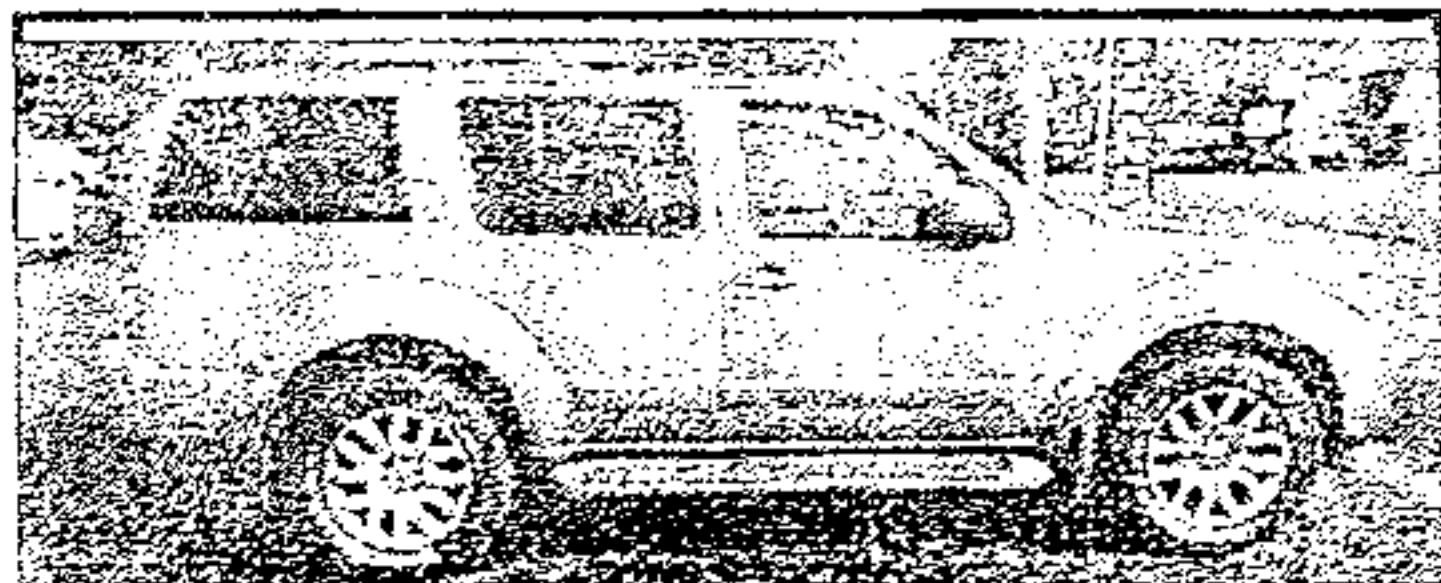
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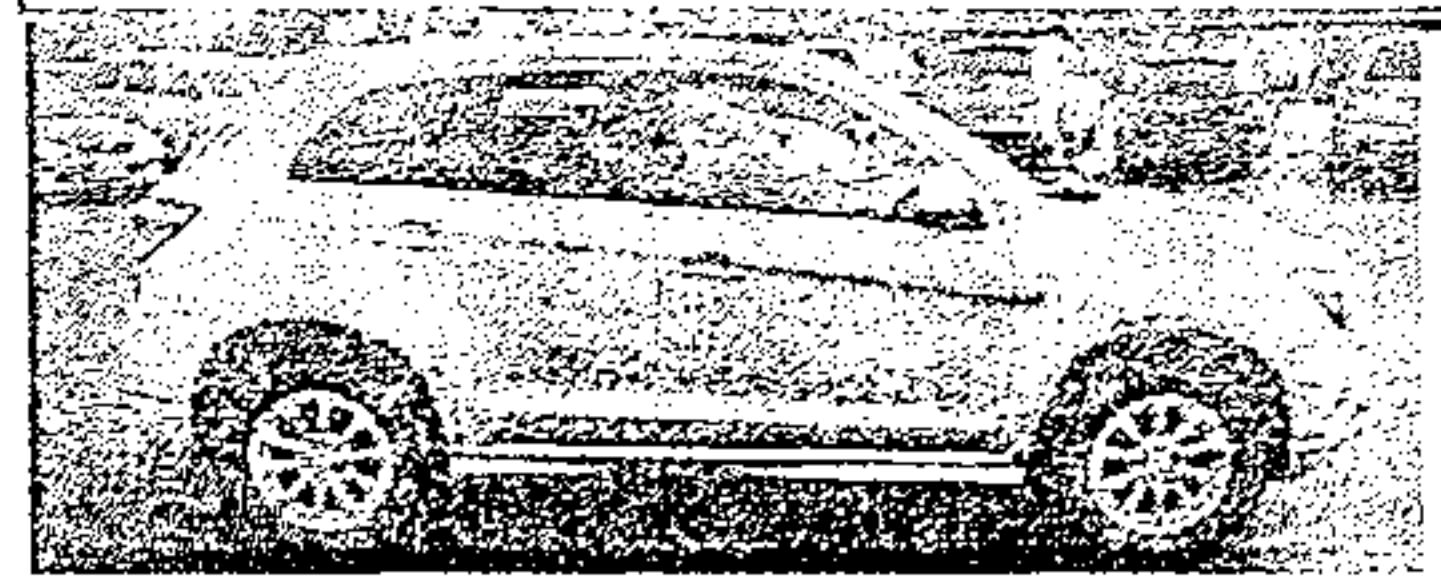
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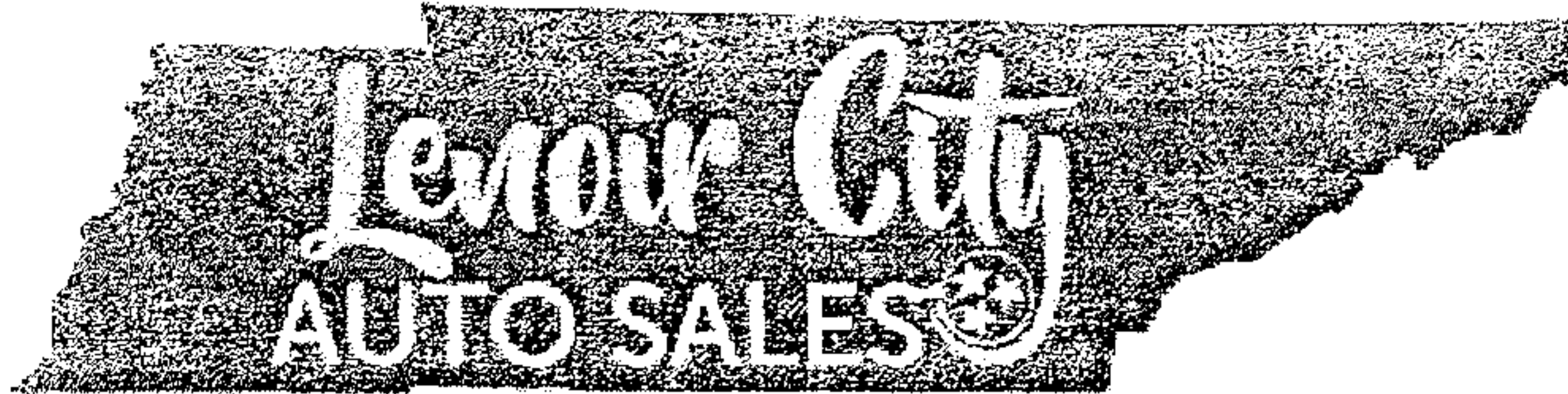
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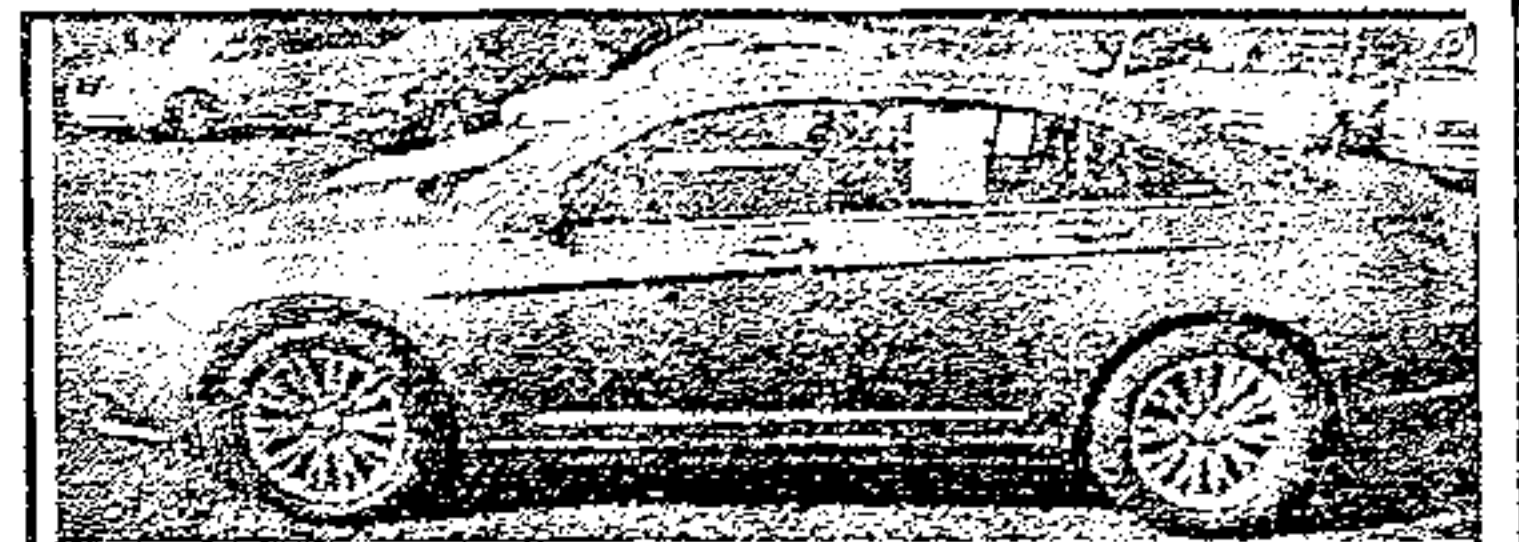
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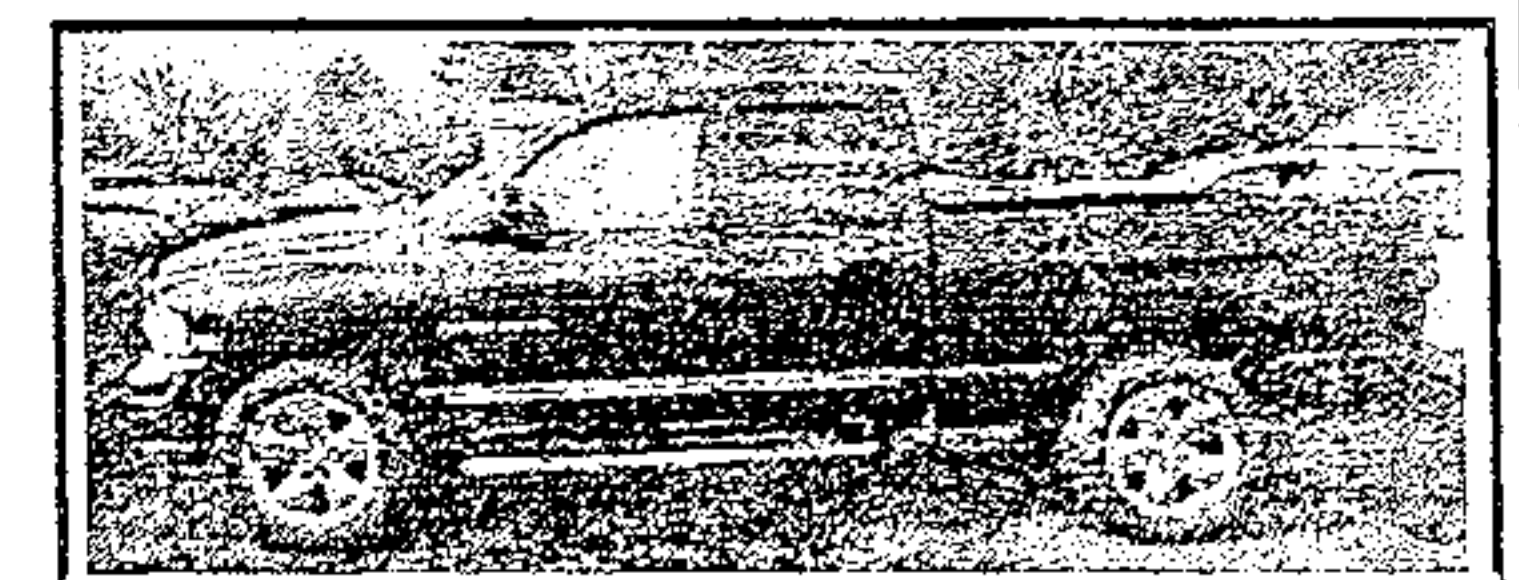


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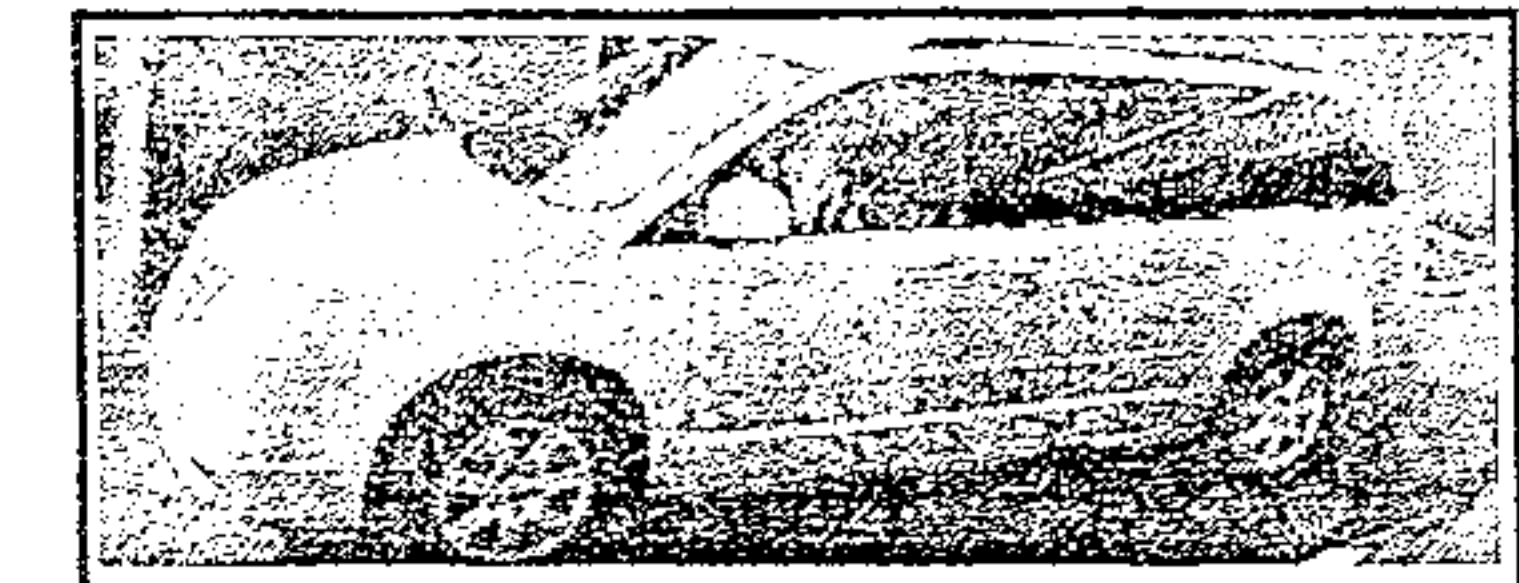
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DV

James Turpin, 40, West 9th Ave Lenoir City, was charged with Domestic Assault. Officer Jamie Pistole LCPD, was dispatched to 9th Ave in reference to a domestic disturbance. James Turpin called 911 and stated he was being held against his will, that there was items pushed against the door by the victim keeping him inside the residence. Moments later Turpin stated that he was hiding from the victim in the bathroom and that someone was outside the door not allowing him to leave. As Officer approached the residence he could see through the window of the bathroom and no one was standing outside the door. Also the victim was downstairs and Turpin was upstairs. There is no stairwell inside the residence. It was apparent that Turpin was not being held against his will. The victim stated that Turpin was upset that he lost 60.00 dollars earlier, and began arguing with victim. The victim stated that Turpin hit her

in the face and knocked her to the floor. Officer observed victim did have swelling on her right eye. After an investigation James Turpin was the primary aggressor and placed under arrest.

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Public Meeting Notice
 The Loudon County Surplus Property Authority Committee will meet Tuesday, February 18, 2020 at 5:00 PM at the Loudon County Office Building, 100 River Road, Loudon.

Public Notice
 The City of Philadelphia Mayor and Board of Aldermen will meet in a regular scheduled monthly meeting on Monday, March 9, 2020 at 7:00 p.m. located at the United Methodist Church of Philadelphia.

Public Notice
 The Loudon County Electronic Roll Call Committee will meet at the County Office Building on February 27th at 5 PM for a vendor presentation.

Public Notice
 The City of Philadelphia Mayor and Board of Aldermen will have the second and final reading of the Ordinance No. 20200113 "Purchasing Policy" for the City of Philadelphia on Monday, March 9, 2020 at 7:00 p.m. located at the United Methodist Church of Philadelphia.

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Dui

Cody Hawn, 23, Sunnyside Road Philadelphia, was charged with DUI. Deputy Billy Lewis LCSO, was dispatched to a reckless driver Hwy 11 coming into Loudon County. Dispatch advised that a Chevrolet truck was all over the roadway. Deputy observed the vehicle turn onto Spring Street and accelerate to a high rate of speed. Upon catching the vehicle at Spring St. and Knox St. Deputy made contact with the driver Cody Hawn. Mr. Hawn exited his vehicle he had slurred speech, bloodshot eyes, a strong odor of an alcoholic beverage, and was unsteady while standing. Mr. Hawn stated he had left one bar and traveled to another stating he had too much to drink and should have not been driving. Cody Hawn was placed under arrest and transported to the Loudon County Jail.

missing

not crazy enough to think that a 9-year-old can disappear into thin air without somebody knowing something.”

Twenty years after Asha’s disappearance, her family and investigators continue to seek answers. “Someone knows something,” said Asha’s mother, Iquilla Degree.

The case remains an open investigation, with a local detective reviewing leads—old and new—and FBI investigators from the Charlotte Field Office consolidating and combing through case files for unexplored patterns or clues. Like Asha’s mother, investigators believe someone in area may hold the key that could unlock the case.

“We strongly believe that there is someone out there that may have a piece of information that will help her,” said Cleveland County Sheriff’s Office Detective Tim Adams, who came out of retirement in 2014 to lead the department’s probe. In 2015, the

sheriff’s office teamed up with the FBI and the North Carolina State Bureau of Investigation in a top-to-bottom re-examination of the case, which has since generated more than 350 leads, including 45 in the past year.

“The fact that it was a small child that left on Valentine’s Day really caught everybody’s heart in this community,” Det. Adams said. “She’s been called Shelby’s Sweetheart, because she’s a child that’s one of our own that has gone missing, and we want to find out what happened to her.”

Age progression of Asha Degree, who went missing on February 14, 2000, from her home near Shelby, North Carolina. The National Center for Missing and Exploited Children produced this image in January 2020 of how she might look as a 29-year-old.

Asha Degree was 9 years old when she disappeared on February

14, 2000. An age-progressed photo shows what she might look today.

What is known from the earliest hours of the investigation is that Asha disappeared from her bedroom sometime between about 2:30 a.m. on February 14, 2000, when Harold checked on Asha and her older brother, and 6:30 a.m., when Iquilla went in to wake the kids for school. There was no sign of forced entry and no promising scent trail for search dogs to follow. That afternoon, investigators received at least two separate reports from individuals who said they saw a young female walking along Highway 18, in the opposite direction of the Degrees’ home, around 4 a.m. One person said they went back to check on the girl but she had left the roadway and disappeared into the woods.

“That was the last time anyone had a sighting of Asha that had actually

see missing ctd. page 5

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Meds

Karen West, 60, Heather Lane Lenoir City, was charged with DUI. Officer Jason Arden LCPD, responded to Northshore Drive at Hwy 321 to investigate a motor vehicle accident. Upon arrival Officer observed a silver vehicle on a rocky ditch-line and a white female identified as Karen West located approx.. 100 feet of the vehicle attempting to get up after falling. Karen required assistance getting to her feet, was very unsteady and lethargic, and had slurred speech. Karen stated she was not paying attention and drove into the ditch, and was not injured. Karen stated that she had taken her daily prescribed medication to include Clonazepam, Buprenorphine, and Gabapenrin. Karen West was placed under arrest and agreed to blood draw.

missing ctd. from page 4

been confirmed," Det. Adams said. On August 3, 2001, some 30 miles north of the last sighting, construction workers digging an access road for a new home in neighboring Burke County found a book bag that belonged to Asha. Inside was a concert T-shirt featuring New Kids On The Block and a book, McElligot's Pool, by Seuss. Neither belonged to Asha, though the book was from the library at Asha's school, Fallston Elementary. Investigators released images of the shirt and book in 2018, hoping to jog the memories of people

who may have helpful information.

The 2015 re-investigation also turned up another possible lead: Asha may have been seen getting into a dark green 1970s-model Lincoln Continental Mark IV or Ford Thunderbird with rust around the wheel wells. The FBI publicly announced the potential lead in 2016 and released images of the vehicle models.

"We encourage anybody out there that if they have any information—no matter how small or minor it may seem—it might be extremely crucial to further us getting one step closer to Asha," said FBI Special Agent Michael Gregory, who is leading the case now for the Bureau. "We will continue to pursue all avenues to find out what circumstances led to her disappearance, and we will continue to pursue this case at all costs."

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Public Notice
Loudon County Website Committee will meet February 19th at 5:00 PM at the County Office Building for a vendor presentation.