Will Carol ever see justice for her son?

ONLY 28 OF EVERY 100 CRIMES IN LEICESTERSHIRE IS SOLVED. **NICOLA DOWLING** HEARS THE STORY BEHIND ONE UNDETECTED CASE

As she stands at the graveside of her 19-year-old son, Carol Hemsley finds it hard to battle against the anger which wells up inside. On her way home the 46-year-old mother-of-three will find it equally as hard to stop herself scrutinising every white van which passes her on the road.

Her son Kevin died on the B582 between Barlestone and Newbold Verdon after being run over by a white van in the early hours of May 7 last year.

No-one has ever been brought to justice.

Police say Kevin had been lying in the road after a scuffle with a teenage friend before he was killed.

This month he would have celebrated his 21st birthday.

Carol believes there are people in a nearby village who have the vital evidence needed to bring her son's killer to book.

Police are convinced there are witnesses out there.

But Carol feels a conspiracy of silence means no-one is willing to tell police what they know.

Officers have conducted scores of interviews, put out appeals and scoured the area for evidence, but are still missing that key witness, admission or a piece of forensic evidence.

This is one of a number of crimes which have gone undetected in Leicestershire, but it is by no means typical.

Many unsolved crimes are much less serious.

They could be car break-ins, or thefts which have to be reported to police for the owner to get an insurance pay-out, or drunken assaults which result in bruised pride rather than injury.

But the fact remains that only 28 in every 100 crimes in Leicestershire is solved, with the remaining 72 lying undetected on a police computer.

The figure seems shockingly low, but it is higher than the national average and all but one of the other East Midlands forces.

That's small comfort for Mrs Hemsley.

It is only recently she has been able to stop scrutinising every white van which passed them as they tried to go about their lives in the face of sometimes insurmountable grief.



VICTIM: Kevin Hemsley

Mrs Hemsley and her family, of Desford, do not blame the police. They are happy that everything that could have been done, has been, and they have always been kept informed of any developments in the case. But they are desperate for the key witness to come forward.

"I am angry that people are not coming forward, this could have happened to their son or daughter.

"It is sickening to look at my son's picture in the living room and then have to think of the person who killed him.

"My older son David, 23, and Kevin were inseparable.

"He copes by keeping busy, he works all the hours God sends now. His brother Paul, 13, gets upset and my husband David has health problems brought on by the shock of losing Kevin.

"I try to keep busy, but even that doesn't work sometimes. I can be standing peeling the potatoes and something strikes a chord in my brain and I begin going over what happened.

"It would help just knowing that the person who did this has not got away with it. It was hard enough losing Kevin but to think the person who ran over him could be driving past the house is awful.



THE HEARTACHE GOES ON: Carol Hemsley tends her Kevin's grave – her teenage son's hit-and-run killer is still on the loose

Mrs Hemsley went on: "They treated him worse than a dog. If they had stopped to call an ambulance he might have lived."

Inspector Paul Orton, of Leicestershire police traffic department, is sympathetic to the family, and says the case will never be closed until it is solved.

He is reticent to go into details, because he does not want to tell me anything which could jeopardise the investigation.

He said: "We have no direct witnesses, although we believe they exist. All the evidence we have at the moment is circumstantial so we have nothing to try anybody with.

"We are still looking for any active leads we can get."

Because the trainee mechanic was killed by being run over, there is no DNA evidence available like there may have been in a hand-to-hand fight, and no CCTV as there could have been if the incident had happened in a town centre.

All that the officers can do is to keep re-examining the case to make sure that they have not missed anything, and to keep following up any new calls which may come in to them. One did come in last week, but unfortunately, the police already had the information.

But they don't want this to prevent anyone else from ringing, and have urged those with information – no matter how insignificant it may sound – to come forward.

In the meantime they remain in contact with Kevin's family and alert them to every new development in the case.

But they are yet to be able to provide the development they need: Justice for Kevin.

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Carol Hemsley