

JOHN PATRICK KERRIGAN

Of Ronan

■ **Last seen:** July 20, 1984, in Ronan.

■ **Gender:** Male.

■ **Birthdate:** Jan. 10, 1926.

■ **Age when disappeared:** 58.

■ **Age now:** 68.

■ **Contact:** Lake County Sheriff Joe Geldrich, 883-4321.

The Rev. John Patrick Kerrigan, a Catholic priest, vanished two days after his transfer from Plains to Ronan's Sacred Heart parish.

Parishioners reported him missing after he failed to show up for weekend services.

He was last seen the night of July 20, 1984, at a Ronan bakery, where he had stopped on his way home from jogging.

Kerrigan's clothes were found July 21, 1984, along state Highway 35, three miles northeast of Polson on the east shore of Flathead Lake. His shirt was stained with his own blood. A \$100 bill was tucked in a pocket.

His 1976 Chevrolet Impala was found eight days later parked in a swale just outside the Polson city limits. The car had spots of blood on the interior.

In the trunk, police found a bloody pillow and shovel and a small cardboard box containing a wallet with hundreds of dollars. The car keys were found in a field about 30 yards from the car.

Authorities found no links with the disappearance of an Episcopal priest in southwest Montana two years earlier.

Kerrigan and the other missing priest, the Rev. James Anderson of Townsend, were friends, having worked in White Sulphur Springs at the same time earlier in their careers.

Kerrigan's case has been featured on NBC's television program, "Unsolved Mysteries," which focused on possible connections with the unsolved murder of another priest, Reynaldo Rivera, who was shot near Santa Fe, N.M., in 1982.

Two escapees from the former Swan River Youth Camp passed through Ronan the night Kerrigan disappeared, later kidnapping and raping a young woman in Evaro. The two denied any involvement in Kerrigan's disappearance, said Lake County Sheriff Joe Geldrich.

On July 22, 1984, the day after Kerrigan's clothes were found, 18-year-old Reed Nevins killed a 41-year-old woman in her Polson home. He had been in Ronan the night Kerrigan disappeared.

Nevins was questioned, but also denied involvement, Geldrich said.