

# A man's skeleton found in 1979 finally identified after 43 years

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2015 Facial

*Reconstruction (Photo Courtesy: Alachua County Sheriff's Office)*

Today, the Alachua County Sheriff's Office (ACSO), announced the conclusion of a case that lasted over 40 years.

In 1979, a Florida Division of Forestry employee was in High Springs when he stumbled upon what appeared to be a skeleton and a rope with a knot.

Three years later, a forensic anthropologist by the name of Dr. William Maples helped to try and identify a face to this skeleton. Maples at the time was a curator at the Florida State Museum and eventually founded the CA Pound Human ID Lab at UF. Maples concluded that this skeleton was a man that had blonde or red hair and was 5 feet 5 inches tall.

After 33 years passed, ACSO collaborated with the University of South Florida. Together they attempted to use 3D photography to try recreate the look of this mystery man who was founded years ago.

In 2018, the forensic DNA and remains of this mystery man was sent to be tested for genetic matter but after conducting multiple labs they were unable to identify a "DNA profile" according to ACSO.

Just a year ago, Cold Case Examiner Kevin Allen decided to send the remains of the body to a lab by the name of "Othram" that was located in Texas. They used Forensic-Grade Genome Sequencing (FGGS) which is used to identify evidence that has been usually been degraded or other factor. Earlier this year, they were able to use this DNA profile to link a match between what they say was a second or forth cousin to this mystery man.

Allen then passed the information from the investigation to a volunteer genealogist by the name of Misty Nall. After a few hours, Nall was able to identity this skeleton from 43 years ago as Ralph Tufano, who was originally from New York.

ASCO says that Tufano struggled and despite his smile, was hurting on the inside and eventually disappeared in 1976.

Tufano is surpassed by his sister named Theresa Narbut and two daughters named Renee Nubus and Maria Cifelli. His family defined him as someone with a vibrant personality.



*The family of Ralph Tufano Left: Renee Nubus (daughter) Middle: Theresa Narbut (sister) Right: Maria Cifelli (daughter) Photo Courtesy: Alachua County Sheriff's Office.*

ASCO says that despite Tufano's smile, he was battling and hurting on the inside which eventually led him to disappear in 1976.

On August 15th, Ralph Tufano would have turned eighty years old. His sister says that their parents passed away not knowing where Ralph was and that her only hope is that he was reunited with their parents in heaven.

Details of his passing are still left undetermined and the Alachua County Sheriff's Office as well as the family of Tufano are asking for assistance from anyone who might remember Ralph's presence in North Central Florida during the years of 1976-1979.