

# Montana DOJ & Butte-Silver Bow Department of Law Enforcement Partner with Othram to ID 2012 John Doe

Found more than a decade ago, the unidentified man found near Butte, MT is now identified as 46-year-old Michael Wayne Canada.

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## Highlights

Montana Department of Justice

Butte, Montana

## Media Inquiries

### Summary

On June 26, 2012, human remains were found in a garbage bag on the side of Moulton Reservoir Road north of Butte, Montana. Butte-Silver Bow Department of Law Enforcement (BSBDLE) responded to the scene and discovered two human legs inside of the bag. Upon further investigation, BSBDLE detectives noted that socks and Red Wing brand hiking shoes were present on both feet and the remnants of blue jeans were present on one of the legs. While the remains were in the beginning stages of decomposition, investigators were able to determine the legs likely belonged to a white male. Detectives believe that the victim died at another location, with his remains later being left at the crime scene near Moulton Reservoir Road. In spite of an exhaustive search, no other remains for the individual were ever located.

An autopsy performed by Montana State Forensic Science Division Pathologist Dr. Willy Kemp estimated the time of death to be three to four days prior to the recovery of the decedent's remains. The autopsy also determined that the decedent suffered a substantial injury, prior to his death, that resulted in the placement of a metal rod into one of his legs.

In March 2013, the case information was entered into the National Missing and Unidentified Persons System (NamUs) as UP11036. Investigators pursued all leads in an effort to identify the unknown man. Despite extensive efforts from investigators, the man's identity remained a mystery. The Butte-Silver Bow Department of Law Enforcement then partnered with the Montana Department of Justice (MTDOJ) Division of Criminal Investigation (DCI) in an effort to assist in the identification of the man. Together, the agencies decided to attempt forensic genetic genealogy to generate new leads in an otherwise cold case.

In December of 2019, investigators sent forensic evidence to Othram's laboratory in The Woodlands, Texas. Othram produced a DNA extract that was suitable for testing and then Forensic-Grade Genome Sequencing® was utilized to build a comprehensive DNA profile. Othram's in-house genealogy team used the DNA profile to perform genetic genealogy research. Working collaboratively, the law enforcement agencies reached out to possible relatives of the unknown man and slowly pieced together the man's probable identity. In 2022, MTDOJ DCI Agents contacted relatives of the man and collected a reference DNA swab from a close relative for DNA testing. The reference DNA sample was compared to the profile for the unknown man. These test results and a follow up investigation suggested that the man found in 2012 was in fact 46-year old **Michael Wayne Canada**. Additional reference DNA testing was completed by the Montana State Crime Lab and the man's identity was officially established by Montana State Forensic Science Division Pathologist Dr. Willy Kemp.

Canada had not been in touch with his family for at least two years prior to his death in 2012. Canada was born August 22, 1965 and was likely 46-years-old at the time of his death. As part of the investigation, investigators learned that Canada had a serious motorcycle accident resulting in a metal rod being placed into his leg. Canada had not been reported as a missing person.

The investigation into Canada's death is ongoing. If anyone has information about the circumstances around the death of Michael Wayne Canada, please contact Agent Ryan Eamon with the Montana Department of Justice Division of Criminal Investigation at [406-444-3874](tel:406-444-3874) or Butte, MT Field Office at [406-691-7108](tel:406-691-7108) and reference case number MC-13-06-07. You can also contact Butte Silver Bow County Law Enforcement Crime Stoppers reference case number 212CR0014429 at [406-782-7336](tel:406-782-7336).

