

Princess Doe identified, alleged killer charged: Cold case cracked on 40th anniversary

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Princess Doe is identified as Dawn Olanick, a 17-year-old from Long Island, New York, during a news conference on July 15, 2022, 40 years to the day since her body was discovered in a Blirstown cemetery. Her mysterious identity made her one of Warren County's most notorious cold cases. A family member wears her picture on his jacket during the news conference. Steve Novak | For lehighvalleylive.com

[Princess Doe](#) is a stranger no more.

Little was known about the woman whose body was found in a Blirstown cemetery on July 15, 1982. She was beaten beyond recognition. Identification was impossible.

Residents gave her dignity with a formal burial near the spot she was found, off to the side at the edge of the woods. Years went by. Princess Doe became a famous cold case. There were TV specials. [Websites](#). [Memorial pages](#) on social media. People gathered around her gravesite at 25 years, 30 years. The township is [protective of her](#). But no one knew who she was, not beyond the broadest sense. Her nickname was bestowed by investigators who simply knew that this woman was somebody's child. Somebody's daughter.

Somebody's princess.

Now we know.

She was Dawn Olanick, a 17-year-old from the Long Island town of West Babylon, New York.

[Authorities announced the identity](#) of Blirstown's princess on Friday — 40 years to the day that her body was discovered in Cedar Ridge Cemetery off Route 94, seven miles north of I-80.



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“For 40 years, law enforcement has not given up on Princess Doe,” Warren County Prosecutor James Pfeiffer said in a news conference with New Jersey State Police and numerous law enforcement and assisting agencies.

They also announced charges against her alleged killer, Arthur Kinlaw, a 68-year-old man currently incarcerated in Sullivan County, New York, on two other first-degree murder convictions from 2000. Investigators now allege that Kinlaw tried to lure Olanick — Princess Doe — into prostitution, then, when she refused, drove here to New Jersey and killed her. The spot she was found was apparently random, though authorities are still trying to piece together parts of her last year alive.

State police said Kinlaw is serving a term of 20 years to life on his previous convictions. He could face another life sentence in New Jersey if convicted of first-degree murder in the Princess Doe case.

Kinlaw confessed to the Princess Doe slaying in written statements dating back to 2005, authorities revealed Friday. But the prosecutor said that determining the victim's identity was crucial to assembling a solid case.

Princess Doe received widespread attention over the decades. She was the first unidentified crime victim to be entered into the National Crime Information Center database by the FBI in 1983.

But her identity remained elusive. DNA samples were obtained over the years, but it was only recently that forensic agencies were able to connect her genetic material with a genealogical profile. Her skeleton was tested in 2007 by the University of North Texas Center for Human Identification. In 2021, the lab Astrea Forensics performed a new DNA test, the results of which were forwarded to Innovative Forensic Investigations, which examined genealogy information. Family members were identified to provide their own DNA samples for comparison.

Olanick's identity was finally confirmed on April 29. Her alleged killer was charged on Wednesday.



Sketches and computer models over the years tried to show what Princess Doe may have looked like, in the hopes that someone would come forward with more information. lehighvalleylive.com file photos

The same techniques involving DNA and genealogy also helped solve another local cold case: The "[Tiger Lady](#)," another unidentified woman, whose body was found near an I-80 rest stop in 1991. Nicknamed for a tattoo on her calf, the Tiger Lady was revealed last fall to be 16-year-old Wendy Louise Baker of Coatesville, Pennsylvania.

Tiger Lady and Princess Doe were separated by 11 years and just seven miles. Now both of their cases have been cracked within eight months of each other.

"In New Jersey, there is no time limit for justice," Acting Attorney General Matthew Platkin said during Friday's news conference in Blairstown for Princess Doe.

Relatives of Olanick sat in a row together during the announcement. Her photo was pinned to their shirts. A spokesperson for the family — a cousin of Olanick's who was 13 when she disappeared — thanked law enforcement for their efforts over four decades.



Eric Kranz, one of the original investigators, speaks to reporters after Princess Doe is identified as Dawn Olanick, a 17-year-old from Long Island, New York, during a news conference on July 15, 2022, 40 years to the day since her body was discovered in a Blirstown cemetery. Kranz coined the Princess Doe nickname. Steve Novak | For lehighvalleylive.com

The case became personal for many of the investigators. Eric Kranz was one of the original Blirstown officers involved. He's the one that coined the Princess Doe nickname.

"It's very nice to know she has a name," Kranz said after the news conference.

Princess Doe was taken in by the community and it will be the family's decision if Olanick ultimately returns home to Long Island. But for now, she remains where she has for the last 40 years, in a quiet corner of the cemetery. Her grave marker on Friday morning was decorated, as it often is, with flowers and small mementos. It appeared someone recently left fresh roses, pink and red in the warm morning sun.

The gravestone reads: "Princess Doe. Missing from home. Dead among strangers. Remembered by all."

But she's no longer among strangers. Not now that we know her name.



Fresh flowers and mementos decorate the gravesite of Princess Doe in Blirstown, New Jersey, on July 15, 2022, the 40th anniversary of the discovery of her beaten body in the woods at the edge of Cedar Ridge Cemetery. The mystery of her identity has been one of Warren County's most notorious cold cases. Steve Novak | For lehighvalleylive.com