

42 years later, woman found dead in Indian River County identified

by Alexis Cruz

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A body found in 1982 in a canal near a road in Vero Beach, Florida, was identified as Evelyn Lois Horne Townsend, the Indian River County Sheriff's Office announced on March 12, 2024. (WPEC)

VERO BEACH, Fla. (CBS12) — A "Jane Doe" in Indian River County is getting her name back, four decades later.

The Indian River County Sheriff's Office (IRCSO) revealed a woman whose body was found shot four times in 1982, in a canal on the side of State Road 60, had been identified as **Evelyn Lois Horne Townsend**.

Townsend's family traveled to Vero Beach to meet with investigators Tuesday and be there as investigators revealed the latest developments in the case.

"To be honest with you, I didn't think my mother's body would ever be recovered," Townsend's daughter Debra Townsend Dubois said during the news conference. Sixty years old now, she was only 18 when her mother went missing.



Evelyn Lois Horne Townsend's daughter Debra Townsend Dubois speaks during the Indian River County Sheriff's Office announcement on March 12, 2024. (WPEC)

Dubois was not the only family member who joined Sheriff Eric Flowers on Tuesday. Townsend's brother, Levon Horne, also attended and described what it is like to get news like this, after all these years.

"It's basically like slipping out of a movie or something," he said. "So, it's gonna take me a while to absorb this and get my act together, I guess."

Flowers said knowing the longtime Jane Doe's name not only will give Dubois, Horne, and other loved ones peace, it will give investigators new avenues to pursue.



Evelyn Lois Horne Townsend's brother Levon Horne speaks during the Indian River County Sheriff's Office announcement on March 12, 2024. (WPEC)

"We have people or persons of interest that we've identified," he noted during the news conference. "Unfortunately, they are deceased, but that doesn't mean we're going to stop trying to find out what happened to her and how she ended up there."

Flowers indicated detectives are still working this case as a homicide investigation. Townsend, who was born in 1939, had some connections to drugs and was known to drift around the state, he added. Flowers also noted the sheriff's office has received a \$500,000 cold case grant from the U.S. Department of Justice to investigate cases like these.



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Though detectives have not found out who is responsible for her death, Evelyn's family said they are looking forward to bringing her body back to a safe place.