

Sandusky man washed up as John Doe decade ago

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The sister of a Sandusky man whose body surfaced in Kentucky nearly a decade ago is asking the public for help in uncovering what happened to her brother in the days leading up to his death.

Robert Slack, 61, of East Market Street, was [last seen in 2006, riding his bike](#) near Huron. A few weeks later, his body, at the time identified as John Doe, was discovered in Louisville.

Now, Slack's relatives are searching for answers — and hope the community will be able to help.

Missing person

In 2014, Slack's sister, Betty Dunn, contacted Sandusky police in search of her brother, as she was hoping to track him down to settle an estate.

When Dunn was unable to find him, she enlisted the help of local investigators, and Sandusky police Detective Gary Wichman soon took on the case.

Wichman began searching for any trace of Slack, and learned he was last spotted in late July, 2006, riding his bicycle near Rye Beach Road. At the time, he was wearing a tan t-shirt with a photo of a spider printed on the front.

As part of their investigation, police collected DNA swabs from Slack's siblings and entered them into a national crime and missing persons database.

A few months ago, a DNA match was made — Wichman learned Slack's body had washed up in August 2006 in a tributary of the Ohio River, in Beargrass Creek, Louisville.

Officials in Kentucky were unable to identify Slack back in 2006, and listed him as a 'John Doe' in their records. A coroner had ruled his death consistent with drowning.

Unanswered questions

Even though Slack's family now knows what eventually happened to him, they're still left with several lingering questions about what occurred in the meantime.

“He was a fairly reclusive person and didn't associate with a lot of people. He didn't have any means of transportation except his bike,” said Wichman. “So we're still trying to figure out or explain how he got from Sandusky Ohio, to his body being recovered in Louisville, Kentucky.”

Wichman said it was possible Slack's body moved down the Ohio River for a short period, but that still wouldn't explain how he traversed such a great distance.

Slack's bicycle, meanwhile, was never recovered or seen again.

Wichman tried to glean clues from Slack's medical history, but his attempts to locate any local doctors or dentists who treated him have not been fruitful.

Searching for answers

Betty Dunn is now asking the public for help in her brother's case.

“We're trying to figure out how he got from Sandusky to Kentucky. To us, something's not right. We don't know what happened and we want answers,” Dunn said.

Slack had no family or known ties to Kentucky, so his family is puzzled as to why or how he ended up there.

“It's very bizarre — if he truly rode his bike all the way from Sandusky, that's quite a long ride,” she said.

Relatives are hoping any medical personnel who treated Slack will contact Sandusky police with potential information

“We hadn't seen (Robert) since 1987 at our father's funeral; he was estranged from the family. (In 2014), my mother passed away and he needed to be aware of it. But when we found out there was a problem — that he was missing — we were totally in shock,” Dunn said.

“Was there something going on we didn't know about? Did he ride his bike off into the sunset?” she asked. “We don't know, but we'd like somebody to come forward.”

Anyone who knew Slack, saw him riding his bike during the timeframe he went missing, treated him in a medical capacity, or recognizes the distinct spider t-shirt he was last seen wearing is being asked to contact Sandusky police at 419-627-5858.

Source: <http://www.sanduskyregister.com/story/201604270013>

Doe Network: 1101UMKY