

# Alaska troopers ID serial killer's victim 40 years after murder

October 22, 2021 by Casey Grove, Alaska Public Media



Robin Pelkey. (Alaska State Troopers)

Alaska cold case investigators say they have named another woman murdered by the state's most notorious serial killer, after nearly four decades of mystery about her identity.

She'd been known as "Horseshoe Harriet" after her body was found 37 years ago near Horseshoe Lake north of Anchorage. Troopers announced Friday the young woman's real name was Robin Pelkey, a 19-year-old originally from Colorado. Investigators identified her through extensive genealogy research.

Troopers say Pelkey was living in Anchorage in the early 1980s, around the time Robert Hansen was picking up young women in the city, flying them to remote locations and murdering them. In 1984, Hansen pleaded guilty to four murders. He later admitted to killing a total of 17 women and, in a helicopter, showed investigators where he'd left the bodies.



Robert Hansen (APD photo)

Pelkey was one of the 17 women Hansen admitted to murdering, trooper spokesman Austin McDaniel said Friday.

“Alaska State Troopers were able to locate 12 bodies,” McDaniel said. “At this point, now that we’ve identified Horseshoe Harriet as Robin Pelkey, there is one body that we’ve recovered that remains unidentified, and that is who we believe to be Robert Hansen’s first victim, Eklutna Annie.”

As they did in the Pelkey identification, McDaniel said the troopers’ Cold Case Investigation Unit continues to work with Outside genealogical research labs on creating a DNA profile of Eklutna Annie and constructing a family tree to find potential family members.

In the Pelkey case, the research led investigators to one of her family members living in Arkansas, and a DNA sample confirmed they were close relatives, McDaniel said.

That technique has helped bring closure for other previously unidentified murder victims in other cases, but it's also been used to track down suspects in at least three other cold case murders in Alaska, McDaniel said.

"So that's a major priority for the state troopers, for law enforcement in our state is, not only to hold accountable those who victimize Alaskans, but also to bring closure to families of victims across the state," he said.

Troopers notified Pelkey's surviving family about her identification, McDaniel said.

"At this point they've asked to remain private, so I don't have any additional information about them or their reaction at this time," he said.