

Remains of woman found on farm 34 years ago identified

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Nora Elia Castillo (Baca County Sheriff's Office)

BACA COUNTY, Colo. ([KDVR](#)) –A cold case is no longer cold. The remains of a woman that were found on a farm in 1988 have been identified.

The investigation started in June of 1988 when a farmer reported to the Baca County Sheriff's Office that he found what he believed were human remains on his property southwest of the Town of Springfield.

[Do you recognize this woman? Unidentified body found in 1973](#)

Deputies from the sheriff's office and the Baca County Coroner estimated the remains had been there for one to three years. After searching the area for days and documenting evidence, the sheriff's office said deputies found

nothing to identify the remains or determine why the person died or how they ended up in the farmer's field.

Timeline of investigation

Investigators said they took several steps to identify the woman's remains over the last 34 years.

- Dental impressions were made, and dental records were submitted to the National Crime Information Center
- DNA samples were taken and submitted for analysis
- An anthropological study was completed to try find something to identify the remains
- Facial reconstruction was completed to try to get an idea of what the person may have looked like

Investigators said they had many possible matches to the dental records, however, they were compared to the remains and all excluded.

[Cold case: Have you seen Nicole Silvers?](#)

Case goes cold

The case eventually went cold, and the remains were named "Jane Doe". The remains were buried in the Springfield Cemetery. Investigators said they buried copies of important case information with the remains in hopes of someday being able to identify the body.

Technology advances

The sheriff's office said the [Colorado Bureau of Investigation](#) reached out in May of 2021 and asked if they could submit the evidence from the 1988 Jane Does case into the [national missing and unidentified persons system](#) that was started in 2007.

A few months later, in July, the Baca County Coroner's Office contracted Solved by DNA, an investigative genetic genealogy company, to try and identify "Jane Doe."

The DNA records of "Jane Doe" were located but they were not adequate enough to do a familial study due to what the sheriff's office said were limitations in technology at the time the remains were located.

On Dec. 13, 2021, the sheriff's office and coroner's office had the remains of "Jane Doe" exhumed so they could get new samples to test for DNA.

The DNA samples were sent to the CBI for analysis. After the analysis, the DNA profile was entered into the [national missing and unidentified persons system](#).

[Cold case: Who killed Clifton Holloway 17 years ago?](#)

DNA match located

In August of 2022, the sheriff's office and coroner's office were notified of a possible familial DNA match to "Jane Doe."

Investigators with Solved by DNA said they were able to find a person with DNA markers that indicated they were a family member of "Jane Doe."

The sheriff's said they also contacted several possible family members of the match and helped them get in touch with Solved by DNA.

[Cold case: What happened to Edith Lehnerz 26 years ago?](#)

Next, the possible match was asked to submit an additional DNA sample to determine if the "Jane Doe" was related to them.

On Sept. 26, 2022, the national missing and unidentified persons system notified the sheriff's office that the possible family DNA for "Jane Doe" had been located.

On Oct. 6, 2022, Baca County agencies were notified that the DNA from "Jane Doe" was a match to a person who submitted her DNA to the McAllen, Texas Police Department.

Remains identified

The sample of DNA from the McAllen Police Department had been submitted in 2004 by a person searching for her missing mother, Nora Elia Castillo.

The daughter of Castillo filed a missing person case for her mother in 1996, even though her mother had been missing since 1986 or 1987, the sheriff's office said.

Castillo's family was located and notified that she was found in Baca County, Colorado.

“Many thanks go out to all the agencies that cooperated in identifying Nora Elia Castillo! The Baca County Sheriff’s Office, the Baca County Coroner’s Office, Michele Kennedy with Solved by DNA, Colorado Bureau of Investigation, McAllen Texas Police Department, NamUs, and the University of North Texas all worked closely together investigating and solving this portion of the case,” the sheriff’s office shared.