

Officials: ‘Jane Doe’ identified more than 40 years after dying in hospital



After more than 40 years, officials in South Carolina said a "Jane Doe" has been identified as Virginia Higgins Ray.(FHD Forensics)

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RICHLAND COUNTY, S.C. (WIS/Gray News) - A “Jane Doe” in a 1982 cold case was identified on Tuesday, according to South Carolina officials.

According to the Richland County Coroner, the woman was identified as **Virginia Higgins Ray**.

Officials said Ray was diagnosed with schizophrenia and was a patient at Richland County state hospital when she was later transferred to the women’s ward on Bull Street, but never provided her name.

According to medical records, Ray suffered a grand mal seizure and a subsequent fall before her death at a hospital in Columbia, South Carolina. Her death reportedly was caused by aspiration from the contents in her stomach.

Despite exhaustive search efforts by the coroner’s office and anthropology team, Ray remained unidentified for over 40 years, [WIS](#) reports.

The anthropology team eventually turned to genetic genealogists at [FHD Forensics](#) for help on the case. That team found almost 4,400 people in her family tree and 11 sets of ancestor couples with intermarried descendants.

The team was eventually led to a group of surnames out of Wilmington, N.C., and the surrounding area before a targeted press release was sent out.

Officials said Ray's daughter contacted the anthropology department on Mother's Day of this year and said she believed they had her mother's remains.

The Richland County Sheriff's Department DNA lab confirmed the relationship between her and a sibling of Ray's to the unidentified remains of "Jane Doe" on May 19.

Officials also said the investigation was underwritten by the [Dean and Tina Linn Clouse Memorial Fund](#).

Ray's family has started up a [GoFundMe](#) to help pay for her burial expenses.