

# Remains found in 1982 identified as guitarist for R&B group The O'Jays

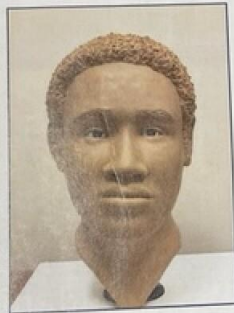
O'Jays guitarist's remains identified nearly 40 years later





hair style are the artist's estimations to complete missing markers for identification.

Anyone with information is asked to call Ohio BCI's Criminal Intelligence Unit at 740-845-2406



AKRON, OHIO 44308  
PRESS RELEASE - February 26, 1982

Report from J. Lawrence Angel, Ph.D.  
Curator of Physical Anthropology  
Department of Anthropology  
Smithsonian Institution

Preliminary results on the bones submitted:

1. The bones were that of a negro male.
2. Age in his late twenties, early thirties.
3. Stature of 5'5" to 5'6", + - 1".
4. The subject had a slight build.
5. The subject, although slight in build, was muscular.
6. The subject was right handed.

The bones also revealed that:

1. The bones were approximately two to three years old.
2. They showed holes in the skull with the following possibilities:
  - A. Coffin wear.
  - B. Storage of the body in a damp cellar.
  - C. Blunt trauma.



3. Facial bones were shattered indicating possible trauma.
4. The bones/body were cut up prior to being placed in bags.
5. The subject at the age three to four had an illness with a very high temperature.
6. The vertebrae showed adolescent kyphosis.
7. There may have been repeated blows to the head prior to death.

Doctor Angel's written report will be forwarded in approximately two weeks.

With the cooperation of the Twinsburg Police Department and the other city departments, the recovery of the bones was made possible.

Anyone having information regarding the above, please contact the Summit County Coroner's Office at 379-5680 or the Twinsburg Police Department at 425-3871.

By: [Bob Jones](#) , Ian Cross  
Posted at 9:05 AM, Dec 14, 2021

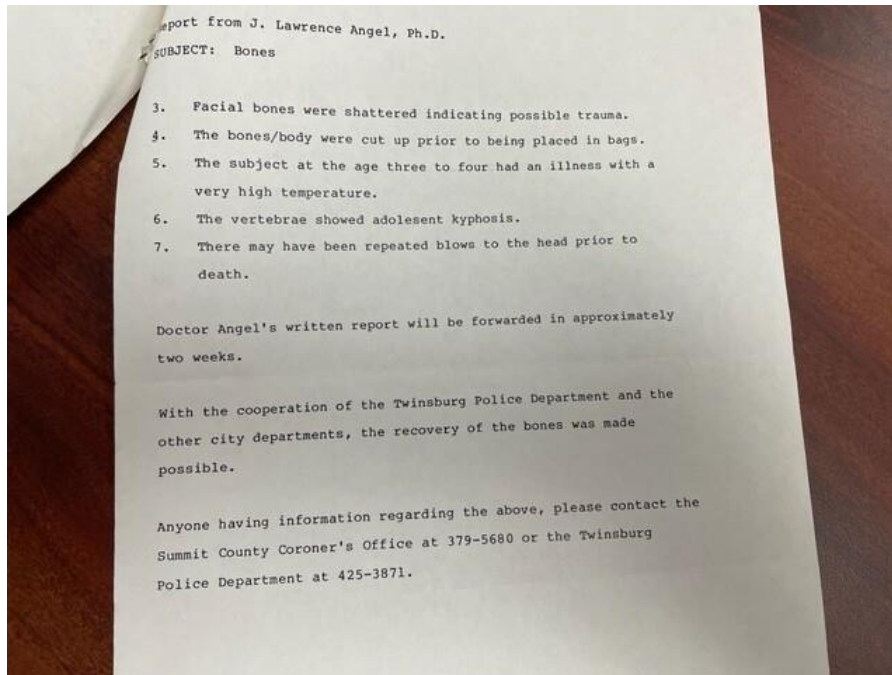
and last updated 7:46 PM, Dec 14, 2021

TWINSBURG, Ohio — Human remains [discovered in Twinsburg in 1982](#) have now been identified as those of Frank “Frankie” Little, Jr., who was a guitarist and songwriter for the R&B band The O’Jays, as a result of genealogical research from the DNA Doe Project.

The original case file on the unidentified remains.

The partial remains were recovered in a garbage bag behind a now-closed business on Cannon Road in Twinsburg, according to police. A worker found a skull in the snow behind the business. Police then discovered the other body parts in the garbage bag.

The manner of death has been ruled a homicide.



Bob Jones | News 5

Another page from the original report on the unidentified remains.

“It’s definitely nice that we can give some answers to the family and hopefully they have some sense of closure,” said Twinsburg Detective Eric Hendershott. “He had a life, and ultimately he ended up here in Twinsburg, with his life taken by another.”

Little was born in Cleveland in 1943 and raised here. In the mid-1960s, he was a guitarist and songwriter for The O’Jays. He also served in the U.S. Army for two years, including a deployment to Vietnam during the Vietnam War.

“Frankie was a member of the band in the 1960s,” Hendershott said. “He played guitar with the band in the studio and on tours.”

Eddie Levert, the lead singer of the O'Jays, said Little was sentimental, loving and passionate.

Levert said Little moved with the band to California in the 60s, but he did not stay on the west coast.

"He could have been a great entity in the music business, but he was in love and love drove him back to Cleveland," Levert said.

Levert lost track of Little over the years and was stunned to learn of the murder of his former band mate.

"I never would have thought this would happen to him. I don't know why anyone would do him like that," Levert said.

Little had a daughter who passed away in 2021 and a son who has not yet been located or identified, police said.

Little was last known to reside in Cleveland, and it is believed he was last alive in the mid-1970s. Not much is known about his disappearance or death.

The identity of the remains was a mystery for almost 40 years, until, in October 2021, the DNA Doe Project provided names of potential living relatives who were able to provide Little's name, police told News 5.

Margaret O'Sullivan, one of Little's cousins from Cleveland, was among the family members who was contacted. She was asked if she had any missing relatives.

"I said yes. I have a cousin name Frankie Little is missing," O'Sullivan said. "We don't know what happened to him. We always wondered what happened, so we don't know what happened to Frankie at all."

A brother in Georgia provided a DNA sample, which was analyzed by the Ohio Bureau of Criminal Investigation Crime Lab. Little's identity was confirmed by Dr. Lisa Kohler with the Summit County Medical Examiner's Office.

Kohler said data provided to her through DNA testing revealed odds indicating it was 398,000,000 times more likely that the two men were brothers.

"It was clear that there was a match here, that we had finally been able to put a name to those remains," Kohler said. "I feel comfortable saying he died from unknown injuries and that this is a homicide."

Kohler said the remains are the oldest that are stored at the Summit County Medical Examiner's Office. Arrangements will eventually be made to turn Little over to relatives for a proper burial.

The connection between the old remains and The O'Jays was an unexpected twist for everyone involved in the case.

"The fact that he was a musician, and it seems like he had some degree of prominence at one point in time, it's neat to have that background," Kohler said.

Elias Chan, a volunteer with DNA Doe Project, worked on the case for more than two years.

Chan said the investigation was “far from a slam dunk” and hit many roadblocks along the way as the team searched for potential relatives, but the DNA link finally provided the answers the non-profit organization was seeking.

“The goal is to kind of hang in there, commit to it, keep checking those matches, keep going down the lines and keep thinking innovatively,” Chan said.

O'Sullivan said the family is grateful to have answers so that Little can finally rest in peace.

"Now we have closure," she said.

Hendershott said with the remains identified 39 years later, the focus now is trying to figure out who killed Little.

“We’re trying to figure out how he got there and who could have put him there. That’s what we don’t know,” he said.

Comparison of an artist's sketch of the victim made in 2009 and a photo of Frank Little.