

Body found in Pike County identified after 26 years

By Doug Wilson Herald-Whig Posted: Sep. 13, 2016 1:40 pm BOWLING GREEN, Mo. –

A woman's body found 26 years ago in Pike County has been identified. Sgt. Al Nothum of the Missouri State Highway Patrol said tests have confirmed that the body of a white female found Aug. 26 1990, was that of Cynthia L. Day of National City, Ill. Hikers discovered the body in 1990 below a scenic overlook, off Mo. 79. There was evidence of blunt force trauma, and the case was handled as a homicide. The identity of the woman could not be confirmed, though.

A year later the remains were sent to the Colorado Forensic Science Lab, where the bones were boiled to aid with facial reconstruction. Pike County Sheriff Stephen Korte told reporters from the St. Louis Post-Dispatch that soft tissue often was boiled off bones in the 1990s as a means of preservation. Investigators at that time did not know they were losing organic material that would, within a few years, allow for DNA testing.

On July 26, a Missouri State Highway Patrol Division of Drug and Crime Control investigator received a phone call from an individual who believed the unidentified female might be the mother of an acquaintance. Investigators, using new technology, were able to find DNA in the remains. Genetic markers from Melody and Kimberly Day confirmed that the woman was their mother.

In a 2012 interview with the Post-Dispatch, the sisters told how they last saw their mother on Aug. 10, 1990, when Kimberly brought her newborn son by for a visit. Cynthia Day told them she planned to leave her boyfriend. "A couple days later, we went back to look for her and she, the boyfriend and everything she had was gone," Melody Day told the Post-Dispatch. "We saw the boyfriend a few weeks later, then never after that."

The daughters had long thought the remains were those of their mother. The dead woman's height matched Cynthia Day's 5-foot-2. An autopsy confirmed the woman had undergone a hysterectomy, as had Cynthia Day, and the body was found with a ponytail holder similar to those used by the missing woman.

Law enforcement officials say the boyfriend was in a California prison several years ago for a conviction there. He has since been released. Korte said in 2012 that tests at the time had not been conclusive, but he was hopeful the technology would continue to get better. "This is a great example of what the citizens of Missouri and law enforcement can accomplish when information is shared and relationships are bridged," Nothum said. The investigation is continuing by the Patrol's Division of Drug and Crime Control and the Pike County Sheriff's Department. Anyone with information is urged to contact DDCC at 636-300-2800, or the Pike County Sheriff's Department at 573-342-3202.