

Nassau County Police Department and the FBI Leverage Othram's Forensic Sequencing Platform to Identify a 1997 Gilgo Beach Homicide Victim

A young woman, known as "Peaches," whose remains were found in 1997, are now known to belong to Alabama native and Army veteran, **Tanya Jackson**.

Solved



Summary

In June 1997, the torso of an unidentified woman was found inside a container in the woods next to McDonald Pond at Hempstead Lake State Park. Hempstead Lake State Park is near Ocean Parkway on Long Island in Nassau County, New York. Her remains were in a plastic tub covered by plastic garbage bags, and she was found with a maroon towel and a dark floral pillowcase. Her head, both arms, and both legs (below the knee) were severed but were not found with the torso. On her left breast, she had a tattoo depicting a heart-shaped peach with a bite taken out of it and two drops falling from its core, which resulting in her being given the nickname "Peaches."

Investigators worked extensively to identify the woman, including releasing a photo of her tattoo to the public and publishing a photo of it in a national tattoo magazine

to find the artist. The details of the woman's unidentified person case were entered into the National Missing and Unidentified Persons System (NamUs) as UP11652. Despite law enforcement's exhaustive efforts, Peaches remained unidentified for nearly three decades.

In December of 2010, police discovered four sets of remains on Gilgo Beach in Suffolk while searching for Shannan Gilbert, who had gone missing earlier that year. These four individuals-- Melissa Barthelemy, Megan Waterman, Amber Lynn Costello, and Maureen Brainard-Barnes--were dubbed "the Gilgo Four," and suspected to be victims of a serial killer, dubbed the Long Island Serial Killer.

Police continued to search along Ocean Parkway when in April 2011 they found six more sets of remains: an unidentified Asian biological male dubbed "Asian Doe," "Fire Island Jane Doe" who was later identified as [Karen Vergata in 2023 using Othram technology](#), Jessica Taylor and Valerie Mack, both of whom had been found partially in Manorville in 2003 and 2000, and the extremities of a woman named "Jane Doe 3," with an unidentified toddler dubbed "Baby Doe," who was later found to be Jane Doe 3's daughter.

In 2016, DNA testing linked the extremities that were identified as Jane Doe 3 as belonging to Peaches. Peaches's remains were found on the Nassau side of Ocean Parkway in 2011, making her the only victim in the case to be found solely in Nassau County. Investigators were also able to associate two gold bracelets with the woman's remains.

In 2020, forensic evidence was submitted to Othram to determine if advanced DNA testing could help to identify Peaches. Previous attempts at building DNA profiles from the remains had failed, but Othram scientists were able to refactor the existing data for the unknown woman to build a usable comprehensive genealogical profile. After successfully completing the process, the DNA profile was delivered to the FBI's forensic genetic genealogy team and the FBI team performed the necessary work to generate investigative leads. Peaches is now known to be Tanya Jackson, an Army veteran originally from Alabama, who was born October 22, 1970. Tanya was a resident of Brooklyn, NY at the time of her death.

The identification of Tanya and her child, Tatiana, represent the 12th and 13th cases in the State of New York where officials have publicly identified an individual using technology developed by Othram. To read about other cases in New York, visit [DNASolves](#).