

Grand Bay ‘Jane Doe’ identified nearly five decades later

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MOBILE, Ala. ([WALA](#)) - A murdered, dismembered and nameless woman has been identified.

Ada Fritz has been known as ‘Jane Doe’ since her body was found in Grand Bay in 1976. According to the Mobile County Sheriff’s Office, teenage boys found Fritz’s body in Sessions Creek off of Potter Tract Rd in Grand Bay in May of 1976.

The 62-year-old had been shot in the back of the head. Her hands were cut off and she was wrapped in trash bags and dumped in the water. January 2022, FOX10 News Anchor, Shelby Myers spoke with one of those teenagers who found her.

He said, “Even though I was 14 years old, it freaked me out that bad. I had to sleep on the floor in my parents room.”

Until 2023, nobody knew whose body it was. Her case sat cold for nearly 50 years!

In 2022, the Mobile County Sheriff’s office released a new sketch of what she might have looked like. They hoped someone would recognize her. Nobody did. But this year, despite her body being cremated and placed in a mass grave with others, Sgt. Johnny Thorton found a dental mold in her file that still had some dead skin on it.

That DNA was sent off to a lab and a profile was created. Using genealogical research, cold case specialist Olivia McCarter, was able to link a family tree to the woman and ID her as Ada Fritz.

McCarter said Fritz never had any kids. Her only living relative is a nephew who lives out of state. McCarter said the woman was likely visiting Grand Bay on a fishing trip because she liked to fish and hunt. Fritz was originally from Oregon.

It’s unclear why she was murdered, but the sheriff’s office does think they know who did it. Henderson Williams is accused, but he’s not talking. He died in a Mississippi prison in 2008. Henderson was convicted of the murder of his own mother. Detectives said Henderson cut off his mother’s hands and dumped her in a body of water in Grand Bay, too.