

Murdered Phoenix Man Identified After Nearly 40 Years — But Hundreds More are Waiting

[ELIAS WEISS](#) DECEMBER 17, 2021 10:29AM

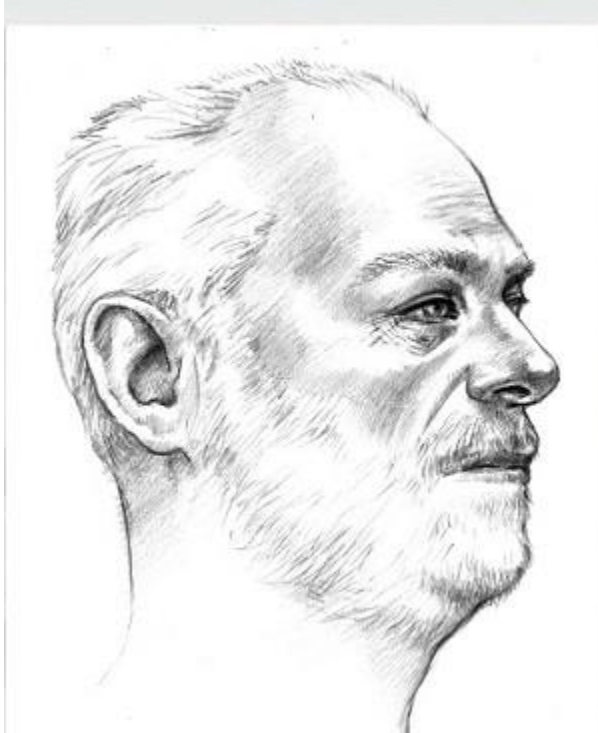


A display case at the Maricopa County Medical Examiner's Office **Sean Holstege**

After 38 years of doggedness and sleuthing, investigators have identified a homeless man murdered in South Phoenix.

But there are hundreds more people who died without anyone knowing their real names because they were homeless too.

People in their neighborhoods may know snippets about them – first names, nicknames, habits, likes, and dislikes. But when they die, it is as if they disappeared without a trace.



The 1983 Baseline John Doe, depicted in a police sketch here, was identified on November 5, 2021.
DNA Doe Project

On September 11, 1983, the murder victim was found in a field near Baseline Road and South Central Avenue. He was bludgeoned to death.

The victim was likely 50 years old when he was killed in a drunken altercation, based on matching details reported in the FBI's Supplemental Homicide Report.

The Phoenix Police Department, teaming up with the Maricopa County Medical Examiner's Office and the California-based nonprofit DNA Doe Project, identified the victim last month.

Loved ones had been searching for answers for decades.

"This man had a family who missed him," said Cairenn Binder, the genealogist who led the DNA Doe Project team that closed the timeworn case. "He was a clever man who had experienced mental illness and misfortune in his life."

Family members asked police to withhold his name, out of respect for their privacy.

The Unidentified Persons Bureau in the Medical Examiner's Office has identified 362 nameless individuals who died since 1970.