

'Macon Jane Doe' identified, confirmed as victim of serial killer Samuel Little

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BIBB COUNTY, Ga. - After nearly five decades, the identity of a woman found off Arkwright Road in Macon, previously known as "Macon Jane Doe," has finally been revealed. The Bibb County Sheriff's Office, in collaboration with the Criminal Justice Coordinating Council (CJCC), successfully solved the case and identified her as **Yvonne Pless**, who was 20 years old at the time she fell victim to Samuel Little, the FBI's most prolific serial killer.

The breakthrough in the case came when Capt. Shermaine Jones of the Bibb County Sheriff's Office and Amy Hutsell, Program Director for CJCC's Sexual Assault, Child Abuse and Human Trafficking Unit, first joined forces in 2018. Little, who had since passed away, confessed to killing two women in Macon. Yvonne Pless was Little's initial victim in 1977, followed by Fredonia Smith, who was murdered in Washington Park in 1982. To verify the authenticity of Little's confessions regarding the unsolved Macon cold cases, Jones and Hutsell traveled to Wise County, Texas, where Little was being held.



Macon Jane Doe

After conducting interviews with Little, Capt. Jones officially closed both cases and contacted the remaining family member of Fredonia Smith to provide closure. However, the family of Macon Jane Doe remained unknown. In 2022, Jones and Hutsell resumed their collaboration and employed forensic genetic genealogy techniques with the assistance of Othram. Through this process, they identified a relative of Yvonne Pless, who then connected them with the rest of her family members. Little confessed to a staggering total of 93 murders, with eight of his victims being Georgia citizens and the ninth from Chattanooga, Tennessee. Interestingly, Little left the remains of the Chattanooga victim in Dade County, Georgia.

Sheriff David Davis expressed his gratitude, stating, "Thanks to the dedication of Captain Shermaine Jones and Director Amy Hutsell, the family members of Yvonne Pless and Fredonia Smith now have closure concerning their missing or victimized loved one. I believe with continued dedication, teamwork, and advancement in technology, we can bring that same closure to other awaiting families."

CJCC Executive Director Jay Neal echoed Sheriff Davis' sentiments, adding, "CJCC is dedicated to providing innovative resources to our criminal justice partners. We were pleased to collaborate with the Bibb County Sheriff's Office to provide long-awaited answers in these cases. We hope that these answers have brought healing to the families of these victims."

The family of Yvonne Pless released the following statement:

We appreciate the interest in our family member's story. When Captain Jones and Ms. Hutsell notified us that Yvonne had been identified, we were unaware she was deceased. We are mourning the loss of our loved one and have no comments at this time. We ask that our privacy be respected.

Amy Hutsell, who oversees the Georgia Sexual Assault Kit Initiative (GA SAKI) Task Force, revealed that the project received a task from the FBI's BAU-4 to assist in matching Little's

confessions with nine cold cases across Georgia jurisdictions. The Task Force provides consultation and technical assistance to state and local law enforcement agencies in the investigation and prosecution of cold case sexual assaults that have been reopened as a result of the state's efforts to test previously unsubmitted sexual assault kits.