

# Human remains identified after 42 years as Portland man



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After more than 40 years of questions, a set of human remains now has an identity, the Oregon State Police announced on Wednesday.

"The unidentified has been identified," authorities said in a [Facebook post](#) that detailed the cold case.

The skeletal remains of a man that were first discovered by hikers at the bottom of Multnomah Falls in September of 1979 have now been identified as that of Freeman Asher Jr.

Police say the relatives of Asher have been notified of the discovery and they are working on releasing his remains to their care.

According to police, a few possessions were found that day on September 14th as well, including clothing, eyeglasses, and hair that authorities said indicated the person "may have been of African American biological origin." An anthropologist with the Smithsonian Institution in Washington, D.C. analyzed the remains that year.

However, it would be more than two decades before they were re-examined in 2006. Four years later, in 2010, a DNA sample was uploaded to the CODIS database, though it never yielded a

match with a missing persons case. Following that, a Clackamas County forensic artist created a composite drawing that included the personal items that were found at Multnomah Falls.

A grant awarded to OSP in 2018 allowed the agency to perform "innovative DNA techniques on unsolved unidentified skeletal remains cases." Two years later, a DNA Phenotyping and Genetic Genealogy report listed a possible name for the remains found -- Freeman Asher Jr.

Police say he still had relatives in Portland and was thought to have moved to the city around 1976. Through extensive interviews and a search for relatives, police learned that Asher disappeared and was presumed dead by most of his family.

A sister of Asher's in California agreed to a DNA test for comparison, and with the sibling relationship genetically confirmed, authorities were finally able to properly identify the remains on January 29, 2021.

"We are dedicated to solving the unsolved and bringing closure to families' missing a loved one. The unidentified will never be forgotten," said OSP in a statement on the case.



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State police said multiple agencies worked together to make the identification, including the Oregon State Medical Examiner's Office, Smithsonian Institute, Clackamas County Sheriff's Office, Multnomah County Sheriff's Office, Portland Police Bureau, Parabon Nanolabs and San Fernando Police Department.