

LOCAL NEWS

Body found in Lorain in 1989 has been identified

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LORAIN — The remains of an unidentified man from a decades-old cold case have been identified.

The body of Terrence Patrick Brennan was found April 3, 1989, among the rocks on the shore of Lake Erie behind 3428 West Erie Ave. in Lorain, according to a news release from Lorain police. Brennan was about 36 at the time.

When Brennan was found, he was wearing a western-style shirt, jeans and a cowboy boot. He had a yellow-metal cross with a circle and two turquoise stones, with two additional stones missing. He also was wearing a Seiko watch.

Lorain Police Detective John Dougherty said fingerprints were taken at the time, but in 1989 the ability to run prints across jurisdictions was limited. The newer technology was able to produce a hit when the prints were rerun this year from when Brennan was arrested in 1971 in Forest Park, Ill., on charges of theft, possession of burglary tools and criminal damaging.

He said police in Forest Park and Hamtramck, Mich., where Brennan's last known address was, had little information on the man. Dougherty said at the time Brennan's body was found, the cause of death was believed to have been an accidental drowning.

According to a Chronicle-Telegram article from the time, police were trying to identify the body of a man found on the beach near the wastewater treatment plant. At the time there were reports of missing persons out of the Marblehead and Cleveland stations of the U.S. Coast Guard.

The Cleveland report concerned a pilot whose plane went down over Cleveland and the Marblehead report involved one of two boaters lost after going overboard in November 1988. Police at the time were waiting for dental records in an attempt to make a positive identification.

Lorain County Coroner Dr. Stephen Evans said identification was never made.

“Back in the day they had two or three different people who they thought he was,” Evans said. “But based on dental records and so forth, none of the people they thought he was turned out to be. So he went down as an unknown.”

Dr. Frank Miller, who works in the Lorain County Coroner’s Office, said he learned about the new fingerprint technology at a seminar and the coroner’s office reached out to the FBI hoping for a match.

“I had it re-searched and the name popped,” Miller said.

Miller said Brennan’s case was one of two cold cases the office had. The other is a skeleton that was found in Columbia Station in 1981, Miller said, but DNA tests have so far led nowhere with that case.

Anyone with information on Brennan’s death is asked to call Dougherty at (440) 204-2105.

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