

MISSOURI

# Jefferson County identifies man in decades-old John Doe case

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JEFFERSON COUNTY, Mo. – The Jefferson County Sheriff’s Office has identified a man previously known only as “John Doe” for more than 30 years after his death.

On Tuesday, the sheriff’s office announced the man has been identified **Benny Leo Olson**, originally from Illinois.

Investigators say Olson’s body was found in the Mississippi River, just south of Festus, in September 1994. He was found deceased with no tattoos or other identifying marks, and no family members came forward to identify him before he was buried in 1995.

Last fall, [Olson’s remains were exhumed](#) from a grave site in Bellefontaine Neighbors as part of a renewed effort to solve the case.

Using advanced DNA technology, forensic and medical experts were able to extract and sequence his DNA. Law enforcement officers then scoured databases and records to match the profile to a person.

“I am honored to have assisted the Jefferson County Sheriff’s Office in identifying Mr. Olson after so many years,” said Forensic Genetic Genealogist Alyssa Feller via a news release. “This case resolution is a testament to the power of investigative genetic genealogy to give John and Jane Does their names back and provide answers to family.”

The identification effort came in a collaboration between the Jefferson County Sheriff’s Office, the Regional Medical Examiner’s Office, the St. Louis County Medical Examiner’s Office and the Jail Administrator of the Madison County Sheriff’s Office.