

Mississippi County Sheriff's Office, Arkansas Attorney General's Cold Case Unit, & Arkansas State Police Team with Othram to Identify a 2006 John Doe

Nearly twenty years after a man's remains were found by an Arkansas highway, he has been identified as 51-year-old **Little John Sutton**, who was missing from Tennessee since 2006.

Solved



Summary

On September 27, 2006, a highway department worker discovered human remains while mowing. The discovery was made on the side of a roadway in Mississippi County, Arkansas in the Buckeye Community. The Mississippi County Sheriff's Office responded and began collecting evidence and investigating. It was determined that the remains belonged to an adult Black man, likely between the ages of 30 and 50. He was found wearing torn black running pants, briefs, white socks, a T-shirt and white tennis shoes and was about 5'11" tall.

Despite an investigation into his identity, the man could not be identified and he became known as Mississippi County John Doe. Details of the case were entered into the National Missing and Unidentified Persons System (NamUs) as UP2827.

In June 2025, investigators teamed with Othram to leverage identity inference, a process that enables investigators to identify individuals from DNA evidence, even when there is no known reference sample to initially compare against. Officials with the Arkansas Attorney General's Office Cold Case Unit, the Arkansas State Police Crime Lab, and the Mississippi County Sheriff's Office worked together to submit forensic evidence to Othram's laboratory headquartered in The Woodlands, Texas.

At Othram, scientists reviewed details of the case, determining that advanced DNA testing could help to identify the man. Othram scientists worked to develop a DNA extract from the provided skeletal remains, using Forensic-Grade Genome Sequencing® to build a comprehensive SNP profile for the man. This SNP profile powered a forensic search led by Othram's in-house forensic genetic genealogy team, resulting in new investigative leads about the man's identity.

Using this new information, a follow-up investigation led investigators to potential relatives of the man. To determine the possible relationship between the relatives and Mississippi County John Doe, investigators collected a reference DNA sample from a possible family member. Using Othram's KinSNP® rapid relation testing, a comparison between the family member's DNA profile and the John Doe's DNA profile was made. This comparison, along with the investigative efforts of law enforcement, have now led to the identification of Mississippi County John Doe as Little John Sutton, who was born on October 12, 1954. Sutton, who went by the name "James Harris," was 51 years old at the time that his remains were found in 2006. If alive today, he would be 71 years old.

Sutton was last seen in Memphis, Tennessee in August of 2006. He left Tennessee for Missouri to work with a Memphis produce company and was not seen or heard from after again. Sutton was reported missing in October 2006 and the details of his case were entered into NamUs as MP160. An investigation into Sutton's disappearance from Memphis is continuing.

Funding for advanced DNA testing and forensic genetic genealogy conducted by Othram was provided by the Arkansas Attorney General's Office, whose prioritization of this case and others in the State of Arkansas is helping to bring answers in long-unsolved cases.

This is the ninth publicly announced case in the State of Arkansas where officials leveraged Othram's identity inference pipeline. Explore other cases on [Othram's website](#).