

Knox County Regional Forensic Center identifies body of woman who disappeared in 1998

The woman was just 27 years old when her body was found near a creek in Campbell County.



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KNOXVILLE, Tenn. — Investigators and scientists who were determined to crack a cold case from 1998 matched remains that were found in that case to Lori Alexander, a woman from Ohio.

She was just 27 years old when her body was found near a creek in Campbell County. The forensics team said Wednesday all they needed was DNA, but it took a while to get it.

"An unidentified woman was found in Campbell county in 1998 as the victim of a homicide," said Chris Thomas, over administration at the Knox County Regional Forensics Center.

An autopsy report showed that she was found naked, with a gunshot wound to the head and a stab wound in her right chest. Thomas said no one claimed the body at the time of death.

Campbell County had her buried as an indigent, so she has a tombstone that lists an unidentified person.

Years later, in 2015, Alexander's body was brought to the Knox County Regional Forensic Center, and an examination of the remains led investigators to a helpful discovery.

"We noticed that even though the body was decomposed, we were able to get a set of fingerprints of the deceased, and so we were able to take those fingerprints," said Thomas. "The FBI reached out to us, and through upgraded technologies, they were able to match the identity of the fingerprints to a missing woman from Toledo, Ohio."

They credit the advanced technology and the persistence of their forensics team for bringing closure to Alexander's friends and family.

It is the second time this year that the center has identified a victim from a decades-long homicide case. In August 2020, the center was granted permission to directly submit prints to an FBI database, which allowed for comparisons with recently digitized fingerprint cards from other jurisdictions across the nation, and from past decades.

With that, they were able to identify [Tena Marie Gattrell](#), a 27-year-old woman from California who was killed in Knox County in 1987.