

# Remains found in Tucson nearly 40 years ago finally identified

Authorities said **Rogelio Morales Caudillo** was murdered, his remains were found in shallow grave

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By 13 News Staff

*Published: Apr. 15, 2026 at 6:40 PM EDT|Updated: Apr. 15, 2026 at 8:37 PM EDT*

TUCSON, Ariz. (13 News) - A nearly four-decade mystery has been partially solved, but the question of who committed the murder is still up in the air.

The remains known as Three Points John Doe were found buried in a shallow grave in a remote desert area off Valencia Road near Ryan Airfield on April 5, 1988.

Investigators determined the remains were from a 17- to 18-year-old man and had been murdered one to two years before the remains were discovered.

Through the work of investigators and the [DNA Doe Project](#), the remains were identified as Rogelio Morales Caudillo.

Rogelio was 17 years old when he vanished from Tucson in 1986.

The Pima County Office of the Medical Examiner brought the case to the DNA Doe Project.

The project said once a DNA profile was generated, it became clear that the remains were from a man of Mexican descent.

“Although we had no close DNA matches, our research indicated that Three Points John Doe had roots in Sonora, Mexico,” said team leader Lance Daly. “We identified a family of interest and eventually began finding descendants of theirs who had moved from Sonora to Arizona, so we focused on the branches that ended up in the Tucson area.”

A team worked on the case for five months, using Mexican birth records and American obituaries to construct a family tree.

Eventually, they narrowed in on a particular branch of the family, and contact was made with a potential relative.

That relative didn't know of any missing family members, but she promised to ask around. That led to a crucial revelation - the disappearance of Caudillo, a cousin of hers who'd vanished in 1986.

“Although this relative was not aware of anyone missing, her decision to ask some of the older members of her family led to someone who did know of a missing cousin,” said team co-leader Emily Bill. “Thanks to a single question, Rogelio’s family finally has the answers they’ve been seeking for nearly 40 years.”

With the genealogical evidence and the timing of his disappearance lining up, Rogelio was presented to the Pima County Office of the Medical Examiner as a possible candidate.

Further DNA testing facilitated by the Pima County Sheriff’s Department later confirmed that Caudillo was the boy formerly known only as Three Points John Doe.