

# Collin County Medical Examiner's Office Teams with Othram to Identify a 1998 Homicide Victim

After 27 years, investigators have identified a homicide victim whose remains were found in Collin County, Texas as **Penny J. Gunn**.

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## Summary

In April 1998, the body of an unidentified Black female were discovered in Lake Ray Hubbard in Collin County, Texas. At the time of the discovery, the woman was wearing black Adidas jogging pants, gray socks, and black Adidas athletic shoes. The woman's height was estimated to be 5'7" and her weight was approximately 170 pounds. Her age could not be determined. With few leads to go on, the woman became known as Collin County Jane Doe. Details of the case were entered into National Missing and Unidentified Persons System (NamUs) as UP3612. A forensic sketch depicting the woman's likeness was developed and released to the public in hopes that it would generate leads about her identity.



In 2024, the Collin County Medical Examiner's Office partnered with Othram to use Forensic-Grade Genome Sequencing® and forensic genetic genealogy to develop new leads in the case. Forensic evidence was delivered to Othram's laboratory where scientists successfully developed a DNA extract and then used Forensic-Grade Genome Sequencing® to build a comprehensive DNA profile for the woman. Othram's in-house forensic genetic genealogy team used the profile in a forensic genetic genealogy search to develop new investigative leads that were returned to law enforcement.

Using this new information, a follow-up investigation was conducted leading investigators to potential relatives of the woman. A reference DNA sample was collected from a possible relative and compared to the DNA profile of the unidentified woman using KinSNP® Rapid Relationship Testing. This investigation led to the positive identification of the woman, who is now known to be Penny Gunn, who was also known as Penny J. Morris, born in August 1962. Penny would have been 35 years old at the time that her body was found.

The investigation into Penny Gunn's last days and death continues. Anyone with information about Penny Gunn should contact the Dallas Police Department Cold Case Supervisor Sergeant Jeffrey Hunter at [jeffrey.hunter@dallaspolice.gov](mailto:jeffrey.hunter@dallaspolice.gov) or call (214) 671-3661.

A portion of Othram's casework costs associated with the advanced DNA testing and forensic genetic genealogy completed in this case was contributed by donors through a DNASolves® crowdfund. We are grateful to everyone that helped crowdfund this case and other DNASolves cases. Remaining costs for the advanced DNA testing and forensic genetic genealogy used in this case was provided by

NamUs, a national program that assists the criminal justice community with the investigation and resolution of missing, unidentified, and unclaimed persons cases across the United States and its territories. NamUs is funded and administered by the National Institute of Justice (NIJ) and is managed through a contract with Research Triangle Institute International (RTI). Othram is grateful for the support of RTI, NamUs, and the NIJ.

The identification of Penny Gunn represents the 21st case in the State of Texas where officials have publicly identified an individual using technology developed by Othram. Visit [DNASolves](#) to learn about other Texas cases where your support can help bring long-awaited answers to families.