

Three decades later, remains of missing woman found

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A New Mexico cold case that has haunted investigators for nearly three decades is finally getting answers as the remains of Ann Lombard Taylor, who went missing when she was 33 years old, have been found.

“Holy crap, we finally found her,” said former Sandoval County Sheriff’s Detective Adam Crosby.

Lombard Taylor was reported missing from her home in Placitas, New Mexico, on May 1, 1996. Her husband, James Taylor, told investigators the two had fought and that his wife walked away, leaving behind their four children.

But her son, Tyler Anderson, never believed it. “I knew my mother, and the idea of her just disappearing and never hearing from her ever again didn’t really fit well with who she was,” he said.

Anderson’s persistence helped breathe new life into the case. For years, detectives dug around the property, searching around the septic tank, an orchard and brought in cadaver dogs. Every time, they came up empty.

Three decades after she disappeared, the answer was uncovered. On May 19, 2026, the current owners of the property were digging a trench to run electricity to a shed.

“As the backhoe operator was digging, he pulled up Ann’s remains wrapped in a blanket and a blue tarp. And she was only buried about two and a half feet down,” said Sandoval County Sheriff Detective Don Chewning.

Investigators said Taylor never kept his story straight. “He advised that she just left. Over the years, he had several stories that he made up to tell his family and law enforcement that she left with another guy. And then he said that she was buried in different locations,” said Det. Chewning.

Investigators said the evidence, including a trail of police reports describing years of abuse, led them to believe that Taylor was the person responsible, but he will never face charges as he died in 2019.

"I think the family definitely deserved to have that closure and to have Mr. James Taylor be adjudicated. It really is unfortunate," said Crosby.

Anderson said he came to terms with that years ago and is now just grateful his mother is coming home.

"Put her where she would want to be and not where that man put her," said Anderson. "This is not something that I ever expected to be able to have."

The pain and suffering he grew up watching led him where he is today, working with victims of domestic and sexual violence as a tribute to his mother.

"I grew up around that, and I want to be the type of person that I, my siblings, my mother needed," said Anderson.

The medical investigator has not issued a cause of death. Investigators said there were no obvious injuries to Lombard Taylor's skeletal remains, but they said her husband had a history of putting her in a chokehold.

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