

# San Joaquin County Sheriff's Office Teams with Othram to Identify "Lady in the Fridge"

The "Lady in the Fridge" is now known to be Amanda Lynn Schumann Deza, who was likely 29 years old when she was murdered.

Solved

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## Summary

In March 1995, an individual recycling in the unincorporated community of Holt in San Joaquin County located a partially submerged refrigerator in an irrigation canal off Bacon Island Road. Inside the refrigerator was a woman's body. Investigators at the time believed the woman had been entombed in the refrigerator underwater for several months leading to an advanced state of decomposition. The female was described as Caucasian with strawberry blonde hair, 110 to 130 pounds, with an approximate age of 29 to 41. Additionally, there were obvious signs of injury to the female resulting in it being ruled a homicide.

For nearly twenty-seven years, San Joaquin County Sheriff's Office investigators have been trying to identify the homicide victim dubbed "Lady in the Fridge." The case was entered into the National Missing and Unidentified Persons System (NamUs) as UP68494; however, despite the exhaustive efforts of law enforcement, the woman's identity remained a mystery. After exhausting all the leads for

investigators to pursue, the case eventually went cold. Over the years, many investigative and scientific techniques have either been improved or created through new technological advances. One of the methods is investigative genealogy, which combines DNA analysis with traditional genealogy research and historical records to generate investigative leads for unsolved violent crimes.

In 2022, San Joaquin County Sheriff's Office and the San Joaquin County Medical Examiner's Office partnered with Othram to determine if advanced forensic DNA testing could help establish an identity for the woman or a close relative. Skeletal evidence was sent to Othram's lab, where Othram's forensic scientists developed a DNA extract and used Forensic-Grade Genome Sequencing® to build a comprehensive DNA profile for the unknown female. In addition, Othram's in-house genealogy team used forensic genetic genealogy to produce investigative leads, which were returned to San Joaquin County Sheriff's Office Investigators.

A follow-up investigation contacting the victim's possible mother and daughter was made. They provided their DNA sample to compare, confirming the identification of Amanda Lynn Schumann Deza, born August 11, 1965.

Now that Amanda has been identified, we are looking for clues to her disappearance. We know that Amanda was separated from her husband and had three young children at the time of her disappearance. Speaking with the family, she was last seen at an unknown apartment complex in the city of Napa with an unidentified male she met in a rehabilitation facility.

We are calling upon the public for assistance and encourage anyone with information about Amanda Lynn Schumann Deza or possible details surrounding her murder to reach out to San Joaquin County Sheriff's Office. You may contact us at [209-468-5087](tel:209-468-5087) or by email at [coldcase@sjgov.org](mailto:coldcase@sjgov.org).