

Jefferson County Coroner's Office Teams with Othram to Identify a 2000 John Doe

After two decades, investigators have identified a man whose remains were found on a hiking trail outside of Golden, Colorado.

Solved

Summary



In July 2000, the skeletal remains of an unidentified man were discovered by Open Space trail workers who were building the Galbraith hiking trail north of Golden, Colorado. The Jefferson County Coroner's Office determined that the man likely died at that location in the fall or early winter of 1999. The remains were that of a white male estimated to be between the ages of 45 and 55 years. Investigators determined that the decedent was approximately 5'3" in height and had a slim build, weighing approximately 135 pounds. A dental exam at autopsy revealed evidence of poor dental health, a tooth implant, a root canal, and gum disease.

Several articles of clothing were recovered within the vicinity of the man's remains, including a size large green camouflage jacket and plaid shirt, and size 32x30 blue jeans. At the time of discovery, the man was wearing white Nike tennis shoes and socks. Additionally, a Marlboro cigarette package was recovered near the man's remains.

In January 2014, the case was entered into the National Missing and Unidentified Persons System (NamUs) as case number UP11940. To help visualize the man's appearance during his life, an artist rendering was created in 2016. Despite continuous efforts by law enforcement to identify the man, no leads yielded a match and the man's identity remained a mystery.

In 2023, the Jefferson County Coroner's Office submitted forensic evidence to Othram in The Woodlands, Texas to determine if advanced DNA testing could help identify the man. Othram scientists successfully developed a DNA extract from the forensic evidence, and then used Forensic-Grade Genome Sequencing® to build a comprehensive genealogical profile for the unknown man. Othram's in-house forensic genetic genealogy team then used this profile to conduct extensive genetic genealogy research, ultimately providing new investigative leads to law enforcement.

Using this new information, a follow-up investigation was conducted leading investigators to potential relatives of the man. This investigation led to the positive identification of the man. **At the request of the family, the identity of the man will not be released at this time.** The family has asked for the opportunity to grieve privately but are incredibly grateful to finally have answers. Final arrangements are being made for the return of the remains.

Funding for the advanced DNA testing and forensic genetic genealogy used in this case was provided by NamUs, a national clearinghouse 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. We are grateful for the support of RTI, NamUs, and the NIJ.