

Ontario Provincial Police & Toronto Police Service Leverage Othram's Genetic Testing Platform to Identify Deep River John Doe

Advanced DNA testing and forensic genetic genealogy have helped identify a man whose body was discovered in 2001 in a remote area of the Laurentian Hills.



Solved

Summary

In September 2001, Ontario Provincial Police found the body of a man in an outhouse on a cross-country ski trail. The body was found near Deep River, Ontario located in the Laurentian Hills. The man was wearing Pepe brand blue jeans, a black Fundamentals shirt, a long-sleeved dark blue cotton shirt, black Replay running shoes, and a black leather Calvin Klein belt. He also wore a silver ring with an aquamarine stone on his right little finger and had a blue Levi's pocket watch with a built-in compass. His possessions also included Copper Koh Sakai glasses with reflective lenses, a blue nylon Eagle Creek backpack containing a candle, lantern, mini flashlight, a water container, protein bars from a GNC store, and \$60 in cash.

A post-mortem examination conducted in 2001 concluded that the man died due to a medical condition, likely ruling out foul play. Investigators believe that the man was found within a few days of his death. Investigators could not find anyone that recognized him or could identify him. The details of the case were checked against

missing person reports and fingerprint records across Canada and the United States, but ultimately, he could not be identified and the case eventually went cold.

In 2023, the Ontario Provincial Police, in collaboration with the Ontario Forensic Pathology Service and the Office of the Chief Coroner, teamed with the Toronto Police Service and Othram, to leverage forensic genetic genealogy to identify the unknown man. Forensic evidence was sent to Othram's laboratory in The Woodlands, Texas and Othram scientists used Forensic-Grade Genome Sequencing® to build a comprehensive DNA profile for the unknown man. Once the profile was developed, the Toronto Police Service used the profile in a genetic genealogy search to identify new leads in the case.

The leads along with a follow up investigation enabled law enforcement to locate the man's family and his identity was confirmed through additional DNA testing. Out of respect for the family's privacy, investigators have **not released the man's name**. The reason for his presence in the area where his body was found remains unknown.

The successful identification of this individual was made possible via a funding award from the Solicitor General, which supports the Toronto Police Service in providing forensic genetic genealogy services across Ontario for cases involving unidentified human remains, historical homicide, and sex assault. Othram is honored to be able to provide forensic DNA testing services for this effort.