

# Toronto Police Service Leverages Othram's Genetic Testing Platform to Identify a 1996 John Doe

After nearly three decades, a man found in a field in Toronto, Ontario, has been identified.

Solved



## Summary

In August 1996, the remains of an unidentified man were found in a field near Lake Shore Boulevard West and Spadina Avenue in the Canadian city of Toronto, Ontario. The man, who was estimated to be approximately 5'8" tall, did not have any identification or possessions with him. Authorities responded to the scene and determined that his body had been there for an extended amount of time and ruled out foul play. The man had long gray and white hair that he wore in a ponytail with a receding hairline and an examination revealed arthritis in his hands, back, and hips. The man was estimated to have died several weeks to months prior to the discovery of his remains.

Initial attempts were made to identify the man by searching through local missing person cases, but no match was found and the case went cold and he became known as Toronto John Doe. In recent years, the man's traditional DNA profile was submitted to Canada's National DNA Databank, but his identity remained a mystery.

In May 2024, with the approval of the Office of the Chief Coroner for Ontario and the Ontario Forensic Pathology Service, the Toronto Police Service submitted forensic evidence to Othram in The Woodlands, Texas in hopes that advanced DNA testing could help to identify the man. Othram scientists used Forensic-Grade Genome Sequencing® to build a comprehensive DNA profile for the unknown man. Once the profile was developed, it was returned to the Toronto Police Service for use in a forensic genetic genealogy search to develop new leads in the case.

Using these new leads, the investigation found distant relatives who traced their heritage to Quebec, Canada's largest province. In November 2024, the investigation focused on a man from Quebec. In March 2025 a DNA comparison between the deceased man and relatives of the man confirmed his identity. Members of the Service de Police de la Ville de Montreal notified his family, whose **name will not be released at this time.**

The identification of the man represents the 17th publicly-announced case in Ontario where investigators used technology developed by Othram to identify an individual. To read about other cases in Canada, visit the [DNASolves Canada map](#).