

# LaSalle police identify man found dead in Detroit River 17 years later

## DNA match in U.S. database helps bring closure to family across the border

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After nearly two decades, LaSalle police say they've identified a man whose body was discovered floating near Fighting Island in 2008.

On Aug. 15, 2008, officers with the LaSalle Police Service recovered the body of a man found along the western shore of the island in the Detroit River.

Despite efforts to identify him, including media releases shared with local and Michigan-based outlets, all efforts were unsuccessful.

In 2011, investigators developed a DNA profile for the man. They entered it into the Canadian Human Remains Index, a database that stores and compares DNA from unidentified remains across the country.

Then, in 2025, police were authorized to compare that DNA with the U.S. database. On Aug. 14, 2025, the LaSalle Police Service received confirmation of the man's identity from the RCMP's Forensic Science and Identification Service.

Fighting Island is the largest Canadian island in the Detroit River. (Google)

The man's next of kin has since been notified in the United States. Police say there were no signs of foul play, and **no further details about the deceased will be released.**

LaSalle Police Chief Michael Pearce said the breakthrough brings long-awaited closure for the family.

“I am pleased our investigators were able to identify this man and close this investigation,” Pearce said in a statement.

“After 17 years, the family has some closure, and John Doe has been given back his name.”