

Orange County Sheriff's Office Teams with Othram to Identify a 1993 Homicide Victim

A man, whose partial remains were discovered by two hunters in Orange County, Florida, has been identified as 48-year-old **Richard Wick**.

Solved



Summary

In October 1993, two hunters stumbled upon the partial skeletal remains of an unidentified individual on an old vacant lot that had been used as a vegetable farm in Orlando, Florida. The remains were provided to the Orange County Sheriff's Office, who conducted an excavation of the area on the following day in an effort to recover additional remains. Upon examination, it was determined that the remains were that of a white male who was between the ages of 45 and 55 years at the time of his death. Due to the limited information and the condition of the man's remains, no other identifying characteristics could be determined. The man's manner of death was determined to be homicide.

Details of the case were entered into the National Missing and Unidentified Persons System (NamUs) as UP553. Despite the efforts of law enforcement, the man's identity remained unknown for over three decades. With a desire to finally identify the man, the Orange County Sheriff's Office Cold Case Unit contacted Othram in hopes that advanced DNA testing and forensic genetic genealogy could help generate new leads and identify the man.

In 2023, the Orange County Sheriff's Office submitted forensic evidence to Othram in The Woodlands, Texas. Othram scientists successfully developed a DNA extract from the forensic evidence and used Forensic-Grade Genome Sequencing® to build a comprehensive DNA profile for the unknown homicide victim. Once the profile was successfully built, Othram's in-house forensic genetic genealogy team produced new investigative leads that were provided to the Orange County Sheriff's Office.

Using these new leads, the Orange County Sheriff's Office continued a follow-up investigation which led them to genetic relatives of the man. A reference sample was collected from a potential relative and compared to the DNA profile of the man. This comparison confirmed the identity of Orange County John Doe as 48-year-old Richard Wick. Wick moved to Florida from New York and was reported missing by his family, with whom he was in touch with regularly, after he failed to contact them for an extended period of time.

If you knew Richard Wick or have any information about his life or the circumstances leading up to his tragic death, you are asked to contact the Orange County Sheriff's Office Cold Case Unit at [407-836-4357](tel:407-836-4357), or call the Crimeline at 800-423-TIPS.