

Montgomery County Sheriff's Office Partners with Othram to Identify a 1988 John Doe from North Texas

In 1988, an unidentified man was found by hunters near Conroe, Texas and he remained unidentified for more than three decades

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Highlights

Montgomery County Sheriff's Office
Conroe, Texas

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Summary

In 1988, a hunter found what he thought may be human skeletal remains while scouting for a potential hunting location. The man initially left the skeletal remains alone, speculating that the skeletal remains might have belonged to an animal. However, the hunter returned, collected the skeletal remains, and brought them to a dentist for analysis. Initially, the remains were identified as belonging to a female but later analysis revealed the remains belong to an older male.

Once the remains were identified as human, the Montgomery County Sheriff's Office was contacted to investigate. Returning to the location where the skeletal remains were initially found, investigators were able to locate other bones as well as a pair of pants and a shoe. Although a cause of death for the unidentified man was not clear, investigators were able to estimate post-mortem interval (PMI) as four years.

In 2009, UNTHSC extracted DNA from the skeletal remains and developed a DNA profile that was searched in CODIS. Unfortunately, no hits were found in the CODIS database, but UNTHSC did confirm that the skeletal remains belonged to a man. With all leads exhausted, the case eventually went cold.

In September 2021, the Montgomery County Sheriff's Office partnered with Othram to use advanced DNA testing to produce new leads in the case that might reveal the identity of the man or at least help find a close family member. Scientists at Othram used Forensic-Grade Genome Sequencing® to build a comprehensive DNA profile from the skeletal remains of the unknown man. Once a profile was built, a search in a genealogy profile produced DNA matches that uncovered new leads to potential family members for the unknown man. Special thanks to Carla Davis for genealogical research support. The investigative leads that came from genealogical research were sent to the Montgomery County Sheriff's Office investigators so they could investigate the possible familial connection.

Diligent work from the Montgomery County Sheriff's Office, confirmed the investigative leads provided by Othram and confirmed the identity of the unknown man as Charles Wane Dodd. Charles was thought to be from Dallas, Texas and he was reported missing, last seen in August 1985, just 3 years before the skeletal remains were found about 200 miles south of Dallas, Texas. Charles would have been 74 years old at the time of his death. It is possible he was taken against his will. Now that Charles has been found, an investigation into the circumstances of his death continues.