

Date Found: January 3, 1979

Date Identified: February 10, 2023

On January 3, 1979, a duck hunter discovered human remains entangled in fishing line on the tide flats near Spencer Island just south of Marysville, Washington. The Snohomish County Coroner's Office called the decedent "John Doe (79-1)" under Coroner's case number 79-1-7. The Snohomish County Sheriff's Office responded to the scene and determined that there did not appear to be any suspicious circumstances.

On January 4, 1979, Snohomish County Coroner Robert Phillips classified the cause and manner of death as Undetermined, stating that the skeletal remains were found on the tide flats. Records indicate that an examination and dental charting would be done, but these records do not exist today.

The decedent was not identified and on March 15, 1979, Cassidy Funeral Home buried him at Cypress Lawn Cemetery in Everett. While it was common practice at the time to bury unidentified remains, skeletal remains that are discovered today are kept at the Snohomish County Medical Examiner's Office until they are identified.

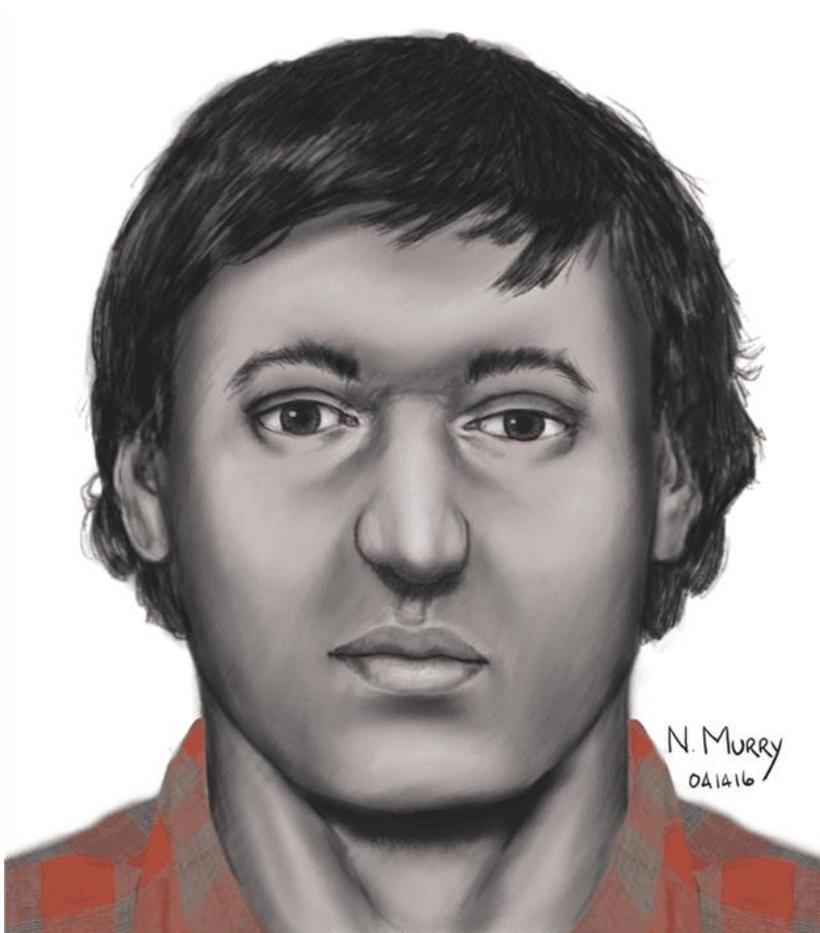
In the years that followed, the case grew cold and, due to a far less extensive record keeping process by the Coroner's Office (which was converted to a Medical Examiner's Office in 1987), it is unclear the extent of work that investigators may have done, including how many known missing persons the remains may have been compared to.

In 2008, Detective Jim Scharf with the Snohomish County Sheriff's Office Cold Case Team and retired Snohomish County Superior Court Judge Ken Cowser began reexamining old unsolved homicide and unidentified person cases in Snohomish County. With the emergence of new DNA technologies, the team was interested in exhuming this case with the hopes of obtaining DNA samples that were not taken during the initial exams. The process of identifying and reviewing the cases, obtaining exhumation permits, and conducting DNA testing can take years.

In July 2015, the decedent's remains were exhumed from the Cypress Lawn with representatives from the Snohomish County Sheriff's Office and the Medical Examiner's Office in attendance. The remains were then transported to the Medical Examiner's Office for further examination and given the name "Spencer Island Doe".

In July 2015, Forensic Odontologist Dr. Kyle Tanaka took dental radiographs, charted the decedent's teeth, and uploaded them to NCIC and NamUs in the hopes of getting a dental match with a known missing person. NCIC is the FBI's National Crime Information Center database which is a computerized index that tracks crimes and missing persons and allows other law enforcement jurisdictions across the country to view details about the case and compare them against their own missing persons cases. No NCIC dental matches were made.

In August 2015, the Snohomish County Medical Examiner's Office entered the case into the National Missing and Unidentified Persons System (NamUs) under case # UP14154. NamUs is a federal database funded by the National Institute of Justice that contains information on missing, unidentified, and unclaimed persons cases from across the country. Dental records and fingerprints, when available, can also be uploaded to a NamUs file which can then be compared against known missing persons nationwide who have had their own dental profiles and/or fingerprints uploaded.



2016 Sketch By Natalie Murry

In April 2016, forensic artist Natalie Murry took measurements and photographs and drew a facial reconstruction of what the decedent may have looked like in life. The drawing is not meant to be a photograph and is the artist's interpretation of what the decedent may have looked like, based on facial morphology. The hope is that someone will see a resemblance or likeness to their missing person and provide leads that will help identify the person.

In April 2016, the late Dr. Kathy Taylor, the Washington State Forensic Anthropologist at the King County Medical Examiner's Office, performed an examination of the remains and estimated that they belonged to an adult male with Caucasian ancestry between 5'2" and 5'6" in height and between 27 - 61 years old. No perimortem trauma was discovered, although there was evidence of an un-set, well-healed left femur fracture.

In September 2018, a section of the right femur (leg bone) was sent to the University of North Texas Health Sciences Center (UNTHSC) for DNA extraction and upload to the FBI's Combined DNA Index System (CODIS). CODIS is a database designed to compare DNA profiles from missing persons to DNA from family reference samples and certain convicted offenders and arrestees. In March 2019, UNTHSC successfully obtained complete mtDNA and STR profiles which were uploaded to CODIS. No matches were made, but this is not unusual for unidentified human remains.

From 2018 to 2021, Snohomish County Medical Examiner Investigators ruled out numerous missing persons by circumstances, STR testing, and dental records.

In 2021, the Snohomish County Medical Examiner's Office began collaborating with Othram, Inc. to obtain an advanced DNA profile, suitable for investigative genetic genealogy, for our unsolved cold cases. This collaboration has resulted in several successful identifications. In January 2021, a section of femur bone from Spencer Island Doe was sent to Othram, Inc. for DNA extraction, testing, and a DNA profile that could be uploaded to genealogical databases. The funding for the laboratory work on this case was generously provided through DNASolves.com.

In May 2021, Othram successfully obtained a DNA extract that was sufficient for testing after multiple rounds of extraction and human enrichment. Othram scientists used Forensic-Grade Genome Sequencing to develop a DNA profile that could be uploaded to genealogical databases. Biogeographical analysis of the DNA profile revealed that the decedent was, in fact, Caucasian. The Snohomish County Medical Examiner's Office uploaded the Othram DNA profile to GEDmatch and FamilyTreeDNA and obtained several matches. An investigator with the SCMEO built ancestor trees from several of the top matches and found a male who went missing in the Everett, Washington area in the late 1970's, Gary Lee Haynie. DNA reference testing of Gary's half-sister ultimately confirmed that Spencer Island Doe was Gary Lee Haynie,



Gary Haynie in childhood

who was about 29 years old when he went missing.

Gary was apparently not reported missing or was reported missing, but the missing persons records were lost over time, which sometimes occurred during the transition from paper to digital records.

Gary was born in Topeka, Kansas, and traveled the world with his mother and adoptive father who was in the Air Force. He loved the Beatles and played the piano. His parents have both passed away and the circumstances of his disappearance are not known.

On February 10, 2023, Chief Medical Examiner Dr. Matt Lacy officially identified the decedent as Gary Lee Haynie.

The Snohomish County Medical Examiner's Office would like to thank the following individuals and organizations for their assistance on this case: Othram, Inc., GEDmatch/Verogen, FamilyTreeDNA.com/Gene By Gene, SCSO Detective James Scharf and SCSO Cold Case volunteer Ken Cowser, the King County Medical Examiner's Office and the late Dr. Katherine Taylor, Forensic Anthropologist Dr. Laura Fulginiti, Forensic Artist Natalie Murry, Forensic Odontologists Dr. Gary Bell and Dr. Kyle Tanaka, genealogist Deb Stone, Caleb Hutton at The Everett Herald, the Washington State Patrol Missing and Unidentified Persons Unit, NamUs and the University of North Texas Health Sciences Center, and Gary's relatives for sharing their DNA, family history, photographs, and records to help solve this 44-year-old mystery.