

Toronto Police Service Leverages Othram's Genetic Testing Platform to Identify a 2008 John Doe

Seventeen years after a man's remains were discovered found in Toronto, he has been identified as a man named **Alcides**.

Solved

Summary

In March 2008, the remains of an unidentified man were found in the area of Bloor Street East and Parliament Street in Toronto, Ontario, Canada. The Toronto Police Service responded and began collecting evidence and investigating. A coroner's investigation determined the death was not suspicious. Despite a lengthy investigation, the man could not be identified and became known as Toronto John Doe (2008).

In 2023, the Toronto Police Service submitted forensic evidence to Othram in The Woodlands, Texas where scientists determined that advanced DNA testing could help to identify the man. Othram scientists successfully developed a DNA extract from the provided evidence and then used Forensic-Grade Genome Sequencing® to build a comprehensive DNA profile for the man. Othram's in-house forensic genetic genealogy team used the profile in a genetic genealogy search to develop new investigative leads that were returned to law enforcement.

The man's biogeographical ancestry coupled with initial genealogy findings indicated that the man was from Europe, which resulted in a bulletin being circulated among online groups from a specific region in Europe. Shortly thereafter, two tips were provided: one from Ontario and one from overseas. These tips that the unknown man could be a man named Alcides.

Using this new information, a follow-up investigation was conducted leading investigators to potential relatives of the man living overseas. Reference DNA samples were collected from a relative and compared to the DNA profile of the unidentified man. This investigation led to the positive identification of the man, who is now confirmed to be Alcides. Alcides was from Portugal and in his 50's when he died, according to media reports.

His family was notified of Alcides's identification and also provided with the details of his burial location. Alcides was never reported missing, but those who loved him

always wondered what happened to him as they had not heard from him in years, according to the Toronto Police Service.

This investigation was made possible through a grant provided by the Ontario Solicitor General and the collaborative efforts of the Ontario Forensic Pathology Service, the Toronto Police Service, Othram, the National Centre for Missing Persons and Unidentified Remains and the Centre of Forensic Sciences.

Individuals who have taken a consumer DNA test can aid ongoing forensic investigations by joining the [DNASolves database](#). Expanding the number of available DNA profiles increases the likelihood of successful identifications, helping to reunite families with their missing loved ones and resolve cases that have remained unsolved for years.

The identification of Alcides represents the 20th case in the Canadian Province of Ontario where officials have publicly identified an individual using technology developed by Othram. Visit [DNASolves](#) to learn about other Ontario cases where your support can help bring long-awaited answers to families.