

Jane Doe Part Three: Giving Jane back her name



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Amber Rae Johnston went missing in August 2021 from Winston-Salem, NC. She has since been identified through DNA testing as Wadesboro's Jane Doe found in May 2022.

WADESBORO — With a heavy heart, Sharon Johnston, the mother of missing woman Amber Johnston has confirmed the news no parent ever wants to receive. On Monday, March 10 Sharon received a phone call from a detective with the Anson County Sheriff's Office who is in charge of the Wadesboro Jane Doe case. It was during this call, as Sharon has since shared with the Anson Record, that she learned her daughter Amber has been positively matched with the DNA of the unidentified woman whose body was found behind the National Guard Armory May 2022.

Johnston says, "The news about Amber being identified was an emotional breakdown for me. I am glad that I can bring her home and she can rest in the cemetery beside her grandfather and grandmother, they were very close."

She adds the last three and a half years have been hard on her and Amber's five children.

"Her children and I knew that Amber would never quit calling and texting them. And I was hoping she was coming home. When I got the news she bought a ticket to Pittsburgh, Penn., and never got on that bus, I knew it was bad," remembers Sharon.

Johnston acknowledges she does feel some amount of closure in finally having an answer for where her daughter has been all this time.

"Amber is gone and it's real, and it's heartbreaking. The horrific pictures on the deer cam will never leave me. But they were part of identifying and bringing my daughter home and that I am thankful for," she said. "Many families are still searching after many years for their loved ones."

Looking ahead, Johnston says she doesn't know what she thinks the next steps in the investigation into her daughter's disappearance will be, but she is hopeful law enforcement will not give up on finding the answers to Amber's story.

"I do know Amber did not get to that location on her own. She had no belongings, no phone, no shoes, no clothes," she said.

Johnston does have some ideas on next steps she would like to see law enforcement take now an identification has been made.

“The living person that used her snap benefits while she was laying to rot in those woods needs to be questioned,” she said. “Her picture should be shown in the area, [because] someone saw something. Someone knows something. Hopefully someday, someone comes forward with information.”

Through the heart breaking journey to find Amber and bring her home, Johnston said she has learned a thing or two about the kindness of strangers — even those from other countries who have reached out to offer prayers, love and support.

“I want to thank all of the people that helped search for her, and spent countless hours from the start of this journey,” she said. “The posters, podcasts and boots on the ground from Dutchy (Dutchess Discussions Youtube channel and Facebook page for the missing) and Angela Mimi. Rae Law in North Carolina going down from Winston-Salem to Charlotte videotaping the way and posting flyers everywhere. A dear person in Myrtle who attached flyers and met me to discuss the missing case with the Myrtle Beach Police Department. The Charley Project, the Anson Record, and so many more people helping, praying and sending me hope, clues and support and sharing Amber’s story. I just want everyone to know that Amber had her struggles, but Amber was a kind soul. She loved us all. She was coming home to her family and friends, but something or someone sidetracked her along the way. She will be coming home in a different way. And we shall visit her and know where she is now. Home.”