

# DNA links decades-old SF missing person case to Texas 'Jane Doe'

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SAN FRANCISCO (KRON) — A missing person case that spanned for more than five decades in San Francisco was officially closed through DNA analysis on Wednesday after multiple law agencies and forensics specialists linked the investigation to a “Jane Doe” in Houston, Texas.

The San Francisco Police Department said Cheryl Lanier was last seen in 1973 in San Francisco when she was 27 years old. Lanier was described as an African American woman, 5 feet 7 inches tall, and weighing 130 pounds, with brown hair and brown eyes.

“The initial missing person’s report of Lanier was filed in 2010. SFPD’s Missing Persons Unit worked tirelessly on the investigation,” SFPD said in a news release Thursday. “However, the case remained open and unsolved. In July 2025, SFPD received a tip out of Harris County in Houston, Texas advising that a deceased ‘Jane Doe’ was potentially Lanier.”



Cheryl Lanier (Photo: SFPD)

Following the new development, SFPD said investigators reached out to Houston police and started working with the State of California Department of Justice's Bureau of Forensic Services. SFPD said DNA analysis was used to determine that Lanier was in fact the "Jane Doe," bringing closure after 53 years to her loved ones.

It is not clear how Lanier ended up in Houston.

“SFPD offers its sincerest condolences to the family and friends of Lanier,” added police.

SFPD said the Harris County Institute of Forensic Science, New York City Police Department and South Carolina Greenville PD also helped with the investigation.