

# Officials: Gregg County murder victim 'Lavender Doe' identified

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Lavender Doe composite and sketch.  
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Lavender Doe has been identified almost 13 years after her body was found on a burning woodpile on an oil lease in Gregg County.

“Lavender Doe” was the name given to the young woman, believed to have been in her late teens or early 20s, who authorities say was killed by the same man accused of killing Felisha Pearson in July 2018.

Joseph Wayne Burnette, 41, remains in the Gregg County Jail on two murder charges. Authorities previously said Burnette had confessed to killing Pearson, whose [body was found in July](#) off Birdsong Street in

Longview, and also killing an unidentified woman whose body was found Oct. 29, 2006, in Gregg County, known as “Lavender Doe.”

The DNA Doe Project, a California nonprofit agency that says it uses “advanced genetic genealogy techniques to identify John and Jane Does,” announced Tuesday on Facebook that it had identified the woman, but did not release her name. The Gregg County Sheriff’s Office also wouldn’t release her name.

“The DNA Doe Project has made an identification in the case of Lavender Doe,” a Facebook post by the DNA Doe Project says. “The young woman was discovered on October 29, 2006, in Kilgore, TX. Since July 2018, the DNA Doe Project has been working closely with the Gregg County Sheriff’s Office, TX on this case. At the request of the GCSO no further details will be released at this time due to the open nature of her case and pending trial. We thank Lt. Eddie Hope, Ret. Lt. Kirk Haddix and the rest of the GCSO for their tireless efforts to identify her, and entrusting us with assisting in her case. We also wish to thank the National Center for Missing & Exploited Children and the National Missing & Unidentified Persons System for their assistance and support during the course of this project.”

Gregg County Sheriff Maxey Cerliano said Hope “has been very diligent in working information and leads and working the Doe project over the years to get to this point.” He declined to release the woman’s identity but said Hope has been in contact with her family.

“Certainly, we hope that this brings some closure and some answers to the questions that they’ve had the last 12-plus years,” Cerliano said.