

Oregon woman identified as 1990s Happy Face Killer's victim

- By: Jerry Howard
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GILROY, Cal. -- A genetic identification program says today an Oregon woman is the fatal victim of a man in prison for murders from the early 1990s.

The DNA Doe Project says with the help of the Santa Clara County CA Sheriff's Office it has identified a woman found near westbound State Route 152 near Gilroy, California as Patricia Skiple. Known as Patty or Patsy, Skiple was born May 29, 1948 and raised in Colton, Oregon.

It says "Happy Face" serial killer Keith Hunter Jesperson confessed to her murder and the strangulation killings of seven other women from 1990 to 1994; he's serving four life sentences without the possibility of parole in the Oregon State Penitentiary.

[The DNA Doe Project, Inc.](#) says it is "an all-volunteer 501(c)(3) non-profit organization whose mission is to identify John and Jane Does and return them to their families. The genealogy research is *pro bono*, but the organization relies on donations to fund lab costs when agencies cannot afford them. To date DDP has made over 70 identifications."

Santa Clara County Sheriff's Office Sergeant Shannon Catalano took the Skiple case to the DNA Doe Project in 2019, hoping its investigative genetic genealogy could identify her. Volunteers researched genetic matches to the Pacheco Jane Doe, determining a likely identity last year that recently was confirmed through DNA testing.

DNA Doe says Sgt. Catalano contacted potential family members to encourage them to voluntarily upload their DNA profiles to GEDmatch, a public DNA database used for forensic cases.

DNA Doe Project team leader Cairenn Binder says, "It would not have been possible to solve this case without the dedication of our law enforcement partners at Santa Clara County Sheriff's Office, especially Sergeant Shannon Catalano, whose tenacious efforts to solve the case made our job as genealogists as effective as possible."

"We thank the voluntary DNA testers who tested and/or uploaded to GEDmatch in order to assist us in solving this case," said team leader Harmony Bronson. "Every single DNA match made a difference in this difficult case."

DNA Doe invites people to visit its [website](#) to learn how to upload DNA profiles to GEDmatch because "your DNA could help solve criminal cases and bring Jane and John Does back to their families and communities."