

‘Valentine Jane Doe Homicide’ cold case solved 29 years after teen girl found dead in Florida



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Wanda Deann Kirkum, 18, of Hornell, New York, was beaten, raped and killed in the Florida Keys in February 1991. (Monroe County Sheriff's Office)

New DNA technology has helped detectives solve a cold-case murder 29 years after a teen girl was found dead in the Florida Keys.

Robert Lynn Bradley beat and raped Wanda Deann Kirkum, 18, and then strangled with her bikini top, the Monroe County Sheriff's Office said Monday.

Kirkum of Hornell, New York, had never been reported missing. Windsurfers found her body February 15, 1991, in a wooded area off U.S. 1 near Mile Marker 35.

The “Valentine Jane Doe Homicide,” documentation for which ballooned to 4,000 pages, drew national media attention at the time and was featured on “Unsolved Mysteries.”

Bradley was killed in a homicide in Tarrant County, Texas, in April 1992, at the age of 31.

Witnesses had seen Kirkum hitchhiking out of Key West the day before her body was found “off a dirt road that leads to an area known to locals as the ‘Horseshoe’ east of Big Pine Key and west of Bahia Honda Key,” the sheriff’s office said.

In a news release, Sheriff Rick Ramsay said the Monroe County Sheriff’s Office worked on the case along with the Florida Department of Law Enforcement. Kirkum’s parents are both dead.

Investigators found that DNA collected from the scene of Bradley’s homicide matched DNA from the scene in the Keys where Kirkum was found.

Evidence suggests Bradley lived in Miami in late November 1990.

“I would like to personally thank Major Crimes Unit Detective Vince Weiner and the Florida Department of Law Enforcement for their efforts in solving this very serious and tragic crime,” Ramsay said in a statement. “This case is a testament and shining example of this agency’s commitment to solving crime, no matter how old the case and no matter the challenges.”

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