

20 years later, police identify woman found burning in church parking lot

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Editor's note: Readers may find details of the case disturbing.

SAN DIEGO ([KSWB](#)) – More than 20 years after her body was found bound and burning in a church parking lot, police have identified the victim in a grisly San Diego murder.

Officials are also putting out a renewed call for answers in her cold case.

Officers discovered the body of then-20-year-old Nicole Weis on Jan. 24, 2000. She was found with her hands cut off and wrapped in cardboard, which was secured around her body with a rope and then lit on fire in the parking lot of the College Avenue Baptist Church.

An artist created a rendering of the victim's face in hopes that someone would recognize the young woman, but she remained unidentified — considered a “Jane Doe” for nearly two decades.



Nicole Weis, a woman killed in San Diego in 2000, is shown in this undated photo provided by San Diego County Crime Stoppers.

In 2019, police enlisted the help of Barbara Rae-Venter, a leading researcher in the field of investigative genetic genealogy, who worked with a team of detectives to upload a Weis DNA sample to an ancestry database. Eventually, the team found a match: Weis' half-brother, Glen Stevenson.

"I was adopted as a kid. And, growing up, I always had some inklings about whether or not I should or shouldn't go looking for my biological family," Stevenson said, in a [video produced by SDPD](#).

Now an adult, Stevenson had uploaded his information to a database in hopes of finally learning more about his family. When police contacted him, he got some of the information he sought, though he was horrified to learn of his half-sister's fate. "It was a wild, shocking way of learning about my family," Stevenson said.

That DNA link to Stevenson opened up further possibilities for investigators tracing Weis to her family, and SDPD was eventually able to follow the family tree to another blood relative: Kimberly Beach, Weis' sister. A Michigan native, Beach told police she knew and loved her sister, but said that in the late 1990s Weis moved to the West Coast and eventually lost touch with the family.

"When my sister was killed, I would have been a month shy of turning 26," Beach told SDPD in an interview. "But when I actually found out that she had been killed, I was a month shy of 46."

In sharing Weis' story, police did not go into detail about what they've learned about the victim's life at the time of her murder, or why she lost contact with her family. But in an emotional plea, Beach urged anyone with information to come forward, and said she wants the world to know that her sister deserves justice.

"I want people to know that my sister was a beautiful girl," Beach said through tears. "Because I miss her. I miss her."

Now armed with Weis' identity, investigators hope they can discover new leads in her case, which had long turned cold. Police urged anyone who might have tips about her murder to reach out, but also put out a more general call for interviews with anyone who knew Weis.

Tipsters can contact the department's Homicide Unit at 619-531-2293, or report tips anonymously to San Diego County Crime Stoppers at 888-580-8477, or [through their website](#).