

Remains identified of murdered 22-year-old Wichita woman missing since 1987, KBI says

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Human remains found 32 years ago near a rural Kansas road have been identified as a missing Wichita woman who was killed, state investigators said.

The Kansas Bureau of Investigation said in a news release that the remains found in Marion County in 1987 belonged to Michelle E. Carnall-Burton. At the time, Carnall-Burton was a 22-year-old woman from Wichita.

Her remains were found Sept. 21, 1987, by a county road worker in a treeline 4 1/2 miles west of Lincolnvile, in Marion County. Her body was lying in tall grass 20 feet from a blacktop county road that runs between Lincolnvile and Durham. The nearly deserted road was being used as a detour for U.S. 77, which was being repaired.

Investigators determined the woman had been murdered, but the body was badly decomposed and couldn't be identified. Anthropologists at Kansas State University examined the remains and created a physical profile of the victim.

In February 2019, the KBI and the DNA Doe Project partnered to use DNA testing and forensic genetic genealogy searching to identify the woman. Investigators determined the victim was related to the Carnall family from Cherryvale.

State agents contacted Leonard "Bud" and Donna Carnall of Corpus Christi, Texas. The parents said they had a missing daughter and voluntarily submitted DNA to the KBI. Testing confirmed the previously unidentified remains of the homicide victim belonged to Carnall-Burton, their missing daughter.

Carnall-Burton had left her home in Cherryvale in 1986 and lost touch with her family. Investigators believe she was killed in June or July 1987. Anyone with knowledge of her whereabouts during that time or other information on the cold case is asked to call the KBI at 1-800-KS-CRIME.

Carnall-Burton was described as a 5-foot-7 white woman who weighed about 140 pounds. She had brown hair, hazel eyes and a small cross tattooed on her lower left forearm.

