

Officials identify ‘Granby Girl’ from 1978 unsolved homicide

Authorities have been able to identify the victim in a decades-old unsolved homicide case in Granby.

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GRANBY, MA (WGGB/WSHM) – Authorities have been able to identify the victim in a decades-old unsolved homicide case in Granby.

Investigators said that on November 15, 1978, a woman’s remains were found under some leaves on a logging road off Amherst Road in Granby. The medical examiner’s office determined that the woman had died from a gunshot wound to the temple, the manner of death was homicide, and that the woman – who was believed to be between 19 and 27 years old – had been dead since approximately June 1978.

For decades, authorities weren’t able to identify the victim, known until Monday only as ‘Granby Girl,’ but approximately two years ago, DNA evidence was obtained from the woman’s remains and sent to Othram, a private forensic lab in Texas. The company was able to get the victim’s DNA profile and was able to identify another woman in Maryland who was likely related to the victim.

“The hope was that with Othram’s cutting edge technology, we could not only extract a viable DNA sample from the victim, but then try to locate one or more living relatives she may have by searching various genealogy databases,” said Northwestern First Assistant District Attorney Steve Gagne.

Authorities contacted that woman, who then led them to the victim’s adult son, who was five years old when the victim disappeared. A comparison of the son’s DNA to the victim’s DNA resulted in a 100 percent parent-child match through forensic genetic genealogy and investigators have formally identified the Granby victim as Patricia Ann Tucker, who was born on July 28, 1950.

“The son had previously uploaded his DNA to the website Ancestry.com and was able to forward his profile to investigators,” Assistant District Attorney Gagne explained. “Later that very same day, Othram compared the son’s DNA profile to the DNA profile they had extracted from the victim’s remains. Othram confirmed the two DNA samples were a 100 percent parent-child match.”

Tucker also had later married names including Patricia Heckman, Patricia Dale, and, at the time of her death, Patricia Coleman.

The investigation reportedly then found that Tucker was married to Gerald Coleman at the time of her death. They were married in 1977 in Middletown, CT and lived along Lake Pocotopaug in East Hampton, CT at the time of her death. Investigators said he was the last person known to be seen with her and that he dropped Tucker's son off at the house of Laura Holmes and never returned to pick him up.

"Matthew never again saw his mother from that point forward, nor did he have any further contact with Gerald Coleman," Gagne added.

Coleman died in a Massachusetts state prison in 1996 while serving time for rape and assault, among other charges. However, we're told he's still considered a person of interest in this case.

Tucker's son, Matthew Dale, was there on Monday as Assistant District Attorney Gagne made the announcement of the breakthrough in this case. He did not want to be on camera, but the assistant DA read a statement aloud that was written by Dale.

"First I would like to say thank you to everyone in trying to identify my mother and wrapping your arms around her, especially the community of Granby. Thank you for never giving up on her. At least I have some answers now after 44 years. It's a lot to process, but hopefully, the closure can begin now. Thank you again."

Anyone with information regarding Laura Holmes, Patricia Tucker, or Gerald Coleman is urged to call Granby Police (413) 467-9222, email jwhite@granbypd.org, or by [submitting a message through the department's website](#).