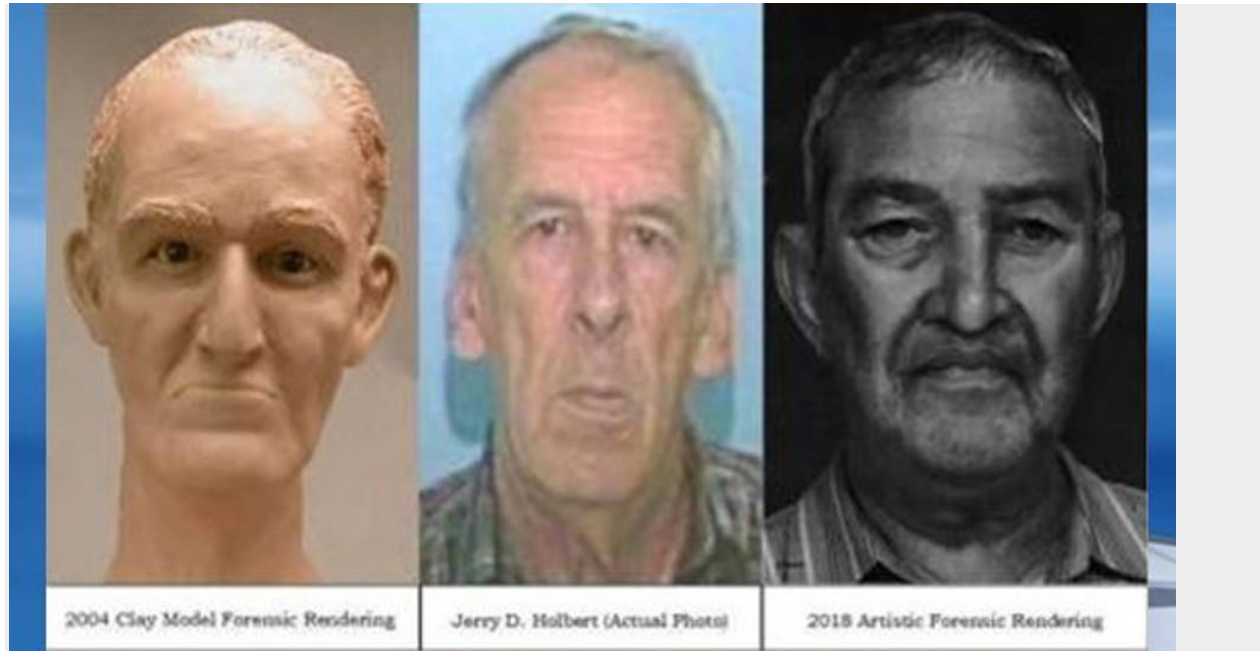


Remains found in Tennessee identified as Charleston man reported missing in 2003

by SHANNON STOWERS

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A 2004 clay model forensic rendering (left), the 2018 artistic forensic rendering (right) and an actual photograph of Jerry D. Holbert (middle). (Courtesy of the Kingsport Police Department)

CHARLESTON, W.Va. (WCHS/WVAH) — Police in Tennessee have solved a 17-year-old cold case involving a missing man from Charleston.

The Kingsport Police Department announced Thursday it had positively identified the remains of a body found in the Holston River on Aug. 11, 2003, as Jerry D. Holbert of Charleston, according to a news release.

Holbert was reported missing on Aug. 4, 2003, after he was thought to have boarded a bus for Ohio and never showed up. Investigators suspect that Holbert, who suffered from dementia, may have mistakenly boarded the wrong bus.

The man's body was found in the river with no identification and only \$267 in cash, according to the news release. Kingsport police said they do not believe foul play resulted in Holbert ending up in the river.

In June 2020, the Kingsport Police Department was informed of the similarities between unidentified remains case and the missing person case. Detectives were then able to get a DNA sample from a relative of Holbert, confirming his identity.

The police department said that while DNA analysis existed in 2003, technology has made significant advancements since then making the identification possible.