

The Milwaukee County Medical Examiner's Office and Wisconsin DOJ Team with Othram to Identify a 1982 Milwaukee Jane Doe

After 44 years, Milwaukee River Jane Doe is now identified as 26-year-old **Berline Trammel**, born November 17, 1955.

Solved



Summary

In March 1982, a young woman's body was discovered near 420 North Plankinton Avenue by an off-duty Wauwatosa firefighter in Milwaukee, Wisconsin. The woman's body was discovered floating between two metal barrels that were tied to a nearby pier in the Milwaukee River. She was described as African American, with brown eyes and black hair with a reddish tint. At the time of her death, the woman was estimated to be between 15-29 years old. Investigators believe the woman had been in the river for several months before her body was found.

Milwaukee River Jane Doe stood about 5'3" and weighed 137 pounds. She had a vertical surgical scar midline on her lower stomach, a scar on her right ankle and a scar on her right forearm. There was evidence of extensive dental work including two extractions, a number of fillings and a partial bridge.

A forensic facial reconstruction was commissioned in 2014, and updated portraits were subsequently released by the National Center for Missing and Exploited Children (NCMEC). Details of the case were entered into NamUs as UP7640. New facial reconstructions were uploaded to her NamUs in 2026. Despite pursuing all possible leads to identify the unknown young woman, her identity was a mystery.

In 2022, with all leads exhausted, the Milwaukee County Medical Examiner's Office reached out to Othram with the goal of using advanced DNA testing and forensic genetic genealogy to identify the young woman. A DNASolves® crowdfund was established to raise the funds necessary for Othram's casework costs and forensic evidence collected during the woman's autopsy was submitted to Othram's lab in The Woodlands, TX.

At Othram, scientists successfully extracted DNA from the provided tissue block. Using this extracted DNA, scientists then worked to build a DNA profile using Forensic-Grade Genome Sequencing®. This DNA profile enabled Othram's forensic genetic genealogy team to conduct an forensic genetic genealogy (FGG) search. The FGG remained active from 2022 through 2026, spanning four years of research, analysis, and investigative follow-up.

During this period, Othram's genealogists and investigators worked to identify and evaluate potential familial connections, build and verify family trees, and pursue leads generated through genetic analysis. The extended timeline reflects the complexity of the case and the effort required to reconstruct family relationships and narrow the pool of potential candidates in this case.

In 2026, investigators finally identified Jane Doe as 26-year-old Berline Trammel, born November 17, 1955. Trammel's family was notified of her identification and expressed gratitude for the long-awaited resolution. We are grateful to those who contributed to the DNASolves® crowdfund, making Berline's identification possible.

This is the 8th publicly announced case in the State of Wisconsin where officials leveraged Othram's identity inference pipeline. Explore other cases on Othram's [website](#).