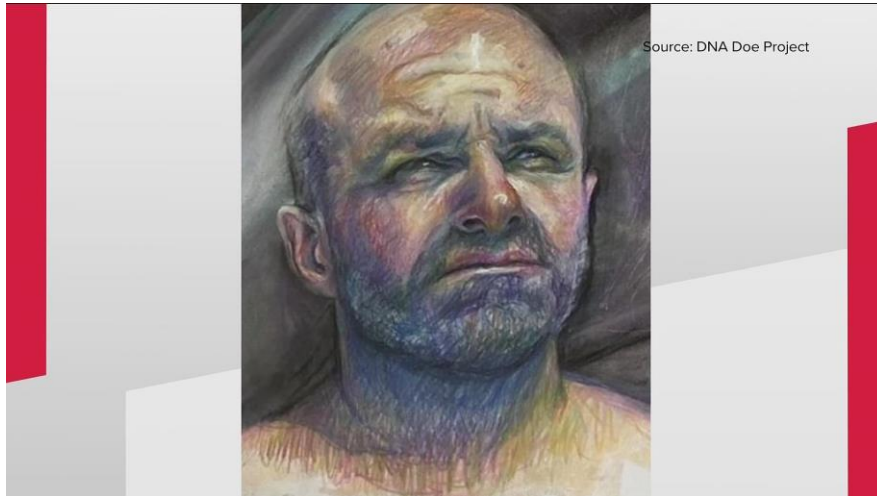


Skeleton discovered in Gwinnett County nearly 20 years ago finally identified

Investigators said his name is Gordon Rexrode.



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GWINNETT COUNTY, Ga. — A nearly 20-year-old mystery is solved in Gwinnett County. The remains of a man found in Lawrenceville back in 2003 have [finally been identified](#) as Gordon Rexrode. The county medical examiner said if it weren't for a non-profit group's help, he would still be a John Doe today.

"Everybody deserves to have their name," said Gwinnett County Chief Medical Examiner Dr. Carol Terry.

Gordon Rexrode's skeletal remains were discovered in a manhole off Craig Drive in Lawrenceville.

"There had been a crew that was cleaning out some storm drains," said Chief Investigator Eddie Reeves. "(They) opened up the manhole and there were the skeletal remains of an individual."

Rexrode was approximately 70 years old when he died. Artists were able to create a bust in his likeness and a sketch, but no one ever identified him. Then last year, Terry learned about the [DNA Doe Project](#), a non-profit dedicated to identifying unknown remains using genetic genealogy.

Terry said small agencies can rarely afford the costs that come with that kind of testing. Her office reached out to the project last February for help and got a discounted rate.

"A few months later they reached out to us and said we think we've got a good lead," said Terry.

A family member's DNA confirmed that lead. The nameless man was Gordon Rexrode.

"Of course I'm hurt. At the same time, I feel that it's helping with closure for the family," said Gerald Rexrode, Gordon's younger brother.

Gerald said his brother was homeless, but stayed in touch with his family members over the phone.

"When he stopped calling we began to wonder. And after, you know, him not contacting us for a couple of years, then I took it upon myself and my brother and I went looking for him," Gerald said.

After all these years, Gerald said the family believed Gordon had died, but they never knew for sure. Until now.

"He was a very kind person. And everybody in Georgia that we talked to, they all loved him," he said.

The family said they plan to hold a celebration of life for Gordon in North Carolina, where they live.

Gordon will hopefully not be the only mystery solved in Gwinnett County. Terry said her office has teamed up with the DNA Doe Project yet again to identify another man whose skeleton was found in 2015. The county has a total of three unidentified people that it hopes it can finally put a name to in the near future.