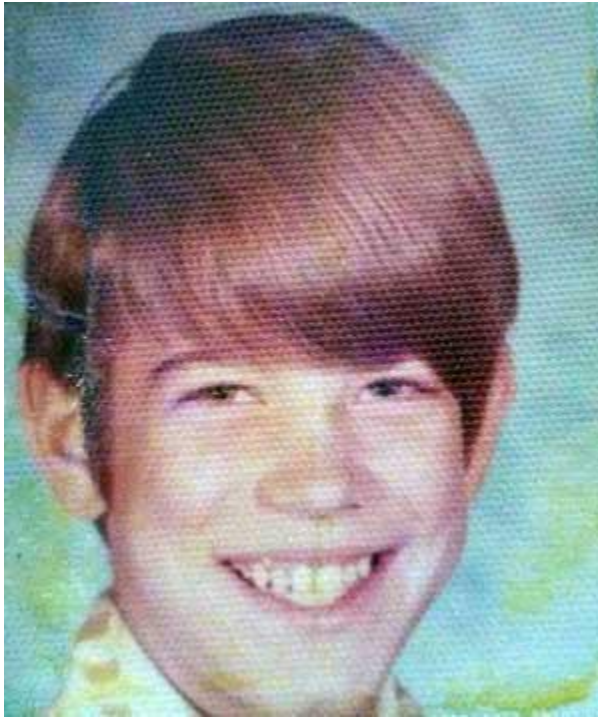


Another John Wayne Gacy victim ID'd, ending family's 40-year agony

By Jessica Suerth, CNN

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New victim of serial killer identified 01:14

Story highlights

- James Byron Haakenson is identified as a victim of serial killer John Wayne Gacy
- DNA submitted by his family led to ID of victim after 40-plus years

(CNN)For half a decade, serial killer John Wayne Gacy prowled the streets of Chicago in search of young, vulnerable boys and men to lure back to his Norwood Park home.

Gacy is believed to have murdered at least 33 men between 1972 and 1978. Some 40 years later, six of those men are still unidentified.

But one family was brought closure Wednesday, as Cook County authorities identified James "Jimmie" Byron Haakenson as another victim of the so-called "killer clown."

Police: Victim was murdered shortly after coming to Chicago

Haakenson was 16 years old when he left his home in St. Paul, Minnesota, in search of a different life in a bigger city in 1976, Cook County Sheriff Thomas Dart told reporters Wednesday.

The teenager came to Chicago in early August and called his mom on August 5, 1976, to let her know he had arrived. It would be the last time she would hear from her son.

Police believe Gacy murdered Haakenson shortly after he made that phone call home, quite possibly that same day.

It is not known how Haakenson and Gacy met. Gacy was known for searching areas around Chicago looking for men who were gay, alone or looking for work.

Gacy would lure men to his home on false pretenses, often offering them rides, money, drugs, alcohol or a job. He would then impair them before sexually assaulting, torturing and killing them.

Authorities used DNA to identify victim

By the time police uncovered the crawlspace in Gacy's home in 1978, Haakenson's body was unidentifiable. For 39 years, he was given a new identity: Victim No. 24.

In the 1970s, police could only identify victims using dental records. Cook County officials removed the jawbones from the eight unidentified Gacy victims before burying them in county cemeteries, Dart said.

County officials found the bones did not provide enough information for four of the unidentified victims, and in 2011, authorities exhumed the bodies to gather more DNA.

Dart said authorities gathered enough DNA evidence on the victims and are ready to start bringing closure to their families. Dart said he hopes more families will come forward in the near future so more victims can be identified.

Nephew of victim searched for answers

It was earlier this year when a nephew of Haakenson's reached out to the county to find out more about his uncle.

Dart said the nephew came across information on the county's recent efforts to identify the victims. Shortly after, he persuaded his father and aunt, Haakenson's brother and sister, to take a DNA test.

The DNA submitted by the family members was an "immediate hit" on Victim No. 24, Dart said, which quickly led to identifying Haakenson.

It wasn't the first time family members came forward to link Haakenson's disappearance to John Wayne Gacy.

Haakenson's mother went to authorities in 1979 to see if her son was a victim, Dart said. But due to limited resources at the time and the mother's lack of dental records, nothing was recovered.

The mother passed away in the early 2000s, Dart said.

Timeline of murder determined from positions of victims

Cook County authorities used other victims' positions in the crawlspace of Gacy's suburban Chicago home to narrow the timeframe of Haakenson's death. Haakenson's body was found between the bodies of two other men: Rick Johnston and another unidentified boy, referred to by police as Victim No. 26.



[Serial Killers Fast Facts](#)

Johnston, whose body was found on top of Haakenson's, is believed to have been murdered by Gacy on August 6, 1976, after attending a concert at the Aragon Ballroom in Chicago. Dart said authorities believe the third victim, whose body was found below Haakenson's, was murdered in July or August of 1976.

Police urge people to come forward

When remains were first uncovered in Gacy's home in 1978, eight victims were unidentified. But due to advancements in technology, that number has been reduced to six.

[John Doe No. 89 identified](#)

Dart said the victims were identified because "people agreed to come forward with DNA." Authorities are now urging people who had loved ones who went missing in Chicago during that period to come forward and submit their DNA -- and hopefully get some answers. "Every family deserves closure, without hesitation," Dart said.

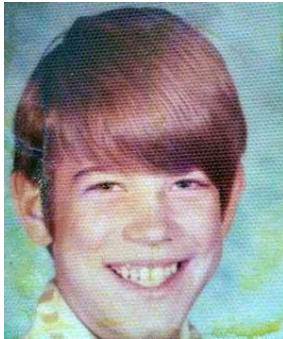
Source: <http://www.cnn.com/2017/07/19/us/john-wayne-gacy-victim/index.html>

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John Wayne Gacy victim identified 41 years after disappearance

By [Danielle Haynes](#) | July 19, 2017 at 5:47 PM

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Forty-one years after his disappearance, James "Jimmie" Haakenson was identified by forensic scientists as one of the 33 victims of serial killer John Wayne Gacy. Photo courtesy the Cook County, Ill., Sheriff's Office

July 19 (UPI) -- Investigators in Illinois identified the remains of one of the seven unnamed victims of serial killer [John Wayne Gacy](#), the Cook County Sheriff's Office said Wednesday.

Sheriff Thomas Dart said a body found Dec. 29, 1878, in a grave with multiple victims in the crawlspace of Gacy's Norwood Park, Ill., home was that of 16-year-old James "Jimmie" Byron Haakenson. Jimmie's mother reported him missing in the summer of 1976 after he left his home in St. Paul, Minn. She said she last heard from him in a phone call on Aug. 5, 1976.

The state of Illinois [executed Gacy](#) in 1994 for the murders of 33 boys and young men, eight of which were initially unidentified. Dental records were the primary identification tool used by forensic scientists at the time, and none were available for Jimmie.

The sheriff's office [reopened the investigation](#) in 2011 to identify the remains and has since identified Jimmie [and William Bundy](#).

Scientists at the University of North Texas Center for Human Identification used DNA samples collected from Jimmie's two siblings to positively identify his remains.

Dart said the investigation to identify the remaining six victims was ongoing.

"Anyone who may believe their missing male relative was a Gacy victim is urged to visit the Sheriff's website for additional information," [a press release](#) from the sheriff's department said.

Source: https://www.upi.com/Top_News/US/2017/07/19/John-Wayne-Gacy-victim-identified-41-years-after-disappearance/2631500497741/?spt=rrs&or=1

Second long-unknown Gacy victim identified as boy from Minnesota

Cook County Sheriff Tom Dart announces on July 19, 2017, the identity of another victim of John Wayne Gacy. (Nancy Stone / Chicago Tribune)

[Megan Crepeau](#) [Contact Reporter](#) Chicago Tribune

Jimmie Haakenson set out on an adventure more than 40 years ago, traveling to Chicago from his Minnesota home at just 16.

But the boy with a sunny smile disappeared without a trace, and on Wednesday, Cook County Sheriff [Tom Dart](#) said Haakenson fell victim to Chicago's most notorious serial killer — John Wayne Gacy.

DNA supplied by a brother and sister helped confirm that Haakenson was Victim 24, whose remains were found buried with many of the other victims in the crawl space of Gacy's Chicago-area house.

"My brother has been missing for so long, and it's so nice to know that we've found our brother now, even though now it's not good," Lorie Sisterman, Haakenson's sister, told the Tribune in a phone interview Wednesday evening from her home in Minnesota. "It's so wonderful, but it's also, you know, horrible at the same time."

Gacy was convicted of killing 33 boys and young men in the 1970s, 32 of them strangled. All but four of the victims were found in the crawl space of Gacy's home in Norwood Park Township. He was executed by lethal injection in state prison in 1994 after his appeals failed.

Six years ago, Dart announced his office had reopened the Gacy investigation in hopes of identifying eight victims whose names still remained a mystery decades later. Haakenson was the second to be identified.

Haakenson told his family in St. Paul that he planned to explore Chicago on his own, Dart said at a crowded news conference.

The teen called his mother on Aug. 5, 1976, to let her know he had arrived in Chicago, but his family never heard from him again, according to Dart.



During the chilly nighttime hours on Dec. 22, 1978, police began one of the grisliest excavations in the history of American crime. For weeks to come, Chicago and the nation watched in horror as the crawl space under the home of 36-year-old John Wayne Gacy, a onetime children's clown, was revealed to be a makeshift tomb. The bodies of 29 young men were eventually recovered from the Norwood Park neighborhood home. Four others were found in Illinois rivers. The first victim died in 1972, the last in 1978, only 10 days before Gacy's arrest. For decades, authorities could not identify eight of the victims.

Haakenson's nephew — who had never met him but had taken an interest in his disappearance — recently persuaded Haakenson's brother and sister to submit DNA samples for testing.

The nephew "felt very, very compelled throughout his life to find out about his uncle," Dart said. "He wanted to bring some type of closure himself."

Sisterman described the nephew as "the hero of the family."

"He started the ball rolling," she said. "He was like, who the heck disappears? ... He was so curious, like, obsessed with finding Jimmie."

The DNA testing showed a "strong genetic association" with Victim 24, authorities said. In addition, detectives examined other data, including the initial missing person report, to conclude that Victim 24 was in fact Haakenson.

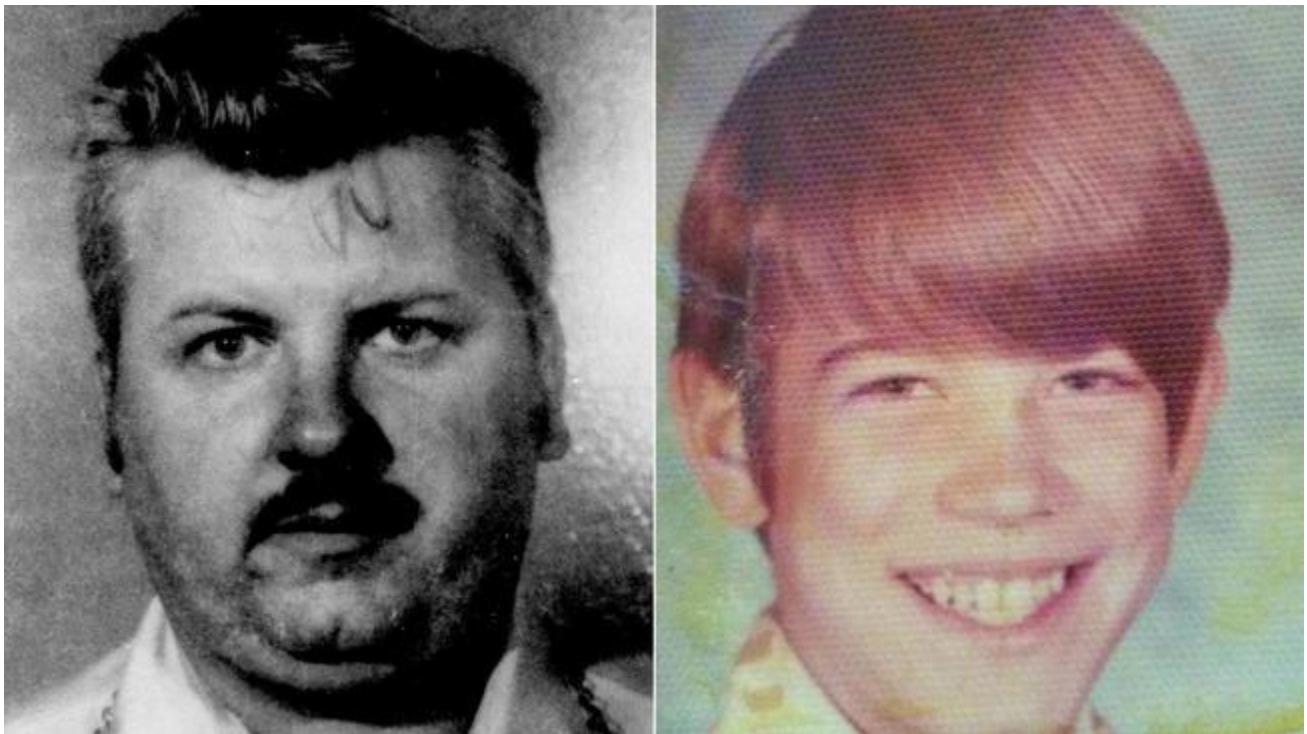
The sheriff's office formally notified Haakenson's family of the identification Monday.

"It's beyond heartbreaking when you're explaining to them that their worst possible horrors are actually, unfortunately, true," Dart said.

Haakenson's mother had come to Chicago in 1979 after Gacy's arrest and the discovery of the bodies in his crawl space, Dart said. Her attempt to find out if her son was among Gacy's victims failed because she did not have his dental records — then the main method of identifying remains, Dart said.

She died in 2008 without ever knowing what happened to her son, Sisterman said.

"She wasn't able to know where her son was, and that's kind of sad," Sisterman said.



The Cook County Sheriff's office has identified another victim of the notorious serial killer John Wayne Gacy. (CBS)

Haakenson was a normal teenager, Sisterman said, and the siblings had a happy childhood despite their parents' divorce. They were raised by their mother, she said.

Haakenson was born in Chicago, and their father had worked there, Sisterman said.

"Maybe he wanted to go back where he was born or something," she said. "Maybe he thought he'd see his dad."

Sisterman and the rest of Haakenson's family plan to visit the Chicago-area grave where the remains of Gacy's then-unidentified victims were laid to rest.

They will hold a memorial service and have Haakenson's name engraved on the tombstone, she said.

"We're still processing everything," she said. "We're kind of overwhelmed."

Dart reopened the Gacy investigation in October 2011 in an effort to use modern scientific methods and technology — unavailable at the time of the murders — to help identify the eight victims whose names remained a mystery.

The next month, the sheriff's office confirmed the remains of William George Bundy through DNA as one of Gacy's unknown victims. Bundy, an accomplished diver and gymnast at Chicago's Senn High School who worked construction jobs after dropping out, was 19 when he disappeared in October 1976.

In addition, through its efforts to identify the Gacy victims, the sheriff's office solved four cold-case murders and located five missing persons alive and two others who had died without their families' knowledge. But none of those were related to Gacy.

Dart said his office continues to try to uncover the identities of the six Gacy victims whose identities remain unknown.

About 170 different leads have been provided to the sheriff's office from families who suspect their loved ones may have been killed by Gacy, officials said, and investigators so far have looked at about 130 of them.

In addition, 55 people have submitted DNA samples to be analyzed in connection with the investigation since the case was reopened in 2011, said Sophia Ansari, a spokeswoman for the sheriff's office.

"Every family deserves to have closure," Dart said Wednesday.

Investigators may never know just how Gacy and Haakenson crossed paths. Gacy was known to lure his victims with job offers at his remodeling and construction business. In addition, he would frequent areas heavily populated by gay men or parts of the city where he knew young men would likely be alone, Dart said.

Haakenson's identification could aid in determining the identity of the remains found buried just below his in Gacy's crawl space, Dart said.

Because authorities now know Haakenson likely died in early August 1976, the body buried beneath his — Victim 26 — was probably killed a short time before, Dart said.

The body found buried above Haakenson's was long ago identified as the remains of Rick Johnston, who was last heard from on Aug. 6, 1976, the day after Haakenson called his mother from Chicago.

"The bodies were buried almost consecutively as he was murdering people and filling up the crawl space," Dart said.

The sheriff's office has DNA records on file for Victim 26 as well as the other unidentified remains, and Dart encouraged anyone who suspects their loved one might have been killed by Gacy to come forward.

"All we need to do is supply DNA from living relatives."

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Source: <http://www.chicagotribune.com/news/local/breaking/ct-john-wayne-gacy-victim-haakenson-20170719-story.html>