

## Woman found deceased in 2005 identified 9 years later

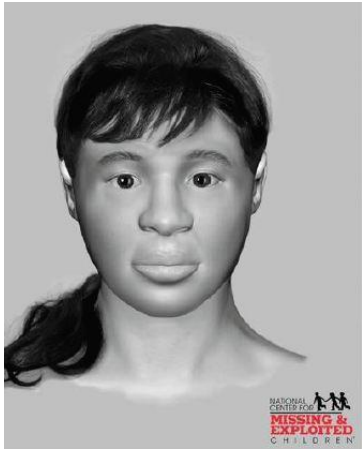
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By Courtney Smith, Digital Content Producer

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Latasha Smith (Source: Columbus Police Dept.)



(Source: National Center for Missing & Exploited Children)

- [Parents of newly-identified woman found in CA](#)

COLUMBUS, GA (WTVM) - Investigators have discovered the identity of a deceased woman nine years after her body was found.

On Dec. 22, 2005 members of the Columbus Police Department were called to an area near the dead end of Quincy Drive in reference to the discovery of a deceased woman.

At that time, the condition of the woman's body prevented officials from positively identifying her. An autopsy was performed and the Georgia State Medical Examiner ruled her death a

homicide.

The Robbery/Assault Unit initiated an investigation that attempted to identify the victim and her murderer. Interviews were conducted and any available leads were tracked down. Years went by without many positive results.

Investigators continued to work the case for nine years and recently identified the victim as 19-year-old Latasha LaShelle Smith, born Dec. 2, 1986. Smith went missing from Rialto, Calif. on Dec. 1, 2005.

The Columbus Police Robbery/Assault Unit is now asking for anyone that might have any information as to Smith's murder or her activities in Columbus Ga. back in December 2005 to please call Sgt. R. Long at (706) 225-4260 or the Robbery/Assault Unit at (706) 653-3400.

The Columbus Police Department would also like to take this opportunity to thank all of the individuals and agencies listed below that have helped them investigate this homicide.

National Center for Missing and Exploited Children (NCMEC)  
National Missing and Unidentified Persons System (NAMUS)  
NCMEC Project ALERT Biometric Unit  
Midtown Medical Center Radiology Department  
United States Secret Service  
Georgia Bureau of Investigation  
Dr. Steven Swords, DMD Columbus GA.  
Dr. Richard Scanlon, Forensic Odontologist, Pennsylvania  
Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI)  
Muscogee County Coroner's Office  
Arizona Department of Public Safety  
Rialto California Police Department  
California Department of Justice  
Georgia Board of Dentistry  
Dr. J. Kenneth Burkus, Hughston Clinic, Columbus Ga.

Source: <http://raycomnbc.worldnow.com/story/28262800/woman-found-deceased-in-2005-identified-9-years-later>

Doe Network Case 985UFGA

COLUMBUS, GA (WTVM) - There are new details in a Columbus cold case one day after a woman's remains were identified after nearly 10 years.

The remains, found in 2005 were finally been identified as Latasha Lashelle Smith.

Muscogee County Coroner Buddy Bryan and Chief Deputy Coroner Freeman Worely said police have located her parents in California, Smith's home state.

Arrangements will be made to ship her body back to her parents where she can finally be laid to rest.

Law enforcement agencies have released a cause of death, but do not wish for it to be made public at this time.

The medical examiner's office in Decatur, GA used dental records and DNA for identification.

Source: <http://raycomnbc.worldnow.com/story/28272721/parents-of-newly-identified-woman-found-in-ca>