

Long-Lost Identity: Bones 17 Linked to Lori Anne Razpotnik in 'Green River Killer' Case

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Lori Anne Razpotnik. Photo by King County Sheriff's Office

For almost four decades, the remains discovered near Seattle in 1985 remained anonymous, known only as Bones 17. After 17 years, authorities connected the remains to the notorious "Green River Killer" but were still unable to determine the victim's identity.

This week, King County officials confirmed the identity of the remains, which belonged to **Lori Anne Razpotnik**. Razpotnik had run away from her family's home in Lewis County, south of Seattle, in 1982, marking the last time her family saw her alive.

Her remains were discovered near another set of remains, referred to as Bones 16, in Auburn after the police investigated a car over an embankment in December 1985.

The Green River Task Force handled the investigation, but the remains remained unidentified. A pivotal development emerged years later when Gary Ridgway was arrested in November 2001. DNA evidence linked Ridgway to some of the earliest victims in the string of unsolved killings in the Seattle area.

In 2002, Ridgway admitted to placing the victims' remains where Bones 16 and Bones 17 were found, among the 48 counts of aggravated murder he pleaded guilty to in 2003. He later admitted to a 49th murder charge in 2011, solidifying his status as one of the most prolific serial killers in U.S. history.

In 2012, DNA testing identified Bones 16 as the remains of Sandra Majors. This recent identification of Lori Anne Razpotnik's remains was possible due to advanced DNA testing by Parabon Nanolabs and subsequent DNA comparison testing at the University of North Texas, utilizing a saliva sample provided by Razpotnik's mother.

The King County Sheriff's Office expressed gratitude for the collaborative effort involved in identifying Lori Anne Razpotnik, thanking Parabon Nanolabs, the University of North Texas, and various agencies that contributed to the identification process.

Gary Ridgway is currently incarcerated at Walla Walla State Penitentiary without the possibility of parole. The moniker "Green River Killer" stemmed from Ridgway's choice of dumping his victims' bodies in the Green River south of Seattle, although most of the victims' remains were found near Seattle, with a few in Oregon.