

Tennessee Bureau of Investigation and Roane County Sheriff's Office Team with Othram to Identify 1987 Homicide Victim

After 36 years, Roane County Jane Doe is now identified as Knox County, Tennessee resident **Betty Lou Wisley**, born December 30, 1935.

Solved



Summary

In August 1987, a passer-by discovered human remains beside a garbage dumpster in the 2600 Block of Highway 58 in Kingston, Tennessee. Forensic anthropologists determined that the remains were those of a white female, likely between the ages of 35 and 50. The woman had been burned after her death and discarded beside the dumpster. Investigators with the Roane County Sheriff's Office worked to determine the identity of the woman through the use of technology available in 1987, but their efforts were not successful. After exhausting all leads, investigators could not determine her identity, and she was classified as a Jane Doe.



Attempts to identify the Roane County Jane Doe continued. A forensic sketch depicting how the woman may have appeared during her life was released to the public. In April of 2009, the University of Tennessee Forensic Anthropology Center submitted a sample of her remains to the Federal Bureau of Investigation. A DNA profile was developed and entered into the Combined DNA Index System (CODIS) and details of the case were entered into the National Missing and Unidentified Persons System (NamUs) as UP1565. Despite investigators exhaustive efforts, no developments occurred, and the woman was never identified.

In April 2023, as part of the Tennessee Bureau of Investigation's (TBI) [Unidentified Human Remains DNA Initiative](#), TBI agents assisted the Roane County Sheriff's Office by submitting forensic evidence to Othram in The Woodlands, Texas. Othram scientists developed a suitable DNA extract from the evidence and then used Forensic-Grade Genome Sequencing® to build a comprehensive DNA profile for the unknown woman. Othram's in-house forensic genetic genealogy team used the profile in a genetic genealogy search to develop investigative leads that were returned to investigators.

In a follow-up investigation, investigators made contact with potential genetics relatives of the woman, and were able to obtain a familial DNA reference sample. That reference sample was then submitted to Othram for comparison against the DNA of the unidentified woman using KinSNP® Rapid Relationship Familial Testing.

Based on this evidence, Roane County Jane Dane is now know to Betty Lou Wisley. Wisley was born December 30, 1935. She was from Clinton, Missouri, but had been living in or near Knox County, Tennessee at the time of her death.

Roane County Sheriff's Office Investigators and TBI special agents now hope that the public can help piece together the events leading up to Betty Lou Wisley's death. Anyone with information, specifically any knowledge about individuals she may have been with before her death, is asked to contact the Roane County Sheriff's Office at [865-717-4722](tel:865-717-4722) or email tips to awolff@roanesherriff.org.