



ORANGE COUNTY SHERIFF'S DEPARTMENT

NEWS RELEASE

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OCSD Coroner releases new images to help ID John Doe from 23 years ago *Assistance from DNA Doe Project Reveals New Info about John Doe*

SANTA ANA, Ca. (November 10, 2020) – The Orange County Sheriff's Department Coroner Division, in partnership with the National Center for Missing and Exploited Children (NCMEC), have released newly updated images in hope to identify a John Doe found in Trabuco Canyon nearly 24 years ago.

On Dec. 13, 1996 Coroner Division Investigators and OCSD Homicide Investigators responded to reports of human remains found in a wilderness area east of Trabuco Creek Road in the unincorporated area of Trabuco Canyon. At the time, it was estimated the remains had been there up to two years, with environmental factors affecting their condition. Investigators believe the decedent went missing sometime in 1995 or 1996.

Based on initial anthropological estimates from 1996, it was believed this unknown male subject was around 15 - 19 years old, approximately 5'2" to 5'8" with a medium build. An odontologist's report, which showed the decedent's teeth were in poor condition, was taken and submitted to a Department of Justice database. He was given the name John Doe as investigators worked to learn his identity.

In 2020, the Sheriff's Department contracted with the DNA Doe Project in an attempt to identify the subject. Initial genealogical DNA examinations confirmed he was Hispanic or Native American in origin, and not primarily Caucasian as had initially been suspected. Additionally, based on further genetic testing, it is believed the subject is likely from a remote/rural area in Latin America due to the very low threshold of genetic matches. In fact, the threshold is so low that at this time, familial DNA analysis cannot be further pursued at this time because the population demographic to date is underrepresented in genealogical databases.

In 2018, the Coroner Division again partnered with NCMEC in an attempt to generate leads that might deliver an identification. A computed tomography (CT) scan of the skull was created and submitted to NCMEC, which used the latest reconstruction techniques to develop renderings of what John Doe may have looked like. With the new information, NCMEC modified their initial sketch from 2019 to produce a new likeness that reflects the suspected Latin American descent of John Doe.

"Over the years, there have been occasional leads, yet he has not gotten his name back," said Kelly Keyes, Supervising Deputy Coroner. "As with all of our unidentified cases, which date back to the 1950s and includes nearly 100 cases, we continue to review these cases with the hope that John Doe will finally get a name."

"Sometimes seeing a picture can spark a memory and that could lead to information," Keyes said. "We're looking to match that face to a name so we can bring closure to his family."

Anyone who has any information about John Doe can contact the Orange County Coroner Division at 714-647-7000 or coroner@ocsd.org, reference case number 96-07901-MU.

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