



ORANGE COUNTY
SHERIFF'S DEPARTMENT

NEWS RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

SHERIFF-CORONER DON BARNES

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OCSD Coroner releases updated image to help ID John Doe from 25 years ago *Assistance from DNA Doe Project Reveals New Information about John Doe*

SANTA ANA, Ca. (December 23, 2021) – The Orange County Sheriff's Department Homicide Unit, in partnership with the DNA Doe Project, have released a newly updated image in hopes of identifying a John Doe found in Trabuco Canyon nearly 25 years ago.

On Dec. 13, 1996, Coroner Division 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 submitted to a Department of Justice database. He was given the name John Doe as investigators worked to learn his identity.

In 2020, the Coroner Division partnered with the National Center for Missing and Exploited Children (NCMEC) in an attempt to generate leads that might deliver an identification. In 2020, 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.

In 2020, the Sheriff's Department partnered with the DNA Doe Project in an attempt to identify the subject. 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 September 2021, a new team of volunteers was brought onto the case by DNA Doe Project Case Managers that are specialists in Spanish Language databases. In conjunction with this renewed effort, a forensic artist affiliated with the DNA Doe Project has provided an additional rendering of the unidentified subject. Anyone who has any information about John Doe can contact the Orange County Coroner Division at 714-647-7400 or coroner@OCSheriff.gov, reference case number 96-07901-MU.

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2021 Rendering



2020 Rendering

