



NEWS FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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OC Sheriff Coroner seeking assistance to help ID John Doe

SANTA ANA, Ca. (October 2, 2023) – The Orange County Sheriff's Department Homicide Detail, is re-sharing images of a John Doe found in Trabuco Canyon nearly 25 years ago in the hope to generate new leads and identify the decedent.

The department, in partnership with the DNA Doe Project, first released the images in 2020 and then again in 2021.

On Dec. 13, 1996, the Coroner Division and OC Sheriff 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 believed 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 potential Latin American descent of John Doe.

The Sheriff's Department in 2020 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 team of volunteers was brought onto the case by DNA Doe Project Case Managers who are specialists in Spanish Language databases. In conjunction, a forensic artist affiliated with the DNA Doe Project provided an additional rendering of the unidentified subject. The Orange County Sheriff's Department, in partnership with the DNA Do Project, is again seeking any information that may help identify this individual. 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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ORANGE COUNTY
SHERIFF'S DEPARTMENT

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SHERIFF-CORONER DON BARNES

2021 Rendering



2020 Rendering

