



NEWS FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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John Doe identified after 25 years

SANTA ANA, Ca. (Feb. 6, 2024) – A John Doe discovered 25 years ago in a remote area of southeastern Orange County has been identified through investigative genetic genealogy.

On Aug. 29, 1998, a research biologist for the Rancho Mission Viejo Company discovered what he believed to be human remains in a remote area of southeastern Orange County. OC Sheriff Homicide investigators, Orange County Crime Lab (OCCL) personnel and Coroner personnel responded to the scene, but did not initially discover any indication the decedent had been the victim of a homicide.

The following day, OC Sheriff Homicide investigators, OCCL and Coroner personnel returned to the location to conduct a more extensive search of the area, but no additional evidence was located. Outside resources called in by the Coroner and Homicide Investigators conducted an initial examination of the recovered remains and estimated they belonged to Caucasian or Latino man, over 40 years old, who was approximately 5'6" to 5'8" tall.

In September 1998, an additional search of the remote area was conducted where the remains were initially discovered. The search resulted in what was believed to be a shallow grave, additional human remains and additional clothing. OC Sheriff personnel again responded to the scene to collect the additional evidence. Over the next several months, OC Sheriff Homicide investigators attempted to identify the man, but were unsuccessful.

In early January 2023, OC Sheriff investigators, working in partnership with representatives from the California Department of Justice Laboratory in Richmond, California, submitted forensic samples related to John Doe to Othram Laboratories in Texas. The laboratory developed a genetic profile for investigators to conduct Forensic Investigative Genetic Genealogy to attempt to identify the decedent.

In February 2023, Othram Laboratories provided investigators with a suitable genetic profile for John Doe and, using publicly accessible genetic databases available for law enforcement, investigators began their genealogical research in hopes of identifying the man.

In November 2023, investigators tentatively identified the man as Donald Raymond Loar, 54, who had been reported missing to the Los Angeles County Sheriff's Department in February 1998. Loar was last seen in the city of Bellflower, and he reportedly was wearing clothing similar to the clothing recovered near the remains of John Doe.

In early December 2023, OC Sheriff investigators met with representatives from the Los Angeles County Sheriff's Department to learn additional details regarding Loar's disappearance.



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OC Sheriff investigators then met with Loar's family and obtained a sample of their DNA for comparison purposes.

On Jan. 24, 2024, the California Department of Justice confirmed the remains recovered in August 1998 were Donald Raymond Loar. Investigators are now focusing their attention on discovering the circumstances surrounding his death.

Anyone with information related to this case is encouraged to contact Orange County Crime Stoppers at 1-855-TIP-OCCS or crimestoppers.org.



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