

WALKER COUNTY SHERIFF'S OFFICE

Clint R. McRae, Sheriff



717 FM 2821 W. Suite 500 Huntsville, Texas 77320
936-435-2400 Fax: 936-435-2440



For Immediate Release

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WCSCO and Partners Identify 1980 Murder Victim

On October 31, 1980 a white female believed to be between the ages of 15-20 arrived in Huntsville, Texas. She was seen alone by several citizens that also talked to her at two separate locations in town. One of the locations was a truck stop/restaurant along Interstate 45, at this location she talked to a couple employees. And asked for directions to the Ellis Prison Farm and was given written directions. During this conversation she told these individuals she was from the Rockport, Aransas Pass area.

On Saturday, November 1, 1980 at 9:20 A.M. Walker County Sheriff's Office, deputy responded to a call of a body located on the shoulder of IH-45 North of Huntsville one half mile south of the FM 1696 exit, the body had been reported by a citizen.

The cause of death was ruled as asphyxia due to strangulation by ligature per the Harris County Medical Examiner's Office.

The initial investigation focused on identifying the victim and determining any possible relationship she may have had with the Texas Department of Corrections. Employees and inmates at the time were interviewed with negative results. A search of missing person's reports revealed no leads or media reports of the case have resulted in no positive information concerning the victim's identity. Investigators traveled to the Rockport Aransas Pass area and interviewed law enforcement as well as school officials with negative results.

With the 41st Anniversary of this horrible crime taking place- I would like to report our victim has been identified as **Sherri Anne Jarvis DOB 3-9-1966 from Stillwater Minnesota.**

In July 2020, Detective Bean along with other detectives and Ranger Doolittle met with Othram Labs and authorized them to begin forensic DNA testing in an attempt to form a DNA profile from tissue samples from the original autopsy. Othram Labs was able to obtain a DNA profile from the samples and used this to start to build a family tree.

In March of 2021 Othram provided Detective Bean with what they believed six people were either direct relatives of Jane Doe or they were possibly Aunts and/or Uncles. Detective Bean with the assistance of Detective Phelps were able to utilize internet resources to finish building out the family tree. While doing this the detectives were able to locate information on all but one female family member. And discovered that she had run away in the early 1980 and was 14 years old at the time.

DNA samples were obtained from biological family members and turned over to Othram Labs to be compared to the DNA samples from Jane Doe with a match. All of the evidence was then compiled and released to the Harris County Institute of Forensic Sciences where they confirmed the identification of Jane Doe as Sherri Jarvis.

Sheriff McRae stated I never liked to refer to this case as a "cold case" it has always been a top priority and we have never forgot her.

I would like to thank the Sheriff's Office Criminal Investigations Division as well as the lead Detective Tom Bean for his drive and determination to never give up. As well as the partnerships that have assisted us, the Texas Rangers, Federal Bureau of Investigations Houston Field Office, Harris County Institute of Forensic Sciences, Othram Tech Labs, National Center for Missing and Exploited Children and all of the past Sheriff's Office Investigators that spent many hours and days never quitting to help bring Sherry home.