

Volusia County Sheriff's Office & District 7 Medical Examiner Team with Othram to Identify a 1997 John Doe

After two and half decades, a man whose remains were found in DeBary, Florida in 1997 has been identified as **Ryan Stone**.

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Summary

In November 1997, the skeletal remains of an unidentified individual were found along a wooded trail in Volusia County, Florida. The trail head is located near Ft. Florida Road, 1.4 miles south of Highbanks road in DeBary, just north of Orlando. An investigation was launched, and it was determined that the body was likely that of an adult male who was white or Hispanic. Alongside the remains, investigators found Pipeline brand shorts, a red Screen Stars brand T-shirt and white socks. Remnants of a blue Key Elements brand garment were also found. With few clues to go on the man's identity could not be determined and he became known as Volusia County John Doe.

Details of the case were entered into the National Missing and Unidentified Persons System (NamUs) as UP723. Despite investigators' efforts, the man could not be identified and his identity was a mystery for almost 30 years.

In 2024, the Volusia County Sheriff's Office, working with the county's District 7 Medical Examiner's Office, submitted forensic evidence to Othram's laboratory in The Woodlands, Texas in hopes that advanced DNA testing could lead to the identification of the man. Othram's scientists successfully developed a DNA extract from the remains. Scientists then used Forensic Grade Genome Sequencing® to build a comprehensive DNA profile for the unknown man. Othram's forensic genetic genealogy team then used the profile in a genealogy search to reveal new leads about the man's identity.

These leads sparked a follow-up investigation that led to potential relatives of the man. During the course of the investigation, an individual who was believed to be a relative of the man provided a DNA sample. The relative's DNA profile was compared to the John Doe's DNA profile using Othram's KinSNP® Rapid Relationship Testing. This comparison confirmed the identity of the man as Ryan Stone. Stone was last seen toward the end of 1994 when he told family that he was going to spend some time away from central Florida and go for a trip to New York, which he had never done before. Ryan was never heard from again and his remains were located in DeBary, Florida. It is believed Ryan never went to New York.

The identification of Ryan Stone marks the 37th case in Florida where officials have publicly identified an individual using technology developed by Othram. To read about other cases in Florida, [visit DNASolves](#).