

Body found in Alabama 20 years ago was escaped Mississippi inmate who lived under assumed identity

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Skeletal remains found in Alabama's Blount County in 2005 have been identified as **Patrick Grayson Spann**. (Contributed)

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Human remains found by hunters in Blount County almost 20 years ago have been identified as a Mississippi inmate who walked away from work release and lived under an assumed identity before his death.

Blount County District Attorney Pamela Casey on Tuesday identified the remains as Patrick Grayson Spann. He was 32 when he died.

The skeletal remains were found by hunters in October 2005 on railroad tracks off U.S. 31 near Garden City.

A gun and driver's license were found with the remains.

The .22 revolver had five spent cartridge cases and one in the cylinder.

The woman listed on the driver's license was interviewed and revealed that her partner, Chad Patrick Singleton, had taken her identification and abruptly vanished a year before.

Casey said the investigation showed that the name "Chad Singleton" actually belonged to a man who died in 1995, and that Spann had been living under that name.

The remains were examined by a forensic anthropologist in 2005 but the true identity remained a mystery.

Casey in 2024 reopened the case.

The man known as Chad Singleton had two biological daughters while he was living in Blountsville.

The district attorney's office submitted DNA evidence of one of those daughters for genetic genealogy testing to identify and locate possible relatives which could lead authorities to the true identity of the remains.

That search turned up a possible biological son.



Skeletal remains found in Alabama's Blount County in 2005 have been identified as Patrick Grayson Spann. This is an enhanced image of Spann. (Contributed)

Spann's identification was made possible by investigative genetic genealogical research performed by [Moxxy Forensic Investigations](#), a group hired by Casey.

DNA testing positively identified the remains to be that of Spann by using the comparison of DNA profiles obtained from a tooth extracted from the remains and that of his potential biological son.

The confirmation was made by the Alabama Department of Forensic Sciences.

During the investigation, it was discovered that Spann assumed the alias after he escaped from the Hinds County detention facility in Raymond, Mississippi.

He was serving a two-year sentence for possession of cocaine when he and another inmate went on a work assignment and never returned to the jail.

"The were doing good work, especially Patrick Spann, who has been with us two to three months," the work supervisor told the Mississippi Clarion-Ledger in the days following the inmates' disappearance.

"He had earned our trust. We are just disappointed it happened."

After his escape, Spann lived on Overlook Road in Blountsville under the "Chad Singleton" alias, Casey said.

According to witnesses, Spann left the home one day in October 2004 and never returned.

The vehicle Spann was reportedly driving was eventually recovered behind a barn off Bangor Hollow Road.

Investigators don't believe Spann died of natural causes, but are still working to determine the cause and manner of his death.

"Patrick Grayson Spann's remains have been released to his family in Mississippi for proper burial, but this does not conclude the investigation into his death," Casey said.

"State and local law enforcement will continue to pursue and follow leads until all remaining questions surrounding his death have been resolved."

Casey said more than 100 unidentified remains are in the custody of the Alabama Department of Forensic Sciences.

She hopes that more genetic-investigative genealogy will be used for identification so that everyone makes it back home to their loved ones even after their death.

Casey is currently using investigative genealogical research to try to resolve three other cold cases. To date, unknown DNA has been identified in two of those three cases.

Those investigations are still pending. Tim Sartain, a retired Alabama Bureau of Investigation agent, is working for Casey on the cold cases.

Casey also thanked Moxxy Forensic Investigations and Blount County Coroner Lynn Sweatman for their assistance in the Spann investigation.

Anyone with information about the disappearance and death of Spann, aka Chad Patrick Singleton, is asked to call the Blount County District Attorney's Office.