

# Arkansas State Police Teams with Othram to Identify a 1984 Homicide Victim

After more than 40 years, the victim of a 1984 homicide has been identified as **Earl James McDaniel**.

Solved



## Summary

In October 1984, Arkansas Department of Transportation workers discovered a man's body while mowing grass along Interstate 40, approximately 4.5 miles west of Carlisle in Lonoke County, Arkansas. The man's body was sent to the Arkansas State Crime Laboratory, where an autopsy revealed that the cause of death was strangulation, indicating homicide as the manner of death. Despite extensive investigative efforts at the time, authorities were unable to identify the victim, and the case remained unsolved for decades.

Details of the case were entered into the National Missing and Unidentified Persons System (NamUs) as UP 2823 and the became known as Lonoke County John Doe.

In 2024, the Arkansas State Police Cold Case Unit partnered with Othram to apply advanced DNA testing and forensic genetic genealogy in hopes of identifying the unknown man. Using Forensic-Grade Genome Sequencing®, Othram successfully developed a comprehensive DNA profile that could be used for genealogical research. Othram's in-house forensic genetic genealogy team executed this research, leading to a possible family match. By January 2025, investigators had a

tentative identification and located a potential relative in Washington state. ASP Cold Case investigators contacted the relative—McDaniel’s daughter—and obtained a DNA sample for comparison. In late February, testing confirmed the identity of the unknown man as Earl James McDaniel.

Further investigation revealed that McDaniel had been incarcerated in Washington during the 1960s and had numerous arrests throughout the United States during the 1980s. The circumstances surrounding McDaniel's murder remain under investigation. ASP urges anyone with information about McDaniel’s movements or associates in 1984 to contact the Cold Case Unit.

This identification highlights the power of forensic genetic genealogy and its ability to provide long-awaited answers in cold cases. Those interested in supporting the application of forensic genetic genealogy in unidentified person cases can contribute directly to DNASolves and individuals who have taken a consumer DNA test can aid ongoing forensic investigations by joining the [DNASolves](#) database.

The identification of Earl James McDaniel represents the 5th case in the State of Arkansas where officials have publicly identified an individual using technology developed by Othram.