

Mystery of a Missing Mom Solved 11 Years Later After Body Found in Cemetery for Unidentified

The answers were held inside a cemetery where the unidentified are buried

By [Rob Stafford](#) and [Lisa Capitanini](#) • Published December 21, 2022 • Updated on December 22, 2022 at 9:14 am



Linzene Franklin

The first snow of the season was falling gracefully on the tops of grave sites at Mount Olivet, a Roman Catholic cemetery located on the South Side of Chicago.

Cook County Sheriff Tom Dart and members of his task force on missing person cases had come to a place they all knew too well. A place where unidentified people have been buried since 2014. There are numbers but no names on the 84 graves located in a quiet secluded section of the cemetery.

Except now, 11 years later, one of those numbers has a name.

Commander Jason Moran of the Cook County Sheriff's office had completely reinvestigated the disappearance of 61-year-old Linzene Franklin.

"The first thing we start doing is obtaining reports, documents and evidence that has to do with the individual's disappearance and circumstances," said Moran.

Franklin was reported missing by her daughter in the spring of 2011.

"She was suffering from some mental health problems, which sort of led her down a tough path, found herself living in the streets," Moran said.

Moran checked databases for proof of life, death certificates and social media that might account for her disappearance. Nothing came up under the name of Linzene Franklin.

Franklin's daughter was desperate to find her.

In older cold cases, detectives say the first rule is never assume any old file is accurate.

In the case of Franklin, it wasn't until Moran reran her fingerprints, comparing them to all the Jane Does buried at Mount Olivet, that he finally came up with a hit.

"A fingerprint examiner looked at both sets of prints, and they were one and the same. It's a match," Moran said.

It turns out Franklin died at a bus stop on the North Side of Chicago from a heart attack, two years after she went missing. She was buried at Olivet Cemetery with dozens of other unidentified bodies.

Now, grave number 5112013 finally has a name.

"I can't emphasize enough to you – the families don't want to hear the bad news, but they want closure," said Dart.

That's why Dart said he's trying to bring order and humanity to the cruel chaos that can unfold when the unidentified are sent to be buried.

Now, the Cook County Medical Examiner's office gets DNA, dental records and fingerprints from each Jane or John Doe and registers them with their exact gravesite at Mount Olivet Cemetery.

The grave site could contain the people reported missing by so many families in and around Chicago and could be the answer to their anguish of not knowing what happened to their loved ones.

Franklin's family is hardly alone in their quest for answers.

Last year, Dart's office established a task force to reopen missing person cases. So far, his team has solved 18 of 140 cases.

Among the cases still unanswered is the disappearance of Viola Martin. Martin disappeared at Christmas 13 years ago, and NBC 5 Investigates spoke with her daughters last year.

"I don't want to celebrate Christmas," said daughter Angela Martin. "I cut my phone. I don't want to talk. So those celebrations are a thing of the past."

This year, Viola Martin's picture is among the missing featured on billboards around Chicago.

"They've been posted on the highways, expressways as well as some of them are stationary," said Deputy Chief Dion Trotter of the Cook County Sheriff's Department. "If you (drive) in on I-55, you'll see a big billboard and it's electronic. It will be flashing missing women for Cook County Sheriff's Office."

Trotter is still working the Martin case.

"We've located addresses where the phone records have given us leads and spoke to people she saw before her disappearance," said Trotter.

Martin's case is among several being investigated by the sheriff's office.

Dart hopes the structure his office brought to the cemetery will help lead to more answers, and closure, for those left in the unknown.

"It's beyond people's ability to understand that a person can go missing anywhere at any time, let alone that you can actually find the remains of an individual and not be able to connect it," said Dart.