

Indiana State Police & Vigo County Coroner's Office Teams with Othram to Identify a 1998 Jonn Doe

After 26 years, a man whose remains were discovered near a highway overpass in Vigo County, Indiana has been identified as 47-year-old **Mitchell Preston**.

Solved

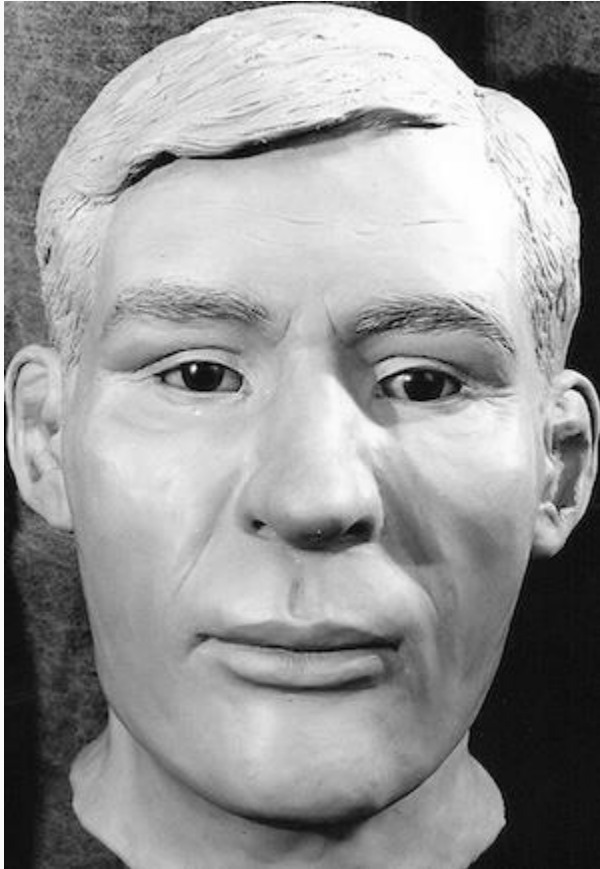


Summary

In January 1998, the skeletal remains of an unidentified individual were discovered by a state highway worker near a western Indiana highway overpass in Vigo County. Vigo County is just southwest of Indianapolis. It was determined that they were that of a white male who was between 5'8" and 6'2" tall. The man was between the ages of 40 and 60 years. Details of the case were entered into the National Missing and Unidentified Persons System (NamUs) as UP4829. Despite extensive efforts by law enforcement investigators to identify the man, no matches were found, and the case went cold due to a lack of viable leads.

In April 2023, the Indiana State Police and Vigo County Coroner's Office worked together to submit forensic evidence to Othram in The Woodlands, Texas to determine if advanced DNA testing could help identify the man. Othram scientists

successfully developed a DNA extract from the forensic evidence and then used Forensic-Grade Genome Sequencing® to build a comprehensive DNA profile for the unknown man. Othram's in-house forensic genetic genealogy team then used this profile to conduct genealogy research, ultimately providing new investigative leads to law enforcement.



Using this new information, a follow-up investigation was conducted leading investigators to potential relatives of the man. Reference DNA samples for a potential relative were collected and compared to the DNA profile for the John Doe. This investigation led to the positive identification of the man, who is now known to be 47-year-old Mitchell Preston. Preston was last seen in Anderson, Indiana in August of 1997. He was traveling on foot to California.

Anyone with information about Preston's disappearance, such as where he was last seen or what may have happened to him, is asked to contact the ISP Cold Case Team and Trooper Detective Brad Miller at [1-800-225-8576](tel:1-800-225-8576). All tips will be investigated and may remain anonymous.

The identification of Mitchell Preston represents the 7th case in the State of Indiana where officials have publicly identified an individual using technology developed by

Othram. Most recently in Hamilton County, homicide victim [Jeffrey A. Jones](#) was identified nearly 30 years after his remains were discovered on Herb Baumeister's Fox Hollow Farm.

Funding for the casework cost associated with this case was provided by Audiochuck. Audiochuck is an Indianapolis-based media company that develops true crime content. This case was funded through a project that Audiochuck and Othram have established to help clear unsolved cold cases in Indiana.