

Osceola County Sheriff's Office Teams with Othram to Identify a 1997 John Doe

After 27 years, a man whose remains were discovered in a wooded area in St. Cloud, Florida, has been identified as **63-year-old fugitive William Wallace Stabler Jr.**, born January 23, 1933.

Solved



Summary

In June 1997, the skeletal remains of an unidentified individual were discovered in a grassy area in the unincorporated community of Holopaw, which is located in St. Cloud, Florida. St. Cloud is a city in Osceola County that is situated on East Lake Tohopekaliga, south of Orlando. The remains were discovered by travelers who had stopped on the side of highway 192. The Osceola County Sheriff's Office responded to the scene. The remains were transported to the University of Florida where it was determined that they were that of a male, who stood between 5' 9" and 6' 1" and weighed between 200 and 225 pounds. The man was between the ages of 50 and 70 years old at the time of his death.

At the time of the discovery of man's remains, he was wearing size 12 Nike tennis shoes, size 40x32 beige pants, and dark blue polo shirt. A handgun was also recovered with the remains, and investigators determined that the man died due to a self-inflicted gunshot wound. Details of the case were entered into the National

Missing and Unidentified Persons System (NamUs) as UP534. 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. The man became known as Holopaw John Doe, named for the community in which his remains were discovered.

Marin police hunt gunman, kidnapper

An ex-convict who shot at two Marin County policemen Saturday night and then kidnapped a Corte Madera man yesterday morning was being sought by police today.

He was identified as William W. Stabler Jr., a former San Quentin inmate with previous convictions for armed robbery, assault on a police officer and escaping from jail.

The kidnap victim's auto was found abandoned in San Francisco, at Mansel Street and Visitacion Avenue, at 3 o'clock this morning. There was no trace of Stabler.

Two police officers for the Twin Cities Police Department, which serves both Corte Madera and Larkspur, encountered Stabler late Saturday night when they went to a Corte Madera apartment building to see about a complaint of disturbing the peace.

The officers ran into Stabler in the building's lobby. Stabler, said police, retreated, then whirled, pulled a gun and fired six shots at police Sgt. Al MacDonald and officer Don Baxley, neither of whom was hit.

The officers did not return the fire, police said, and Stabler escaped. Yesterday morning he surfaced again, allegedly abducting Bruce Preville, of Corte Madera, from in front of his home.

Stabler, said police, forced Preville at gunpoint to drive him into San Francisco, where he let him go in the Pacific Heights area.

Stabler drove off in the car, a Datsun 200SX with license plate number 826 RVO. Stabler was described as 6 feet 3, 220 pounds, wearing jeans, a white shirt, brown coat and white tennis shoes.

The recovered car was impounded at the Hall of Justice as the investigation continued, police said.

In 2023, the Osceola County Sheriff's Office submitted 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 genealogical profile for the man. Othram's in-house forensic genetic genealogy team then used this profile to conduct genetic 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 were collected from the potential relatives and compared to the DNA profile of the unknown man. This investigation led to the positive identification of the man, who is now known to be William Wallace Stabler Jr., born January 23, 1933.

Throughout the course of the investigation, it was learned that William Wallace Stabler Jr. was a career criminal. In April 1960, Stabler escaped from a prison camp in Weott, California where he was incarcerated after being convicted of first degree robbery. Months later, he was arrested and returned to Humboldt County for trial. During the 1970s, Stabler committed several robberies and was eventually apprehended after leading police on a high-speed chase, during which he shot at them with a rifle. For years following the chase with police, Stabler maintained a "pen pal" relationship with one of the police officers who had been shot during the incident. This correspondence continued until Stabler was paroled.

The screenshot shows the 'Online Warrant Search - Warrant Details' page for William Wallace Stabler Jr. The page includes a navigation menu, a search bar, and breadcrumb links: Home > Departments > Sheriff > Marin County Warrant Search. The main content is divided into three sections: Personal Information, Warrant Information, and Warrant Charges.

Personal Information		Warrant Information	
Name:	STABLER, WILLIAM WALLACE	Warrant Nbr:	CO046892A
Date of Birth:	1/23/1933	Issue Date:	8/15/2013
Height:	6' 02"	Bail Amount:	\$100,000.00
Weight:	230 lbs.	Type:	Arrest warrant
Gender:	Male	Level:	F
Race:	White		
Eye Color:	Blue		
Hair Color:	Brown		

Warrant Charges		
Code & Section	Description	Level
245(B) PC	Assault on pers w/semiauto firearm	F
207 PC	Kidnapping	F
10851 VC	Taking veh w/o owners consent	F

Later in 1981, William Wallace Stabler Jr. fired at two police officers who were responding to a domestic violence call in Corte Madera, California, which is located in Marin County, north of San Francisco. To flee, Stabler forced a man at gunpoint to drive him out of San Francisco, then stole the man's car to continue his escape. As of the time of his identification, active warrants for his arrest were on file in Marin County, California.

Stabler was featured on the TV show "America's Most Wanted" which garnered tips about his whereabouts, including information about him being in New York in 1991 or 1992, where he was seen shopping at a Banana Republic store with his Doberman Pinscher named Daisy. It was reported that he was working as a video game repairman. The last known photo of Stabler dates back to 1988, when he was arrested in Los Angeles under the alias "William Hudson." There have been no solid leads on Stabler for more than two decades.

The identification of William Wallace Stabler Jr. represents the 25th case in the State of Florida where officials have publicly identified an individual using technology developed by Othram. Most recently in Winter Haven, Florida, [Mack Lavell Proctor](#) who was murdered and found in a marshy area, was identified in May 2024.