

# MBI Cold Case Unit & Mississippi State Medical Examiner Team with Othram to Identify a 2001 Homicide Victim

After 23 years, a man whose remains were discovered wrapped in carpet and a blanket on the side of the road in Jackson County, Mississippi, has been identified as **John "Johnnie" Allen Gallegos**, born April 12, 1966.

Solved



## Summary

In June 2001, the remains of an unidentified individual were discovered wrapped in a carpet remnant and a blanket along the side of the road in Jackson County, Mississippi. Investigators responded to the scene where they determined the remains were that of a white male. The man was estimated to be between 26 and 36 years old, standing approximately 5'5" tall, and weighing around 237 pounds. He had dark brown hair, shaved close to the head with a small amount of gray, as well as brown eyes. The man bore several distinguishing scars, including an old scar on the center of his forehead, a possible old gunshot wound on his left wrist, and a scar on the left side of his nose. He also had several tattoos, including a large bird, possibly a peacock or phoenix, on his right shoulder, the name "John" on his right upper chest, and an old English script E or F on the inside of his left forearm.

At the time of his discovery, he was wearing XL running shorts, XL warm-up pants, and a T-shirt. DNA samples were collected from the carpet and blanket, leading to a breakthrough in August 2004, when 26-year-old Steven Leon Andrews was arrested and charged with capital murder in connection with the case. Investigators believe the motive behind the killing was robbery.

In January 2009, details of the case were entered into the National Missing and Unidentified Persons System (NamUs) as UP4735. A forensic sketch depicting the man's likeness was developed and released to the public in hopes that it would generate new leads in the case. 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 investigative leads.

In December 2023, the Mississippi State Medical Examiner'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 provided evidence and then used Forensic-Grade Genome Sequencing® to build a comprehensive DNA profile for the man. Othram's in-house forensic genetic genealogy team used the profile in a genetic genealogy search to develop new investigative leads that were returned to law enforcement. The work was funded by philanthropist and Mississippi native Carla Davis.

Using this new information, a follow-up investigation was conducted, leading investigators to potential relatives of the man. Reference DNA samples were collected from a relative and compared to the DNA profile of the unidentified man. This investigation led to the positive identification of the man, who is now known to be John "Johnnie" Allen Gallegos, born April 12, 1966.

The identification of John "Johnnie" Allen Gallegos represents the 29th case in the State of Mississippi where officials have publicly identified an individual using technology developed by Othram. Most recently in Hattiesburg, Mississippi, [Daniel Grantham](#), whose remains were discovered in a wooded area off MS Highway 589, was identified in less than a year.