

COLFAX – Human remains found near Colfax more than 30 years ago have been officially identified as that of a missing Berkeley woman.

The Placer County Sheriff's Office announced a Jane Doe cold case breakthrough on Monday.

Back in 1990, human remains were discovered off an embankment on Yankee Jims Road in the Colfax area. Technology at the time was insufficient to identify the remains, forcing detectives to classify the investigation as a Jane Doe case.

Since then, advances in forensic genealogy have resulted in a multitude of formerly cold cases to be reopened.

Last year, a likely next-of-kin of the person was identified through DNA analysis – finally leading detectives to identify the remains as that of Wendy Abrams-Nishikai.



Wendy Abrams-Nishikai PLACER COUNTY SHERIFF'S OFFICE

Abrams-Nishikai was last seen on Halloween 1989 in Berkeley. She was 21 years old at the time and left behind a young daughter.

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For close friends, Maria Recht and Aimee Sessions, time has not healed old wounds.

"We've all gone on and been able to enjoy watching our kids grow up, and that's something that she has not had the experience to do," Sessions said. "She deserved it. She was a wonderful, kind love and light, brilliant mind."

Exactly how Abrams-Nishikai died is still unclear.

"We do believe that there is somebody responsible for her death," Elise Soviar, the spokesperson for Placer County Sheriff's Office said. "Now, at this point, we are starting to work that angle of this investigation."

While her identification gave loved ones a sense of closure, old questions are now reopening. Recht and Sessions want to know who's responsible and why.

"Why hasn't anyone come forward," Recht said. "Someone was there. Somebody knows. Somebody knows something," Recht said.

More than anything, finding who's responsible for her death is a chance for loved ones to heal, especially those who never got to say goodbye.

"We want justice. And we want the narrative that for her daughter, that she would have never left voluntarily if nothing else," Sessions said. "We just want her daughter to know that she was highly loved."

Anyone with further information regarding Abrams-Nishikai's death is urged to contact the Placer County Sheriff's Office.

<https://www.cbsnews.com/sacramento/news/colfax-jane-doe-missing-berkeley-woman-wendy-abrams-nishikai/>