

**Nearly four decades after her burned body was found on the I-95 turnpike in Westport, Connecticut, Fairfield County Jane Doe has been identified as Barbara Heyward Manners, born June 9, 1951.**

Solved



### Summary

In May 1985, the charred remains of an unidentified woman were discovered along the side of the Interstate 95 in Westport, Connecticut. Westport is a town in Fairfield County, located along the Long Island Sound. The woman's body was found burning in a pile of tires. Her hands and feet had been removed and were never recovered. Investigators determined that the remains were that of a Black female, who was likely 30 to 40 years old at the time of her death. The woman's height was estimated to be 5'0" and she weighed approximately 110 pounds. Investigators recovered several personal items alongside the woman's body. She wore a pair of Russler brand blue jeans and a wool wrap-around sweater that contained a pack of Salem brand cigarettes in the pocket.

The woman, who was a victim of homicide, became known as Fairfield County Jane Doe. In July 2012, details of the case were entered into the National Missing and Unidentified Persons System (NamUs) as UP10474. Despite the exhaustive efforts of law enforcement, the case went cold and the woman's identity remained a mystery for nearly forty years.

# Police Gets Leads In Woman's Death

Associated Press

WESTPORT — A road block set up on the Connecticut Turnpike this weekend has given state police several leads into the death of a woman whose charred remains were found next to the highway last week, a state police spokesman said.

Lt. Kenneth Kirschner said Sunday that police limited westbound traffic to one lane from 10:15 p.m. to 11:15 p.m. Saturday near the turnpike exit where the woman's body was found about the same time last week.

An autopsy revealed that the unidentified woman was black, in her 20s, about 5-foot-5 and weighing between 120 and 130 pounds. She was killed by a blow to the head shortly before someone set fire to her body, and her hands and feet were missing, the autopsy showed.

Fifteen state troopers and eight detectives questioned the occupants of 469 vehicles during the road block, Kirschner said. Traffic was only slightly delayed during the one-hour road block, he said.

In 2022, the Connecticut Office of the Chief Medical Examiner (OCME) teamed with Othram in hopes that advanced forensic DNA testing could help establish an identity for the woman or a close relative. Forensic evidence was submitted to Othram's laboratory in The Woodlands, Texas where Othram scientists successfully developed a DNA extract and then used Forensic-Grade Genome Sequencing® to build a comprehensive DNA profile for the unknown woman. Othram's in-house forensic genetic genealogy team then used the profile in a genetic genealogy search to develop new investigative leads that were returned to investigators.

Using these new leads, a follow-up investigation was conducted, leading to possible relatives of the woman. This investigation led to the identification of Fairfield County Jane Doe, who is now known to be Barbara Heyward Manners. Barbara was born June 9, 1951 and was 33 years old when she was murdered. After nearly four decades, Barbara's remains will be returned to her family for her final internment. If alive today, Barbara would be 73 years old.

A portion of Othram's casework costs associated with the advanced DNA testing and forensic genetic genealogy completed in this case was contributed by donors through a DNASolves® crowdfund that was established in December 2022. The remaining funds were provided by NamUs, a national clearinghouse that assists the criminal justice community with the investigation and resolution of missing, unidentified, and unclaimed persons cases across the United States and its territories. NamUs is funded and administered by the National Institute of Justice (NIJ) and is managed through a contract with Research Triangle Institute International. We are grateful for the support of RTI, NamUs, and the NIJ.

Together, [Othram and the Connecticut OCME](#) are working to solve human remains cases that have long remained unresolved. The identification of Barbara Heyward Manners represents the sixth case in the State of Connecticut solved using technology developed by Othram. To read about other Connecticut cases, [visit DNASolves](#).