

Remains of murdered Calif. man ID'd in Wash. after 20 years

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The remains of Darrell Hill, which were discovered in Purdy, Wash. in December 1994, have finally been identified nearly 20 years later. CBS affiliate KIRO

PURDY, Wash. - A skeleton found dumped in a ditch along a Washington state highway nearly twenty years ago has finally been identified as a missing Los Angeles man, reports CBS affiliate KIRO.

The station says authorities this week identified the remains, discovered along State Route 16 in Purdy, Wash., on December 23, 1994, as those of 30-year-old Darrell J. Hill. He had been shot in the head several times.

In March 1993, Hill was reported missing from Los Angeles under what police called suspicious circumstances, according to KIRO.

"At the time [the remains were found], technology didn't exist like it does today," said Pierce County Medical Examiner's investigator Melissa Baker. "He was never identified."

The skeleton was initially misidentified as a female, the station reports. DNA from the body was run through a national database in the 1990s and again in 2009, but a match wasn't found. Eventually, the remains were reexamined and determined to be male.

Detectives with the LAPD requested a DNA sample from Pierce County after finally developing a connection between Hill and the skeleton in February. That connection has not been revealed. The sample was compared against DNA from Hill's son, an infant at the time of his father's disappearance. It matched.

"It's equivalent to a standard paternity test," Pierce County Medical Examiner Dr. Thomas Clark told KIRO. "Instead of an unidentified son, we have an unidentified father."

While a significant breakthrough in the case, identifying Hill's remains has not brought investigators any closer to solving his murder, according to the station. It is also unknown how the victim wound up so far from his southern California home.

Hill's family has been notified that his remains were identified and would be sent back to Los Angeles for burial. "They're very excited that this chapter of their life is closed and they can put him to rest," said Baker.

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