

Police find remains of Ohio girl missing since 1999 in accused rapist's home

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FILE: This photo shows missing Ohio teen Nicholle Coppler. (Polly Klaas Foundation)

LIMA, Ohio – Police say the skeleton of a 14-year-old Ohio runaway missing since 1999 has been found after the home where she was last seen was demolished.

The Lima News reports that Lima police on Saturday said the remains of Nicholle Coppler were found in a crawl space as the home's foundation was being dug out. Allen County Coroner Gary Beasley said they were identified through dental records.

The home was owned by Glen Fryer, who had been suspected in Coppler's death. The newspaper reports he was 55 when he killed himself in 2002 while awaiting sentencing for raping a girl.

The home was demolished after the state took possession due to unpaid taxes. Coppler's remains were the only ones found.

"I knew in my heart it was Nicholle," said the girl's mother, Krista Coppler, who now lives Florida. "I knew in my heart she never left that house."

Lima Police Chief Kevin Martin said the discovery means the homicide investigation is reopened. The newspaper reports that police have said Fryer had a link to human trafficking.

"Our goal is still the same: Try to get to the truth," Martin said. "Where exactly that will lead us I cannot say."

Lt. Jim Baker said detectives believe Fryer was involved in the death but that there also were other people. Police said other people knew the girl was in the house, and Lima police Maj. Richard Shade said at least two other people lived in the home with Fryer.

Krista Coppler said she doesn't feel the investigation was handled properly in 1999 but that police have since changed policy on runaways.

"If, in Nicholle's name, she can save some other girls, some good can come out of this," she said.

Source: <http://www.foxnews.com/us/2012/02/20/police-find-remains-ohio-girl-missing-since-1-in-accused-rapists-home.html#ixzz1muciPzL4?test=latestnews>