

NEWS RELEASE

Released by: Gordon J. MacDonald, Attorney General

Subject: Identification of the Deceased Adult Male found in Salem, New Hampshire on August 7, 1969

Date: Monday, April 6, 2020

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Concord, NH -- Attorney General Gordon J. MacDonald, New Hampshire Department of Safety Commissioner Robert Quinn, and Salem Administrative Chief of Police Brian Patullo, announce that the remains of the adult male found deceased on the side of Interstate 93 in Salem, on August 7, 1969, have been identified. The human remains are that of Winston Richard Morris of Barre, Vermont. Winston Morris, also known as "Skip," was 30 years old at the time of his death.

Mr. Morris' remains were discovered by a work crew on the northbound side of Interstate 93 in Salem, just south of exit 2, in a water-filled pit. An autopsy determined that Mr. Morris died of several gunshot wounds to his head and torso. The manner of his death was ruled a homicide. The autopsy report estimated that the then-unidentified remains were of a male, 28-40 years old, 5 feet, 11 inches tall and weighed about 225 pounds. He was wearing a tan shirt with blue stripes with a Bradlees sales tag, bluish-green slacks, black shoes and socks. There were no personal effects found with remains.

Known fingerprints were taken from the remains at the time of the autopsy. However, no state or national databases were operational at that time to compare fingerprints. In 1969, manual searches of fingerprints on file in New Hampshire and in Boston were unsuccessful in identifying the remains. As a result, he was buried at Pine Grove Cemetery in Salem, New Hampshire.

In December of 2012, Mr. Morris' remains were exhumed pursuant to a court order requested by the New Hampshire Cold Case Unit. The remains were examined by New Hampshire's Chief Medical Examiner, Dr. Jennie V. Duval, and Forensic Anthropologist, Dr. Marcella H. Sorg of the University of Maine. These examinations confirmed the original autopsy findings, but also provided additional information about the remains. Dr. Sorg determined that there were at least six gunshot wounds to the head and one projectile track into the left ribcage that may have originated from the jaw. Dr. Sorg reported that the remains had several unique characteristics that may have been noticeable to those who knew him. Specifically, she noted that this male had wide shoulders, was slightly hunched over in appearance, his upper and lower jaws were disproportionate resulting in a substantial under-bite and seemingly oversized lower jaw with buck teeth. She also noted that the remains had a severe break to the right upper thigh bone that had been repaired with a surgical plate and six screws. Dr. Sorg opined that this break would have taken months to heal, during which he would have had an extensive plaster cast and needed crutches.

As a result of the exhumation in December of 2012, a DNA profile was developed for the unidentified remains at the FBI national laboratory. That profile was uploaded to the Combined DNA Index System (CODIS), which is the FBI's program of support for criminal justice DNA databases. The profile was also submitted to the National Missing and Unidentified Persons System (NamUS). The DNA profile was searched in the databases against the DNA profiles developed from samples provided by persons looking for their missing relatives without success.

Over the years, the Cold Case Unit, the Salem Police Department, the Medical Examiner's Office and the New Hampshire State Police Forensic Laboratory, continued their efforts to identify the remains. Those efforts included a facial reconstruction of the skull by Forensic Artist Harvey Pratt at the Oklahoma State Bureau of Investigation. This facial reconstruction was posted on the New Hampshire Department of Justice's Website, the Cold Case Victim List. <https://www.doj.nh.gov/criminal/cold-case/victim-list/index.htm>.



In June of 2019, anticipating the 50th anniversary of the discovery of these remains, another concerted effort was undertaken to identify them by the New Hampshire Cold Case Unit and its partners. This effort proved successful with an identification of a fingerprint from the remains by Timothy Jackson, a Criminalist at the New Hampshire State Police Forensic Laboratory. Previous efforts to identify the remains from a fingerprint had been unsuccessful.

In December of 2012, the New Hampshire State Police Forensic Laboratory received the fingers of Mr. Morris from the medical examiner's office, which had been recovered during the exhumation of his remains in 2012. In January of 2013, the laboratory began processing one of the fingers to try and obtain a usable fingerprint. In January and February of 2013, a recording of the post-mortem finger was submitted to the Tri-State (NH, ME & VT), the Boston, the Massachusetts and the FBI Automated Biometric Identification System (ABIS) databases for comparison with known fingerprints on file. These efforts did not result in an identification. In July of 2019, the print was re-submitted to the Tri-State and FBI ABIS databases due to system upgrades, which again resulted in no identification. Criminalist Jackson took the initiative and made additional efforts to identify the fingerprint by manually plotting the individual characteristics from the finger and resubmitting it to the FBI ABIS database. Subsequently, Criminalist Jackson identified the post-mortem finger with Mr. Morris' fingerprints, which were then in the FBI ABIS database.

The New Hampshire Cold Case Unit, with the assistance of the Vermont State Police and the Barre, Vermont Police Department have continued investigating Winston Morris' death and have

notified members of his family of the identification of his remains. The family advised investigators that they had made numerous efforts over the years to locate Mr. Morris, but all of their efforts were unsuccessful. Those efforts included contacting law enforcement agencies, the Salvation Army, and the television program, Unsolved Mysteries. The family had also recently considered conducting a genealogy search using the Family Tree product, but did not do so.

After speaking with family members and reviewing records, a timeline was established of the movements of Mr. Morris in the weeks leading up to his death:

- Released from Vermont State Prison on May 9, 1969;
- Spent time in Boston, Massachusetts in June, 1969;
- Spent time in Glastonbury, Connecticut in July, 1969;
- Last seen in Burlington, Vermont on July 25, 1969; and
- Found deceased in Salem, New Hampshire on August 7, 1969.

The family provided a number of photographs set out below of Winston “Skip” Morris.



Winston Morris (on the right), in 1962 with his father.



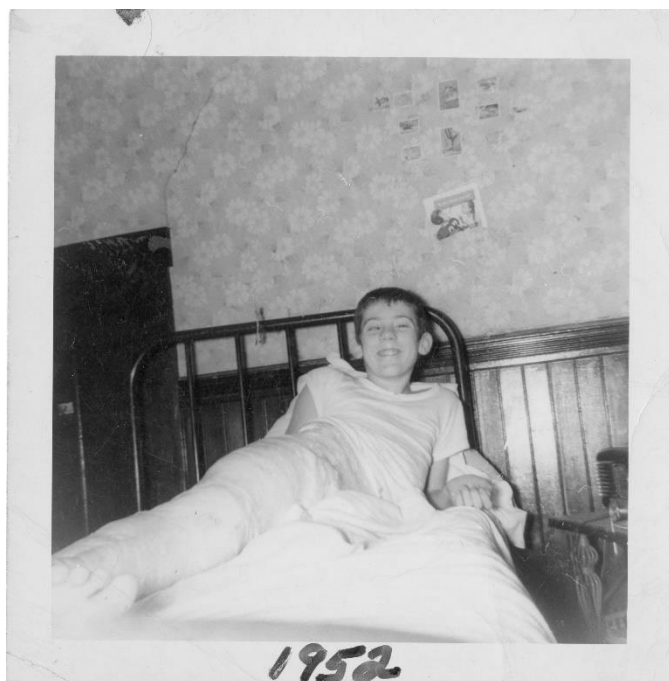
Winston Morris, September of 1962.



Winston Morris and his wife, Marilyn French. October of 1962.

The photo below shows Winston Morris at the age of 13 with a cast on his right leg. His family confirmed that a metal plate had been used to secure the break in Winston's leg. This is consistent with the metal plate found in the remains. During this investigation, efforts were made to identify the source of this plate. As part of this process, the Medical Examiner's Office received assistance

from Dr. Christopher Gentchos of Concord Orthopaedics, who removed and examined the plate. Dr. Gentchos opined that the victim had broken his leg between the ages of 11-14 and that such a plate would have been used at a local hospital. Attempts were being made to identify the remains from the information obtained about the metal plate when the fingerprint identification was confirmed.



Winston Morris, 1952.

The investigation into the circumstances of Mr. Morris' murder remains open. Anyone with information that could help with this investigation should call the New Hampshire Cold Case Unit at (603) 223-8890, or email the unit at Coldcaseunit@dos.nh.gov.

The Morris family does not wish to make a public statement at this time.

The New Hampshire Cold Case Unit encourages any family member with a missing loved one to report the missing person to their local law enforcement agency. If a missing person was previously reported more than 10 years ago, it is advisable to re-contact law enforcement to update the necessary information. By communicating with law enforcement about a missing person, information can be updated and databases can be reviewed to ensure that reports of missing persons are properly documented within local and national databases maintained by agencies such as NamUs and the FBI. NamUs creates a central repository for all missing and unidentified person case information by accepting records and DNA samples from law enforcement that have been collected from family members of missing persons from across the country, along with DNA from unidentified remains. Those samples are compared within databases to make identifications, give law enforcement investigative leads and reunite families. Approximately, 4,400 unidentified bodies are recovered by law enforcement each year.

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