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Department of
Public Safety

Anchorage, Alaska

STATE OF ALASKA

PRESS RELEASE

Homicide Victim Found on Fire Island in 1989 Identified by DNA Analysis and Genetic Genealogy

December 1, 2021 (Anchorage, AK) – On July 24th, 1989, human remains were found on the northwest shore of Fire Island, west of Anchorage. Investigators from the Alaska State Troopers (AST) responded to the scene and collected the remains. An autopsy concluded that the victim was a Caucasian male, estimated to be 35 to 50 years of age. Evidence was found on the remains that indicated the death was criminal in nature. An anthropologist estimated that the remains had been lying exposed on the beach for at least a year, but an approximate date of death could not be accurately determined. All efforts by AST to identify the victim were unsuccessful. The victim's remains were eventually interred at the Anchorage Municipal Cemetery.

In 2003, hair and tissue samples that had been collected at autopsy were sent to the FBI Laboratory in Virginia. A mitochondrial DNA (mtDNA) profile was developed. The profile was entered into the national missing persons database, but no identification was made.

In 2021, the Alaska Bureau of Investigation (ABI) Cold Case Investigation Unit reopened the investigation. Bone samples from the victim that had been retained by the State Medical Examiner's Office were sent to Othram Inc., a private forensic DNA laboratory in Woodlands TX. Scientists at Othram were able to extract DNA from the bone samples. They used forensic-grade genome sequencing to develop a comprehensive DNA profile. The profile was uploaded into a genealogy database. The profile was linked to other persons in the database, some of whom had ties to Alaska. Subsequent genealogy research by Othram and AST indicate that the victim may be Michael Allison Beavers.

Michael Beavers had been reported missing to the Anchorage Police Department in January 1980, by his spouse. He was last seen alive in late November 1979, at age 40, when he left his residence in Chugiak to travel by automobile to Seattle, WA to contact a business associate there. Beavers was a heavy equipment operator, and he owned an excavation business in Chugiak. Beavers never arrived in Seattle. No information was developed to indicated what had become of Beavers and the investigation was closed in 1982. In 1992, Beavers was officially declared deceased.

Investigators with the AST Alaska Bureau of Investigation (ABI) located a close blood relative of Beavers' and obtained a DNA sample. Subsequent DNA analysis confirmed that the remains found on Fire Island were in fact those of Michael Beavers. The investigation into this incident is on-going. If anyone has any information regarding Beavers' disappearance and murder, please contact the ABI Cold Case Investigation Unit at (907) 375-7728 or the main ABI number at (907) 269-5611.



Michael Beavers 1978

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