



KENOSHA SHERIFF'S DEPARTMENT

1000 – 55TH STREET

KENOSHA, WISCONSIN 53140

**MAIN OFFICE TELEPHONE NUMBER: (262) 605-5100
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SHERIFF DAVID BETH

MEDIA RELEASE

DATE: July 17, 2019
EVENT: 1988 John Doe Homicide Identification
LOCATION: County of Kenosha
RELEASED BY: Sgt. Chris Hannah - Public Information Officer

The Kenosha County Medical Examiner's Office and the Kenosha County Sheriff's Department are always committed to solving "Cold Cases" that remained open.

Using state-of-the-art fingerprint technology, the Medical Examiner's Office was recently able to identify a deceased man in a Sheriff's Department John Doe cold case from 1988.

Medical Examiner Patrice Hall, in collaboration with the Kenosha County Sheriff's Department Detective Bureau, have been actively reinvestigating this case since 2012. The unidentified male has now been positively identified as Robert Lyle Schwartz, born January 16, 1944.

"The Kenosha County Sheriff's Department recognizes the importance of bringing resolution for the families of these cold cases, and we will not allow these cold case victims to be known as forgotten victims," said Sheriff David Beth.

Schwartz, it was determined in 1988, died by homicide due to strangulation. His body was discovered in a shallow grave by a highway survey crew near the Interstate 94 East Frontage Road and present-day Highway 165. But, until very recently, his identity was unknown.

In May 2017, a representative of the National Missing and Unidentified Persons System advised Hall that new fingerprint analysis technology had allowed for the identification of more than 100 previously unidentified persons in just six weeks.

A Sheriff's Department investigator discovered that the Wisconsin State Crime Lab had fingerprint images on file that were of a high enough quality to perhaps yield a positive identification using the new technology.

Weeks later, the Sheriff's Department received notice from the Wisconsin Crime Lab that the fingerprint analysis turned up a positive identification of Schwartz.



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“Putting names to John Does is a passion of mine, and it’s been immensely gratifying to bring this case to fruition,” Hall said. “This would not have happened without effective collaboration between my office, the Sheriff’s Department, NamUs and the State Crime Lab. I thank them all for their efforts.”

After the positive identification was made, then began the search for the next of kin of Schwartz, and the eventual process of amending the death certificate.

Hall eventually contacted relatives of Schwartz’s, who confirmed that Schwartz had traveled to Chicago in the late 1980s, and they had not seen him since, nor had they reported him missing. Hall said the family suspected that Schwartz’s lifestyle had caught up to him after they lost contact with him.

Schwartz had spent prison time in California for fraud. A relative described a scenario in which Schwartz had conned people into buying shares of silver bullion, then giving them certificates that were worthless.

The body that was discovered in Kenosha County in 1988 was that of a white male, roughly 40 years old, 5-foot-7 to 5-foot-9, 160-200 pounds, partially bald, with a well-trimmed beard and mustache and well-maintained teeth and fingernails. He was wearing expensive designer clothes, including a Hermes Sports sweater, a Ted Lapidus shirt and Saks Fifth Avenue underwear.

Partial fingerprints were obtained upon autopsy of the severely decomposed body.

“The Sheriff’s Department makes every effort to investigate all crimes, but these cold case unsolved homicides are particularly significant to the victim's families and our department,” said Sheriff David Beth. We continue to look for new technology and techniques to resolve these cases. The Sheriff’s Department will continue to strive for the closure of the remaining cold cases.”

Please visit <http://www.co.kenosha.wi.us/1523/Cold-Case-Files> for information regarding our current Cold Case Files. Any information that you may have, even something that seems insignificant could be important. Those with information can call the Kenosha County Sheriff’s Department Detective Bureau at 262-605-5102 or give information anonymously by calling Crime Stoppers at 800-807-TIPS (8477) or 262-656-7333.

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