



MEDIA RELEASE

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Calaveras Sheriff's Cold Case Team Exhumed Remains from Ng & Lake Serial Murder Cases with Hope in Updated DNA Technology

The Calaveras County Sheriff's Office has a small group of deputies who, in addition to their regular duties, review and investigate unsolved "Cold Cases". Generally, the team focuses on unsolved homicides, missing persons, and unidentified remains.

Advances in technology over the years have improved the ability to identify human remains including those previously determined to be unsuitable for DNA analysis. Recognizing these advances, the Calaveras County Sheriff's Office contacted the California Department of Justice to discuss the possibility of identifying previously unidentified human remains associated with the Charles Ng and Leonard Lake serial killings. These crimes occurred in Wilseyville (Calaveras County) and in other locations in California during the 1980's. Discussions, meetings, and planning have occurred over the past two years, and plans were made to remove the remains from their current location and submit them to the California Department of Justice for DNA analysis.

At the conclusion of the criminal trial and conviction of serial killer Charles Ng in the 1990's, the remains were placed into a crypt in a cemetery located in San Andreas, CA. As of the morning of August 17th, 2021, the remains were removed from the crypt following a few words and an invocation by a Sheriff's Chaplain. The Calaveras County Sheriff's Office Cold Case Team is working directly with Criminalists from the California Department of Justice and two expert Forensic Anthropologists to respectfully catalog and analyze the remains to determine their viability for DNA analysis.

If remains are determined to be amenable to DNA typing, the California Department of Justice will compare the DNA obtained from the remains to the DNA of participating next of kin of known victims. The Calaveras Sheriff's Office is attempting to locate families of missing persons who may have fallen victim to Ng and Lake. Any unmatched DNA will be submitted to the Missing Persons DNA Database for comparison and with hope of future identification.

Through this project, the Calaveras County Sheriff's Office is seeking to bring closure to the victims' next of kin by potentially identifying their loved ones' remains. At the conclusion of the analysis, remains will be held as legally necessary, returned to loved ones, or re-interred.