

[One mystery solved with ID of body in St. Tammany cold case. But why was he killed? | Crime/Police | nola.com](#)

# **cold case. But why was he killed?**

Dismembered, badly decomposed body found dumped off remote highway in 2016.

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Kleanthis Konstantinidis was identified in October 2022 as the man who was found dismembered in 2016 in rural St. Tammany Parish. In 2019, the St. Tammany Parish Coroner's Office released this sketch of him. The partially dismembered body was badly decomposed and the FACES lab reconstructed his face. (File image from 2019)

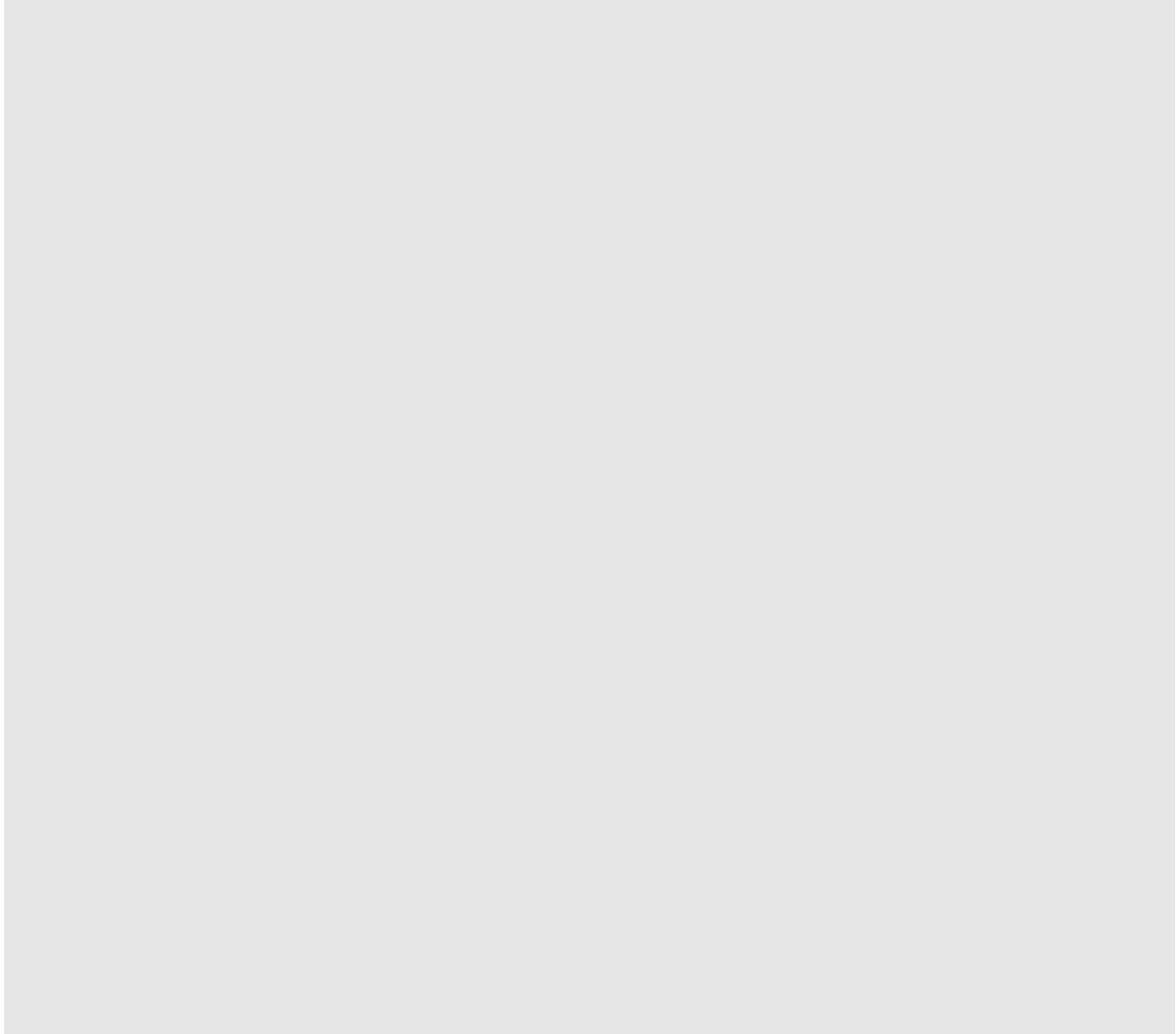
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- **BY BOB WARREN | STAFF WRITER**
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A murder mystery was solved in part on Friday when authorities said they had finally been able to establish the identity of a man whose badly decomposed body -- minus its arms and the lower half of one of its legs -- was found on a stretch of rural St. Tammany Parish highway in the summer of 2016.

The St. Tammany Parish Sheriff's Office said [the body found off Highway 90 near the Rigolets more than six years ago was that of Kleanthis Konstantinidis](#). At an autopsy after the gruesome discovery on July 29, 2016, the St. Tammany Coroner's Office had

ruled the death a homicide from  
blunt force trauma to the head.

But while the positive ID solves one  
riddle, another remains: Who was  
Konstantinidis and why would  
someone want him dead?



From April 2019, St. Tammany Coroner Charles Preston shows a sketch of a homicide victim found in July 2016. The partially dismembered body was badly decomposed and the FACES lab reconstructed the dead man's face in an effort to determine what he looked like and make a positive ID. Authorities had released another sketch of what the man might look like in 2016.

Advocate Photo by GRANT THERKILDSEN

A breakthrough in the case came in  
April 2019, when a human foot was

found inside a bucket in Biloxi, Mississippi, the Sheriff's Office said. DNA testing connected that foot to Konstantinidis.

Biloxi Police Capt. Thomas Goldsworthy said the foot was found under the trailer of a man who had died a couple of months earlier.

That man, Phillip Pointer, died of natural causes, according to the Sheriff's Office. Detectives, the Sheriff's Office said, have established Pointer "as the primary suspect in Konstantinidis' death."

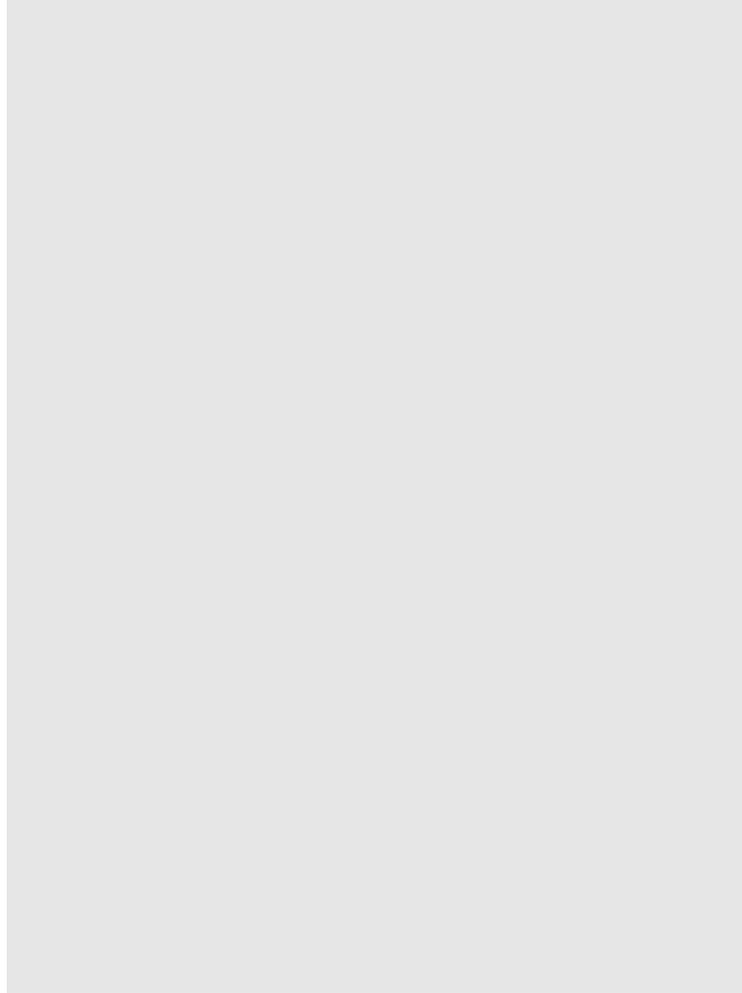
St. Tammany Parish Coroner Charles Preston, whose office worked to bring attention to the

case and find an identity for the body, was not available to comment on the case on Friday, a spokesperson said. Efforts to find family members of Konstantinidis also were not successful.

### **Gruesome discovery, investigation begins**

The person who found Konstantinidis' body on July 29, 2016, told investigators he had not seen the corpse on the property the day before. Authorities said the level of decomposition made determining age and ethnicity difficult. But the autopsy did determine the victim was a male, perhaps 65 years old and around 5'10."

The Coroner's Office provided a DNA profile, and the data was sent to Parabon NanoLabs, which specializes in DNA phenotyping, the Sheriff's Office said. [A sketch of the victim was developed](#), based on the advanced DNA testing, and was disseminated to the media in 2016.



This is the sketch that St. Tammany Parish authorities put out in 2016 after an unidentified body was found. On Friday, the St. Tammany Sheriff's Office said the body had been identified.

Two months after the body turned up, the Sheriff's Office said investigators believed the killer had dismembered the victim in an effort to hide any distinguishing features,

such as tattoos or fingerprints.

Investigators also said they thought the victim had been killed somewhere else and dumped near the intersection of Highway 90 and Old Spanish Trail.

Over the next few years, detectives chased down leads. But nothing stuck.

Calling it an "exquisitely frustrating" mystery, [Preston held a news conference in April 2019](#) to discuss the case and spread new photos of what the victim possibly looked like, these coming from a clay model created by the Forensic Anthropology Computer

Enhancement Services Lab in LSU's Anthropology Department.

The man's skull had been turned over the scientists at the lab, who spent years developing the model. The lab estimated the person's age at 60 to 80 years old.

## **Foot found**

That same month, according to the Sheriff's Office news release, Biloxi police found out about the severed foot.

After the DNA from the foot was found to match that of the body found in St. Tammany, Biloxi detectives contacted St. Tammany

investigators with the new development.

Working with the Biloxi Police Department, LSU FACES Lab and the DNA Doe Project, St. Tammany detectives were able to develop what they believed was a positive identification, the Sheriff's Office said.

St. Tammany detectives found a relative who lived in the northern U.S., who provided a DNA sample, the Sheriff's Office said. The coroner's office DNA lab concluded the relative's DNA and the St. Tammany victim's DNA were a match.

Armed with that match, authorities were able to make positively identify Konstantinidis' body, the Sheriff's Office said.

An age for Konstantinidis was not provided.

The Sheriff's Office said the investigation is continuing.

*Staff writers Joni Hess, Carlie Wells and Michelle Hunter contributed reporting.*