

## Authorities seek identity of skeletal remains

By Anita Hassan  
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The gold-colored dental cap fit right over her front tooth. Bonded to the front of the tooth cap was a diamond with a place for tiny clear rhinestones set in each of its four corners.

When she smiled, it wasn't likely it would go unnoticed.

Authorities found the tooth cap near the woman's skeletal remains, recovered in the parking lot of an abandoned south Houston apartment complex last week. The cap, on which all the rhinestones were missing save one, and other metal dental work found seemed to line up nearly perfectly across the front teeth in her skull and over a single rotting tooth.

They believe it could be a clue in learning her identity.

"If somebody knew her, then you would know this (tooth cap)," said Dr. Jennifer Love, a forensic anthropologist with the Harris County Institute of Forensic Sciences. "This is something you would see every time the person talked."

Her remains were discovered Sept. 17 in the 6300 block of Cullen, where buyers looking over the property discovered the woman's skull. Within a few hours, authorities recovered about 90 percent of her skeleton. The woman may have been between 30 and 45 years old and between 5 feet 1 inch and 5 feet 7 inches tall.

The remains may have been in the area about three to six months, Love estimated. No apparent trauma was found on the bones, and her cause of death is still undetermined.

Near the site where the bones were recovered in the parking lot, authorities also found a white wristwatch, a white clip-on earring and a black bra. Love said authorities believe these items also may have belonged to the woman.

Farther away from the apartment complex, which had been abandoned for at least a few years, authorities discovered a size-7 gold-colored sandal, black hair extensions with a purple ponytail holder and white and black hair clip. "Almost Famous" brand jean shorts in size 5 also were found.



[ The skeletal remains were discovered in the overgrown parking lot of a vacant apartment building. No property was found on the remains, but several items were found in the vicinity. These include decorative gold-colored dental work. ]

PHOTOS BY THE HARRIS COUNTY  
INSTITUTE OF FORENSIC SCIENCES



DNA testing on the remains could take months.

Houston Police Department Sgt. W. Bush said police searched the area and checked police reports for any potential missing persons who match her description but have come up empty.

Investigators are planning to post fliers in the area.

"Without knowing who she is," Bush said. "We don't really have a place to start."

Anyone with information in the case is urged to contact the HPD Homicide Division at 713-308-3600 or the Harris County Institute of Forensic Sciences at 713-796-6774.

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