

After decades, another serial killer victim identified

By LISE OLSEN, HOUSTON CHRONICLE

Updated 11:44 a.m., Thursday, December 1, 2011



After nearly four decades, a team of Harris County forensic scientists has identified one of the last victims of Houston serial killer [Dean Corll](#) as [Roy Eugene Bunton](#), a teenager missing since about 1971.

Bunton was only 17 or 18 when he disappeared, possibly snatched up while hitchhiking by Corll or one of his two teenaged accomplices.

Harris County forensic anthropologist [Sharon Derrick](#) said Wednesday that Bunton's body, which was recently exhumed as part of an effort paid for by [National Institute of Justice](#), was identified through a combination of DNA and circumstantial evidence.

He was one of only two still unidentified victims of the serial killer, who tortured and kidnapped at least 28 Houston teens, forcing some to write false runaway letters to their families. Both of those bodies were found buried in a boathouse that belonged to Corll, whose murder spree ended when Corll was killed by his teenaged accomplice, [Elmer Wayne Henley Jr.](#), in August 1973.

Henley and another accomplice, [David Brooks](#), were convicted in the teen murders and remain in prison.

Bunton's body had previously been mistakenly identified as a different teen - [Michael Baulch](#) - an error discovered after earlier DNA tests in 2010.

In 1971 or 1972, Bunton left for work at a shoe store at Houston's Northwest Mall and never came home.

Bunton's sister, who still lives in Houston, first contacted Derrick, the forensic anthropologist, in 2009 about her fear that Corll had killed her missing brother. Like other victims, Bunton lived in the Houston Heights neighborhood where Corll's family had owned a candy factory and where Corll trolled for local teens.

Derrick reviewed her files, but in 2009 found no unsolved cases that could have matched Bunton, an unusually long-legged teen with blonde hair and a wide smile who stood a full 6-feet tall.

That changed in 2010, however, when Derrick discovered an error that had been made back in 1973: A body buried in a family plot thought to be that of Michael Baulch, another Corll victim, was not Baulch after all.

Hints at identity

As she examined the newly disinterred body, she immediately thought of the call she'd gotten in 2009 from Bunton's sister.

"As I kept working, I kept seeing things that reminded me of Roy Bunton. He would have gone missing at the same time and he was either 18 or 19," she remembers. This boy too had unusually long legs. And when she checked for Roy's photos in her files, the shape of the teeth matched too.

Bunton's family plans a private burial. His sister declined comment through Harris County officials.

Corll's victims were found in three different mass graves: four in St. Augustine on Lake Sam Rayburn in East Texas; seven on the beach at High Island and 17 buried in the Houston boathouse.

In 2008, another long- unidentified boathouse victim was confirmed to be [Randy Harvey](#), only 15 when he disappeared in 1971 after riding his bicycle to a gas station. In 2009, another positive ID was made of 17-year-old [Joseph Lyles](#), whose skeletal remains were discovered in another mass burial site on High Island in 1983, the last of Corll's known victims' remains to be recovered.

Now, it is the last unidentified teen who haunts Derrick. She is hoping for yet another relative to call about this boy whose body was discovered buried near Bunton's.

Clothing stands out

He likely went missing in 1971 or 1972. Two possible candidates, old unsolved missing persons cases, remain open from that era. But their last names are so common - French and Harmon or Harman - that Derrick has been unable to find any relatives.

The unknown boy died still wearing distinctive striped swim trunks, red white and blue, and a tan shirt with a huge peace symbol. When examined under a microscope, the shirt reveals several tiny letters that might be LB4 MF or possibly LBHMF. Was this boy or an older brother a U.S. Marine?

Derrick wonders if the letters might refer to the Third battalion of the 4th Marines, which saw action in its deployment to Vietnam. For now, he has only a case number: ML73-3356.

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