

## Who is John Doe? Look at this sketch made from a skeleton found near Elizabethtown



By RYAN ROBINSON | Staff Writer | Posted: Wednesday, November 5, 2014 9:00

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Two years after a man's decomposed corpse was found in the woods in Elizabethtown, his identity remains a mystery.

But officials aren't giving up.

The Lancaster County Coroner's Office in September sent the skull and other materials to Catyana Falsetti, of Phoenix, Arizona.

She is a forensic artist with Project EDAN (Everyone Deserves A Name) who created a forensic facial sketch of how the man may have appeared when he was alive.

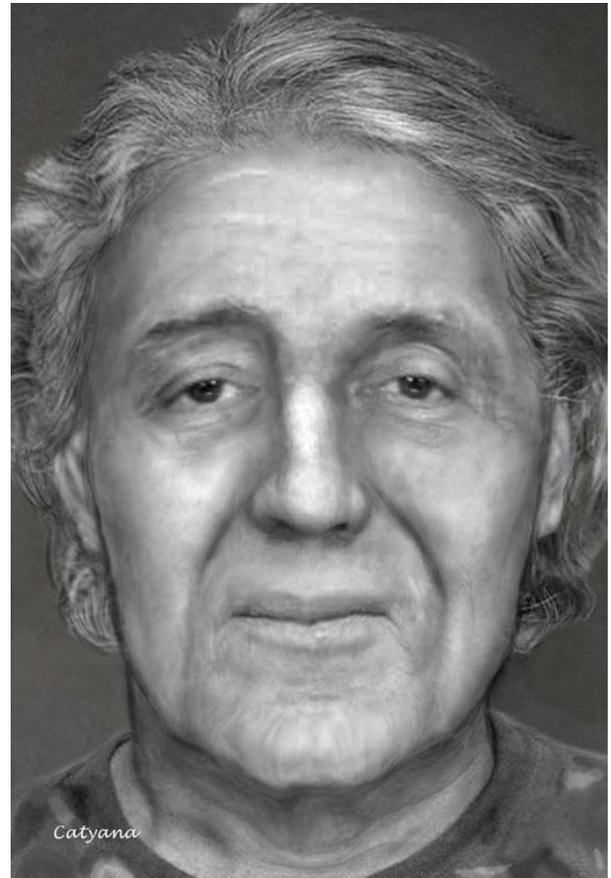
The black-and-white sketch, which looks almost like a photograph, was released to LNP Tuesday and officials hope someone, somewhere, will recognize him and finally be able to give John Doe a name.

"We want to be able to, if possible and practicable, make a positive ID so loved ones the decedent may have left behind know of his death," county Coroner Dr. Stephen Diamantoni said.

No tips had come in as of Wednesday.

The clarity of the sketch may shock some people. It surprised even Diamantoni.

"This is like someone I would see on the street," he said. "It is a pencil sketch, but it looks like a photograph."



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Officials hope this forensic sketch of man whose decomposed body was found in the woods in Elizabethtown helps lead to his identity.

But how accurate might it be?

Diamantoni said no one can know how his hair would have looked, but the other features should be close.

“Many IDs have been made as a result of expert work of forensic artists,” he said. “We’re hoping this is one of those cases.”

A hunter trekking through a wooded area at Masonic Village on Nov. 1, 2012 happened upon the corpse, consisting of decomposed skin and bones.

Considering the deterioration of the remains, Diamantoni said the man likely had died four or five months earlier.

The first two weeks of June is the most likely time frame, he said.

Examination of the remains revealed no evidence of foul play, but also little clue as to the man’s identity.

Some clothing was found with the corpse, but no personal items that could help identify him, such as a ring, watch, necklace or wallet, Diamantoni said.

It is possible the man was homeless, but no campsite was found nearby.

Anthropologist Caroline Robb, brought in by the county to help with the investigation, discovered the remains are of a white man in his mid- to late 40s. The man was 5 feet 7 to 5 feet 11 inches tall and had extensive dental work done on his teeth.

Dennis Dirkmaat of the Mercyhurst Forensic Anthropology Laboratory in Erie confirmed Robb’s findings, Diamantoni said.

The man's most identifying characteristic was the condition of his back.

His spine showed signs of a curve, which would have caused him to walk hunched over, Diamantoni said last year. The skeletal remains suggest the man could have suffered from ankylosing spondylitis - a disease that involves inflammation of the joints between the spinal bones.

Officials hoped at the time the discovery of the disease, which affects about 1 million people, would prove to be helpful in a case that had few leads.

Unfortunately, it didn’t.

The process of identifying the body began with police scanning missing-persons records from around Pennsylvania and neighboring states.

Police and the coroner's office posted the information they found to three databases for missing persons - The National Missing and Unidentified Persons System and the Doe Network, which anyone can access and search, and the National Crime Information Center, used mostly by law-enforcement officials.

They didn't get the tip they needed, frustrating Diamantoni.

"It is very unusual for us to find skeletonized human remains of someone who died within the last six months of their being discovered and be unable to make a positive ID," he said. His office has tried to be as cost-efficient as possible in that effort.

Project EDAN in cooperation with [www.NamUs.gov](http://www.NamUs.gov) and the University of North Texas Health Science Center produced the sketch at no cost to taxpayers. The artwork is donated by the artists, not covered by grant funding.

Anyone with useful information is asked to call the coroner's office at (717) 735-2123.