

Murder victim of Minnesota trooper Robert Leroy Nelson identified as Michelle Yvette Busha, 35 years later

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[1980 Cop sexual assault homicide and child molester](#)

ST. PAUL, Minn. -- Investigators in Minnesota say they've finally identified a woman slain by a state trooper nearly 35 years ago.

The victim was identified over the weekend as 18-year-old Michelle Yvette Busha, thanks to DNA testing. Busha has been buried anonymously in Riverside Cemetery in Blue Earth, in southern Minnesota, for the past three decades.

The woman's body was exhumed in August for DNA sampling as part of the state Bureau of Criminal Apprehension's unidentified human remains program, reports the Minneapolis Star-Tribune. The sample turned up a hit in a national database.

Busha, of Bay City, Texas, was hitchhiking when she was assaulted and slain in 1980, her body dumped in a ravine along Interstate 90 near Blue Earth. She had been strangled.

Authorities said Robert Leroy Nelson, a Minnesota state trooper at the time, confessed to Busha's death.

"This was not a case of who done it, but who was she," Faribault County Sheriff Michael Gormley told the paper.

Jerry Kabe, former chief deputy sheriff in Faribault County and a former lead investigator on the case, said Nelson was in Texas when he admitted to killing an unidentified woman in Minnesota.

Kabe said Nelson told investigators he was watching traffic when a dark van let a young woman out.

He said he followed her, put her in his car, and sexually assaulted, handcuffed and tortured her. He then strangled the woman with a cord, and left her body in a ravine near Interstate 90, east of Blue Earth.

Nelson admitted to throwing away her clothes, jewelry and purse, leaving investigators without clues to identify her, reports the paper.

Busha's family reported her missing in Texas on May 9, 1980. The unidentified body was found weeks later.

Nelson was charged in 1988 with first-degree manslaughter and pleaded guilty, reports the paper. The next year, he was sentenced to 16 years in prison to run concurrently with a sexual

assault sentence in Texas, where he remains incarcerated, reports the paper.

Gormley told the paper Busha's relatives are "glad to know where she is at now. They were surprised that she was up here."

Officials are reportedly preparing for her remains to be returned to Texas.

CBS/AP