

How DNA analysis led to the key breakthrough in the Idaho student murder case

Though multiple news outlets, including [CNN](#) and [ABC News](#), reported that forensic genealogy helped with the [Idahao student murder] case, none has explained how it was used or why it did not appear in the affidavit. That how and why matters. For one thing, it shows that a method known mostly for solving cold cases can apply to ones that are still hot.

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Idaho State Police [has a contract](#) with Othram, a forensic genealogy company, to conduct genealogy testing, according to a July 2021 memo.

Once the DNA profile is ready, it gets uploaded to GEDmatch or FamilyTreeDNA, if not both; these are two primary genealogy sites that permit some types of law enforcement searches.

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Regardless of who is conducting the investigation, genealogists look for partial matches, hoping to find relatives within the third-cousin range. They then began the process of building an enormous family tree, using a vast array of public records and more-traditional detective work to create a short list of people within that tree who could plausibly be the suspect. The fact that [suspect Bryan] Kohberger lived 10 miles from the crime scene would have helped him stand out.

[**This is an excerpt. Read the full article here**](#)