



Facial Identification Success Stories

The following examples of law enforcement uses of facial identification technology are from the National Sheriff's Association and were included in the US Department of Justice's Reduction of Crime Hearing* for the President's Commission on Law Enforcement and the Administration of Justice, April 21 and April 22, 2020.

WARNING
This document contains
graphic images which
some readers may find
disturbing

* <https://www.justice.gov/aq/page/file/1277646/download> (pages 318-324)

Iowa

A shooting at the Iowa Department of Public Safety left one person wounded with a serious but non-life-threatening injury. No documentation was found on the victim who refused to give his identity to Des Moines Police Department detectives. Facial recognition was used to determine a possible identity for the subject, which revealed the victim had a nationwide active warrant for narcotics trafficking.



When an unknown male was found deceased in a soybean field with an execution-style shot to the head, law enforcement found no identification at the scene. Using facial recognition, a possible identification of the deceased male was determined which was subsequently confirmed by family members.



Georgia

A subject claiming to be a truck driver from Athens, Georgia, engaged with an undercover (UC) investigator in Massachusetts believing the investigator was a 14-year-old child. The subject engaged in sexually explicit conversations, sent the (UC) minor pornography, and indicated his interest in traveling to Massachusetts for sex. The subject's Facebook profile was limited and believed to use a fake name. The investigator reached out to an Internet Crimes Against Children (ICAC) affiliate in Georgia for assistance. Analysts submitted the subject's social media profile photo for facial recognition database checks while exhausting other investigative leads and intelligence sources. The first facial recognition result was a match to the subject, who was using his middle name while chatting with the UC investigator. Based upon the lead developed from the facial recognition results, analysts compiled a comprehensive packet on the subject for the Massachusetts investigator.

The remains of a body were found along a fence line behind an apartment complex in Decatur, Georgia. Six hours earlier at 1:30AM, residents of the complex had reported hearing what sounded like an electrical transformer exploding. The deceased's injuries were consistent with a blast or explosion, and fragments of a metal pipe bomb with added shrapnel were also found. The deceased was a white male, 35-45 years of age, 135-145 lbs. with blue eyes. He was wearing all black including a black balaclava and lone-ranger style mask. Only one finger was still intact, and the fingerprint was not on file. A badly damaged cell phone with a SIM card and a second SIM card were found in the shrubs near the body. Record checks on individuals associated with the cellular telephone were provided and video pulled from the surrounding area. Georgia Information Sharing and Analysis Center (GISAC) assisted with conducting facial recognition through the Georgia Department of Driver Services driver's license photo database. Facial recognition yielded a potential match for the deceased. The match had a protective order against him and was previously arrested for stalking his ex-girlfriend, whose residence was 20 yards from the scene of the explosion. The ex-girlfriend was shown a photo of the deceased and confirmed that it was her ex-boyfriend.

<https://www.fox5atlanta.com/news/man-found-dead-following-explosion-in-dekalb-county-identified>

Michigan

Homicide Investigation

A local police agency in Michigan submitted a social media photo of a potential suspect where the identity of the subject was unknown. The victim of the crime was shot and killed at his campus apartment and the suspect fled the scene. Investigators provided an image from

social media of a potential suspect. Facial recognition was used to provide an investigative lead to the investigator. After further investigation, the candidate from the lead was determined to be the homicide suspect. The suspect was charged and later convicted for the homicide.

Child Predator Investigation

A federal law enforcement agency submitted a social media photo to Michigan's Statewide Network of Agency Photos (SNAP) Unit of a subject suspected of soliciting minors online. A facial recognition search returned a viable candidate and the subject in the lead was confirmed as the suspect in the investigation.

Unidentified Deceased Investigation

A county morgue submitted an image to Michigan's Statewide Network of Agency Photos (SNAP) Unit to help identify an unknown deceased female with severe trauma to the face. Trained facial examiners used specialized software to enhance the image to obtain a better gallery of images from a facial recognition search. When the facial recognition search was conducted, a viable candidate returned. The investigative lead was sent to the morgue and was determined to be the correct person. Investigators were able to make a proper death notification to the family.

Criminal Sexual Conduct (CSC) Investigation

A local police agency in Michigan sent out a bulletin asking for assistance in identifying an individual for a Criminal Sexual Conduct (CSC) complaint that occurred at a fraternity house. The Statewide Network of Agency Photos (SNAP) staff contacted the investigating agency and obtained additional photographs of the suspect. Facial recognition developed an investigative lead. The investigator later confirmed the viable candidate in the lead was the correct suspect.

Armed Bank Robbery Investigation

A facial recognition search of an image in relation to an armed bank robbery in Michigan returned a viable candidate. A lead was generated to the requesting detective. After further investigation, the subject in the investigative lead confessed to the armed robbery. Facial recognition was instrumental in expediting the investigation.

Identity Fraud Investigation

While working on identity fraud detection, Michigan's Statewide Network of Agency Photos (SNAP) Unit staff uncovered a potential fraud case when they found a subject whose image appeared on nine different records, each with a different name, with one presumably legitimate. The investigation also revealed the subject had additional alias names and spelling variations. A potential fraud report was turned over to investigators. Without facial recognition,

investigators may not have known this subject was potentially victimizing eight different people by using their driver licenses for fraudulent purposes.

Narcotics Trafficking Investigation

The Statewide Network of Agency Photos (SNAP) Unit in Michigan received a request from an out-of-state law enforcement agency to help identify an unknown subject believed to be from Michigan who was part of a drug trafficking ring in their state. A facial recognition search was conducted, and a viable candidate returned. The investigative lead was provided to investigators who later confirmed this was the subject they were attempting to identify. This subject was involved in numerous drug trafficking investigations in Michigan and West Virginia.

Human Trafficking and Exploitation Investigation

The Statewide Network of Agency Photos (SNAP) Unit in Michigan received a photo of an alleged juvenile victim suspected of being sex trafficked on a popular website known for this type of activity. Facial recognition developed a viable investigative lead. The viable candidate in the lead, a juvenile, was confirmed as being a victim of sex trafficking.

Human Trafficking Investigation

A local Michigan task force requested a facial recognition search on a juvenile female found on a local website known for human trafficking activity. A facial recognition search was performed, and a viable candidate was identified. A lead report with information on the candidate was returned to the agent who confirmed her identity. In a raid on the suspected house where the juvenile was being held, they found the young girl identified through facial recognition as well as five other missing juveniles. The suspect was charged with human trafficking.

Unknown Deceased

A local sheriff's department requested a facial recognition search on an unknown decedent who froze to death in a car. A facial recognition search was conducted revealing a viable candidate. A lead was returned to the deputy and his identity was confirmed to be that of the lead.

Driver Identification

At a traffic stop, a driver did not have identification but provided a name and date of birth. Upon receiving permission from the driver, the law enforcement officer took her photo and ran it through Mobile Facial Recognition to verify her identity. Four mug shots and two previous driver's license images returned. The name and date of birth the driver had provided was her sister's information. The driver was taken into custody and arrested.

Unidentified Deceased

At the scene of a fatal accident, a deceased individual did not have any identification on him. The detective used mobile facial recognition to identify the individual.

Forgery Investigation

Over a three-month period in 2019, facial recognition searches of an individual committing forgery and counterfeiting were requested three times by three different local departments. The Michigan Statewide Network of Agency Photos (SNAP) Unit provided investigative leads to each of these departments and connected the three departments to assist in their investigations. The suspect that was identified as a viable candidate was formally charged with forgery and counterfeiting.

New York

Rice-cooker bomb suspect identified with help of facial recognition technology (NYC) - 2019

<https://nypost.com/2019/08/25/how-nypds-facial-recognition-software-ided-subway-rice-cooker-kook/>

Suspect identified with help of facial recognition technology in diamond district gunpoint robbery of \$4 million in jewelry - 2019

<https://www.nydailynews.com/new-york/nyc-crime/ny-diamond-heist-facial-recognition-20190828-g6fiqkpg3nbshamsd5be4y3nny-story.html>

Washington, DC

The Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives' (ATF) Washington Field Division needed to identify a suspected firearms trafficker. A trained facial recognition examiner in the National Capital Region worked with photo evidence from a social media account and utilized facial recognition software against regional booking and arrest photos. The examiner provided an investigative lead on the possible suspect to ATF. After further investigation using the lead, the identification was confirmed.

Members of the Metropolitan Police of the District of Columbia (MPDC)/FBI Child Exploitation and Human Trafficking Task Force were attempting to identify a victim being commercially sexually exploited by a known human trafficker. The victim had been physically assaulted by the known trafficker. Working with photo evidence from a surveillance operation, a trained facial recognition examiner used facial recognition software against regional booking and

arrest photos to assist MPDC. An investigative lead was provided on the possible suspect. During further investigation, the identification was confirmed.

Members of the MPDC/FBI Child Exploitation and Human Trafficking Task Force assisted in the arrest of a felon in possession of a firearm near an area known for commercial sexual exploitation in Washington, DC. During the arrest, the defendant made statements insinuating he was a pimp/trafficker and that he had recently traveled to Miami, Florida, with two prostitutes. Photographs of the women were located but investigators were unable to identify the women. The photographs were sent to a trained facial recognition examiner who used facial recognition technology to tentatively identify the women and then positively identify the women using corroborating information from other databases. This information was crucial to progress an investigation against a known felon engaged in the criminal sexual exploitation of women.

Maryland

Surveillance video captured an armed carjacking, including images of the suspects and their vehicle. Facial recognition was used on images from the video and provided an investigative lead for one suspect in the video. A query of the subject's name in other databases yielded a recent police encounter in another Maryland county. In the report of that encounter, a detailed description of the subject's vehicle matched the suspect's vehicle from the armed carjacking. This information provided additional evidence that the suspect was the person in the previous encounter.

Virginia

Prince William County (PWC) Police in Virginia received a message for follow-up from a group for veterans regarding Facebook posts by an unknown person stating he did not want to live anymore and was looking into a gun. The veteran group did not know the poster, his real name, or where he lived but sent it to PWC police because there was a link to Dale City. A PWC police department crime analyst used facial recognition software to compare the Facebook poster's image and developed a lead as to who the subject might be. They made contact with the poster and provided help.

Florida

Fugitive Apprehension

In February 2017, a forensic artist was updating age progression images for a 26-year fugitive wanted for participating in a South Florida cocaine trafficking organization. Images of the fugitive were entered into Face Analysis Comparison Examination System (FACES) and the forensic artist saw one potential match was a Florida driver license photograph that strongly resembled the fugitive but with a different name. The information was passed on to federal law enforcement partners and the subject was arrested weeks later. The subject was sentenced to approximately 11 years in federal prison.

Missing Child Investigation

In March 2018, local and federal law enforcement officers were trying to recover a child missing for four months. The child had a history of running away from foster care and falling victim to child sex trafficking. The investigation revealed a Facebook image of an adult male who appeared to be the child's boyfriend. The image was entered into FACES and, among the result was a driver license photograph that strongly resembled the probe image. Further investigation of the individual revealed he was currently on probation. Law enforcement officers initiated surveillance on the subject which revealed the missing child hiding in the rear seat of the subject's vehicle. The missing child was recovered.

Child Sexual Exploitation Investigation

In 2017, detectives were conducting online undercover investigations related to child sexual exploitation. An undercover officer posted online while posing as a 14-year-old girl. An adult male who said he was in his thirties responded to this post. He continued conversation with someone he believed to be a 14-year-old girl despite being informed repeatedly of "her" age. The male provided a photograph of himself which was processed through FACES. Among the results was a driver license photograph which strongly resembled the probe image. Further investigation ultimately led to the location and arrest of the subject for multiple felony charges related to the online seduction of a minor.

Missing Person Investigation

In February 2010, law enforcement officers were investigating a runaway case involving a juvenile female. During the investigation, social media images were obtained of an unknown subject believed to be harboring the juvenile runaway. Images were enrolled into FACES and searched. A potential match was found, and the identity was verified. The detectives determined the suspect's location, recovered the runaway juvenile, and made an arrest of the suspect for harboring a runaway.

Fraud Investigation

In September 2018, a male suspect attempted to rent a high-end vehicle by using a fraudulent Kansas driver license. The rental car employee was suspicious of the male and took a photograph of the driver license. The suspect took the driver license and fled the business. Detectives processed the photograph of the fraudulent driver license through FACES and found a potential match. Additional investigation revealed the suspect was on probation. The probation officer confirmed the suspect was indeed her probationer. An arrest warrant was issued for felony charges and Violation of Probation.

Domestic Battery Investigation

In February 2019, officers were dispatched to a domestic battery call where the male fled on his bike. When officers located him, he was not cooperative. The male provided a name to the officers that could not be confirmed. Officers obtained a photograph of the subject and searched FACES. A prior booking photograph from a neighboring county resembled the subject. The male confirmed that he was the individual officers suspected him to be following the facial recognition search. Further investigation revealed the subject had outstanding arrest warrants for seven charges from a nearby county and he was arrested.