

Hickory Police Department and the Caldwell County Sheriff's Office were notified by the NC State Bureau of Investigation yesterday that the skull found off of Winkler Way near Hwy 268 in April 2012 was Zahra Baker's remains. Working together, the NC SBI's Crime Lab, NC Medical Examiner's Office and Marshall University in Huntington, WV were able compare a DNA profile used for the prosecution of Elisa Baker in Zahra's murder case to the skull found in Caldwell County to confirm the findings. The examination of the skull was unable to provide any further details on how Zahra was murdered.

"This information gives the members of 'Team Zahra' mixed emotions" said Chief of Police Tom Adkins. "It brings up the tragedy of Zahra's death and the life she lived before she was killed but it also gives us and the community a sense of finally bringing her home". Sheriff Alan Jones of Caldwell County said, "Our County and all the folks who worked on this case are reminded of the days spent trying to find Zahra. She will be in our memories for the rest of our lives".

Family members along with the Australian Consulate had to be notified prior to releasing the information to the public. The remains will be returned to the appropriate family members with the assistance of the Consulate.

Elisa Baker is still awaiting sentencing in her federal drug conspiracy case which she has already pleaded guilty. No further information will be released at this time.