

Richard Anthony Battaglia, Class of 1969.



CALIFORNIA AUTOPSY MAY SOLVE MYSTERY OF MEMPHIS MAN

Some detectives in California hope an autopsy of skeletal remains they recovered Monday may clear up the disappearance of a Memphis man whose car was found there last year.

Sgt. Bill Wordlaw of the Riverside County Sheriff's Department office in Blyth said the body has tentatively been identified as

Richard Battaglia, 36.

Battaglia's maroon, four-door, 1982 Mercury was found a year ago today about 5 miles from where a hiker discovered the skeletal remains Monday.

"We only have circumstantial evidence that the body found is that of Mr. Battaglia, but we feel the evidence is strong"

Wordlaw said. He has asked the Memphis Police Department to send dental X-rays so a positive identification can be made. Officers think the body is Battaglia's because keys that fit the car were found in a pair of trousers about 300 yards from the skeletal remains. They also found jewelry believed to have been worn by Battaglia.

Wordlaw said there was indications that the man became disoriented in the desert and died of exposure.

He said the car was still in operating condition when found. Wordlaw said the site is 13 miles north of Blythe on the edge of the Sonora Desert in the Big Marie Mountains. "Very few people have ever been in that location and if it had not been for the hiker, we probably would never have found the remains," he said.

Battaglia, who worked as a security guard and lived at 499 North Garland, was last seen by neighbors on January 13, 1986. Wordlaw said the car had been sold by the used-car lot owner who had towed the vehicle and stored it.

Wordlaw said the autopsy will probably take several weeks. This information is from The Commercial Appeal, Thursday, January 22, 1987.