



**Decedent:** VALORA, Zyanya Gimel  
**Address:** 11195 North Ventura Avenue  
Ojai, CA 93023

**Case:** 1529-25  
**DOB:** 12/17/2002  
**Race:** White  
**Sex:** Female  
**Age:** 22 years

**Date of Death:** Before 09/24/2025  
**Time of Death:** 10:27  
**County:** Ventura, CA  
**Investigator:** James Baroni

## Investigative Report

### SUMMARY

Employees from the Ojai Land Conservancy were doing some scouting in the Ventura River bottom looking for non-indigenous plants. They came across a skull and some other human bones. A cell phone found at the scene belonged to Zyanya VALORA, a 22 YO female who had been reported missing in June, 2024. The remains were later identified as Zyanya VALORA.

### INFORMATION LEADING TO THIS INVESTIGATION

On 09-24-2025, at approximately 1115 hours, I received a call from Medical Examiner's Administrative Specialist, Ashley Williams. She advised that the Ventura County Sheriff's Office had called and reported the finding of human remains in the Ventura River Bottom in Ojai. I advised that I was a few minutes away from the office and that I would contact the reporting agency.

On 09-24-2025, at about 1127 hours, I called and spoke with Deputy Chad Jones. He provided the following information based on the preliminary investigation. Earlier today, people from the Ojai Valley Conservancy were surveying the Ventura River bottom looking for non-indigenous plants. One team member, (later determined to be Martin Schenker) located human remains on the bank of the river bottom and called 911 at around 1027 hours. It was thought that the remains might be related to a missing person from the local area named Zyanya VALORA, age 22. I told Deputy Jones that I would respond to the scene.

### RESPONSE AND ARRIVAL DATA

I arrived at the staging area on 09-24-2025, at about 1227 hours. Access to the area was by entering the property located at 1000 Burnham Rd, and driving to the eastern edge of the property. From there, we had to hike down a steep berm and then a couple hundred yards to the location of the remains. Several people from the Ventura County Sheriff's Office were present including Captain Steve Jenkins, Detectives De La Cerda, Cruz, Hernandez and Torres, Deputies Sharif and Jones, and Sgt. Preciado.

### SCENE SETTING AND DESCRIPTION

The scene was the Ventura River in the general area of 1000 Burnham Rd. The general coordinates were LAT 34.41919, LONG -119.30179. In this area, the river was dry and there vast amounts of dead moss stuck between all the rocks in the center of the river bottom. The river bottom ran north-south in this area. The decedent's

remains were located on the west bank of the river bottom. The area was elevated a minimum of 3 to 4 feet above the river bottom, and rose in elevation going westward. The area was covered with various types of vegetation, including weeds, small shrubs and larger trees. The decedent's remains were scattered over an area of at least 30 x 20 feet. In an area near the edge of the river bottom underneath a large shrub was a cell phone. According to detectives, the cell phone matched that of a cell phone belonging to a local woman who was reported missing in June of 2024 in a nearby area. The phone was later determined to belong to Zyanya VALORA, the missing person.

Moving further up the bank, there were several areas of scattered human remains. On initial searching, the skull was at the southwest border of the bone dispersal area. Moving north approximately 6 feet was a pelvic bone with two femurs, a tibia and a scapula. Slightly north of these bones was some sort of jacket or garment. In the brush, a foot or two east of the pelvic bone, was another fibula bone. A few feet north of the femur bone was some fabric that had an ilium inside of it. A couple of feet west of the ilium was a portion of sacrum and lower lumbar spine. Approximately 7 feet east of the ilium inside of the shorts, was a tibia. Moving north approximately 5 more feet, was another portion of vertebra with ribs attached and one loose rib approximately 2 feet southeast of the vertebra. Another piece of black fabric was on the ground approximately 2 feet northeast of the vertebrae. Approximately 10 feet north of the vertebra was what appeared to be a mound of hair. The hair looked dark brown.

The Ventura County Sheriff's Office flew a drone over the area to obtain aerial photos and to mark coordinates.

A subsequent search by the Ventura County Sheriff's Search and Rescue team located a small amount of hair approximately 3 feet south of the skull and a mandible approximately 8 feet west of the skull. In the general area, a few feet west of the large clump of hair were a few very small bones located by search and rescue that were likely non-human but were collected just in case.

Approximately 9 feet east of the skull as a small fragment of bone. Approximately 2 to 3 feet north of the skull was another mass of hair and some fabric that were covered up with leaves.

In an area approximately 7 feet northwest of the largest clump of hair was a very small fragment a bone that may or may not be human

Approximately 10 feet southeast of the large clump of hair was a small bone underneath a bunch of foliage.

All of the bones found were dry and devoid of tissue. No definitive area of where the decedent may have initially died, was located.

### **RELEVANT HISTORICAL INFORMATION**

According to Det. Hernandez, the decedent had been missing since June 25, 2024 at 1130 hours. She had removed the screen from her bedroom window and left. The decedent was known to be autistic and had some mental health and behavioral issues. She had walked away from her parents' home previously. She had an incident in the past where she was walking in traffic and had been placed on a 5150 hold.

I photographed the area and collected the bones, hair, and clothing. The Ventura County Sheriff's Office collected the phone. I transported the remains back to the Medical Examiner's Office. I requested Det. Cruz provide copies of the missing person's report. Once the decedent's identification has been scientifically confirmed, our office will work with the Ventura County Sheriff's Office to make notification. Det. Erik Hernandez, advised that he had met with the family numerous times related to the Missing Person report.

According to reports on Zyanya Valora in I-cop, she was reported as a missing person on 02-18-2020. At that time she was described as autistic and that she had not been taking her anti-depressive medications. She had been scheduled to see her mental health physician, and they suspected she ran away so that she did not have to go to the appointment. They stated that she had never run away before, but mentioned that about 3 years earlier, she was standing in the middle of HWY 33 and had been taken to Vista Del Mar on a W.I. Code 5585 hold.

According to a missing person's report filed on 06-25-2024, Zyanya's mother, Damaris, advised that she had autism and suffered from depression but refused to take her medications. Over the last few months, her

depression had gotten worse and she spent most of her time in her bedroom with the door shut. She thought that Zyanya might be suicidal but that she had not made any threats and always denied being suicidal when asked. She advised that the decedent was very religious and was found at a Baptist church the last time she ran away in 2020. She was known to have a phone, but it only received calls while on WiFi.

On 09-26-2025, dental x-rays from the remains were obtained by our office and submitted to Dr. Spencer, who compared them to the dental x-rays of Zyanya Valora. Dr. Spencer concluded that the x-rays were from the same person, positively identifying the decedent as Zyanya VALORA.

On 09/26/25 at 1600 hours the decedent's parents were notified of the death and circumstances by Sr. Medical Examiner Investigator C. CARTER and Sheriff's Det. HERNANDEZ. Per the decedent's mother she had autism, a congenital heart problem, and a cardiac aneurysm. The decedent received her medical care from Kaiser. She did not smoke, drink, or abuse drugs to their knowledge. The decedent was autistic and had been decreasing in her functioning prior to going missing. The decedent was known to be depressed, but family denied overt suicidal ideations. Her mother did say that self-harm was possible. The decedent had stopped taking her medications prior to going missing. She had become increasingly isolated from family and spent most of her time in her bedroom. The decedent rarely showered. The family stated they believed the decedent was a cisgendered heterosexual female but admitted they were not sure since she never dated anyone. (CC)

#### **PREVIOUS MEDICAL HISTORY AND CURRENT MEDICATIONS**

According to Sheriff's detectives, the decedent had autism.

I entered the decedent's name into the CERNER medical records database for the Ventura County Medical Center, Santa Paula Hospital, and their affiliated clinics. No records were found.

On 11-05-2025, I called the Decedent Affairs office at Kaiser Permanente and spoke with Steve Choi. He provided the following information. The decedent's medical history included Turner Syndrome, Autism Spectrum Disorder, Coarctation of aorta with repair in March of 2007, obstructive cardiomyopathy from 2007, amblyopia, exotropia, hirsutism, depression, primary ovary failure, and osteopenia. She had a psychiatric assessment in November of 2023 and she did not exhibit any suicidal or homicidal ideation.

#### **INVESTIGATOR'S ASSESSMENT**

Based on the background investigation into missing person Zyanya VALORA, and the fact that the phone found with the remains belonged to Zyanya, there is an extremely high likelihood that the remains are those of Zyanya VALDORA. The bones appear consistent with a small female.

#### **INVESTIGATORS ACTIONS**

I collected the bones, clothing fragments, and hair. I transported them to the Medical Examiner's Office. The Ventura County Sheriff's Office collected the phone. Once identification has been confirmed, our office will work with the Ventura County Sheriff's Office to notify the decedent's parents.

#### **FAMILY NOTIFICATION AND DISPOSITION PLAN**

On 09-26-2025, dental x-rays from the remains were obtained by our office and submitted to Dr. Spencer, who compared them to the dental x-rays of Zyanya Valora. Dr. Spencer concluded that the x-rays were from the same person, positively identifying the decedent as Zyanya VALORA. Sr. Medical Examiner Investigator Carter, along with several people from the Ventura County Sheriff's Office notified the decedent's parents of the death. They were advised that a forensic examination would be performed.

The decedent's remains were later sent to Cal State University- Chico to the Anthropology Lab (Human ID Lab) for further examination, and were later returned to the Ventura County Medical Examiner's Office.

The decedent was later released to Joseph P. Reardon Funeral Home in Ventura at the family's request.

**CONCLUSION AND FOLLOW-UP PLAN**

The case was reviewed with Dr. Christopher Ray Young, Chief Medical Examiner for the County of Ventura. He performed a forensic examination to determine the cause and manner of death and issued the death certificate. The manner of death was undetermined.

The decedent's remains were later sent to Cal State University- Chico to the Anthropology Lab (Human ID Lab) for further examination.

I have no other information to add to this report. Any pertinent information will be included in an addendum.