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Correspondent

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Saturday, 10 February, 2001, 15:40 GMT

## Remains identified as missing Lucie



AP

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Police have identified the remains found in a beachside cave near Tokyo as those of British bar hostess Lucie Blackman.

They were found near a cave at Miura, at the mouth of Tokyo Bay, about 30 miles south of the capital.

Miss Blackman, 22, who worked as a hostess in a Tokyo bar, went missing last July, sparking a massive search.

“**This is a very sad and traumatic time for us**”

**Blackman family**

The case has attracted huge publicity in Japan, where crimes involving Western women are rare.

The dismembered limbs and a head encased in concrete were discovered by police on Friday.

Miss Blackman, a former British Airways stewardess from Sevenoaks in Kent, has not been seen since 1 July last year.

She was working as a hostess in a Tokyo nightclub when she disappeared during a day-trip to the Chiba coast, east of Tokyo, with an unidentified man.

### Drinks with suspect

The Blackman family said in a statement: "Obviously this is a very sad and traumatic time for us.

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**▶ The BBC's Charles Scanlon, in Tokyo**

"Dental records were used to make the identification"  
 real **56k**

**▶ The BBC's Louise Elliott**

"She had been in Japan for only a few weeks"  
 real **56k**

"We are looking forward to bringing Lucie home in the near future.

"In the meantime we would ask that the media respect our wishes to grieve in private.

"We appreciate all the work the Japanese police have done on this investigation but we know they still have a great deal of work to do."

The Foreign Office confirmed the body had been identified from dental records.

Foreign Secretary Robin Cook said he was "deeply saddened".

"Her father, Tim, whom I met in Tokyo, and the whole family, are much in my thoughts. I have greatly admired their courage as they have sought news of Lucie. The task now must be to bring her killer to justice."



Lucie Blackman has been missing since July

The British Ambassador to Japan Sir Stephen Gomersall said his thoughts went out to the Blackman family, who had borne the ordeal with remarkable courage and fortitude.

A Japanese businessman, who has an apartment near where the discovery was made, has been suspected in Lucie's disappearance.

Property developer Joji Obara, 48 - who is already on trial for the rape of several women - has denied involvement in the disappearance of Miss Blackman.

But he has admitted having drinks with her at the bar where she worked.

Police have made no charges against the businessman in connection with Ms Blackman's disappearance.

But he has since been charged with the abduction, drugging and indecent assault of another Western woman.

Mr Blackman, 47, a property developer, said he had no immediate plans to fly to Japan.

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Since Miss Blackman's disappearance he has made a number of emotional appeals for help from the Japanese public during frequent visits to Tokyo.

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