

Found in the snow and ice

On a bright and sunny day in September 1991, two German tourists are hiking in the Alps. The mountain Erika and Helmut Simon are climbing is ten thousand feet high. They stop to take some amazing photos near the summit.

It is just after lunchtime. In a hurry to get back to their car, they take a short cut down the mountainside. They leave the main path and pick their way down a steep, stony gully, at the side of a section of ice.

The gully is full of drifts of snow. Helmut notices something brown against the whiteness of the snow. He thinks it might be litter. He carefully climbs down to take a closer look, before turning to his wife. "I think we've found a dead body," he says.



The body has skin like old leather, and its backbone is sticking out. The lower part of the body seems to be still frozen into the ice. It doesn't have any hair. There are signs of clothing and other items close to the body.

This same year, five or six other bodies have already been found in the mountains, as the summer sun melts the thinnest areas of ice. Often, they are the bodies of climbers who have fallen to their deaths down cracks in the ice. Some have been missing for as long as fifty years.

The first officials on the scene quickly realise that this is not a recent body, but has been in the ice a lot longer. They ask local scientists to come and take a look.

Whose body is it?

How did it get here?

