



Odontology Section – 2003

F4 Homicide in Van Buren County, MEC 02-1272

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The attendee will review overlay and digital analysis of a bite mark and will determine which is the most subjective.

The decedent, Donald Lawson, was reportedly found unresponsive at his residence in Spencer, TN, and was transported to White County Hospital in Sparta. The decedent reportedly sustained blunt force injuries from an unknown assailant and unknown instrument (possibly a walker). The decedent was transported to the Office of the State Medical Examiner Center for Forensic Science, 850 R.S. Gass Boulevard, Nashville, TN, for further investigation.

Dr. Bruce P. Levy performed an autopsy on May 21, 2002 with the following report.

Pathologic Diagnoses

1. Blunt force injuries of head and neck:
 - 1) Multiple lacerations, abrasions and contusions of face and scalp.
 - 2) Multiple facial fractures.
 - 3) Hemorrhages of neck.
2. Blunt force injuries of torso and extremities:
 - 1) Bite marks of abdomen and right upper extremity.
 - 2) Abrasions, contusions and lacerations of chest, abdomen and back.
 - 3) Abrasions, contusions and lacerations of both arms.
3. Atherosclerotic and hypertensive cardiovascular disease:
 - 1) Cardiac hypertrophy (780 grams).
 - 2) Arteriolar nephrosclerosis.
 - 3) Aortic atherosclerosis, marked.
 - 4) Cerebral artery atherosclerosis, moderate.
 - 5) Coronary artery atherosclerosis, marked:
 - 1) Status-post coronary artery bypass grafts (2) and pacemaker placement:
 - 1) Bypass grafts patent.
 - 2) Pericardial fibrous adhesions.
4. Pulmonary vascular congestion and anthracosis.
5. Benign prosthetic hyperplasia.
6. Pleural fibrous adhesions, bilateral.
7. Status-post laparoscopic cholecystectomy, remote:
 - 1) Peritoneal fibrous adhesions, focal.

Cause of Death: Multiple blunt force injuries of head.

Manner of Death: Homicide

Circumstances of Death: Assaulted by other person(s).

On May 21, 2002, Dr. Mike Tabor and Dr. Michael Cisneros were called to the Forensic Science Center in Nashville, TN, to evaluate bite marks on the decedent, Donald Lawson. There were bite marks on the decedent's abdomen and right upper extremities. Linda Scavone, Forensic Photographer, took digital photographs using an ABFO #2 ruler. The bite mark on the right side of the abdomen was excised using an acrylic ring cyanoacrylate and suture technique for examination.

On May 28, 2002, Dr. Mike Tabor and Dr. Michael Cisneros were asked to evaluate accused Robert L. Christian's dentition to the bite mark pattern on Donald Lawson. Impressions and wax bites of Robert L. Christian were taken at the Metro Police Department on James Robertson Parkway in Nashville, TN.

After studying the excised bite mark and digital photograph of the decedent using overlays and digital analysis, the dentition of Robert L. Christian was found consistent with the bite mark left on Donald Lawson.

Bite Mark, Overlay, Digital Analysis