



F44 Beaten, Bitten, and Murdered

Barry E. Lipton, DDS*, 11200 Seminole Boulevard, Suite 108, Largo, FL; and Mardi J. Aronoff, DDS, 22350 Wick Road, Taylo, MI

After attending this presentation the participant will understand:

1) The national statistics involving homicide of children under the age of 5 by a caretaker, with specific data related to this problem within the State of Florida; 2) Recent well-publicized failures associated with the Florida State agency responsible for the welfare of children; 3) The learning experience and challenges associated with this type of investigation; multiple bite marks, multiple suspects; and 4) A case study: A case involving the death of a severely retarded two-year-old male, with thirty-two human bite marks found at autopsy.

According to the U.S. Department of Justice's statistics of homicide trends in the U.S., approximately 80% of the children under the age of five who die every year are killed either by their parents or an acquaintance of one of the parents. This trend has been consistent for over 25 years.

Case Study/A Statistic: Two-year-old David suffered from Cri du chat syndrome. Severely handicapped and mentally retarded, he was totally dependent on his mother for his every need. On February 21, 2000, while attending the AAFS meeting in Reno, Nevada, the author was contacted by the District 12, Associate Medical Examiner with the request to examine and evaluate soft tissue pattern injuries, of possible dental origin, present on the remains of a two-year-old male. According to the Medical Examiner, because of a delay in immediate medical care, this child died of severe internal injuries. In addition to the injuries noted above, several bone fractures were present on the extremities and there was evidence of previously fractured ribs.

Because of a past history of possible abuse, the author was informed that a social worker had just visited the child several days prior to the murder. According to their report, they noted a well dressed (from head to toe) and well-nourished child. Sadly, evidence gathered at autopsy indicated that the social worker never bothered to examine the child undressed. During the course of the examination, 22 separate pattern injuries were examined and photographed. Several of these patterns involved double marks with indications that these injuries were done over a long period of time.

This presentation will review the techniques used in documenting these multiple pattern injuries; obtaining dental records from the four family members who had access to David; the results of the dental comparison of the postmortem records with the dental evidence obtained from the four suspects; the problems associated with multiple pattern injuries, such as are there more than one assailants; the involvement of a Forensic Odontologist prior to autopsy and the need for proper documentation and photographs at autopsy.

Multiple Pattern Injuries, Multiple Suspects, Murder