



### D25 Identifying the Unknown — The Role of the Forensic Odontologist

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After attending this presentation, attendees will understand 1. the statistics involving missing persons and unknown remains and the role of the Forensic Odontologist, 2. how information is placed into the NCIC System and the problems associated with inaccurate information from untrained resources, and 3. Case Studies: a. A cold case involving a missing teenager and a Jane Doe buried for almost 19 years; b. 17-year-old antemortem dental records of a 14-year-old missing female and a 31-year-old Jane Doe.

This presentation will impact the forensic community and/or humanity by increasing the awareness of problems associated with inaccurate dental evidence in dealing with Missing and Unidentified persons.

How important is the timely identification of unknown remains? In cases involving a death, little progress will be made without first establishing the true identity of the deceased.

In this country, there are approximately 100,000 missing persons on record in the National Crime Information Center database and only 5% of these missing persons have supplemental dental records included in their files. Nationally, there are approximately 5,000 people listed as unidentified in the NCIC database, of which 90% are adults. Of the close to 5,000 unidentified, only 68% have supplemental dental information.

Case Study #1/A Statistic: On Monday May 7th, 2001, Detectives from the Pasco County Sheriff's Office contacted me, asking if I would assist in reviewing dental information related to a teenager who had been missing for almost 19 years. They had reason to believe that the remains of a Jane Doe, buried in a neighboring County in 1983, may be those of their missing teenager. A review of the 1979 dental x-rays, chart and NCIC form for the missing teenager, showed inaccurate entries on the submitted NCIC form. Dental x-rays, the postmortem dental report and NCIC information for the unknown were not available for review, as they were lost. Although some similarities were noted when comparing the dental records of the missing teenager and the charted postmortem (1982) remains of the unknown, several inconsistencies were noted in the initial comparison. However the Sheriff's Department elected to proceed with an exhumation.

The unknown from Manatee County was exhumed on June 13, 2001. The skull and dental structures were separated from the remains, re-examined, re-charted and x-rayed. A significant finding during the re autopsy was that teeth originally reported as not present during the 1982 autopsy, were found among the remains. One of which, the Maxillary Left Central Incisor, had a unique pin retained porcelain restoration, previously uncharted.

This presentation will review the results of the dental comparison of the postmortem records with the dental evidence of two cases involving missing teenagers: the problems associated with inaccurate dental charting; NCIC submissions; lack of proper dental records and radiographs; and problems when duplicate copies of the original dental findings and reports are not maintained.

#### **Missing/Unidentified, Dental Records, NCIC**