



F45 Just Another Routine Day in the Office

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The goal of this presentation is to discuss how juggling a general dentistry practice and dealing with the unexpected difficulties of forensic odontology.

This presentation will impact the forensic community and/or humanity by demonstrating how forensic identifications aren't always as they seem. Additionally, describing how being a full time general dentist and having a forensic emergency can sometimes become a juggling act and ways you must modify and adapt.

The purpose of this lecture is to demonstrate how daily office routine can be interrupted by having to perform an "emergency" comparison.

As we all know things can occur at the most inconvenient times and sometimes extreme measures to solve a case are necessary. In this case skeletal remains, a skull from a missing person of three years, was brought over to my dental office for comparison. If the detective's investigation was correct the missing person was murdered and the suspect who had known dealings with the deceased was under surveillance. The arrest warrant was pending the positive identification of the remains. Thus time was of the essence in order to obtain a warrant and arrest the suspect prior to him fleeing.

This case was pending for over three years. The police were very anxious to solve the case due to the fact that the victim was a minor who was brutally beaten via blunt impact injuries to the head and part of the body was charred. During an interrogation of a burglary investigation new leads were obtained, which led the detectives to the suspect who had known sexual relations with the minor. Upon obtaining the name of the minor all the pieces of the three year old puzzle fell into place. All the while steps were taken by missing person's detectives to identify the skeletal remains of this minor. The skull was sent to the FBI lab in DC for fabrication of a computer generated photo based on specific facial points on the skull. However, this was to no avail, the case was still open. This new lead could possibly solve the missing person's case as well as the homicide.

The detectives were anxious for the results of the dental identification. The examination and radiography of the skull were performed in the dental office in between patients with the detectives waiting. To complicate the issue of time constraints, this was not a routine identification. There were issues with the antemortem records; discrepancies between charting and radiographs. The possibility of some type of insurance fraud committed by the treating dentist or some type of charting error.

What do you do when you have a match on radiographs but very specific charting with contradictory information? Is this enough evidence to make a positive identification to subsequently obtain a search warrant? What about your patient in the next operator mid root canal procedure? Do you contact the treating dentist? Will he sign an affidavit stating he committed Medicaid fraud? What do you do?!?!

Just Another Routine Day In The Office.

This case study will highlight some of the difficulties a forensic odontologist may encounter. It will exemplify how things are never as easy as they seem; how routine identifications aren't always routine; how nuts and bolts always get thrown in to the system; and how we need to adapt and modify.

Forensic, Dentistry, Emergencies