



Physical Anthropology Section – 2004

H58 Multidisciplinary Efforts in the Identification of Three Unidentified Females in the State of New Jersey

*Donna A. Fontana, MS**, New Jersey State Police, River Road, PO Box 7068, West Trenton, NJ 08628; *Raafat Ahmad, MD*, Mercer County Medical Examiner Office, Mercer County Airport, Building #31, West Trenton, NJ 08628; *Jay Peacock, MD*, Monmouth County Medical Examiner Office, Centra State Medical Center, Route 537, Freehold, NJ 07728; *Ronald Suarez, MD*, Morris County Medical Examiner Office, PO Box 900, Morristown, NJ 07963-0900

The goal of this presentation is to present cases to the forensic community that utilize various forensic disciplines in the tentative identification of unidentified bodies.

This presentation will impact the forensic community and/or humanity by demonstrating the utility of using different forensic disciplines in the identification process of unidentified remains.

This poster reports on the combined multi-disciplinary efforts of forensic pathology, forensic anthropology, radiology, hair analysis and composite drawing in the identification process of three unidentified females in the State of New Jersey. The results of these efforts will be presented for review.

On July 18, 2001, an unidentified clothed and mummified body was found in Trenton, New Jersey, at the bottom of steps leading to a basement of a bar that had been closed since June 1996. The forensic anthropological examination determined the victim to be a Negroid female, between 25-35 years of age at the time of death and between 4'9"-5'0" in height. The cause of death was listed as "Extensive fractures of skull" and the manner of death was determined to be "Homicide". Postmortem x-rays revealed a healed mandibular fracture. Unique "jewelry" and a diastema between the upper central incisors were also useful identifiers in this case. A forensic composite drawing was rendered which was based upon the anthropometric measurements provided by the forensic anthropologist and tissue thickness measurements for a Negroid female. A newspaper article and composite of the victim resulted in a tentative identification. Positive identification was subsequently made through fingerprint comparison after successful rehydration of the fingertips.

On March 4, 2002, an unidentified skeletonized/mummified body was found in a wooded area in Denville, New Jersey. The autopsy revealed the presence of three tattoos on the mummified skin unique enough for tentative identification. The forensic anthropological examination determined the victim to be a Caucasian female, between 24-34 years of age at the time of death and between 4'9"-5'0" in height. Examination also determined that she had at least one child. The cause of death was listed as "Pending further studies" and the manner of death was determined to be "Pending." A forensic composite drawing was rendered which was based upon the anthropometric measurements provided by the forensic anthropologist and tissue thickness measurements for a Caucasian female. A flyer was subsequently made which included the composite and the tattoos. Positive identification was made through fingerprint comparison after successful rehydration of the fingertips.

On November 18, 2002, an unidentified and nude female body was uncovered by a backhoe in a vacant lot in Tinton Falls, New Jersey. At autopsy, the body measured 5'0" and weighed 106 lbs. in the body bag. The victim had dark, straight hair. The forensic anthropological and radiological examination determined the victim to be of Caucasian/ Hispanic ancestry and between 15-17 years of age at the time of death. Hair analysis determined the hair to be 5-6 inches in length, dark brown in color with 1 - 1 ½ inches of the tips tinted orange. The analysis also determined that the hair was recently cut and racial characteristics were of Caucasian origin. The cause of death was listed as "Homicidal violence of undetermined etiology" and the manner of death was determined to be "Homicide." The only physical identifier found with the victim was an initial ring with the cursive letter "F" with white or clear stones. A forensic composite drawing was rendered which was based upon the anthropometric measurements provided by the forensic anthropologist and tissue thickness measurements for a Caucasian female. A newspaper article and composite of the victim resulted in a tentative identification. Positive identification was subsequently made through fingerprint comparison using fingerprints filed with the Immigration and Naturalization Service only 3 months prior to discovery of the body.

Identification, Forensic Anthropology, Composite Drawing