



### **F15 Bite Mark Analysis of a Fatal Dog Mauling Case Using Forensic Photo Frames Camera Apparatus**

*Elizabeth R. Smith, DDS\*, PO Box 55297, Virginia Beach, VA 23471*

After attending this presentation, attendees will learn of an innovative camera apparatus technique using Forensic Photo Frames in achieving non-distorted patterned injury images for bite mark analysis.

This presentation will impact the forensic community and/or humanity by demonstrating a new technique using Forensic Photo Frames to capture and document non-distorted images in a multiple pattern injury dog mauling case.

The goal of this presentation is to introduce the attendees to an innovative camera apparatus technique using Forensic Photo Frames in achieving non-distorted patterned injury images for bite mark analysis.

On October 04, 2005 in a rural Suffolk city, a two-year-old male toddler awoke from a night of sleeping to find that he was hungry and ready for breakfast. He alone walked downstairs to the kitchen and treated himself to a box of breakfast cereal. In the home were his parents, a male Pit Bull Terrier Mix, and a nursing female Pit Bull Terrier Mix with pups. During the time of his morning meal he was violently assaulted and physically subdued by one and possibly two of the adult dogs. The victim had numerous bite injuries over majority of his body with the most brutal bites to the head and neck region. The child was Life-Flighted to Children's Hospital in Norfolk where he eventually succumbs to his injuries. Both adult dogs and pups were taken to animal control to await the results of the bite mark analysis. Evidence later determined that the child's parents were in an upstairs bedroom using illicit drugs at the time of the mauling. Reports indicate the male dog was a stray and typically stayed outside the home. Given details state the male dog was used to protect the couple's marijuana crop. Neighbors tell a history of the male dog biting and nipping others in the community.

The author of this abstract was contacted by the lead investigator of the Suffolk Police Department and the Office of the Chief Medical Examiners Tidewater District to examine multiple soft tissue pattern injuries sustained by the decedent. The author was asked to present findings and conclusions regarding any or all of the suspects related to the case. Photographs of the victim's patterned injuries were taken using the Forensic Photo Frames apparatus. The adult dogs were examined, photographed also using the Forensic Photo Frames device. Dental impressions were taken on the adult dogs whereby a bite mark analysis was completed. The conclusion was that the male dog was the probable biter and that the female dog could not be ruled out. The parents pleaded guilty to involuntary manslaughter and child abuse causing a serious injury.

Documentation by photography is a first and important tool in the investigation of a crime scene. Depending on the nature of the incident there may exist one opportunity to correctly retrieve photographic evidence. The purpose of the Forensic Photo Frame device is to provide the responder with the best tools and techniques to capture pristine photographs. The easily attachable apparatus applied to a camera when properly used can reduce or eliminate distortion allowing for a 1:1 ratio of high quality images to be documented. This type of evidence can be an influential benefit in the judicial system.

This presentation will demonstrate a new technique using Forensic Photo Frames to capture and document non-distorted images in a multiple pattern injuries dog mauling case.

#### **Dog Bites, Forensic Photography, Angular Distortion**