



### E13 Crime in the University Setting: An Internal Perspective on the Investigation Into UCLA's Body Donor Scandal

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After attending this presentation, attendees will have gained a basic understanding of how crimes committed in a university setting are investigated using examples from a nationally publicized criminal case. Attendees will be introduced to the roles of university counsel, police, and audit staff and how others charged with investigative functions perform their duties and interact with city, county and state officials, as well as external counsel, during on-campus investigative proceedings.

This presentation will impact the forensic science community by educating attendees about criminal investigations in a university setting. Specific procedures and challenges involved in the collection, preservation, and processing of evidence from an institutional whole body donation program will be described. Additional information will be presented to help attendees understand the criminal investigation, charges, perpetrators, and convictions as well as nuances of the laws, rules, and regulations governing whole body donation programs and legal implications arising from recent state and national proceedings of a similar nature.

In March of 2004, The University of California at Los Angeles (UCLA) voluntarily closed its Willed Body Program amid local and national press stories alleging corruption and improper activity with donated human remains. This was one of many scandalous stories erupting nationally at the time that related to human tissues, organs, and bodies donated for transplant, education, and research, and was not the first time UCLA's program had been linked to related problems. Shortly thereafter, and under injunction by the Los Angeles County Superior Court, the university undertook a painstakingly detailed process of simultaneously investigating allegations at UCLA and proactively reorganizing and modernizing the policies, procedures, and practices of the four remaining donor programs located at the University of California's Schools of Medicine at Davis, Irvine, San Diego, and San Francisco.

Behind the stories in the local and national news and the very public closure of the program, are the facts of the case resulting from problems identified through the university's own internal investigation. Sensationalized headlines insinuating improper activity with donated specimens fueled public outrage and often clouded the fact that the primary criminal indictments of the then alleged perpetrators were conspiracy to commit grand theft, embezzlement, and tax evasion. Evidence was collected by institutional personnel and by investigators external to the UC system and included documents, financial transactions, witness statements, expert testimony, and biological samples from donated bodies and body parts. Some aspects of the investigation and litigation were conducted externally by university- contracted litigators as well as by the district attorneys assigned to the case and defense attorneys hired by or assigned via the court to the accused.

Universities often operate as small cities in and of themselves. Many have and rely on institutional resources such as police and counsel to prevent and investigate crimes internally. When a crime expands from the more mundane campus offense to one of local and national importance, the system's interface with non-university investigative personnel and cases become increasingly complex. These complexities will be highlighted through details of the investigations behind the case and convictions from *The People of the State of California v. Henry Reid and Ernest Nelson*.

#### **Body Donation, Embezzlement, UCLA**