



Jurisprudence Section - 2014

F21 John Wayne Gacy — Still in the News

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After attending this presentation, attendees will review a historic case, including all ID efforts, court preparation and presentation, a current media review of unsubstantiated attorney accusations, and irresponsible journalism, in spite of current ID confirmation by twelve forensic experts, most of whom are American Academy of Forensic Sciences (AAFS) members and six of whom are board certified.

This presentation will impact the forensic science community by outlining for odontologists of all levels of expertise, the largest U.S. mass murder attributed to one individual, but primarily will emphasize current accusations which can be detrimental to one's reputation and professional success.

John Wayne Gacy was arrested in December 1978 for the murder of 33 men and boys, most of whom were buried in his crawl space. Initially 24 of the victims were identified primarily by dental means. John Wayne Gacy was tried in February of 1980 for the murder of eight of the 33 victims, was convicted, and was executed in 1994. One more victim was identified in May of 1986. In an effort to identify the remaining eight unidentified victims, they were exhumed in 2011. The exhumation effort would yield one additional identification through DNA, confirmed with dental records not previously available. At the same time, a woman whose son was identified by four forensic odontologists on the original ID team and a consulting radiologist, insisted the identification (ID) was invalid and that her son was still alive. He disappeared with a friend and they were buried together in Gacy's crawl space, and both were declared identified by the medical examiner's office. In addition, continued media attention perpetuated by two attorneys has focused on accusations of misidentification, possibility of additional victims, potential accomplices, and conspiracies of cover-up in spite of no documented evidence.

All ID materials were given to the attorneys so they could confirm the positive identification of this victim with any of their experts. In spite of the original ID documentation given to the attorneys, they proceeded to get a court order for the exhumation of the body of this questioned ID. Disregarding all the scientific evidence to date, the attorneys stated that the DNA comparison of the mother and victim's jaws "were not a match." The DNA results were not made public and the laboratory would not comment to the Cook County Sheriff's Police Department. The attorneys stated publicly that the DNA comparison was made from the jaws, even though factually the jaws were not with the exhumed body.

Gacy, Mass Murder, ID Confirmation