



## Jurisprudence Section - 2014

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### F36 An Unusual Request

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After attending this presentation the attendees will gain information to be able to consider a new protocol in their forensic practice should they be requested to perform the unusual procedure of removing metal restorations.

This presentation will impact the forensic science community by developing a dialogue within the forensic dental community regarding this unusual request.

The value of precious metals has increased significantly in the last decade. There is increased awareness by the general public of the value of these precious metals. Many patients have significant quantities of these types of metals in the form of dental restorations. These can range from crowns, inlays, onlays, and even removable partial dentures or "grills." On a daily basis, there are requests on television, radio, and print media by various businesses to purchase precious metals. These requests are for any form of precious metals from jewelry to dental gold. The proprietors offer to evaluate the customer's "scrap" metal and offer immediate reimbursement.

Due to this widespread media blitz regarding precious metal values, family members aware of a decedent's dental history and restorations may be interested in recovering these items prior to internment or cremation. Removable items such as dentures and "grills" may be easy to recover. Cemented restorations require the skill of one familiar with the art of exodontia. A local funeral director requested the extraction of any teeth from a deceased that had "gold" restorations by the forensic dentist. This request was initiated by the wife of the deceased. The funeral director stated this request was clearly stated in the deceased's last will and testament. In addition the funeral director had obtained from the wife a signed addendum to the cremation authorization for the extraction of those teeth that contained precious metal restorations. In Washington, funeral directors/embalmers are not allowed to extract teeth from the deceased. Therefore, arrangements were made for the procedure to be performed at the crematorium. The details of the procedure performed will be presented. This presentation will allow the attendees to consider a protocol in their forensic practice should a request be made to perform this procedure. The purpose in presenting this case is to develop a dialogue within the forensic dental community regarding this unusual type of request: (1) is it ethical to perform this procedure?; (2) how many in the audience have performed this procedure?; (3) how many in the audience would refuse to perform this procedure?; and, (4) who better than the forensic dentist to perform this procedure?

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### Forensic Odontology, Ethics, Protocol