



G30 “Oscar” the 1985 Unidentified Person: A Career Development Adventure

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After attending this presentation, attendees will recognize the evolution of advances in identification investigation through the examination of a 1985 unidentified male case study, who remains unidentified today. Attendees will integrate retrospective and evolving unidentified person investigation processes by law enforcement, laboratory methodology, and forensic odontology from the 1985 “state-of-the-art” forensic sciences to the present. Attendees will learn a career experiences to potentially model and create opportunities for developing their professional and interdisciplinary careers.

This presentation will impact the forensic science community by teaching attendees the value of perseverance in successful evidence collection, for personal career development and interaction with their local jurisdictions, even when the case study identification remains unknown.

This presentation will chronicle the evolution of an unidentified man’s antemortem life, and the advancing investigative technology since his death in 1985. In 1985, law enforcement could only nickname the unidentified victim as “Oscar” because he was found in a galvanized trash can. This became his moniker.

“Oscar” was found four miles from the author’s resident community of 50 years. It is reasonable to think that these two lives have had common experiences and acquaintances in the 20 years prior to “Oscar’s” death. The need for “Oscar’s” identification and the criminal investigation into his death began with active inquiries to multidiscipline investigators in order to assist law enforcement to coordinate antemortem and postmortem “Oscar” data. In retrospect, the unsolved case may serve as a model for newer colleagues in forensic and police sciences far beyond our own discipline. While law enforcement must thinly spread their resources over many missing and unidentified persons’ cases, this research was able to focus on “Oscar” alone, which provided an introduction to a wide range of forensic technologies, as well as judicial and human resources.

As one comes to know professional friends longer, one learns more about them. Through evolving technologies, we have learned more about “Oscar” than about many others who have been successfully identified with less information. “Oscar” becomes an ever-closer friend because he continues as the model for implementing new technology and inspires new investigators to persevere in the investigation.

“Oscar’s” cadre of friends have grown over time. With them have come radiographic films, Computed Tomography (CT) head and dental images, anthropologic and dental age estimation, dental charting and coding into the National Crime Information Center (NCIC) and the National Missing and Unidentified Persons System (Name’s), forensic artists’ sketchings and clay reconstruction, and shoe-sole patent symbols that may date fabrication. Sometimes friends leave the community due to job opportunities. This is true for “Oscar” who has had, at minimum, seven missing and unidentified persons’ police investigators responsible for his case. With each change, “Oscar’s” friends welcome a new investigator who learns about his life and the maturing postmortem data. This is a useful evolution for the newer forensic odontologist who gains experience in the process.

The “Oscar” circle of friends has continued over the decades, yielding technical satisfaction, but no resolution. In the past year, “Oscar’s” friends have brought him international recognition in the pages of *National Geographic Magazine*.



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The companion portion of this presentation will explain how new phenotyping analyses have helped us to better know and see “Oscar,” as well as enriching colleagues who can share these findings with local law enforcement for other unidentified persons.

Human Dental Identification, Facial Image Technology, Odontology Career Development