



E29 A Serial Killer and Seven Homicides: Finding the Graves—A Multijurisdictional Investigation

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Learning Overview: The goal of this presentation is to highlight the methods used in multijurisdictional investigations involving local and state law enforcement, the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI), and the medical examiner's office to find the location, then recover a serial killer's burial site of seven victims.

Impact on the Forensic Science Community: This presentation will impact the forensic science community by demonstrating the resources of local, state, and federal agencies to assist the medical examiner's office in uncovering mass graves and how this was achieved.

In 2007, scattered human bones were found on the ground behind a strip mall in Connecticut. At that time, it was suspected that the bones were from three individuals. Two skulls were recovered and later identified via dental radiographic comparisons. A third identification (by DNA) was made in 2014 from a few long bones that were recovered. These three individuals were from separate cities. Four local police departments had a possible suspect and compiled a list of missing persons, dates they went missing, and when they had been in contact with the suspect. Local police departments, working together with the department of corrections, state police, and the FBI, were able to track the suspect's movements and when he had been in the areas of the missing persons.

Once all the agencies concluded how many missing persons there were and if they could possibly be buried at the same location, the Connecticut Office of the Chief Medical Examiner was invited to the monthly Serial Killer Task Force meetings. This task force was comprised of investigators from local, state, and federal jurisdictions that convened once a month to share information and decide the next steps. A list of seven victims was compiled from evidence that was tested from the suspect's vehicle. In 2015, a comprehensive search of the 7.3-acre wooded area was performed using an FBI cadaver dog from Quantico, VA, a line search, soil probes, and ground-penetrating radar.

Based on the information obtained from the forensic analysis of the area, the anthropologist and medicolegal investigator focused on a 0.66-acre area. Once the smaller area was marked, back hoes were brought in, along with local, state, and federal personnel to assist with the excavation. After two weeks of searching and methodical test trenching excavations, five graves were uncovered, including the body of the victim whom the suspect was originally incarcerated for killing based on blood in his vehicle. The cooperation of multiple agencies across jurisdictions and the use of a variety of forensic tools helped determine the location of five grave sites where the remains of seven homicides were concealed (two were scattered on the surface and found in 2007). The suspect has since been tried for their deaths and found guilty.

Forensic Search, Serial Killer, Excavation