

# Federal Funding Issues: the Needs of the Medical Examiner

J.C. Upshaw Downs, MD

*BOD & Chair, NAME Governmental Affairs Committee*

*Vice-Chair, CFSO*

*Coastal Regional Medical Examiner, GBI, Savannah*

# Major Federal Issues

- Status
  - Workforce
  - Resources
- Uniform anatomical gift act
- Available federal funds – Coverdell NFSIA
- Disaster preparedness
- Unidentified dead
- Technology/research

NIJ Journal No. 256 • January 2007

**Missing Persons and Unidentified Remains:  
The Nation's Silent Mass Disaster**

“The Bureau of Justice Statistics is finalizing a comprehensive census of the Nation’s medical examiners and coroners. This study—expected to be published in *early 2007*—*will* examine data from 2,000 medical examiners and coroners and *focus on the issue of unidentified human remains* .”

# Uniform Anatomical Gift Act (UAGA)

- Disposition of remains  
prohibitions/limits
- *Primum non nocere*
- Evidence
- Autonomy/authority



## National Institute of Justice

The Research, Development, and Evaluation Agency of the U.S. Department of Justice

# Funding Opportunities



NIJ funds research, development, and evaluation about criminal justice. We **do not** fund proposals primarily to purchase equipment, materials, or supplies, or to provide training or direct services. ([See Laboratory Enhancement Funding](#) for exceptions.)

[Current Solicitations](#) • [Forthcoming Solicitations](#)

[Getting Started](#) • [Post-Award Information](#)

What's New

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Programs

Funding Opportunities

Publications

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NIJ-Related Sites

Solicitation Archive

Fiscal Year 2007

Fiscal Year 2006

Fiscal Year 2005

Fiscal Year 2004

## Current Solicitations

- Forensic Science Training Development and Delivery Program (Posted 4/13/07)  
*Due Date: May 29, 2007, 11:59 p.m. eastern time.*  
[Full text of the Solicitation](#)
- Convicted Offender and/or Arrestee DNA Backlog Reduction Program (In-House Analysis and Data Review) (Posted 4/30/07)  
*Due Date: June 14, 2007, 11:59 p.m. eastern time.*  
[Full text of the Solicitation](#)
- Paul Coverdell Forensic Science Improvement Grants Program (Posted 5/3/07)  
*Due Date: June 19, 2007, 11:59 p.m. eastern time.*  
[Full text of the Solicitation](#)
- Forensic DNA Backlog Reduction Program (Posted 5/22/07)  
*Due Date: June 21, 2007, 11:59 p.m. eastern time.*  
[Full text of the Solicitation](#)

Receive an email notice of new funding opportunities. Grants.gov lists solicitations available from all Federal agencies and lets you [sign up to be notified](#) when the Department of Justice issues a solicitation.



To view PDF files, [download](#) a free copy of Acrobat Reader.



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[FY 2004 Report](#)

[FY 2003 Report](#)

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# Coverdell Forensic Science Improvement Grant Program

The information on this page is based on the fiscal year 2007 award announcement, which contains further detail and instruction. Requirements for funding in future years may differ.

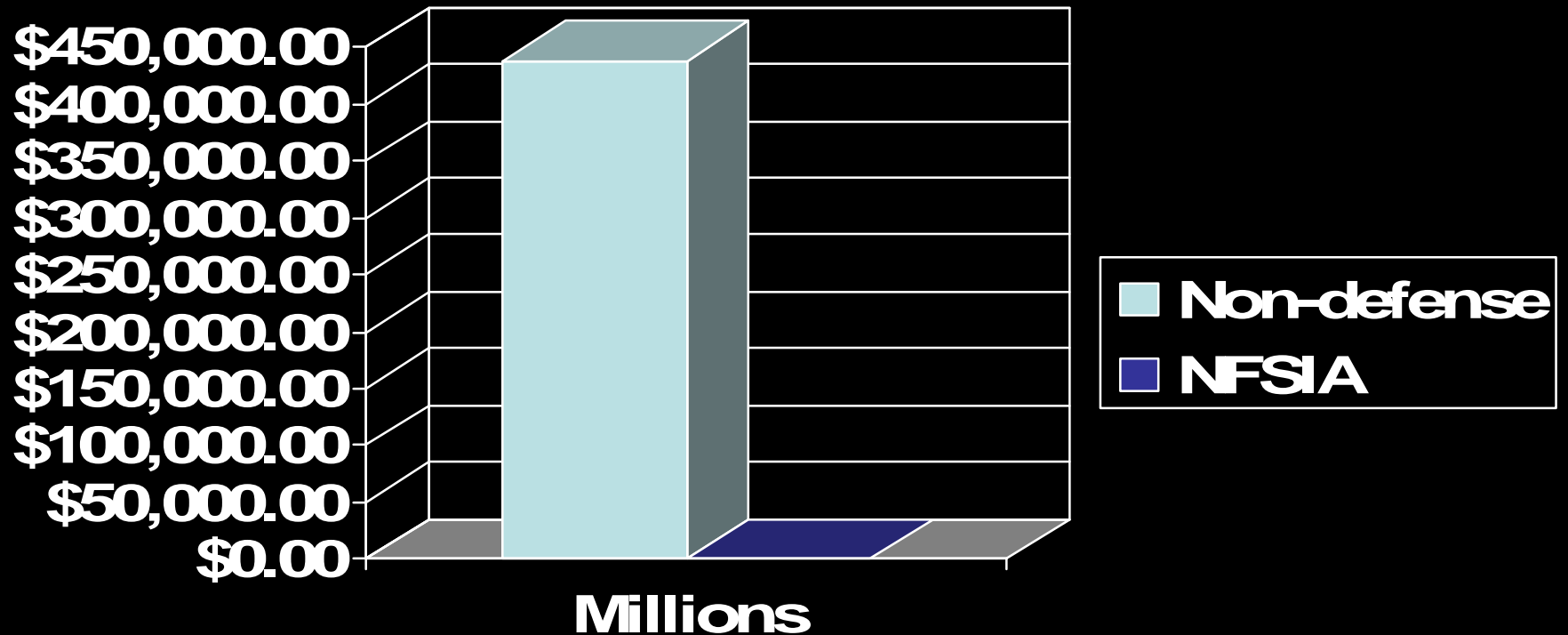
- [Program Description and Purpose](#)
- [Eligibility](#)
- [Expected Results and Outcome](#)
- [Use of Funds](#)
- [Allocation of Fund](#)
- [Program Contact](#)
- [Legislation](#)

See also Program Reports from fiscal years [2004](#), [2003](#) and [2002](#).

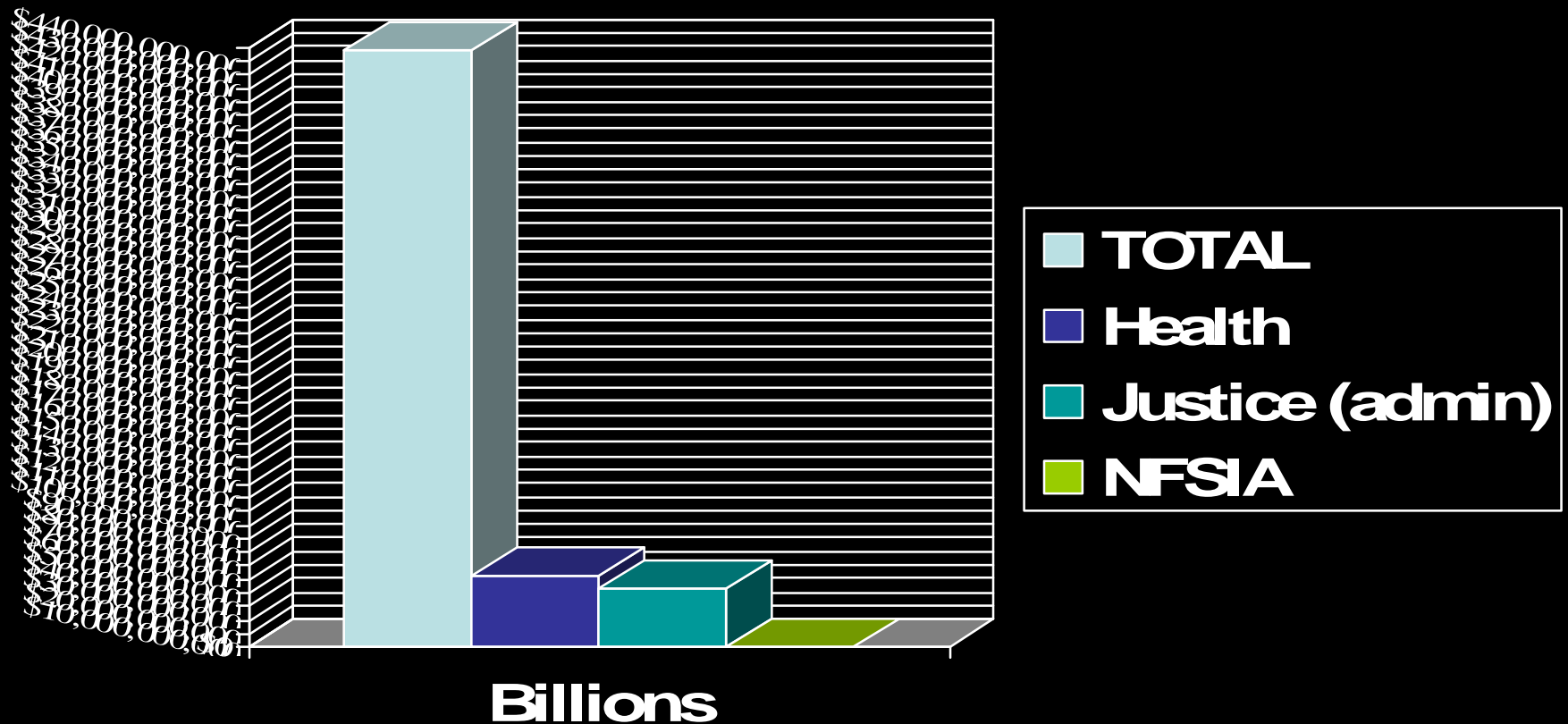
## Program Description and Purpose

The Paul Coverdell Forensic Science Improvement Grants Program (the Coverdell program) awards grants to States and units of local government to help improve the quality and timeliness of forensic science and medical examiner services. Among other things, funds may be used to eliminate a backlog in the analysis of forensic evidence; and to train and employ forensic laboratory personnel, as needed, to eliminate such a backlog. States may apply for both "base" (formula) and competitive funds. Units of local government may apply for competitive funds.

# Discretionary Federal Budget 2007

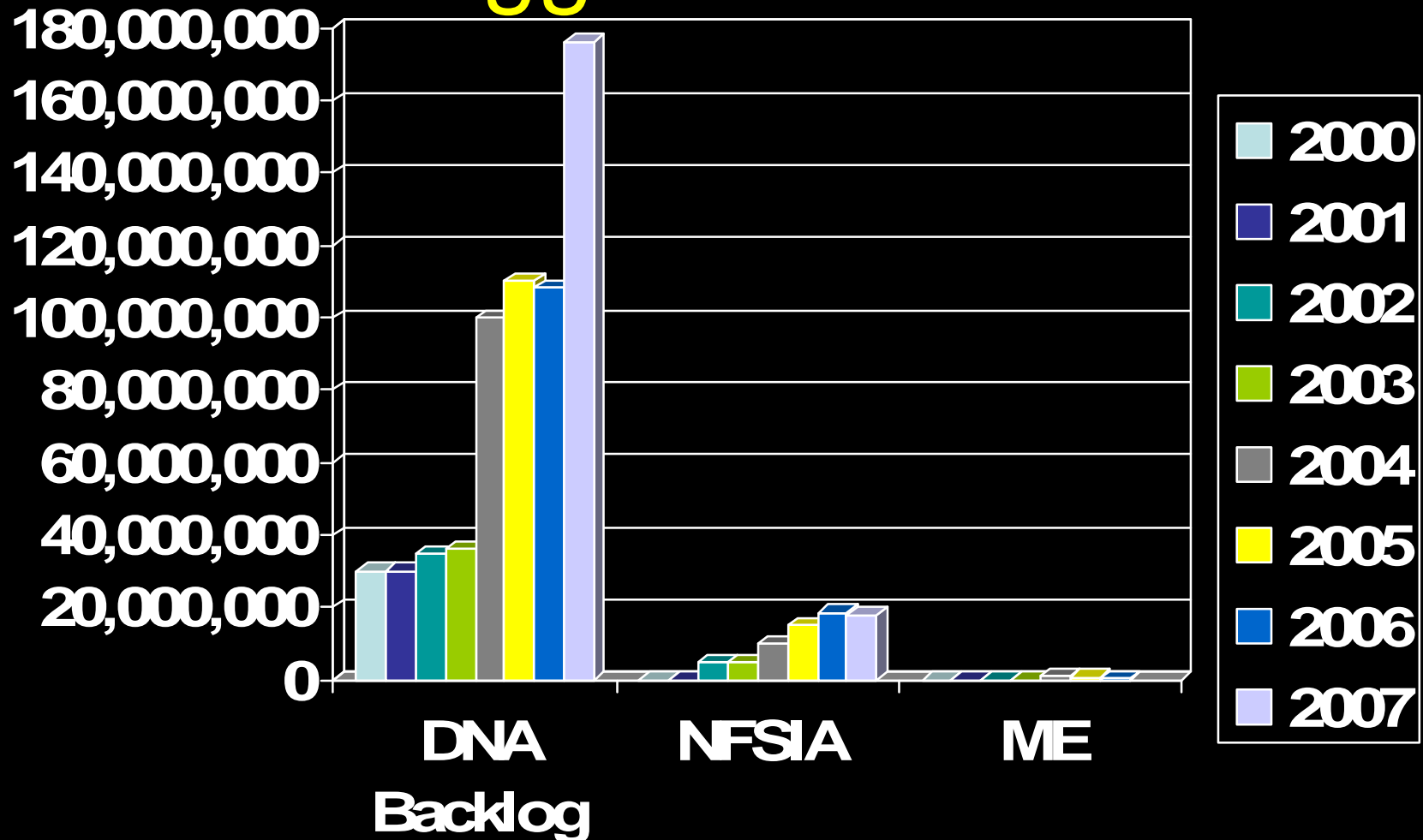


# Discretionary Federal Budget 2007





# All the eggs in one basket...



**DNA Initiative - \$1B over 5 years**

## Coverdell Forensic Science Improvement Grant Program

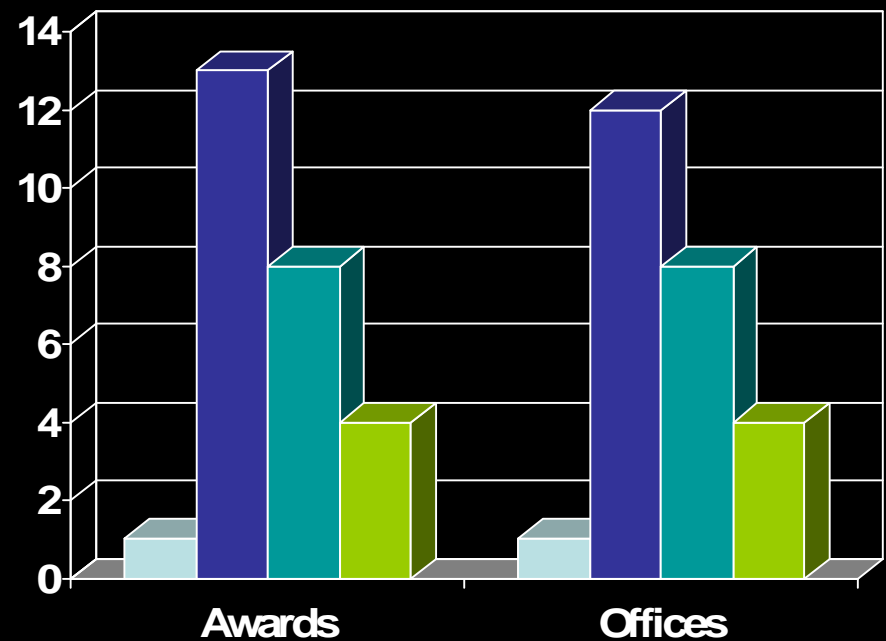
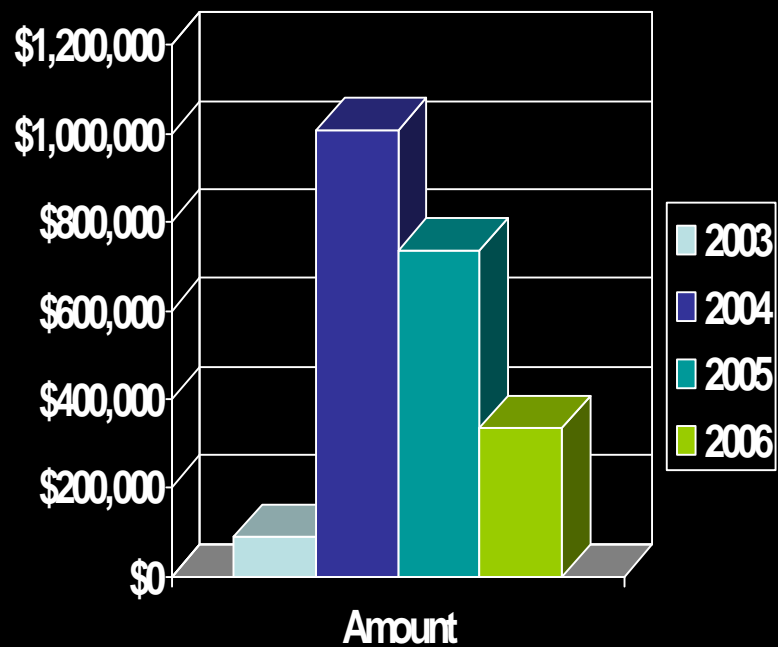
### 'Backlog' Defined

- A backlog in the analysis of forensic science evidence exists if forensic evidence has been stored in a laboratory, medical examiner's office, coroner's office, law enforcement storage facility, or medical facility, and has not been subjected to all appropriate forensic testing because of a lack of resources or personnel.

## Coverdell Forensic Science Improvement Grant Program

- Forensic science (crime lab) & medical examiner services
- States & local government units
- Uses
  - improve the quality and timeliness
  - eliminate/reduce backlogs, including
    - firearms examination
    - latent prints
    - toxicology
    - controlled substances
    - forensic pathology
    - questioned documents
    - trace evidence
  - train & employ forensic laboratory personnel (backlog)
- Program leading to accreditation

# Funding Awards to MEs NFSIA



# Disaster preparedness



# Disaster Mortuary Operational Response Teams

*A National Asset Available in Times of Need*

- Home
- Sign Guestbook
- View Guestbook
- SiteWide Search
- Newsletters
- Enter CHAT Room
- Download Page
- Download VIP
- Download WinID
- Online Training
  - Core Groups
- Family Support
- DMORT E-mail
- Why Have DMORT
- DMORT News
- How we Help
- Families we Serve
  - Our History
- NTSB Relationship
- DPMU Equipment
- People of DMORT
  - Applications
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## Why do we have DMORT?

To assist local authorities during a: **Mass Fatality Incident**

A Mass fatality incident can be defined as:

*'An incident where more deaths occur than can be handled by local resources'*

DMORT is a program of the U.S. Department of Homeland Security that responds **ONLY** when requested. DMORT may be requested by any municipality in need by going through the departmental procedures for requesting federal assistance. Please contact your local **Emergency Management Agency** for further information on requesting federal assistance.

# Issues

- Recognized disaster
- Direction of teams
- Part-time job
  - variable skills
  - tour transitions
  - home jurisdiction
- Cost
- Communication
  - fundamentally local

# Islamic Terrorist Elements as of 2005

FOUO



FOUO



# Bird Flu - Pandemics



# Safety/Training Issues

- Anhydrous ammonia exposure



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NIJ Journal No. 256 • January 2007

## Missing Persons and Unidentified Remains: The Nation's Silent Mass Disaster

by Nancy Ritter

### About the Author

Nancy Ritter is a writer/editor at the National Institute of Justice and Editor of the *NIJ Journal*.

If you ask most Americans about a mass disaster, they're likely to think of the 9/11 attacks on the World Trade Center, Hurricane Katrina, or the Southeast Asian tsunami. Very few people—including law enforcement officials—would think of the number of missing persons and unidentified human remains in our Nation as a crisis. It is, however, what experts call "a mass disaster over time."

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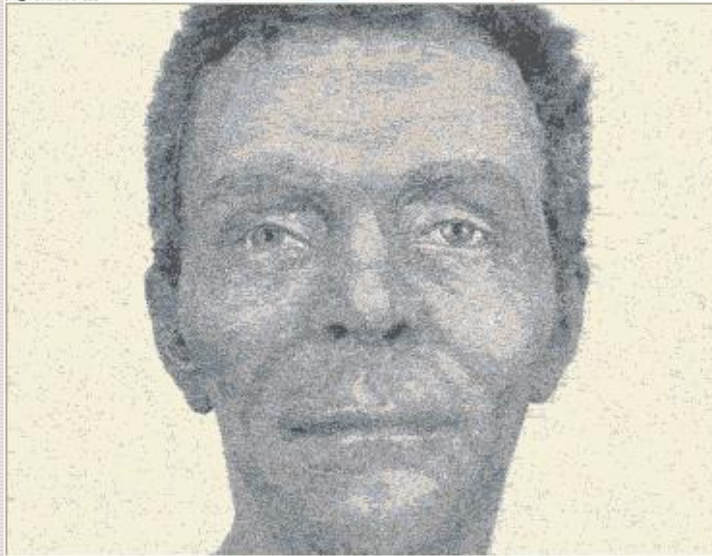
[NIJ Journal No. 256 • January 2007](#)

**Missing Persons and Unidentified Remains:  
The Nation's Silent Mass Disaster**

- US 100,000 active missing cases/day
- Tens of thousands suspicious vanishings
- Total missing hundreds of thousands (20 yr)
- >40,000 unidentified remains
  - ~6,000 (15% NCIC database)



# UNIDENTIFIED DECEDENT REPORTING SYSTEM



This website was developed and is maintained as a public service project of the National Association of Medical Examiners (NAME) and The International Association of Coroners and Medical Examiners (IACME). It is designed to assist in the identification of deceased persons whose names and identities have not yet been established. It includes cases from throughout the United States.

If you will be searching the database and do not have a registered Username on this system, please log in as "guest". No Password is required.

Username

Password

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## National Association of Medical Examiners

*The locus est ubi mors gaudet succurrere vitae*

### Main Menu

- Home
- About NAME
- Abstract Submission Form (2007 Meeting)
- Application for NAME Membership
- Board of Directors
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- Committees
- COCECA
- Contact NAME
- Death Certificate Completion
- Downloads
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- Headlines
- Inspection and Accreditation
- Jobs
- Links to other Web Sites
- Member Roster

### Missing People

This category contains web links to missing people sites.

Web Link	HRs
<b>Missing Persons and Unidentified Remains: The Nation's Silent Mass Disaster</b> On any given day, there are as many as 100,000 active missing persons cases in the United States. NID is making Federal resources available to State and local law enforcement officials to identify human remains and help solve missing persons cases.	40
<b>National Next of Kin Registry</b> The National Next Of Kin Registry (NOKR) is a FREE high-speed solution to locating your Next Of Kin in urgent situations. NOKR is designed as an emergency contact system to help if you or your family member is missing, injured or deceased. NOKR is a	153
<b>Los Angeles Coroner Unidentified Persons List</b> The Los Angeles Coroner Unidentified Persons List contains facially recognizable unidentified people, their history as known, and their clothing and jewelry when present. This list can be searched by sex, race, and date last seen.	257
<b>National Center for Missing and Exploited Children</b> The National Center for Missing and Exploited Children (NCMEC) is a nonprofit organization established in 1984 to, among other things, help find missing children.	125
<b>National Center for Missing Adults</b> The National Center for Missing Adults (NCMA) is a non-profit organization established in 2000 as a national clearinghouse for missing adults.	239
<b>North American Missing Persons Network</b> The North American Missing Persons Network is a volunteer-run organization and website established in 2005 to assist in returning the missing to their families.	180
<b>The Doe Network: International Center for Unidentified and Missing Persons</b> The Doe network is a volunteer-run organization established in 1999 to help return the unidentified and missing to their families. This organization covers North America, Australia, and Europe.	242
<b>Florida Unidentified Decedents Database</b> This site helps to identify unidentified individuals found in Florida.	244

# Research



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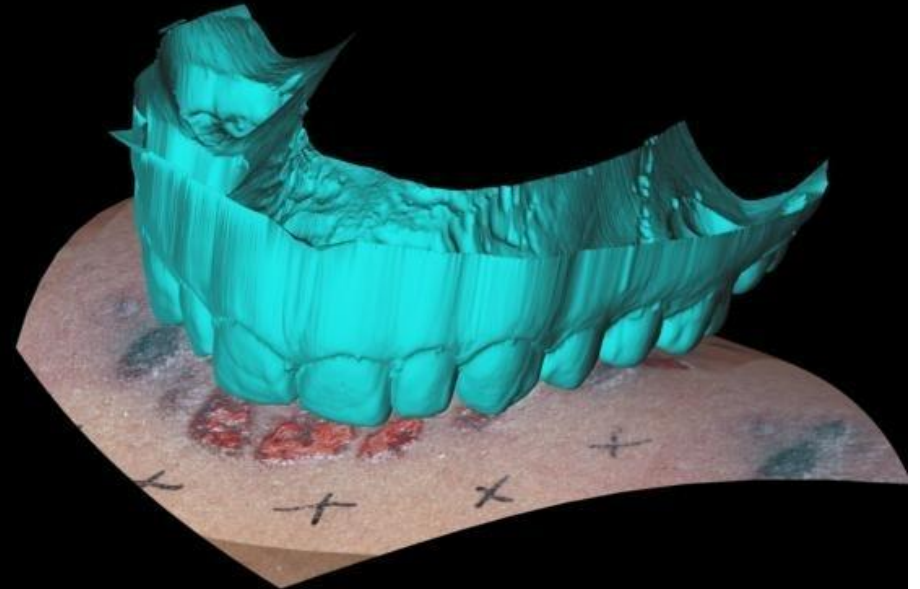
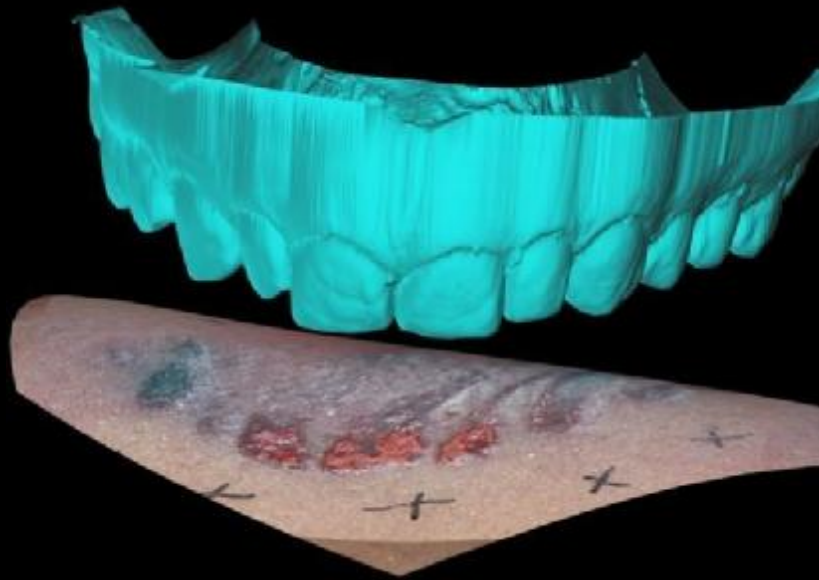
Nothing in the history of mass fatality events prepared America's forensic community for the task of identifying those who died when terrorists attacked the World Trade Center in New York City on September 11, 2001. The number of victims, the condition of their remains, and the duration of the recovery effort made their identification the greatest forensic challenge ever undertaken in this country.



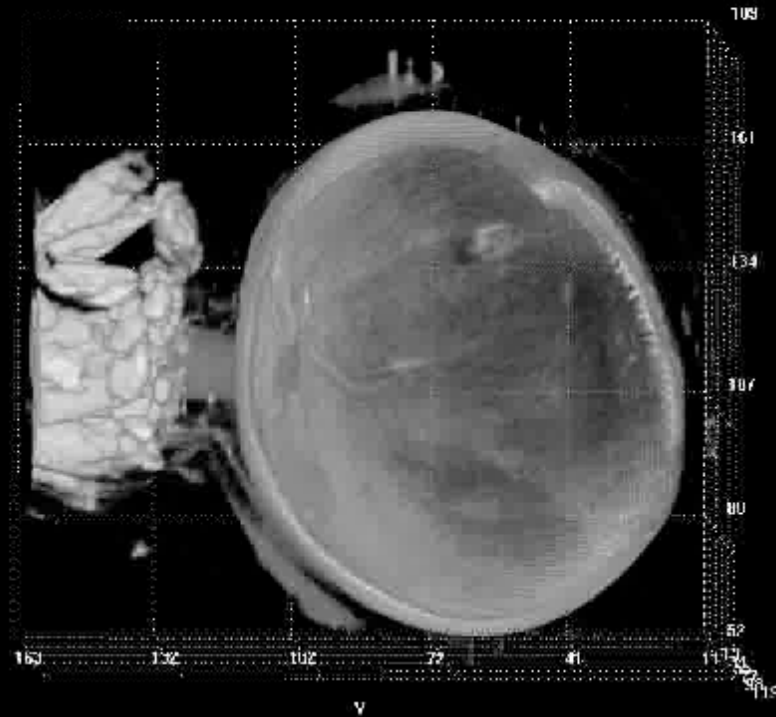
# Research/Technology

## Virtual autopsy

# Research/Technology Pattern Matching



# Shaken/Impact Syndrome



AFP for Dr. Dan Davis

# Research/Technology

## Virtual crime scene

## Development of the 3D Site Plan – bone scanning



Minolta Vivid 910 Laser Scanner

# What if.... What could be done?

- Prepare for disaster
- Train locals (especially scene responders)
- Continue the push for professionalization
- Recruit more physicians into the field
- Actively fund and solicit research/technology