

# 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](#)

### 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](#) [PDF](#)
- 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](#) [PDF](#)
- 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](#) [PDF](#)
- 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](#) [PDF](#)

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.



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**Solicitation Archive**

Fiscal Year 2007

Fiscal Year 2006

Fiscal Year 2005

Fiscal Year 2004



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**FY 2004 Report**

**FY 2003 Report**

**FY 2002 Report**

**Contact NIJ**

# 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.

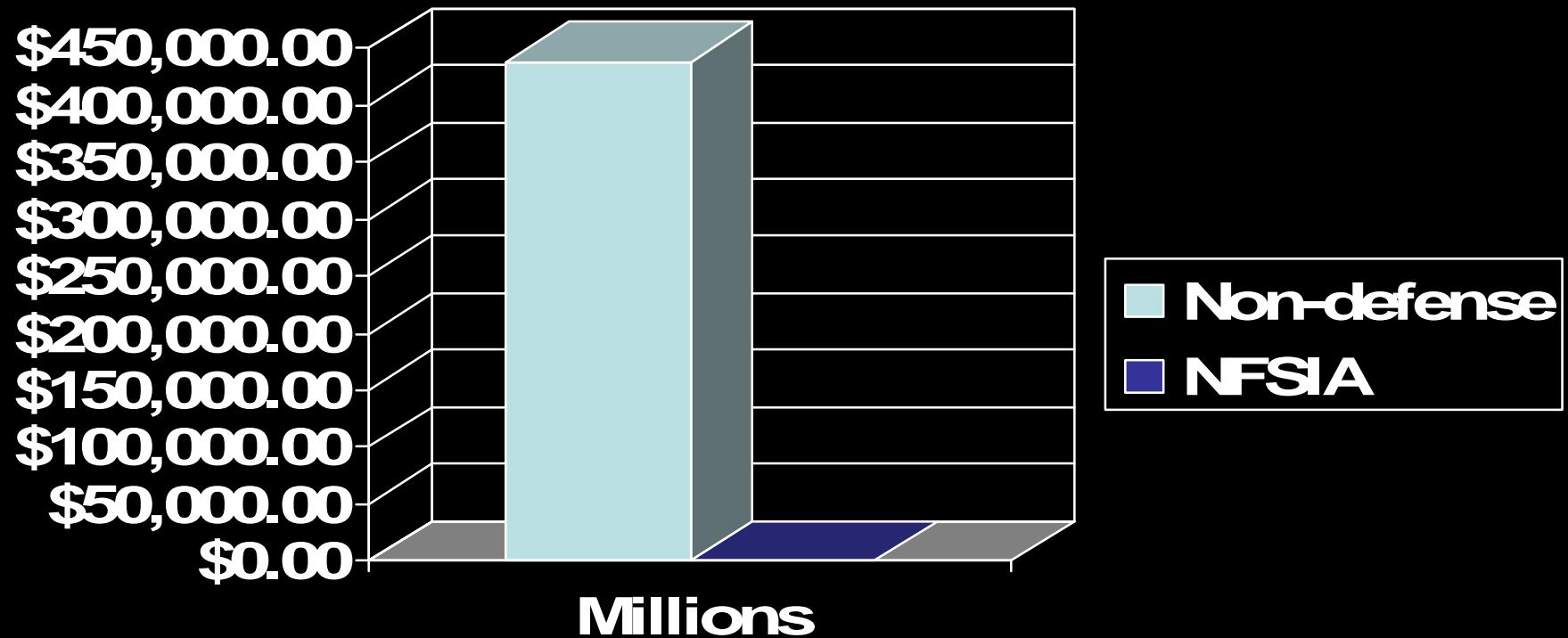
- [Program Description and Purpose](#)
- [Eligibility](#)
- [Expected Results and Outcome](#)
- [Use of Funds](#)
- [Allocation of Fund](#)
- [Program Contact](#)
- [Legislation](#)

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

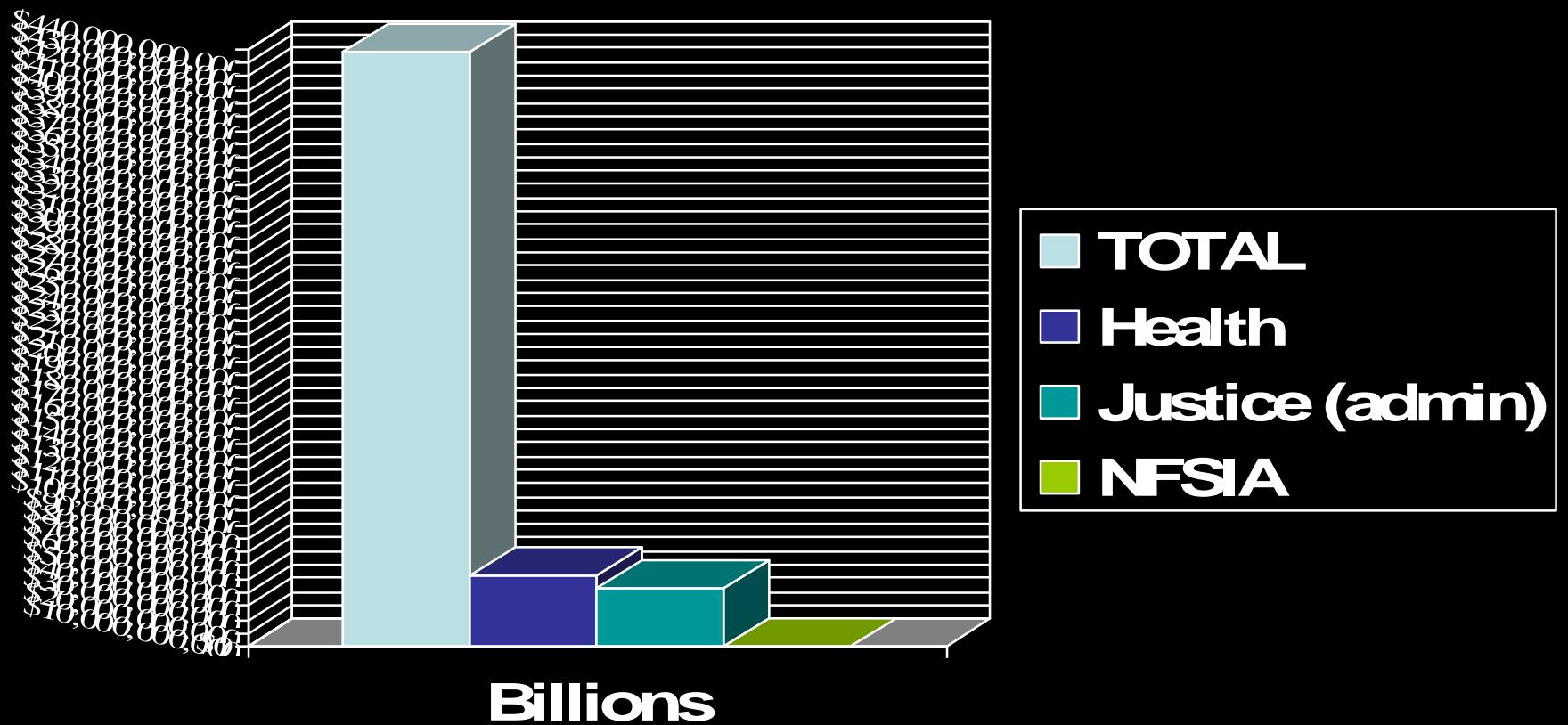
## Program Description and Purpose

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.

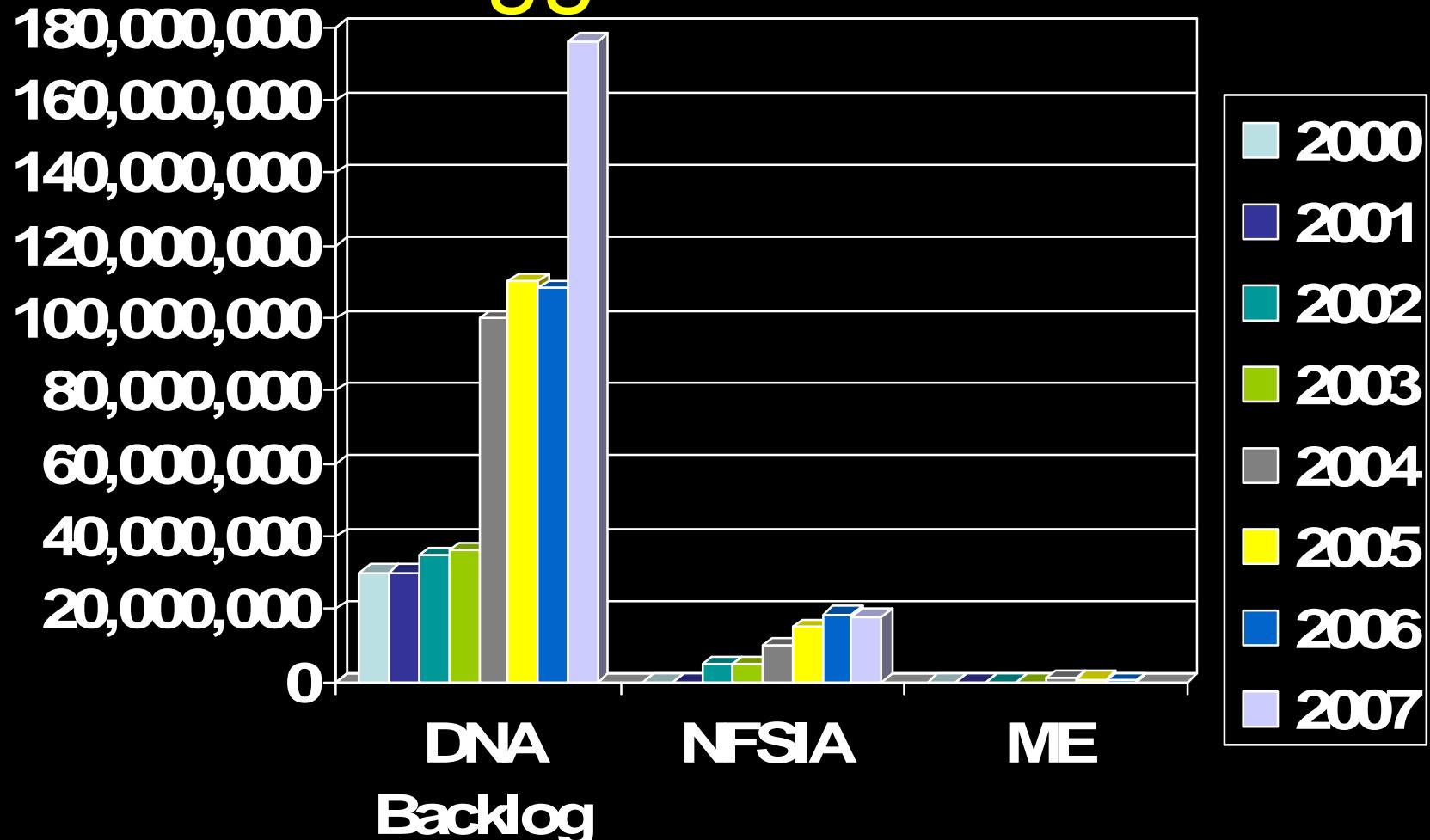
# Discretionary Federal Budget 2007



# Discretionary Federal Budget 2007



All the eggs in one basket...



DNA Initiative - \$1B over 5 years

## Coverdell Forensic Science Improvement Grant Program

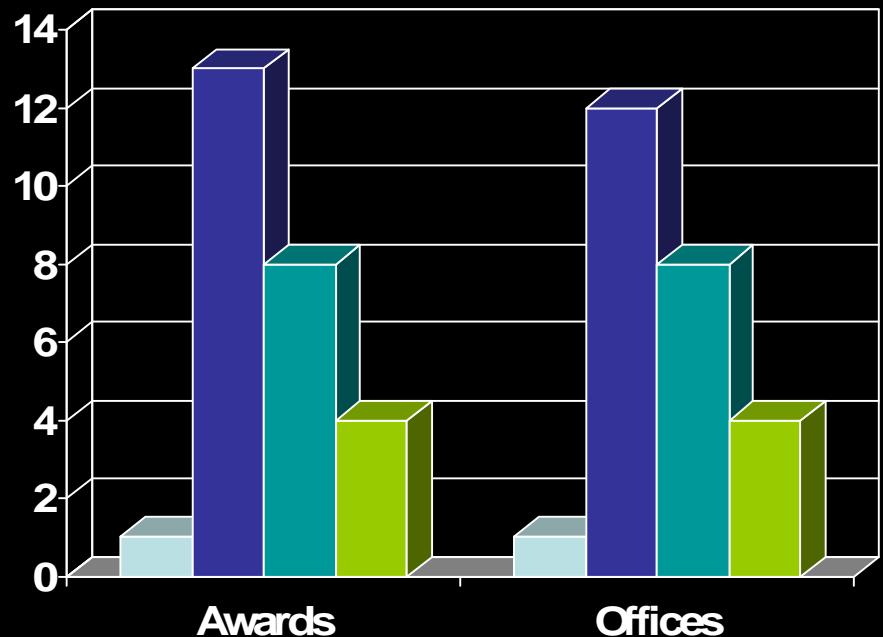
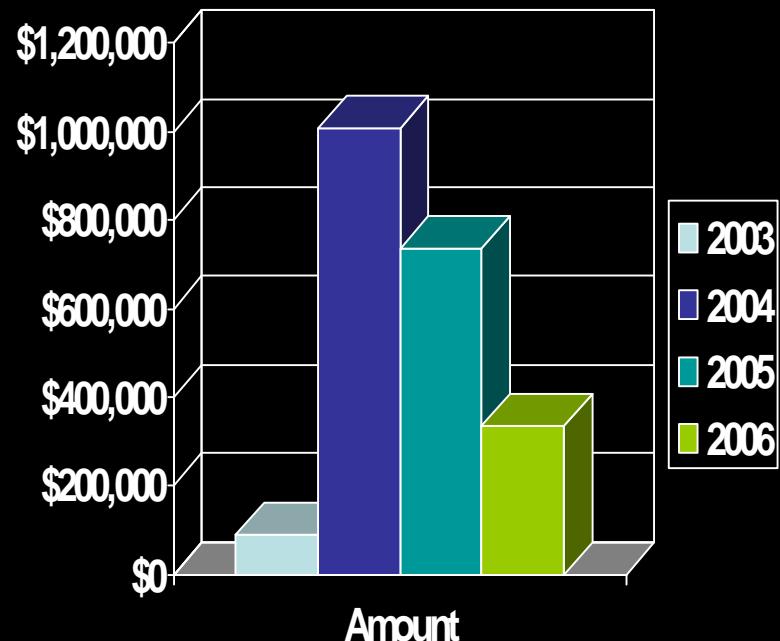
### 'Backlog' Defined

- 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*

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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

Northwest

Northeast

Hawthorne AD

Tooele AD

AFSC/JMC  
HQ

Iowa AAP

Lake City AAP

Kansas AAP

McAlester AAP

Blue Grass AD

Scranton Ammo Plant

Letterkenny AD

LOGCAP  
Support

Riverbank AAP

Red River AD

AFSC-W

Lone Star AAP

Crane AAA

Milan AAP

Anniston AD

Mississippi AAP

Radford AAP

AFSC-E

CEG-A

Southwest

Southeast

- Extremist Locations
- AFSC/JMC Locations

FOUO

# Bird Flu - Pandemics



# Safety/Training Issues

- Anhydrous ammonia exposure



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Director's Message

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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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**Missing Persons and Unidentified Remains:  
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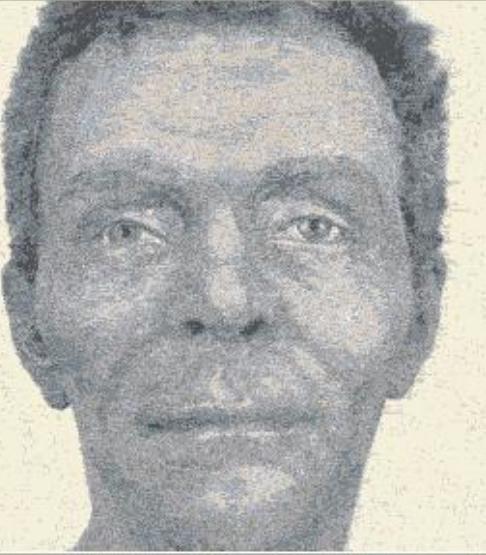
“Very few people—including law enforcement officials—would think of the number of missing persons and unidentified human remains in our Nation as a crisis. It is, however, what experts call ‘a mass disaster over time.’”

**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 DECEASED 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**

*Hic locus est ubi mors gaudet succurrere vitae*

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**Missing People**

This category contains web links to missing people sites.

Web Link	Hits
<a href="#">Missing Persons and Unidentified Remains: The Nation's Silent Mass Disaster</a>	40
<a href="#">National Next of Kin Registry</a>	153
<a href="#">Los Angeles Coroner Unidentified Persons List</a>	237
<a href="#">National Center for Missing and Exploited Children</a>	125
<a href="#">National Center for Missing Adults</a>	239
<a href="#">North American Missing Persons Network</a>	180
<a href="#">The Doe Network: International Center for Unidentified and Missing Persons</a>	242
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# Research



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**NIJ Journal No. 256 • January 2007**

## Identifying Remains: Lessons Learned From 9/11

by **Nancy Ritter**

### About the Author

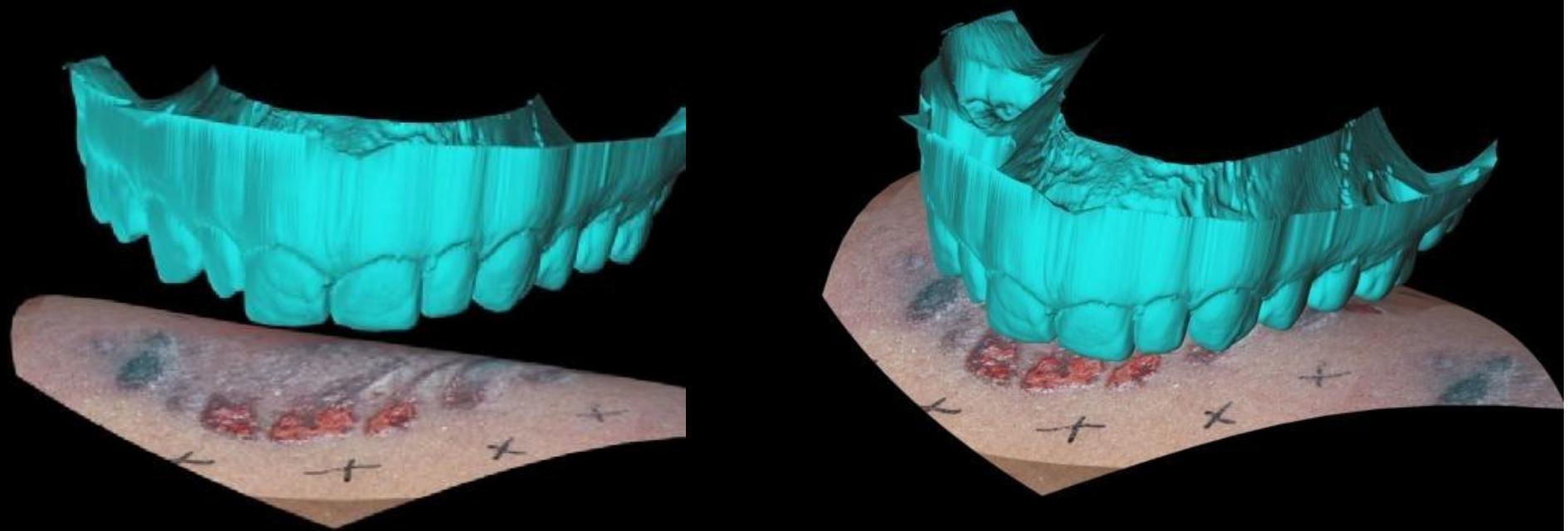
Nancy Ritter is a writer/editor at the National Institute of Justice and Editor of the *NIJ Journal*.

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.

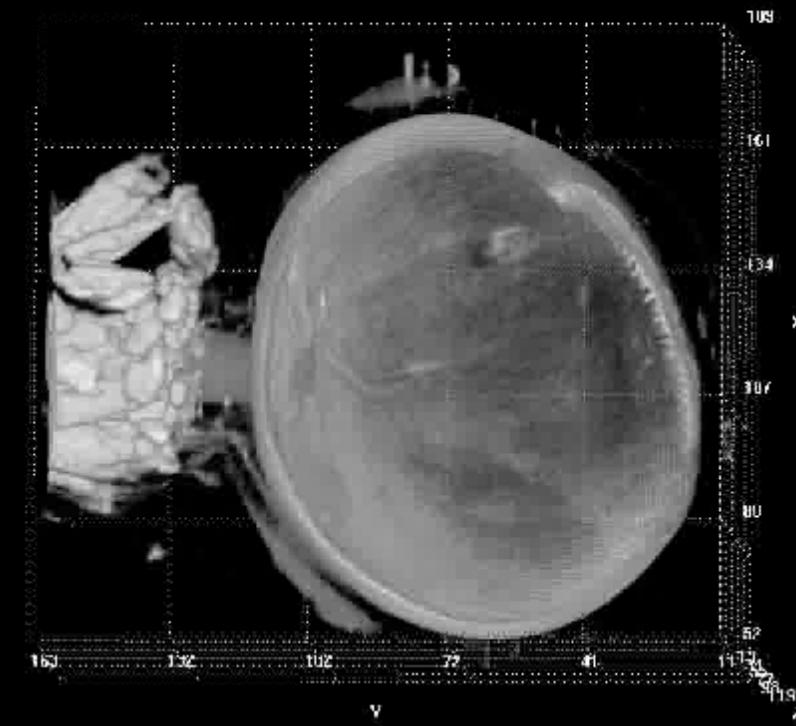
# Research/Technology Virtual autopsy



# Research/Technology Pattern Matching



# Shaken/Impact Syndrome



A FIP 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