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Depicting the Relationship between Forensic Anthropologists and Medical Examiner's Offices
Forensic Anthropology is a specialized field in forensic science that deals with the analysis of human skeletal remains resulting from unexplained deaths. Such circumstances may be environmental disasters, homicides, suicides, and all types of suspicious cases. When nothing remains of a victim but bones, it is the unequivocal job of a forensic anthropologist to deal with the search and proper retrieval of the skeleton and with issues such as identification and detection of signs of trauma which may lead to establish cause and manner of death. These forensic experts help take part in Disaster Victim Identification, the effects of transit and natural disasters, and were indeed a crucial assistance to the aftermath of the September 11, 2001 terrorist attacks.

A Medical Examiner is a specialist who deals with the human cadaver from the scene of crime to establish time and cause of death. The Medical Examiner's Office is charged with investigating violent, sudden unexpected or suspicious deaths and these professionals are usually the ones who perform autopsies. One dilemma that may occur during an examination is when the tissue of the cadaver is scarcely present which reveals the underlying bone structures. Although the examiners may have some trained knowledge and experience on working with bone, it is not nearly equivalent to the knowledge that a forensic anthropologist would be able to provide. If a forensic anthropologist is not called in when situations like these occur, there are high risks of pure evidence and information being mistakenly overlooked and forever lost due to the inadequate amount of familiarity about skeletal remains. Therefore, when forensic anthropologists and medical examiners combine their skills and expertise, the result is a more thorough and complete investigation.

The objective of this study is to inquire how Medical Examiner's Offices view Forensic Anthropology and why they may or may not choose to call upon them for their expertise in particular cases. Surveys will be administered to both Medical Examiners and Forensic Anthropologists. The response from their participation in the surveys will be compiled and used in order to obtain a clearer picture of how Medical Examiner's offices view and engage with the field of Forensic Anthropology.

Mentor:

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