

September 23, 2025

Forensic Services for Medical Examiner and Coroner Offices Webinar Series

Session 1: Identification Resources

Melanie Rouse, F-ABMDI

Clark County Office of the Coroner/Medical Examiner
Las Vegas, NV

Dr. Laura Fulginiti, PhD, D-ABFA

Clark County Office of the Coroner/Medical Examiner
Las Vegas, NV

Rob Glassmire, D-ABMDI

Garfield County Coroner's Office
Silt, CO



Disclaimer

This project was supported by Grant No. 15PBJA-22-GK-01556-JAGT awarded by the Bureau of Justice Assistance. The Bureau of Justice Assistance is a component of the U.S. Department of Justice's Office of Justice Programs, which also includes the Bureau of Justice Statistics, the National Institute of Justice, the Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention, the Office for Victims of Crime, and the SMART Office. Points of view or opinions in this document are those of the author and do not necessarily represent the official position or policies of the U.S. Department of Justice.



WARNING

This presentation contains graphic images that are sensitive in nature which may be considered triggering to some audiences.

Today's Agenda: Identification Resources

- Larger Office Perspective (Clark County, NV), Coroner/Director Rouse and Dr. Fulginiti
- Smaller Office Perspective (Garfield County, CO), Coroner Glassmire
- Q&A Segment



Identification Resources: Clark County Perspective

Melanie Rouse, F-ABMDI

Clark County Office of the Coroner/Medical Examiner
Las Vegas, NV

Dr. Laura Fulginiti, PhD, D-ABFA

Clark County Office of the Coroner/Medical Examiner
Las Vegas, NV

Melanie Rouse, F-ABMDI

Coroner/Director, Clark County Office of the Coroner/Medical Examiner

EDUCATION/SPECIALIZED TRAINING:

- BS and MA degrees
- American Board Certified as a Medicolegal Death Investigator
- HAZMAT operational level responder

CAREER EXPERIENCE:

- Former Chief Medicolegal Death Investigator/Manager for the Maricopa County Medical Examiner's Office
- Former Supervisor of Investigations division
- Mass Fatality Coordinator/Emergency Management Specialist
- Past chair for the Mass Fatality/Continuity Planning committee
- Past co-chair the Safety Committee
- Continuity planning, emergency management, and the development and implementation of training and exercises
- Disaster Mortuary Response Team (DMORT)
- Current Chair of Ethics Committee and BOD for the International Association of Coroners & Medical Examiners (IACME)
- Over 20+ years experience in Medicolegal Death Investigations



Laura Fulginiti, PhD, D-ABFA

Forensic Anthropologist, Clark County Office of the Coroner/Medical Examiner

- Board-certified
- 35 years of experience in a medical examiner office
- Mass Fatality DMORT VIII
- Past President, American Academy of Forensic Sciences (AAFS)
- Past BOD, American Board of Forensic Anthropology (ABFA)



Identification Resources

- Radiology
- Anthropology
- Odontology
- Fingerprinting
- DNA
- Genealogy
- Forensic Artists

CLARK COUNTY

8,060 square miles

Population $\approx$ 2.3 million
(~72% of the state)

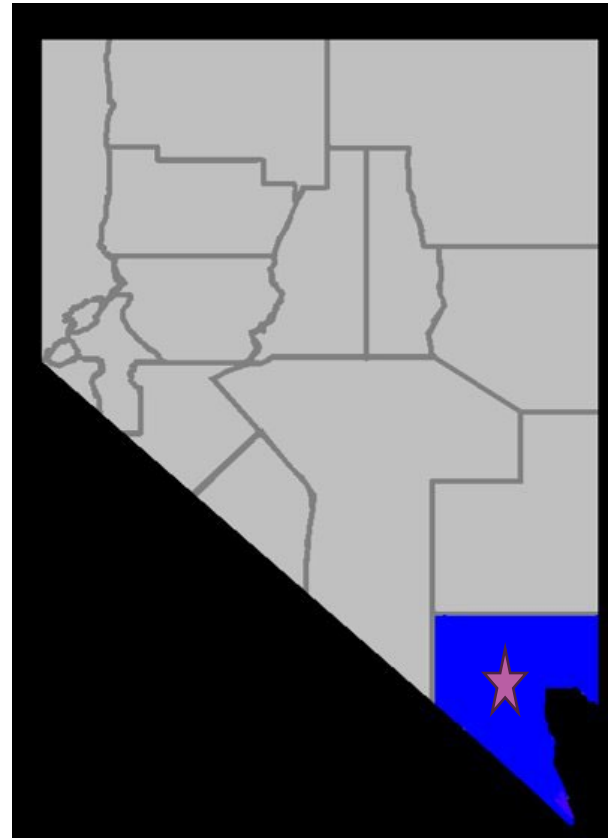


Image provided by the Clark County Office of the Coroner/Medical Examiner

Ancillary Services: Autopsy Enhancement Resources

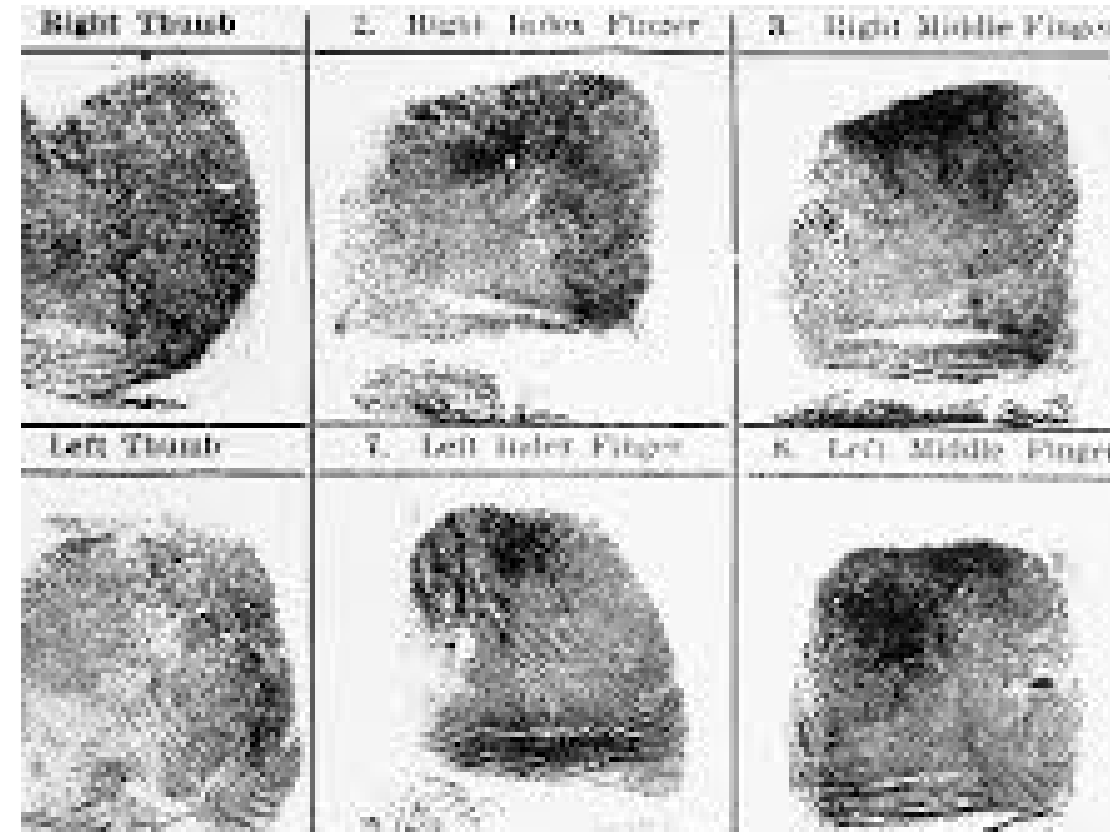
- Radiology
 - In house
 - Contracted vendor
 - Hospital via interlocal agreements
 - Specialists (e.g., pediatric)
 - Full body radiographs
 - Computed Tomography (CT)
 - Targeted radiographs
- Radiology is useful for:
 - **Identification: Comparison of sinus cavities, surgical implants/hardware, sternal wire patterns, fractures**
 - Detection of foreign objects: projectiles, contraband, medical devices
 - Documentation of trauma
 - Diagnosis of natural disease



Image provided by the Clark County Office of the Coroner/Medical Examiner

Postmortem Fingerprinting

- Local law enforcement partners
- Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI)
- Silos
 - Case example ID by fingerprints 5 years later



<https://science.howstuffworks.com/do-persons-fingerprints-change-after-death.htm>

Jane “Vhsnaura” Doe

- March 4, 2017, at approximately 0321 hours, an unidentified female is found unresponsive near a park bench at the Greyhound Bus Station near a local hotel/casino
- Hotel security called 911 and she was transported to a local hospital ER
- She was admitted to the ICU where she was pronounced on March 4, 2017, at 1530 hours
- Found without any identification
- Documents found on her person included a Metro PCS receipt with a male name on it

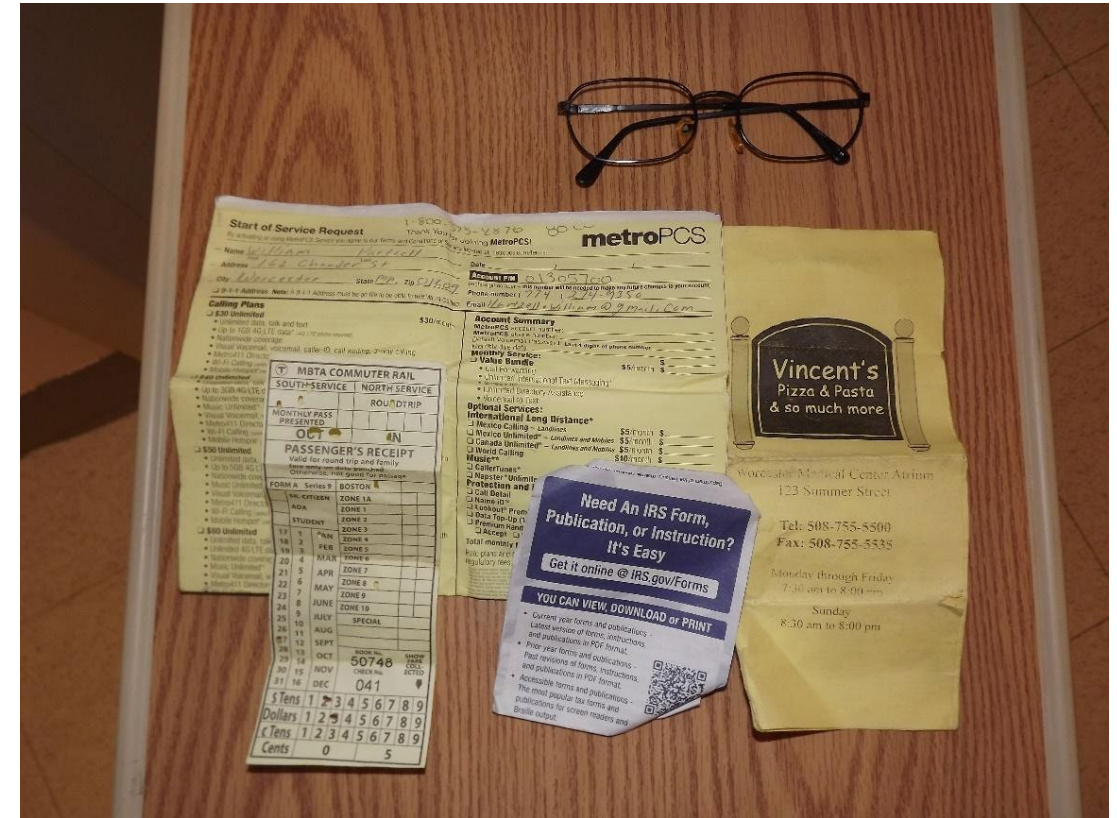


Image provided by the Clark County Office of the Coroner/Medical Examiner

Jane “Vhsnaura” Doe *(continued)*

- March 4, 2017, at approximately 0321 hours, an unidentified female is found unresponsive near a park bench at the Greyhound Bus Station near a local hotel/casino
- Hotel security called 911 and she was transported to a local hospital ER
- She was admitted to the ICU where she was pronounced on March 4, 2017, at 1530 hours
- Found without any identification
- Documents found on her person included a Metro PCS receipt with a male name on it



Image provided by the Clark County Office of the Coroner/Medical Examiner

Clothing



Images provided by the Clark County Office of the Coroner/Medical Examiner



Autopsy Findings

- Hypertensive atherosclerotic cardiovascular disease
 - Severe coronary artery and aortic atherosclerosis
 - Arteriolonephrosclerosis, kidneys
 - Cardiomegaly with dilatation
- Pneumonia, lower lobe left lung
 - Bilateral pleural effusions
- Cortical atrophy, brain
- Blunt force injuries
 - Contusions, head, torso, and upper extremity
 - Rib fractures



Image provided by the Clark County Office of the Coroner/Medical Examiner

Identification Attempts

- Fingerprints collected on March 6, 2017, with more detail
 - No results from the FBI or local law enforcement
- Reevaluated property
 - Called the phone number on the Metro PCS receipt
 - Error message that person was not taking calls
 - Massachusetts Bay Transportation Rail receipt
 - Menu from Vincent's Pizza in Worcester, MA
- Police department reported the name on the receipt belonged to a known sex offender who was incarcerated in CA
 - No relation or knowledge of the decedent
- Searched missing person reports locally and in MA
- 2017: Department of Homeland Security (DHS) reviewed prints, entered into the National Missing and Unidentified Persons System (NamUs) and the Combined DNA Index System (CODIS)

Start of Service Request
By activating or using MetroPCS Service you agree to our Terms and Conditions of Service located at metropcs.com/terms.

1-800-573-2876
Thank You for Joining **MetroPCS!**

metroPCS

Name: [REDACTED]
Address: [REDACTED]
City: Worcester State: MA Zip: 01609
Date: [REDACTED]
Account PIN: [REDACTED]
Phone: [REDACTED]
Email: [REDACTED]

☐ 9-1-1 Address **Note:** A 9-1-1 Address must be on file to be able to use Wi-Fi Calling.

Calling Plans

☐ **\$30 Unlimited** \$30/month
• Unlimited data, talk and text
• Up to 1GB 4G LTE data* (4G LTE phone required)
• Nationwide coverage
• Visual Voicemail, voicemail, caller-ID, call waiting, 3-way calling
• Metro411 Directory Assistance
• Wi-Fi Calling (select phones only)
• Mobile Hotspot* (select phones only)

☐ **\$40 Unlimited** \$40/month
• Unlimited data, talk and text
• Up to 3GB 4G LTE data* (4G LTE phone required)
• Nationwide coverage
• Music Unlimited*
• Visual Voicemail, voicemail, caller-ID, call waiting, 3-way calling
• Metro411 Directory Assistance
• Wi-Fi Calling (select phones only)
• Mobile Hotspot* (select phones only)

☐ **\$50 Unlimited**
• Unlimited data, talk and text
• Up to 5GB 4G LTE data* (4G LTE phone required)
• Nationwide coverage
• Music Unlimited*
• Visual Voicemail, voicemail, caller-ID, call waiting, 3-way calling
• Metro411 Directory Assistance
• Wi-Fi Calling (select phones only)
• Mobile Hotspot* (select phones only)

Account Summary
MetroPCS account number: _____
MetroPCS phone number: _____
Default Voicemail Password: Last 4 digits of phone number
Monthly due date: _____

Monthly Service:

☐ **Value Bundle** \$5/month \$
• Call Forwarding
• Unlimited International Text Messaging*
• Screen-It™
• Unlimited Directory Assistance
• Voicemail to Text

Optional Services:

International Long Distance*

☐ Mexico Calling – Landlines \$5/month \$
☐ Mexico Unlimited* – Landlines and Mobiles \$5/month \$
☐ Canada Unlimited* – Landlines and Mobiles \$5/month \$
☐ World Calling \$10/month \$
☐ Music**
☐ CallerTones*

MBTA COMMUTER RAIL

SOUTH SERVICE	NORTH SERVICE
MONTHLY PASS PRESENTED	ROUNDTRIP

Image provided by the Clark County Office of the Coroner/Medical Examiner

Identification Attempts *(continued)*

- **November 2017**
 - Possible missing person match in NamUs
 - Lisa Grethel, known to have her name on her pants and shoes
 - Wandered away from an elderly home in Montebello, CA 8 years prior
 - No prints on file in CA
 - No one remembered her from the home
- **August 2022**
 - Outreach to the California Department of Justice (CA DOJ)
 - Missing person is alive
 - Convinced CA to rerun prints in the statewide database
 - CA DOJ identified decedent as Linda Mae Smeal (12/07/1941) via fingerprints; kin located via Accurant®
- **Her story:**
 - Per son, mental illness since the 1990s that progressed
 - Family moved to Carson City, NV in 1994
 - In late 2016/early 2017, she wandered away from home
 - Notified in 2017 she was in a psychiatric facility in Las Vegas, NV
 - Tried to make contact with the facility; would not give kin information
 - No missing person report was filed



Image provided by the Clark County Office of the Coroner/Medical Examiner

Ancillary Services: Identification

- Anthropology

- NAME/IACME require ABFA certification
- www.theabfa.org
- NamUs has FAs to assist
- Remote capability

- Odontology

- NAME/IACME require ABFO certification
- <https://abfo.org>
- NamUs has FOs to assist
- Remote capability

National Association of Medical Examiners (NAME); International Association of Coroners & Medical Examiners (IACME); American Board of Forensic Anthropology (ABFA); American Board of Forensic Odontology (ABFO); Forensic Anthropologist (FA); Forensic Odontologist (FO)

Forensic Anthropology Services

- On-site employee
 - Offices with a large case load employ full-time FA(s)
 - Requires salary, benefits package, office and laboratory space
- On-site contract employee
 - Some offices prefer to have a contract employee
 - Can require salary, benefits package, office and laboratory space
- Remote contract employee
 - Requires salary (hourly or fee based), computer access, remote capability
 - Can require benefits and office/laboratory space when needed
- As needed contractor/vendor
- Contracted through local universities

Forensic Anthropology Services *(continued)*

- Unidentified Caseload
 - Biological profile
 - NamUs and database maintenance
 - Outreach to LE/NGOs/government agencies
- Skeletal Trauma
 - Ballistic, BFT, SFT, Dismemberment
 - Healed and Acute/Postmortem
 - Infant skeletal trauma/timing
 - Direction of force – pedestrians
- Identification
 - Biological profile
 - Radiography comparisons
 - Circumstantial ID radiography
 - Mass fatality events
- Determination of Origin/Significance
 - Human v Non-human
 - Forensic v Non-forensic
 - Saves time/resources (LE)

Law Enforcement (LE); Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs); Blunt Force Trauma (BFT); Sharp Force Trauma (SFT)

Forensic Odontology

- Scarce resource
- Remote capability
- Specialized training
- Mass fatality events
- Identification primary responsibility
- NamUs and National Crime Information Center (NCIC) entry
- Comparative radiography
- Oral pathology
- Oral/Dental trauma
 - Infant/Pediatric cases
 - Adults with trauma

Finding Odontologists in Your Community

- **Professional Associations:** Check the **American Society of Forensic Odontology (ASFO)** or local dental societies.
- **Colleges & Universities:** Contact dental schools – many have faculty trained in forensic odontology.
- **Law Enforcement & Coroner's Offices:** Some jurisdictions partner with odontologists for identification cases.
- **Networking:** Attend local forensic science or dental conferences to meet specialists.

Forensic Artists

- Scarce resource for good ones
- Remote capability
- Specialized training
- International Association for Identification (IAI): www.theiai.org
- Postmortem drawings/renderings
- Use skeleton and postmortem ID photos
- Can draw clothing/tattoos/unique scars
- Good for media releases

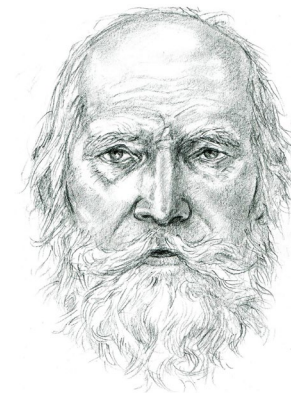


Image provided by the Clark County Office of the Coroner/Medical Examiner

Postmortem DNA Analysis for Identification

- High demand
- Success dependent on sample
- Costly
- Time intensive
- Specialized training
- In house Rapid DNA
- Local LE laboratories
- Local state patrol laboratories
- FBI
- NamUs/National Center for Missing & Exploited Children (NCMEC)
- Bode
- Othram
- DNA Labs International
- Oklahoma State University (OSU)
- University grants
- NGOs

Forensic Genetic Genealogy

- Scarce resource
- Remote capability
- Specialized training
- Use DNA profiles from unidentified human remains to trace genetic lineages
- High success rate (in this office) when other identification methods have failed
- Should use experienced practitioners

When using BJA or other federal funding, the United States Department of Justice Interim Policy Forensic Genetic Genealogical DNA Analysis and Searching must be followed, including the presence of a CODIS-eligible profile and classification of the case as a suspected homicide.

<https://www.justice.gov/olp/page/file/1204386/dl>

Contact Information

Melanie Rouse

Coroner/Department Director

Clark County Office of the Coroner/Medical Examiner

(702) 455-1523

Melanie.Rouse@clarkcountynv.gov

Laura Fulginiti

Forensic Anthropologist

Clark County Office of the Coroner/Medical Examiner

(602) 361-8121

Laura.Fulginiti@clarkcountynv.gov



Identification Resources: Garfield County Perspective

Rob Glassmire, D-ABMDI
Garfield County Coroner's Office
Silt, CO

Rob Glassmire, D-ABMDI Coroner, Garfield County Coroner's Office

- 23 years with Garfield County
- 13 years as sheriff's deputy/investigator
- 10 years as elected coroner
- Marine Corps reservist with deployment in a mortuary affairs unit 2003 Iraq



About Garfield County

- Small office with two full time investigators, one part-time
- Population: 63,609
- 2024 Data
 - Deaths – 379
 - Coroner's Office Investigations – 108
 - Scene Investigations – 92

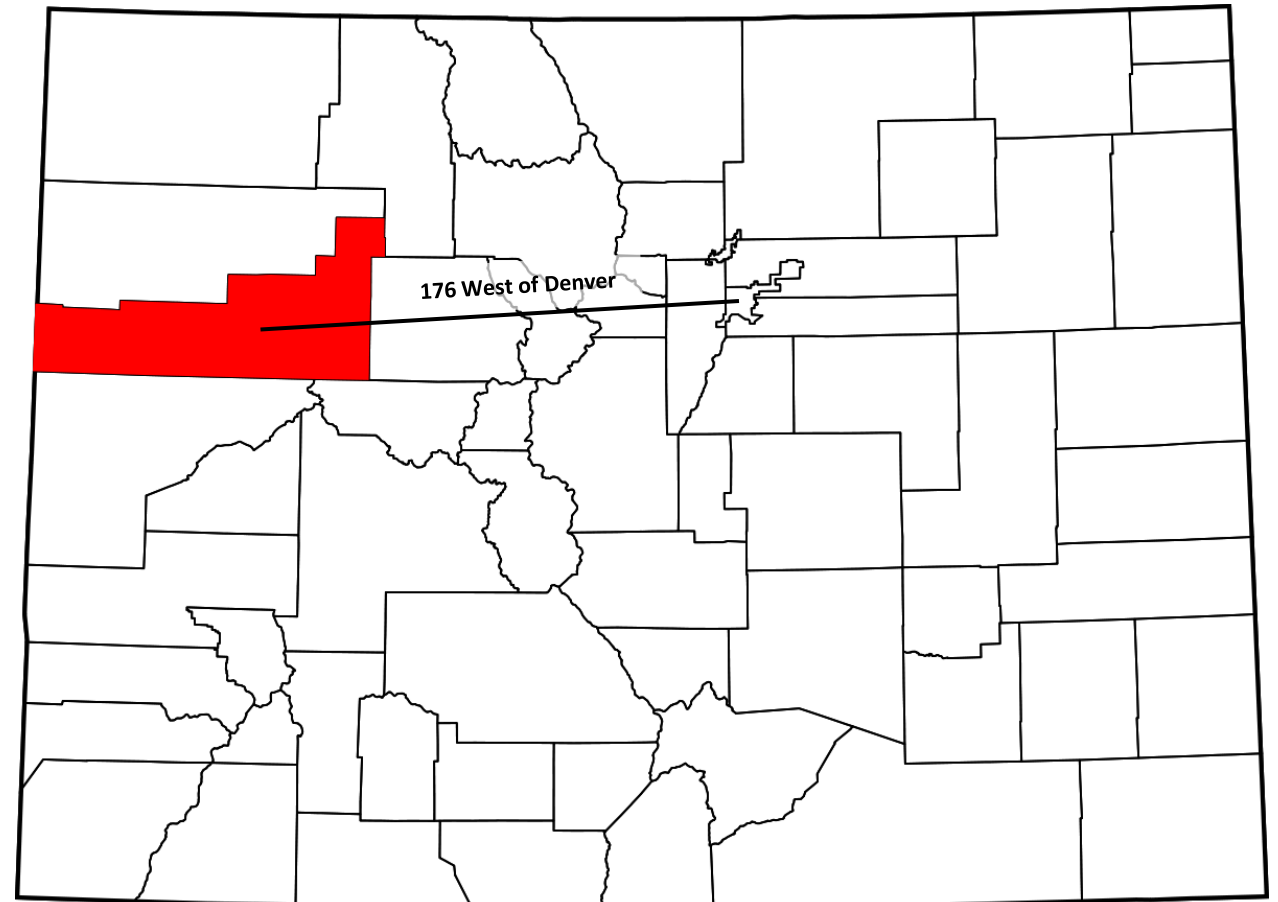


Image provided by the Garfield County Coroner's Office

Forensic Resources



Images provided by the Garfield County Coroner's Office

- Fingerprints – State laboratory
- DNA – State laboratory, private laboratory
- Odontology – NamUs
- Anthropology – contract
- Forensic Pathology – contract

2023 Homicide Identification – DNA & Forensic Anthropology

- Circumstantial
 - The remains were located as described by a witness of the homicide.
 - The victim had been missing for several months.
 - Colorado ID card
- Forensic – DNA
 - Left femur was submitted by law enforcement to the Colorado Bureau of Investigation (CBI) as part of the overall criminal investigation.
 - DNA took 17 months to complete.



Image provided by the Garfield County Coroner's Office

2023 Homicide Identification



Image provided by the Garfield County Coroner's Office

- Forensic – Odontology
 - Cranium recovered months later
 - Unique front teeth, dental work
 - Unable to locate a dental provider
- Forensic – Rapid DNA
 - Mandible recovered a year later
 - Mandible, rib, cranium comparison, buccal swab (bio daughter) using Rapid DNA
 - Unable to gain sufficient sample from mandible
- Forensic – Anthropology
 - Involved since first recovery of remains
 - 8-hour roundtrip, three trips
 - Opined mandible and cranium came from the same person

2024 Male Found in Colorado River – Fingerprints

- Male found in river, early March 2024
- Not typical for recreation that time of year
- Wearing pants and shoes
- No circumstantial identification, no known report of a missing person
- Inked prints collected after autopsy
- Submitted to laboratory at 2:22pm, ID at 4:54pm
- Missing man from nearby town 27 days earlier

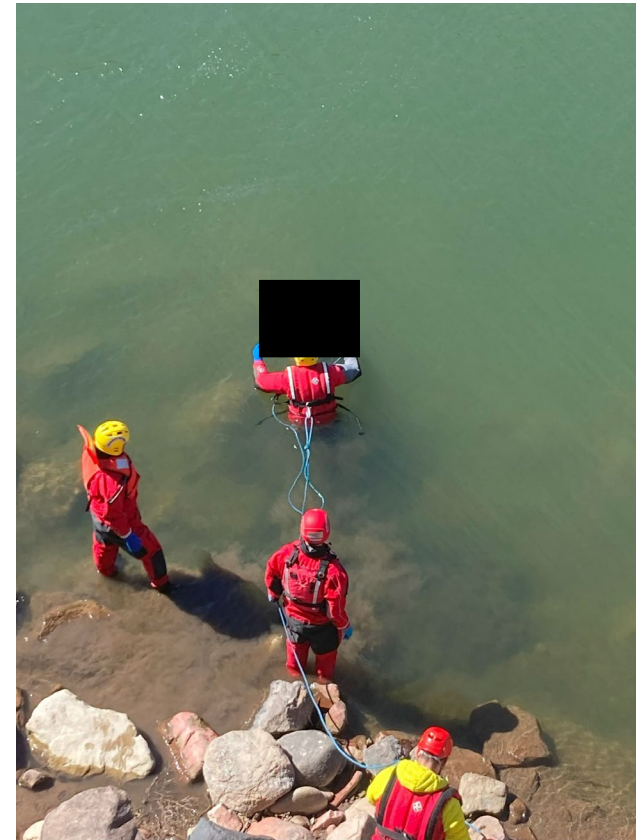


Image provided by the Garfield County Coroner's Office

March 2017 Skeletal Remains – Odontology

- Skeletal remains recovered, cranium and loose mandible
- Circumstantial – State corrections identification card
- Odontology – NamUs affiliated odontologist in Colorado Springs, 8-hour roundtrip
- Odontologist positive identification
- Release from prison in 2013, no missing persons reports



Image provided by the Garfield County Coroner's Office

Contact Information

Rob Glassmire

Coroner

Garfield County Coroner's Office

(970) 309-1042

rglassmire@garfieldcountyco.gov

Q&A Segment



Contact Information

Melanie Rouse

Coroner/Department Director

Clark County Office of the Coroner/Medical Examiner

(702) 455-1523

Melanie.Rouse@clarkcountynv.gov

Laura Fulginiti

Forensic Anthropologist

Clark County Office of the Coroner/Medical Examiner

(602) 361-8121

Laura.Fulginiti@clarkcountynv.gov

Rob Glassmire

Coroner

Garfield County Coroner's Office

(970) 309-1042

rglassmire@garfieldcountyco.gov



forensicstta@rti.org



[@ForensicsTTA](https://www.linkedin.com/company/ForensicsTTA)



[Forensics TTA](https://www.facebook.com/ForensicsTTA)



www.forensicstta.org