

CAREER OPPORTUNITIES IN FORENSIC ANTHROPOLOGY

THE INTRIGUING WORLD OF CAREER OPPORTUNITIES IN FORENSIC ANTHROPOLOGY

CAREER OPPORTUNITIES IN FORENSIC ANTHROPOLOGY REPRESENT A FASCINATING INTERSECTION OF SCIENCE, INVESTIGATION, AND A PROFOUND COMMITMENT TO PROVIDING ANSWERS FOR THE DECEASED AND THEIR LOVED ONES. THIS SPECIALIZED FIELD, WHICH APPLIES ANTHROPOLOGICAL PRINCIPLES TO LEGAL MATTERS, OFFERS A DIVERSE RANGE OF ROLES FOR DEDICATED INDIVIDUALS. FROM IDENTIFYING HUMAN REMAINS AND RECONSTRUCTING EVENTS TO ASSISTING IN CRIMINAL AND CIVIL INVESTIGATIONS, FORENSIC ANTHROPOLOGISTS PLAY A CRUCIAL PART IN THE JUSTICE SYSTEM. EXPLORING THIS CAREER PATH INVOLVES UNDERSTANDING THE RIGOROUS ACADEMIC PREPARATION, THE VARIED WORK ENVIRONMENTS, AND THE CONTINUOUS NEED FOR METICULOUS ANALYSIS AND ETHICAL PRACTICE. THIS ARTICLE WILL DELVE INTO THE MULTIFACETED LANDSCAPE OF FORENSIC ANTHROPOLOGY CAREERS, OUTLINING THE EDUCATIONAL PATHWAYS, COMMON JOB ROLES, ESSENTIAL SKILLS, AND THE REWARDING IMPACT THESE PROFESSIONALS HAVE.

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WHAT IS FORENSIC ANTHROPOLOGY?

FORENSIC ANTHROPOLOGY IS A SUBDISCIPLINE OF PHYSICAL ANTHROPOLOGY THAT SPECIFICALLY FOCUSES ON SKELETAL REMAINS IN A LEGAL CONTEXT. ITS PRIMARY OBJECTIVE IS TO ASSIST LAW ENFORCEMENT AND LEGAL PROFESSIONALS BY PROVIDING SCIENTIFIC EXPERTISE ON HUMAN IDENTIFICATION, TIME SINCE DEATH, CAUSE OF DEATH, AND OTHER CRUCIAL DETAILS RELATED TO SKELETAL EVIDENCE. THIS FIELD REQUIRES A DEEP UNDERSTANDING OF HUMAN OSTEOLOGY, ANATOMY, BIOARCHAEOLOGY, AND THE BIOLOGICAL VARIATIONS WITHIN HUMAN POPULATIONS. FORENSIC ANTHROPOLOGISTS ARE OFTEN CALLED UPON WHEN REMAINS ARE DECOMPOSED, BURNED, OR OTHERWISE DEGRADED, MAKING TRADITIONAL IDENTIFICATION METHODS IMPOSSIBLE. THEY UTILIZE THEIR SPECIALIZED KNOWLEDGE TO EXTRACT AS MUCH INFORMATION AS POSSIBLE FROM BONE, HELPING TO SOLVE CRIMES, IDENTIFY MISSING PERSONS, AND PROVIDE CLOSURE.

THE WORK OF A FORENSIC ANTHROPOLOGIST IS CRITICAL IN CASES RANGING FROM MASS DISASTERS, WHERE THEY ASSIST IN IDENTIFYING VICTIMS AND REUNITING FAMILIES, TO INDIVIDUAL CRIMINAL INVESTIGATIONS WHERE SKELETAL EVIDENCE CAN BE THE KEY TO UNLOCKING A CASE. THEIR ANALYSES ARE PRESENTED IN COURT AS EXPERT TESTIMONY, CONTRIBUTING SIGNIFICANTLY TO THE PURSUIT OF JUSTICE. THE DISCIPLINE DEMANDS A BLEND OF SCIENTIFIC RIGOR AND AN UNDERSTANDING OF THE HUMAN ELEMENT INVOLVED IN EACH CASE.

EDUCATIONAL PATHWAYS TO A FORENSIC ANTHROPOLOGY CAREER

EMBARKING ON A CAREER IN FORENSIC ANTHROPOLOGY NECESSITATES A STRONG ACADEMIC FOUNDATION, TYPICALLY REQUIRING ADVANCED DEGREES. THE JOURNEY BEGINS WITH A BACHELOR OF SCIENCE (B.S.) DEGREE, OFTEN IN ANTHROPOLOGY WITH A CONCENTRATION IN BIOLOGICAL OR PHYSICAL ANTHROPOLOGY. UNDERGRADUATE STUDIES SHOULD EMPHASIZE COURSEWORK IN HUMAN OSTEOLOGY, ANATOMY, ARCHAEOLOGY, AND STATISTICS. MANY ASPIRING FORENSIC ANTHROPOLOGISTS ALSO BENEFIT FROM COURSES IN GENETICS, PALEONTOLOGY, AND CRIMINOLOGY TO BROADEN THEIR SCIENTIFIC UNDERSTANDING AND CONTEXTUALIZE THEIR FUTURE WORK. GAINING HANDS-ON EXPERIENCE THROUGH INTERNSHIPS AT UNIVERSITY LABS, MUSEUMS, OR MEDICAL EXAMINER OFFICES IS HIGHLY ADVISABLE DURING THIS UNDERGRADUATE PERIOD.

FOLLOWING A BACHELOR'S DEGREE, PURSUING A MASTER OF ARTS (M.A.) OR MASTER OF SCIENCE (M.S.) IS GENERALLY THE MINIMUM REQUIREMENT FOR ENTRY-LEVEL POSITIONS. A MASTER'S PROGRAM ALLOWS FOR SPECIALIZED STUDY IN FORENSIC ANTHROPOLOGY, INCLUDING ADVANCED OSTEOLOGY, SKELETAL BIOLOGY, AND PRACTICAL CASEWORK. A THESIS OR

SIGNIFICANT RESEARCH PROJECT IS TYPICALLY A REQUIREMENT, PROVIDING CRUCIAL EXPERIENCE IN INDEPENDENT SCIENTIFIC INQUIRY. FOR MORE ADVANCED ROLES, PARTICULARLY THOSE IN ACADEMIA OR HIGH-PROFILE FORENSIC SCIENCE LABORATORIES, A DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY (PH.D.) IN ANTHROPOLOGY WITH A SPECIALIZATION IN FORENSIC ANTHROPOLOGY IS OFTEN PREFERRED OR REQUIRED. DOCTORAL PROGRAMS OFFER THE OPPORTUNITY FOR EXTENSIVE RESEARCH, PUBLICATION, AND THE DEVELOPMENT OF ORIGINAL CONTRIBUTIONS TO THE FIELD, OFTEN LEADING TO GREATER AUTONOMY AND LEADERSHIP OPPORTUNITIES.

CORE RESPONSIBILITIES AND DAY-TO-DAY TASKS

THE DAILY ACTIVITIES OF A FORENSIC ANTHROPOLOGIST CAN BE HIGHLY VARIED, DEPENDING ON THEIR SPECIFIC ROLE AND EMPLOYER. A SIGNIFICANT PORTION OF THEIR WORK INVOLVES THE METICULOUS EXAMINATION AND ANALYSIS OF HUMAN SKELETAL REMAINS. THIS INCLUDES TASKS SUCH AS DETERMINING IF THE REMAINS ARE INDEED HUMAN, ESTIMATING THE BIOLOGICAL PROFILE OF THE INDIVIDUAL (E.G., SEX, AGE AT DEATH, STATURE, ANCESTRY), AND IDENTIFYING ANY PATHOLOGIES, TRAUMA, OR ANTEMORTEM (BEFORE DEATH) MARKERS THAT COULD AID IN IDENTIFICATION. THEY CAREFULLY DOCUMENT ALL FINDINGS THROUGH DETAILED WRITTEN REPORTS, PHOTOGRAPHIC EVIDENCE, AND SOMETIMES 3D SCANNING.

ANOTHER KEY RESPONSIBILITY IS ASSISTING IN SCENE RECOVERY, WHICH MAY INVOLVE WORKING WITH LAW ENFORCEMENT TO LOCATE AND EXCAVATE BURIAL SITES OR CRIME SCENES WHERE HUMAN REMAINS ARE SUSPECTED. THIS REQUIRES KNOWLEDGE OF ARCHAEOLOGICAL EXCAVATION TECHNIQUES ADAPTED FOR FORENSIC CONTEXTS. FORENSIC ANTHROPOLOGISTS ALSO FREQUENTLY PROVIDE EXPERT TESTIMONY IN COURT, EXPLAINING THEIR SCIENTIFIC FINDINGS AND INTERPRETATIONS TO JUDGES AND JURIES. THIS REQUIRES EXCELLENT COMMUNICATION SKILLS AND THE ABILITY TO TRANSLATE COMPLEX SCIENTIFIC INFORMATION INTO UNDERSTANDABLE TERMS. THEY OFTEN COLLABORATE CLOSELY WITH OTHER FORENSIC SPECIALISTS, SUCH AS FORENSIC PATHOLOGISTS, ODONTOLOGISTS, AND DNA ANALYSTS, TO BUILD A COMPREHENSIVE PICTURE OF THE CIRCUMSTANCES SURROUNDING A DEATH.

DIVERSE CAREER ROLES IN FORENSIC ANTHROPOLOGY

THE SKILLS HONED IN FORENSIC ANTHROPOLOGY OPEN DOORS TO A VARIETY OF SPECIALIZED CAREER PATHS. ONE OF THE MOST DIRECT ROLES IS THAT OF A FORENSIC ANTHROPOLOGIST WORKING WITHIN A GOVERNMENT AGENCY, SUCH AS A MEDICAL EXAMINER'S OFFICE, CORONER'S OFFICE, OR A STATE OR FEDERAL LAW ENFORCEMENT LABORATORY. IN THESE POSITIONS, THEY ARE DIRECTLY INVOLVED IN CASEWORK, ANALYZING REMAINS SUBMITTED BY INVESTIGATORS. ANOTHER SIGNIFICANT AVENUE IS ACADEMIA, WHERE FORENSIC ANTHROPOLOGISTS TEACH AND CONDUCT RESEARCH AT UNIVERSITIES. THIS ROLE INVOLVES EDUCATING FUTURE GENERATIONS OF ANTHROPOLOGISTS, PUBLISHING SCHOLARLY ARTICLES, AND CONTRIBUTING TO THE THEORETICAL AND METHODOLOGICAL ADVANCEMENTS IN THE FIELD.

CONSULTING FORENSIC ANTHROPOLOGISTS ARE ALSO PREVALENT, OFFERING THEIR EXPERTISE ON A FREELANCE OR CONTRACT BASIS TO VARIOUS AGENCIES. THESE PROFESSIONALS MAY BE CALLED IN FOR SPECIFIC CASES THAT REQUIRE SPECIALIZED KNOWLEDGE OR WHEN AN AGENCY LACKS IN-HOUSE EXPERTISE. IN THE REALM OF DISASTER VICTIM IDENTIFICATION (DVI), FORENSIC ANTHROPOLOGISTS ARE VITAL MEMBERS OF INTERNATIONAL TEAMS, WORKING IN THE AFTERMATH OF MASS CASUALTY EVENTS LIKE PLANE CRASHES, EARTHQUAKES, OR TERRORIST ATTACKS. THEY ASSIST IN THE SYSTEMATIC RECOVERY AND IDENTIFICATION OF VICTIMS ON A LARGE SCALE. SOME FORENSIC ANTHROPOLOGISTS ALSO FIND ROLES IN HISTORICAL OR BIOARCHAEOLOGICAL CONTEXTS, APPLYING THEIR SKILLS TO ANCIENT REMAINS FOR RESEARCH PURPOSES, WHICH CAN SOMETIMES INTERSECT WITH LEGAL INVESTIGATIONS IF HUMAN RIGHTS ABUSES ARE SUSPECTED FROM HISTORICAL PERIODS.

WORK ENVIRONMENTS FOR FORENSIC ANTHROPOLOGISTS

THE PROFESSIONAL ENVIRONMENTS WHERE FORENSIC ANTHROPOLOGISTS PLY THEIR TRADE ARE AS DIVERSE AS THE ROLES THEY OCCUPY. A SUBSTANTIAL NUMBER OF FORENSIC ANTHROPOLOGISTS ARE EMPLOYED BY GOVERNMENT ENTITIES. THIS INCLUDES COUNTY OR STATE MEDICAL EXAMINER AND CORONER OFFICES, WHERE THEY WORK ALONGSIDE FORENSIC PATHOLOGISTS AND OTHER MEDICAL EXAMINERS TO ANALYZE SKELETAL EVIDENCE SUBMITTED AS PART OF DEATH INVESTIGATIONS. FEDERAL AGENCIES, SUCH AS THE FEDERAL BUREAU OF INVESTIGATION (FBI) OR THE DEFENSE POW/MIA ACCOUNTING AGENCY (DPAA), ALSO EMPLOY FORENSIC ANTHROPOLOGISTS TO ASSIST IN CRIMINAL INVESTIGATIONS AND THE IDENTIFICATION OF MISSING SERVICE MEMBERS, RESPECTIVELY.

ANOTHER SIGNIFICANT WORK SETTING IS ACADEMIA. UNIVERSITIES AND COLLEGES OFFER POSITIONS FOR FORENSIC ANTHROPOLOGISTS AS PROFESSORS AND RESEARCHERS. THESE INDIVIDUALS TYPICALLY CONDUCT THEIR OWN RESEARCH, PUBLISH FINDINGS, AND TEACH UNDERGRADUATE AND GRADUATE COURSES IN ANTHROPOLOGY, FOCUSING ON BIOLOGICAL ANTHROPOLOGY AND FORENSIC APPLICATIONS. THEY OFTEN MAINTAIN ACTIVE CONSULTING PRACTICES OR COLLABORATE WITH LOCAL LAW ENFORCEMENT. ADDITIONALLY, FORENSIC ANTHROPOLOGISTS CAN FIND THEMSELVES WORKING IN NON-PROFIT

ORGANIZATIONS OR PRIVATE CONSULTING FIRMS, OFTEN SPECIALIZING IN HISTORICAL INVESTIGATIONS, HUMAN RIGHTS CASES, OR PROVIDING SUPPORT TO LEGAL TEAMS. FIELDWORK CAN ALSO BE A SIGNIFICANT COMPONENT OF THE JOB, REQUIRING ANTHROPOLOGISTS TO WORK IN POTENTIALLY CHALLENGING AND SENSITIVE ENVIRONMENTS AT CRIME SCENES OR IN DISASTER ZONES.

ESSENTIAL SKILLS AND QUALIFICATIONS

SUCCESS IN A CAREER IN FORENSIC ANTHROPOLOGY HINGES ON A UNIQUE BLEND OF SCIENTIFIC KNOWLEDGE, ANALYTICAL PROWESS, AND SPECIFIC PERSONAL ATTRIBUTES. A PROFOUND UNDERSTANDING OF HUMAN OSTEOLOGY AND ANATOMY IS PARAMOUNT, ENABLING THE ACCURATE INTERPRETATION OF SKELETAL STRUCTURES. THIS INCLUDES A COMPREHENSIVE KNOWLEDGE OF BONE DEVELOPMENT, VARIATION, AND IDENTIFICATION. SKELETAL BIOLOGY EXPERTISE IS CRUCIAL FOR ESTIMATING BIOLOGICAL PROFILES SUCH AS AGE, SEX, STATURE, AND ANCESTRY FROM SKELETAL REMAINS.

BEYOND BIOLOGICAL KNOWLEDGE, STRONG ANALYTICAL AND CRITICAL THINKING SKILLS ARE INDISPENSABLE. FORENSIC ANTHROPOLOGISTS MUST BE ABLE TO SYSTEMATICALLY EXAMINE EVIDENCE, DRAW LOGICAL CONCLUSIONS, AND DIFFERENTIATE BETWEEN SIGNIFICANT FINDINGS AND NORMAL BIOLOGICAL VARIATION OR POSTMORTEM DAMAGE. METICULOUS ATTENTION TO DETAIL IS NON-NEGOTIABLE, AS EVEN THE SMALLEST BONE FRAGMENT OR MARK CAN HOLD CRITICAL INFORMATION. EXCELLENT WRITTEN AND VERBAL COMMUNICATION SKILLS ARE ALSO VITAL, PARTICULARLY FOR CRAFTING CLEAR, CONCISE REPORTS AND EFFECTIVELY PRESENTING COMPLEX SCIENTIFIC FINDINGS AS EXPERT TESTIMONY IN LEGAL PROCEEDINGS. FINALLY, ETHICAL CONDUCT AND PROFESSIONAL INTEGRITY ARE FOUNDATIONAL, GIVEN THE SENSITIVE NATURE OF THEIR WORK AND ITS IMPACT ON LEGAL OUTCOMES AND GRIEVING FAMILIES.

THE IMPACT AND REWARDS OF A CAREER IN FORENSIC ANTHROPOLOGY

THE IMPACT OF FORENSIC ANTHROPOLOGY EXTENDS FAR BEYOND THE SCIENTIFIC ANALYSIS OF BONES; IT DIRECTLY CONTRIBUTES TO THE PURSUIT OF JUSTICE AND THE PROVISION OF CLOSURE FOR GRIEVING FAMILIES. BY ACCURATELY IDENTIFYING UNKNOWN INDIVIDUALS AND PROVIDING CRUCIAL DETAILS ABOUT THEIR LIVES AND DEATHS, THESE PROFESSIONALS OFFER ANSWERS TO FAMILIES WHO HAVE BEEN IN LIMBO, OFTEN FOR YEARS. THIS ABILITY TO BRING RESOLUTION IS A DEEPLY REWARDING ASPECT OF THE PROFESSION. FURTHERMORE, FORENSIC ANTHROPOLOGISTS PLAY A CRITICAL ROLE IN SOLVING CRIMINAL CASES BY PROVIDING EVIDENCE THAT CAN IDENTIFY PERPETRATORS OR CORROBORATE WITNESS ACCOUNTS, THEREBY HELPING TO ENSURE THAT JUSTICE IS SERVED.

THE INTELLECTUAL STIMULATION DERIVED FROM TACKLING COMPLEX SCIENTIFIC PUZZLES IS ANOTHER SIGNIFICANT REWARD. EACH CASE PRESENTS A UNIQUE CHALLENGE, REQUIRING THE APPLICATION OF SCIENTIFIC PRINCIPLES TO REAL-WORLD SCENARIOS. THE OPPORTUNITY TO WORK WITH DIVERSE TEAMS, INCLUDING LAW ENFORCEMENT, MEDICAL EXAMINERS, AND OTHER SCIENTISTS, FOSTERS A COLLABORATIVE AND DYNAMIC WORK ENVIRONMENT. WHILE THE SUBJECT MATTER CAN BE SOMBER, THE KNOWLEDGE THAT THEIR WORK MAKES A TANGIBLE DIFFERENCE IN PEOPLE'S LIVES AND CONTRIBUTES TO SOCIETAL WELL-BEING OFFERS A PROFOUND SENSE OF PURPOSE AND PROFESSIONAL SATISFACTION.

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS ABOUT CAREER OPPORTUNITIES IN FORENSIC ANTHROPOLOGY

Q: WHAT IS THE TYPICAL STARTING SALARY FOR A FORENSIC ANTHROPOLOGIST?

A: THE STARTING SALARY FOR A FORENSIC ANTHROPOLOGIST CAN VARY SIGNIFICANTLY BASED ON FACTORS SUCH AS LOCATION, EMPLOYER (GOVERNMENT VS. ACADEMIA VS. PRIVATE), AND THE LEVEL OF EDUCATION OBTAINED. ENTRY-LEVEL POSITIONS WITH A MASTER'S DEGREE MIGHT START IN THE RANGE OF \$50,000 TO \$70,000 ANNUALLY, WHILE THOSE WITH A PH.D. OR SPECIALIZED EXPERIENCE COULD COMMAND HIGHER FIGURES. SALARIES CAN INCREASE SUBSTANTIALLY WITH EXPERIENCE AND ADVANCEMENT.

Q: IS A PH.D. ABSOLUTELY NECESSARY TO WORK AS A FORENSIC ANTHROPOLOGIST?

A: WHILE A PH.D. IS OFTEN PREFERRED OR REQUIRED FOR CERTAIN ACADEMIC POSITIONS OR HIGH-LEVEL RESEARCH ROLES, IT IS NOT ALWAYS STRICTLY NECESSARY FOR ALL CAREER PATHS. MANY FORENSIC ANTHROPOLOGISTS SUCCESSFULLY WORK IN MEDICAL EXAMINER OFFICES OR LAW ENFORCEMENT AGENCIES WITH A MASTER'S DEGREE AND RELEVANT EXPERIENCE. HOWEVER, A PH.D. SIGNIFICANTLY ENHANCES CAREER PROSPECTS, RESEARCH OPPORTUNITIES, AND POTENTIAL FOR LEADERSHIP.

Q: WHAT KIND OF FIELDWORK IS INVOLVED IN FORENSIC ANTHROPOLOGY?

A: FIELDWORK IN FORENSIC ANTHROPOLOGY CAN INCLUDE PARTICIPATING IN THE RECOVERY OF HUMAN REMAINS FROM VARIOUS SETTINGS, SUCH AS CLANDESTINE GRAVES, SURFACE SCATTERS, OR DISASTER SITES. THIS MAY INVOLVE ARCHAEOLOGICAL

EXCAVATION TECHNIQUES, CAREFUL DOCUMENTATION OF THE SCENE, AND THE METICULOUS COLLECTION OF EVIDENCE. FIELDWORK CAN OCCUR IN DIVERSE AND SOMETIMES CHALLENGING ENVIRONMENTS AND REQUIRES A HIGH DEGREE OF SENSITIVITY AND PROFESSIONALISM.

Q: CAN FORENSIC ANTHROPOLOGISTS WORK ON HISTORICAL CASES OR COLD CASES?

A: YES, FORENSIC ANTHROPOLOGISTS ARE FREQUENTLY INVOLVED IN INVESTIGATING HISTORICAL CASES, COLD CASES, AND CASES RELATED TO HUMAN RIGHTS ABUSES. THEIR EXPERTISE IN SKELETAL ANALYSIS CAN HELP IDENTIFY INDIVIDUALS WHO HAVE BEEN MISSING FOR DECADES OR UNCOVER EVIDENCE OF PAST ATROCITIES. THIS WORK OFTEN INVOLVES COLLABORATION WITH HISTORIANS, ARCHAEOLOGISTS, AND HUMAN RIGHTS ORGANIZATIONS.

Q: WHAT ARE THE MOST COMMON EMPLOYERS FOR FORENSIC ANTHROPOLOGISTS?

A: THE MOST COMMON EMPLOYERS FOR FORENSIC ANTHROPOLOGISTS INCLUDE COUNTY AND STATE MEDICAL EXAMINER/CORONER OFFICES, FEDERAL LAW ENFORCEMENT AGENCIES (LIKE THE FBI), ACADEMIC INSTITUTIONS OFFERING ANTHROPOLOGY PROGRAMS, AND PRIVATE CONSULTING FIRMS. THEY MAY ALSO WORK WITH INTERNATIONAL ORGANIZATIONS OR NON-GOVERNMENTAL ORGANIZATIONS INVOLVED IN VICTIM IDENTIFICATION OR HUMAN RIGHTS INVESTIGATIONS.

Q: HOW COMPETITIVE ARE CAREER OPPORTUNITIES IN FORENSIC ANTHROPOLOGY?

A: CAREER OPPORTUNITIES IN FORENSIC ANTHROPOLOGY CAN BE QUITE COMPETITIVE, ESPECIALLY FOR ENTRY-LEVEL POSITIONS. THE FIELD IS SPECIALIZED, AND THERE ARE OFTEN MORE ASPIRING PROFESSIONALS THAN AVAILABLE POSITIONS. A STRONG ACADEMIC RECORD, PRACTICAL EXPERIENCE THROUGH INTERNSHIPS, AND A WELL-DEVELOPED NETWORK WITHIN THE FORENSIC SCIENCE COMMUNITY ARE CRUCIAL FOR STANDING OUT IN THE APPLICANT POOL.

Q: WHAT IS THE ROLE OF A FORENSIC ANTHROPOLOGIST IN MASS DISASTER IDENTIFICATION?

A: IN MASS DISASTER EVENTS, FORENSIC ANTHROPOLOGISTS ARE CRITICAL FOR THE SYSTEMATIC IDENTIFICATION OF VICTIMS. THEY WORK AS PART OF LARGE, MULTIDISCIPLINARY TEAMS TO RECOVER, PROCESS, AND ANALYZE SKELETAL REMAINS, OFTEN UNDER CHALLENGING CONDITIONS. THEIR ABILITY TO ESTIMATE BIOLOGICAL PROFILES AND IDENTIFY UNIQUE CHARACTERISTICS HELPS IN CREATING A DATABASE FOR COMPARISON WITH MISSING PERSONS' RECORDS, FACILITATING MASS IDENTIFICATION EFFORTS AND PROVIDING CLOSURE TO FAMILIES.

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