

BOOK REVIEW

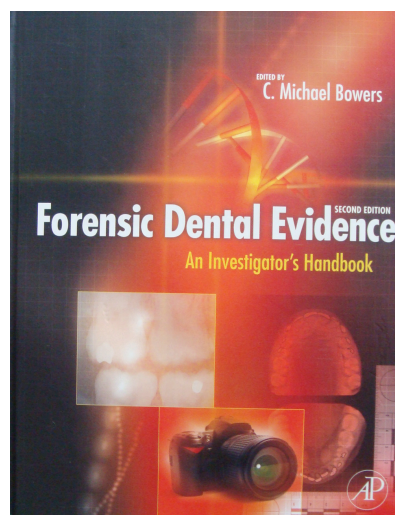
***Forensic dental Evidence:
An Investigator's Handbook 2nd ed.***

**Edited by C. Michael Bowers
Elsevier 2011
ISBN: 978-0-12-382000-6**

The latest edition of this book, comprising 16 chapters, has contributions from international authors with extensive experience in the field of forensic odontology. The purpose of this book is to give a detailed overview of modern day forensic odontology targeting those agencies investigating cases where dental evidence is discovered. Additionally, it is an extremely useful, interesting and educational compilation for anyone connected with forensic dental casework, such as coroners, medical examiners, forensic scientists, prosecutors, defence teams or those with an interest in the subject; dental/medical students, dentists and forensic odontologists (current and future) whatever their experience level.

It expands upon and updates the previous edition and draws attention to the fundamental methodologies and protocols necessary for successful casework with multi-disciplinary involvement. Chapters are colour coded for easy reference and cover topics such as historical dental investigations, identification, mass fatality incidents, bite marks, legal systems, abuse issues, dental materials in identification, DNA, photography, digital imaging and much more of interest. There is a strong emphasis on teamwork and the recognition, documentation, collection, preservation and interpretation of dental evidence. It highlights the challenges and limitations of forensic dental evidence, with a cautionary tone with regard to bite marks and mentions the work of the Innocence Project.

One chapter includes basic dental terminology, numbering and descriptions for those not familiar with dentistry. All chapters have clear sub-headings, are very well illustrated and contain fascinating historical and contemporary cases to include a Romano-Egyptian red-shroud mummy dating to the first century AD, a missing pilot discovered in 2007,



Australian bushfires 2009, bite marks, Ted Bundy and much more. It is extremely easy to read, without lengthy pages of uninterrupted text.

The electronic version of this book contains links enabling the reader to easily access all reference abstracts and updated web-based material online, encouraging further reading and research on forensic dentistry and related scientific disciplines. Very impressive!

Dental age estimation is not mentioned; perhaps there was a reason for this omission, but I feel its inclusion would have been useful. Judicial requirements, identification and persons without documentation often involve the establishment of age. There is much information and research in this area and a chapter dedicated to its use and limitations might be beneficial.

In conclusion this book comprehensively covers concepts and protocols necessary for criminal investigation involving dental evidence and will be of educational value and interest to many categories of reader. It is practical, up to date, informative, well-illustrated and appropriately cautionary.

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