



Current position:

Chief Medical Examiner, Washington, DC

Education history:

Medical School: Instituto Tecnológico de Santo Domingo, Dominican Republic

Residency Program: Conemaugh Memorial Hospital, Johnstown, Pennsylvania

Fellowship: Office of the Medical Examiner, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania

HOW DID YOU INITIALLY BECOME INTERESTED IN FORENSIC PATHOLOGY?

Since high school, I was interested in forensic work because of the challenging aspect of investigations.

WHAT ADVICE DO YOU HAVE FOR ASPIRING FORENSIC PATHOLOGISTS, INCLUDING RECOMMENDATIONS TO MATCH INTO A PATHOLOGY RESIDENCY PROGRAM AND ACCEPTANCE INTO A FORENSIC PATHOLOGY FELLOWSHIP?

Get acquainted with the field. Shadow pathologists, investigators and autopsies. As much as possible, try to rotate in at least two different ME offices. Try to go to court and observe. Make sure that you can adjust to doing autopsies for a career and that you are comfortable with testifying.

WHAT IS THE MOST REWARDING ASPECT OF BEING A FORENSIC PATHOLOGIST?

Providing medical information to families that would be useful for survivors.

WHAT IS THE GREATEST CHALLENGE OF BEING A FORENSIC PATHOLOGIST?

The grind of autopsies and the sometimes mentally exhausting aspect of testimony.

WHAT DO YOU THINK ARE THE MOST IMPORTANT ISSUES/CHALLENGES OF FORENSIC PATHOLOGY TODAY?

1. Encouraging physicians to become pathologists and forensic pathologists.
2. Significant increase in the number of cases.
3. Difficulty in recruiting.
4. Not enough funding for training.

WHAT HAS BEEN YOUR MOST MEMORABLE CASE AND WHY?

When I was working in Detroit, the Medical Examiner's office was involved, along with the FBI, in the recovery of 1500 anatomic specimens in a warehouse including more than 1000 heads. We classified the specimens, assigned numbers and stored them.

WHAT HAS BEEN THE MOST UNEXPECTED FINDING YOU HAVE ENCOUNTERED DURING A CASE?

In Detroit as well, we performed the autopsies of four young women that were found in the trunks of vehicles in a 2-week span. There was no trauma and negative toxicology. They had only one thing in common, the individual that contacted them on a dating website. It is my opinion that he asphyxiated them. He was convicted.

WHO IS YOUR ROLE MODEL AND WHY?

Dr. Werner Spitz, who I have developed a friendship with and who has shared his immense knowledge and experience with me.

WHAT ARE YOUR HOBBIES AND HOW DO YOU MAINTAIN A WORK-LIFE BALANCE?

I am a voracious reader of history and literature and love traveling.
The key is to leave work at work (whenever possible).

WHAT IS YOUR MOST-LIKED MEAL AT YOUR FAVORITE LOCAL RESTAURANT?

Cuban Steak at Cuba Libre in DC.