

a convincing argument for the effectiveness of the comedy-horror hybrid in this cult classic.”

Examining the Examiner: An Amicus Brief on Conflicts Between Forensic Technology and Indigenous Religious Freedoms in Favor of Virtual Autopsies

Student researcher: Peyton James, Senior

Examining the Examiner began as a classroom project on a topic that intersects technology and culture. Stemming from my degree in anthropology and interests in religion, law, and forensic science, I submitted my research in an amicus brief format incorporating all these aspects. An amicus brief is a legal document in which anyone not a party to a case assists the court by offering information, expertise, or insight that has a bearing on the issues in the case.

This amicus brief supports the use of virtual autopsy in the case of Mushkooub Aubid, a member and spiritual leader of the Mille Lacs Band of Ojibwe, whose death in a single-vehicle car accident in 2015 became the center of controversy when legal authorities insisted on a medical autopsy against the traditions of Aubid’s tribe. Due to Aubid’s history of cardiac issues, his family concluded

that he experienced a medical event while driving. While the state patrol did not request an autopsy, the local Minnesota medical examiner insisted on one, against Aubid’s religious traditions.

The objective of the amicus is to work with Indigenous People in determining the best way of handling the deceased during forensic investigations that does not inhibit practicing traditions. A practical solution could be a virtual autopsy, which would not leave any tissue damage on the deceased as a conventional autopsy would. With the current technology available in hospitals, performing a virtual autopsy is a viable option. For example, computed tomography scans can locate foreign objects within the tissue or bodily organs, as shown in a 2019 study of individuals in combat-related circumstances. Most notably, a 2014 study shows that virtual autopsies can identify 60–80% of injuries. This insight supports the procedure’s credibility in investigations that may not be caused by foul play.

Research mentor Risa Cromer writes: “Peyton’s hypothetical amicus brief provides an evidenced-based argument for virtual autopsies within forensic investigations to respect Indigenous people’s rights to religious freedom. Peyton smartly argues that virtual autopsies are a viable alternative that avoids the need to dissect the decedent or interfere in time-sensitive practices related to death and burial.”



CT scans are one of many forms of technology that can be used to perform virtual autopsies.

Efficacy of the Pedagogical, Cultural, and Advocacy Programming at Purdue University Asian American and Asian Resource and Cultural Center

Student researcher: Michael Kuczajda, Senior

Founded in 2015, the Asian American and Asian Resource and Cultural Center (AAARCC) carries on the work of past groups and individuals providing pedagogical, cultural, and advocacy programming to help educate everyone on campus. AAARCC hopes to help students find a sense of belonging that contributes to creating a successful identity, both professionally and academically, while also helping the community be better educated and more inclusive. Through survey analysis, archival study, and participant observation, it has been shown that events consistently drew interested students (for example, the weekly Lunch and Learn program series), and most