

Scientists create body decay ID system

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U.S. scientists have created a system designed to help locate hidden burial sites and provide evidence that points to the victims' killers.

The researchers led by forensics expert Arpad Vass at the Oak Ridge National Laboratory's biosciences division say odors released from decomposing corpses in such graves can provide a chemical fingerprint.

The scientists started by identifying 478 specific volatile compounds associated with burial decomposition and narrowed those to the top 30 in order of perceived importance for finding buried bodies.

The researchers say their project, begun four years ago, identifies the "odor signature" unique to human burial decomposition and could lead to improved cadaver dog training and possibly to a portable instrument that could help locate human remains.

The research, performed with assistance from the University of Tennessee, is funded by the FBI.

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