

Grand jury indicts former Division of Forensic Sciences

The Delaware Department of Justice's Office of Civil Rights & Public Trust announced Monday that a grand jury has indicted a Pennsylvania man on two counts of the crime of Abusing a Corpse. In two separate incidents, James T. Schaeffer-Patton, 39, of Pennsylvania is [accused](#) of having improperly moved decedents' bodies during his employment as a Forensic Investigator for the State's Division of Forensic Sciences.

In particular, Patton is alleged in January 2018 to have used a ligature around a decedent's neck to move the body. In July 2019, Patton allegedly carried a victim in a body bag down a flight of stairs from the scene of death and allowed the victim's head to repeatedly strike the steps. In both cases, Patton declined to use a stretcher supplied to him to move decedents' bodies.

The families of both decedents have been notified of the indictment. Abusing a Corpse is a Class A Misdemeanor. Each count is punishable by a maximum prison sentence of 1 year and a maximum fine of \$2,300.

The DOJ reminds the public that an indictment is merely an allegation and is not evidence of guilt. Defendants are presumed innocent and are entitled to a jury trial at which the State bears the burden of proving each charge beyond a reasonable doubt.