

MARK DESIRE



Biography

Mark Desire is an Assistant Director and Technical Leader with the New York City Office of Chief Medical Examiner. He works in the Department of Forensic Biology, New York City's DNA crime lab and the largest of its kind in North America. During his 26 years with NYC, he has investigated thousands of criminal and missing persons cases. He is the manager of the World Trade Center DNA Identification Team, a unit dedicated to advancing the science and helping return loved ones to their families. Mark has been featured in several documentaries and shows including HBO, Netflix, CNN and BBC.

During mass fatalities, Mark is the Family Assistance Center Manager for New York City. Throughout the COVID operation, he was in charge of decedent recovery, commanding hundreds of military and civilian staff.

Mark has been recruited by the United Nations Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights, National Center for Missing and Exploited Children, and has helped dozens of foreign countries all over the world to assist in locating the missing and design protocol to further this ability. Additionally, he serves on the Missing Migrant Identification Task Force.

Mark created New York City's Missing Persons Day. This is a multiagency event to bring together family and friends of missing persons for the purpose of collecting information to help identify their loved ones. Mark is a professor and forensic advisor for the Program in Criminal Justice at Rutgers University.

Title

From the Ashes: Death as Our Mentor

Abstract

The September 11th terrorist attacks mark a moment in the history of the United States like no other. As he crawled from the collapsed building, bloodied, broken and surrounded by death, New York City Forensic Scientist Mark Desire gained a new perspective on his work and commitment. Mark will tell the story of hardship and pain, and how it pushed his team to constantly adapt and evolve. This isn't just discovering what you are capable of, this is defining yourself to tackle any obstacle. It's not about the accomplishment, it's about what you become trying to reach that goal. The mission is unending. The commitment has not wavered. No matter how hard we're hit or how many times we fall, we will never give up.