



Dodge

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Facial Restoration of Cancer Damage

by Shane A.S. Ritchie, CFSP

The case presented was a 76-year-old male who passed away due to cancer of the throat. As you can see in sketch #1, the cancerous tissue had spread to the clavicle, mandible, right maxilla, right eye orbit, and right zygomatic areas. This resulted in distortion of the mouth and general enlargement of the right side of the head and face.

The body was shipped to me from an out of town funeral home. Fortunately, the embalmer had done a pretty good job and the body was firm, dry, and well preserved; a must if proper restoration is to take place.

The wound was fairly massive, as can be seen in sketch #2. Of further concern was the fact that the visible part of the growth was only about half of what had to be dealt with. There was much tumorous growth under the skin on

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fig. 1



fig. 2



fig. 3



fig. 4



fig. 5

most of the right side of the face which would have to be removed to allow symmetry to be restored. Also, upon close examination, it became clear that much of the skin directly adjacent to the wound was damaged to the point that it would have to be removed.

The visible part of the growth was only about half of what had to be dealt with. There was much tumorous growth under the skin on most of the right side of the face which would have to be removed to allow symmetry to be restored.

I began by excising the damaged tissue and the cancerous growth down to the bone. Luckily the bone was not directly involved with the cancerous growth. You can see the inferior portion of the mandible in sketch #3. I excised all cancerous tissue from under the skin on the right side of the face up to the lower orbit of the eye. Because the growth had excessively distorted the lower lip, it was necessary to detach the lower lip area from the mandible in order to be able to reshape the mouth to a more normal posture. I finished the surgery by undercutting the edges of the skin. This would allow the edges to be drawn under later in the restoration to create a good transition for waxing.

For the next step I packed the entire area with cotton soaked in Basic Dryene. The exposed skin was first coated with a film of petroleum jelly to protect it from the bleaching effects of the Dryene. I allowed this pack to stay in place for about thirty minutes. This was enough time for the Dryene to cauterize, preserve and fully dry the damaged tissue. The cotton was then removed and discarded in preparation for

creating a base for the application of wax.

At this point, I realized that the growth had stretched the skin on the side of the face to the point where some excess would have to be removed in order to restore symmetry. I continued my incision up the face to about the superior border of the zygomatic arch. I then excised about a 1/4" strip of skin, undercut the incision on both sides and closed the incision with an intradermal suture and glue. I then created a "web" of suture thread going across the wound in all directions, pulling the edges inward until the correct dimensions were achieved. This created an anchor for my base (sketch #4). The undercutting of the edges of the incision allowed the skin to be angled inward, creating a good transition point for waxing. The area was then filled to about 1/4" from the facial plane with Inr-Seel. I could have used cotton and Pore Closer as a base but I chose Inr-Seel because it allowed me to manipulate and shape the contour of the face more readily.

The face shape became more normal and symmetrical at this point. Once I was satisfied with my foundation, I sealed the entire area with a coat of Pore Closer and allowed it to dry.

I began to rough in the wax using Pink Wound Filler. Working from a photo provided by the family, I was able to take measurements from known parts of the face, compare them to measurements from the photo and, through a bit of mathematic conversion, work out the correct size and shape of the neck, chin, cheek, etc. using calipers for accuracy. In this step I also re-positioned and glued the lower lip into place.

The wax was roughed in and the shaping/smoothing process begun. I like to use my gloved fingers dipped in

massage cream to smooth and shape wax. Once I get it as close as I possibly can with my fingers, I use a brush dipped in Dry Wash II to finish blending the edges and for overall smooth finishing. I then use a stipple brush to gently recreate the very fine surface pores of the skin. I recreate any lines and/or wrinkles by using a thin piece of cellophane (like used to wrap a cigarette pack) over the wax and drawing the line into the cellophane with the edge of a wax spatula. I finish the lines by smoothing with a brush and lacquer thinner.

Finally the wax was sealed with flexible collodion and a light basecoat of Aquachrome water-based cosmetic was applied by "dabbing" with a cosmetic sponge to a smooth, natural finish. The lips were then lightly pigmented to a natural shade. The entire area was powdered using Kalon Brunette Powder. Warm areas were then lightly blushed for a natural appearance and the entire face and neck were sprayed with a light coat of non-shiny hairspray to seal the cosmetic.

Sketch #5 shows the face after the final shaping of the wax and the cosmetic application. By working carefully and methodically, the results of the restoration process were very natural looking. A nearly certain closed casket situation was avoided. The family was amazed and extremely grateful for giving them back the man that they knew and loved.



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