



Pathology & Biology Section – 2004

G19 Use of the Impact Baton or So-Called “Rubber Bullet” as Less Lethal Force in Air vs. Water

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After attending this presentation, attendees will be able to recognize and differentiate wounds associated with impact baton, versus gunshot wounds associated with handguns and/or high velocity projectiles. Comparison will be made between impact baton wounds occurring in air as opposed to water.

This is a case of an officer involved shooting with a local law enforcement SWAT Team intervention using “less lethal” force which recently occurred at our office. The decedent is a 34-year-old white Hispanic man measuring 69 inches in height and weighing 283 pounds. The decedent had barricaded himself inside his trailer and was armed with a weapon. He was apparently depressed over his mother’s illness and had a history of drug abuse. Less lethal force was used to subdue the decedent in the form of a police dog as well as the use of the “Impact Baton” or so-called “Rubber Bullet.” The Sage Control Ordnance KO1 ammunition in a 37 mm Arwen 37 Mark III was used. This is known as the Sage Less Lethal Launched Ammunition and Ordnance System (L3A0S). The less lethal means used to subdue this man were unsuccessful and he was ultimately subdued with the use of .223 high velocity rifle wounds. The Arwen round wounds observed in this case will be compared to a second case in which rubber bullets were used to subdue an armed man in the San Gabriel River in Los Angeles County. In the second case the impact batons were fired through water, thus altering the wound characteristics. No fatal bullet wounds were incurred and the man ultimately drowned.

Rubber Bullet, Impact Baton, Less Lethal