



Pathology & Biology Section – 2004

G20 Dissection, Preservation and Sexual Abuse of Bodies and Body Parts – An Exceptional Case of Necrophilia

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After attending this presentation, attendees will learn that necrophilia is a rare disorder which can reach extreme dimensions with long-term sexual abuse of dissected and partially preserved body parts. He will retain that cooperation between police, forensic pathology and forensic psychiatry is essential to deal with such cases.

Necrophilia is rare and only few cases have been published in the literature. The cases presented here are unique because the crimes were committed by one individual in a period of 20 years. The stolen bodies were dissected and the organs and body parts partially preserved. The offender abused the corpse and the dissected body parts in a way that is hard to imagine and he documented this abuse on thousands of digital images.

The objective of this presentation is to demonstrate a cases of necrophilia committed by a 40-year-old man with mutilation, dissection and sexual abuse of three bodies and with extensive sexual abuse of dissected body parts which, in the last case, was documented by the offender on thousands of digital images.

The Greek term necrophilia or necrophilism refers to a morbid fondness of being in the presence of dead bodies and, in a stricter sense, to the impulse to have sexual context or the act of such contact with a dead body, usually of males with female corpses (*Stedman's Medical Dictionary*, 24th ed.). Necrophilia is classified as psychiatric disorder (other disturbance of sexual preference) and the psychopathology of necrophiliacs is an interesting, but largely unknown field of forensic psychiatry based mainly on the work of Krafft-Ebing from 1886 (*Psychopathia sexualis*). However, since this disorder is directly associated with bodies and body parts, forensic pathologists play an important role in the investigation of such cases. The following case series demonstrates that the anatomical and pathological know-how of forensic pathology is indispensable for the police investigations and the psychiatric examination. Furthermore, forensic science is necessary to reunite body parts by morphological and molecular analysis thus ensuring that a dignified funeral finally can take place which is extremely important for the next-of-kin as they try to cope with this traumatizing event.

The chronologically last case of this series, which was the most spectacular, illustrates all features of necrophilia in an extreme dimension which, to our knowledge, never was reached in previous publications and case reports.

In October 1999, the body of a 14-year-old girl, who had been killed by a train accident, disappeared from a morgue at a small cemetery located in a rural area in Northern Bavaria, Germany. Extensive investigations were started but did not provide any results. Regional and national media reported on the case and considerable public pressure was exerted on the investigators.

Three months later, a forester observed a man who was taking photographs of intestines spread out in front of him. Although this observation was not reported to the police until 4 weeks later, the man could be identified and he immediately confessed having taken and sexually abused the body. Because of beginning putrefaction, the 40-year-old engineer had started to dissect the body after a few days, removing organs and body parts such as the intestines, liver, uterus, vagina and breasts. Using these specimens, he continued with sexual activities in his home bathroom and documented every detail with a digital camera. More than 7000 images were found on his computer hard disk showing extreme situations which are difficult to cope with even for experienced forensic pathologists.

The remains of the girl consisting of the trunk, parts of the extremities and the skull were found in a hole filled with mud on the property of the man. Some of the dissected specimens had been treated with an alcoholic solution to stop decomposition and could be recovered in his home. He also admitted having abused 2 other cadavers of young females: in 1985 he had opened a casket and mutilated a body by removing breasts, eyeballs and other body parts and in 1981 he had dismembered the corpse of a 21-year-old woman and further dissected and abused the torso at his home leaving the extremities in the casket. This body-snatching had not been noticed at that time. From this case there were still some specimens kept in his home such as a carefully prepared spine column with the pelvis attached by a Velcro fastening. He was suspected of being involved in more cases of body-snatching or bodystripping that had occurred in the region between 1985 and 2000 but no evidence could be found and he denied those accusations.

According to German criminal law he was convicted to two years and three months of prison because of disturbance of human remains. A psychiatric examination was ordered by the court and the diagnosis "necrophilia" (ICD 10: F65.8, other disorder of sexual preference) was made. According to the forensic psychiatrist, the criminal responsibility of the defendant was diminished and the probability of repeating similar crimes with corpses was high. The risk of committing homicides to satisfy his sexual urges in the future was considered to be significant and he was moved to a criminal mental hospital for an indefinite period



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of time.

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