



D30 An Equivocal Death Investigation Case – Multiple Stabbings: The Victim Self-Inflicted 83 Stab Wound Injuries

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The author will present an interesting equivocal death investigation, which involved multiple stabbing wounds, some of which penetrated the heart. The author will also reiterate the significance of the medicolegal findings in the police investigation and why it is essential that police and medical examiners work as a team.

This presentation will impact the forensic community showing the importance of the evaluation of victimology in determining the factors in an Equivocal Death Investigation as well as the importance of comparing autopsy findings with police investigation and the reconstruction of the crime scene. The impact of the presentation occurs when the audience understands that the medical evaluation of the multiple stabbing wounds explained how this victim was able to stab himself 83 times despite the penetrating stab wounds into the heart. The audience should appreciate the importance and significance of the medical examiner, the police, and prosecution working as a team to reveal the truth and see that justice is done for the deceased.

Equivocal death investigations are those inquiries that are open to interpretation. There may be two or more meanings and the case may present as homicide, suicide, or accidental death. The facts may be purposefully vague or misleading as in the case of the "Staged Crime Scene."

In this case, a 61-year-old man was found stabbed to death in his residence by another male who lived in an adjoining apartment. The victim had been stabbed multiple times in the chest. The knife was found near the deceased's left hand and a sheath for the knife was found near to the body. Lying on the floor next to the victim's body was a half empty bottle of Drano® drain cleaner liquid. A door with a dead-bolt lock, which had not been secured, separated the premises. The victim's body was lying in a water feature, which consisted of a tiled sunken basin with rock formation on the side. The water feature was devoid of water and had been plumbed shut at the end of her nose.

The police investigation indicated that the victim had been despondent. Detectives took a number of statements from people who knew the deceased. Most of the blood was confined to the basin and there were neither footprints in blood nor blood found anywhere else in the residence. There were numerous wounds to the abdomen area and some internal organs were protruding from the wounds. When the body was removed from the basin examination revealed slashing injuries to both wrists.

The medical examiner ruled the death a suicide. There were 83 stab wounds to the torso, multiple incised wounds to both wrists and ingestion of Liquid Drano®. The cause of death was exsanguination due to multiple stab wounds of the torso. The wounds were largely concentrated on the left side. Four wounds penetrated the heart. One penetrated the full thickness of the right ventricle. In addition to the stabbing wounds into the torso there were also multiple incised wounds to wrist.

The police investigation coupled with the medical examiner's findings determined this case to be a suicide involving multiple self-inflicted stab wounds, some of which penetrated the heart and the ingestion of Liquid Drano®, which caused hyperemia and hemorrhage.

The left ventricle of the heart supplies the pressure that you record in Blood Pressure measurement (120/80). The right ventricle of the heart is the collection

Equivocal Death Investigation, Suicide, Victimology