



D10 Case Study Ritualistic Homicide at Fort Lewis, Washington

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The goal of this presentation is to introduce the members of the forensic community to a unique murder scene where a multidisciplinary approach was used to show that this was a planned, methodical killing executed in a ritualistic style.

This presentation will impact the forensic community by examining this unusual case and discussing the impact that the crime scene processing, autopsy protocol, and laboratory work had in supporting the prosecution and conviction of the offender.

The goal of this presentation is to introduce the members of the forensic community to a unique murder scene where a multidisciplinary approach was used including crime scene analysis, medicolegal investigation, and multidisciplinary laboratory examinations were used to reconstruct the series of events surrounding this savage murder. Investigation demonstrated this was not a crime of passion as the defense suggested, but rather a planned and methodical killing executed in a ritualistic style.

In this case, on 12 July 2005, the body of the 19-year-old wife of an Army soldier was found posed on the kitchen floor of the husband's assigned U.S. Government quarters located at 2025 Bitar Avenue, Fort Lewis Washington amidst massive amounts of bloodstain patterns from the crime itself as well as actions of the subject and transfer stains from the family dog running through the scene. The examination of her body revealed numerous complex chop wounds inflicted with a meat cleaver, and the crime scene contained ritualistic aspects to include posing the body, insertion of a phallus device, and attempted decapitation.

The Special Agents of the U.S. Army Criminal Investigation Command (commonly referred to as CID) discovered during the course of the investigation that while her husband was deployed to Iraq, his wife allegedly became involved in an affair with another soldier. Upon her husband's return from deployment, he was taking part in group mental health counseling and was being treated for post traumatic stress disorder. The investigation further determined that the soldier idolized Richard Ramirez ("the Nightstalker") and frequently fantasized about killing and becoming a serial killer. Computer forensic analysis established that just hours prior to the murder, he had taken an online quiz entitled "Are you a serial killer?"

On the night of the murder, the victim went to the kitchen and began an online chat with her alleged lover. While she was seated near the kitchen island chatting on the computer, the soldier entered the kitchen, where he confronted her, struck her first with his fist, and then he retrieved a meat cleaver from a butcher block type knife holder. The subject then brutally attacked her with the meat cleaver striking her about the head and shoulders. Once she was immobilized, he stripped her, posed her, vaginally inserted a phallus, and wrote in her blood upon the refrigerator door "Satan said she deserved it." Further, he wrote a note which said "Til death do us part" and signed the note which he attached to her body.

Bloodstain pattern analysis of the scene was used to determine the facts surrounding the incident in question through the examination of the physical characteristics of stains; looking at the dispersion, the shape characteristics and morphology, the volume, the pattern, and the number of bloodstains and their relationship to the surrounding scene. Conclusions were based on evaluation of the stains and their relationship to one another and their relationship to the other physical evidence at the crime scene.

This presentation will examine not only the scene itself, but also the killer's behavior before, during, and after the murder as it relates to his state of mind and draw correlations to the ritual of a human sacrifice as defined in Anton LaVay's satanic bible, a book found in his possession when apprehended.

The husband took pictures of her body, packed his bags, and fled the area. He later became filled with remorse, and turned himself in. Forensic sciences, including bloodstain pattern analysis, latent print examination, questioned documents examination, and forensic pathology were used to determine the sequence of events surrounding the murder, ensuring his successful prosecution for which he received a life sentence.

Murder, Ritualistic, Multidisciplinary Approach