



General Section – 2010

D44 Women as Killers: Are We Missing Something?

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After attending this presentation, attendees will have a better understanding of homicides perpetrated by women.

This presentation will impact the forensic science community by promoting a greater understanding of the efficacy of collaborative working relationships between the professional disciplines involved in criminal investigations.

The public's perception about crime and criminals is often shaped by the vast coverage of this subject on television programs, movies, novels and many other media outlets. The writers and producers may be guided more by ratings than by facts. Homicide investigators are frequently portrayed as individuals with special, often psychic abilities. In reality, we draw upon our own experience, specialized training in forensic and behavioral science and empirically developed information about the characteristics of known offenders.

Professionals who participate in the investigation of violent crime should understand and appreciate the potential evidentiary value of what can be discovered on, in, around and near a victim's body at the crime scene. A thorough crime scene analysis can provide clues to the interaction between the victim and the offender along with the specific chain of events that led to the victim's demise. An experienced crime scene investigator can interpret the physical evidence, often through an analysis of bloodshed at the scene, to propose and test theories of how a crime unfolded, to a reasonable conclusion. The crime scene yields clues not only about the victim and the crime but also about the offender. Media portrayal of offender and associated stereotypical behavior may prejudice investigative analysis. Some may assume that "men murder with guns and knives, while women defend themselves with pots and pans." Public accounts seem, more often than not, to attribute female murderers to more familial settings rather than homicide associated with the male offender. Have some cases remained unsolved because investigators disproportionately focused on men to the exclusion of all available possibilities?

Using specific case examples, the speakers will demonstrate how the investigative focus changed and these complicated cases were resolved. Participants will gain a greater understanding and better appreciate the efficacy of collaborative working relationships between the professional disciplines involved in criminal investigation.

Female Offenders, Crime Scene Reconstruction, Rush to Judgment