



## Pathology Biology Section – 2010

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### G103 Love and a Bullet: Autoerotic Accident or Intentional Suicide?

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The goal of this presentation is to highlight the potential for confusion regarding manner of death by using an interesting example.

This presentation will impact the forensic science community by highlighting the gray area of manner of death.

Autoerotic deaths have traditionally been caused by asphyxia due to hanging. To a lesser degree, trauma secondary to electrocution and insertion of objects have resulted in death. Based on scene investigations and the autopsy findings in these more traditional autoerotic cases, manner of death is best classified as accident. However, there does arise within the forensic spectrum cases involving autoerotism where the manner of death is more equivocal. It is in these fringe cases where excellent investigation of the scene and the victim's past medical history, is paramount. We present here an unusual case of autoerotic death in which the autoeroticism involved a gun.

The decedent, a 29-year-old man killed his father when he was thirteen-years-old. Using a handgun, he shot his father because he was repeatedly abused by him. His mother encouraged the murder. As a young man, the decedent found titillation from a toy handgun. As he grew older, he felt the need for a more powerful arsenal in order to achieve sexual arousal. During his last years, the decedent not only considered his silver .38 caliber Rossi handgun to be "sexy," but he smelled, fondled, and caressed it. The 38 Rossi was kept in a velvet bag in his bedroom, retrieved easily to be used as a sexual and masturbatory aid. His sexual routine with his beloved Rossi escalated from dry firing the empty gun, to leaving one bullet in the cylinder of the revolver while pulling the trigger. Eventually, this repeated practice resulted in his death due to a self-inflicted contact range gunshot wound to his head. A further complication in this case is the decedent's past psychiatric history. He had mild depression and suffered from bouts of insomnia. So this case serves as a great illustration and topic for discussion regarding aspects of autoeroticism, cause of death, manner of death, and the less clear distinction between suicide and accident.

**Gunshot Wounds, Autoerotic, Manner of Death**