



Psychiatry & Behavioral Sciences Section – 2011

18 An Unusual Homicide by Ligature Strangulation – Incaprettamento (a.k.a. Trussed Goat) Committed by a Retired Foreign Legionnaire

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The goal of this presentation is to identify some of the correlations between anthropological and cultural factors associated with a particular kind of homicide, where a rope is used to tie the neck of the victim to his or her wrists and ankles behind the back. This case study, offers the opportunity to analyze the interaction between these factors and those derived from the experience of a rigid military environment such as that of the Foreign Legion.

This presentation will impact the forensic science community by bringing to light possible further necessary research in the cross-cultural perspective, as well as, analysis of the typical dynamics of a rigid military environment.

The case presented here concerns an unusual type of strangulation homicide whereby a rope is passed around the victim's wrists, ankles, and throat resulting in suffocation by auto-asphyxia.

The literature usually refers to this method as "incaprettamento" (i.e., "trussed up like a goat"), a method employed by organized crime groups such as the Italian Mafia, but also used in the execution of war crimes, or in various other cultural-anthropological contexts. This method of killing is meant to impart a particularly degrading and humiliating revenge on the victim. It also serves as sign of intimidation and a warning to others.

To all appearances, the case presented here is different than those usually reported in the literature. The lifeless body of a 48-year-old Tunisian man, found hanging from an iron rod placed between two electrical pylons, was discovered in the countryside of a small southern Italian town.

The perpetrator of the crime was identified as a 32-year-old Tunisian man. He had earned his university degree in philosophy in 2002. In 1998, he began a military career as a non-commissioned army officer, subsequently enlisting into the Foreign Legion. Training in the Foreign Legion is particularly rigid and severe. Service in the Legion is based on the highest trust in both the institution and fellow soldiers. Betrayal is considered to be an act of the greatest dishonor.

Following psychiatric evaluation, the subject was diagnosed with a personality disorder. It was discovered that the victim, a man whom the perpetrator had previously trusted, had "betrayed" the perpetrator on several levels.

The unusual way in which the killing took place, along with its symbolic meaning, seems to have both military and anthropological origins that reflect the culture to which the perpetrator belonged. **Homicide, Ligature Strangulation ("incaprettamento"), Foreign Legion**