



D9 Brazilian Serial Killer: A Case Study of the Emasculated Boys

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After attending this presentation, attendees will gain insight on a succession of murderers involving children which occurred in Brazil and will better understand the operation of a police investigation and its impact on the sphere of the criminal justice system. This presentation will also point out the legislative, social, legal, and procedural repercussions resulting from the traditional methodology used, which could have been avoided with the use of an appropriate technique.

This presentation will impact the forensic science community by discussing the value of an interdisciplinary investigation approach and by proposing an alternative way to investigate serial murderers. This presentation discusses two techniques of forensic investigation used to solve an actual case involving serial murderers, "The Case of Emasculated Boys," which occurred in the north region of Brazil between 1989 and 2003. During the course of investigation, it became clear that the results obtained using the traditional methods of homicide investigation were inadequate and aggravated the situation, unlike the results obtained when using the proper techniques for serial crimes.

The traditional way of investigative thinking used by the Brazilian law enforcement is useless in serial crimes, since the criminal motivation, in this case, was not logical, but symbolic and subjective. Through this case study, discussion will involve the major problems occurring during the traditional investigation of serial. This study also intends to clarify the material points for an investigation on serial crimes, such as reliable surveys and interviews. Inconsistent interviews lead to rework during the procedure, which can ultimately be the cause of reasonable doubt, even when substantive evidence is available. Forensic and objective evidence combined with the use of proper scientific tools are necessary to obtain a solid end result at trial.

A research method was conducted through the analysis of cases, employing official law enforcement as well as federal court documentation. A total of 30 cases in Maranhão and 12 in Pará were re-analyzed. Interviews were conducted of personnel involved in all spheres of the cases, as well as analysis of the interrogation and interview with Francisco das Chagas Rodrigues de Brito, responsible for 42 murders in both states. About 40 hours of interviews were conducted during this research. The benefits of this methodology are speed, low cost, and little need for specific expertise in areas such as psychology, sociology, and criminology. Chagas confessed and has been tried for the murder of 13 boys up to this point, being convicted for a total of 250 year in prison so far.

The work conducted resulted in a significant gain in experience, later applied to several serial murder investigations. In each of them, the sequence of problems was the same: similar crimes which had never been connected as being of the same authorship until there were a significant number of them, not justifying a specific line of investigation. Most of the crimes also involved poor victims or victims belonging to minority groups.

As a result of this research, the best recommendation and motivation for changes in the traditional methodology is the scientific demonstration of the results obtained through the utilization of new tools. It is important to point out that these crimes occurred in poor regions of Brazil, where state-of-the-art forensic tools are not available. It is fundamental to stimulate studies that may increase the understanding of all the problems of high social significance caused by the inadequacy of not using updated investigative methodology.

In the course of this case study, it is proposed that in serial murderer investigations conducted in Brazil, the same sequences of problems are recurrent: inappropriate research methodology; inadequate media coverage and impact; loss of efficiency of criminal justice; and a lack of an interdisciplinary approach resulting in uncoordinated information collection. Therefore, law enforcement and forensic professionals must have access to the data and specific methodology employed on the investigation of all crime scenes that may be connected, increasing the chances of solving such peculiar crimes. Criminal profiling has already been used in other specialized investigations of serial crimes in Brazil, always with positive results.

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