



E21 **Bleeding Out: A Case of Mistaken Homicide**

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After attending this presentation, attendees will understand the importance of a complete and unbiased investigation when it comes to death investigations.

This presentation will impact the forensic science community by contributing to the understanding of the laws pertaining to assisted suicide and potential problems in determining the legal next-of-kin for disposition of remains.

Harris County has a population of more than four million people with approximately 4,000 deaths being reported to the medical examiner's office each year. In many cases, the cause of death is consistent with the witness statements and preliminary death scene investigation; however, sometimes the witness statements and preliminary law enforcement investigations are not consistent and a more in-depth death scene investigation is required by trained medicolegal death investigators. It is important for the medicolegal death investigator to approach all scene investigations without bias or predisposition as to cause of death.

With an evolving population, emerging technology, and the increase of crime scene-related television shows, death investigations are becoming more complicated. Not all crime scenes are what they appear to be. This presentation will review a case of mistaken homicide which was due to false/inconsistent witness statements. Law enforcement arrived on scene to find a large amount of blood throughout the decedent's residence. The decedent's 14-year-old grandson was reportedly in the residence with the decedent. Per the law enforcement report, the grandson reported that he stabbed the decedent two times. At first glance, the scene investigation was consistent with foul play due to the amount and location of blood and evidence including a bloody knife and a bleached footprint on the carpet. Trace evidence was collected on scene. During the medicolegal death investigation of the decedent's body, it was found that what had first appeared to be a homicide was now looking to be something very different. Photographs of the scene and autopsy will be used to show the evolution of the investigation, from the initially suspicious scene findings to the autopsy determination of the cause and manner of death.

This presentation will demonstrate the importance of a complete and accurate death scene investigation. The presentation will illustrate the importance of gathering accurate information and seeking further information when inconsistencies and questions arise during the initial scene investigation. Pathologists who perform the autopsies rely partly on a clear report from the medicolegal death investigator of the circumstances and observations of the death scene. Attendees will enhance their knowledge of death scene investigations and the need for clarity in death scene reports, despite inconsistencies that may arise.

Death Investigation, Homicide, Inconsistent Findings