



# Psychiatry & Behavioral Science Section - 2015

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## I16 An Unusual Patricide: The Woman Who Dismembered Her Father

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After attending this presentation, attendees will have a better understanding of patricide.

This presentation will impact the forensic science community by discussing patricides. In this case study of patricide, the victim, a father, was killed by his child. In general, the murderer often suffers from mental illness and the homicide usually takes place in the home. In Italy, patricide is a rarely reported murder (about 3%) with the typical offender being a young, unemployed male who lives with the victim.

As an elderly man had been missing for about a month, his apartment was searched by the police. They found seven boxes containing body segments, covered by feminine clothing, surrounded by lime, and covered with cellophane. There was no blood or larvae present. The man's daughter said it was the corpse of a stranger and claimed not to have reported the discovery for fear of being accused of murder. She added that her father had been away from home and she did not know where he was. A postmortem computed tomography examination of the decedent showed multiple fractures of the head, inflicted by an object with a cutting edge. During the autopsy, the body was identified and the presence of nine dissected body segments was revealed. The right side of the skull was damaged and there was leakage of a completely liquefied brain. The soft tissues were removed through maceration techniques and chemical treatment to highlight the bones' margins in order to determine the weapon used, which was found at the crime scene, and the manner of death. The macroscopic analysis of bone margins with radiological and histological studies helped to assess the force of the injuries. The examination of the injuries inflicted on the head indicated the trauma occurred while the subject was still alive. An autopsy confirmed that the victim was the daughter's 72-year-old father. His 38-year-old daughter had been a medical school student and for years lived in another city where she attended the university. She suffered from psychiatric disorders and was not treated with drugs. After the death of her mother, she returned to live with her father. The daughter was arrested, but for months continued to deny that she killed her father. Finally, she wrote a letter to the judge in which she confessed to the murder.

The court ordered a forensic psychiatric assessment, against the advice of the attorney who was suspicious of the fact that the woman would possibly inherit her father's large estate. The prosecutor pointed out the woman's shortcomings in an attempt to prevent her from inheriting family property; however, experts concluded that at the time of the crime, the woman was suffering from schizophrenic disorders and was not guilty by reason of insanity. The woman had been told by her mother, who died about a year prior, that she and her husband were members of a satanic cult and that all members of this sect abused her from the time she was two to three years of age. She added that she had no recollection of any abuse because the sect members administered drugs that rendered her unconscious. The abuse took place only at night; by day, her parents led an exemplary life. After the death of the mother, the father had demanded they have sex, but she resisted, at which point, the father threatened to kill her. In the course of yet another clash with her father, where he attempted to rape her, the woman defended herself and finally struck him on the head with a heavy glass object. She then decided to cut the body into pieces in order to transport the remains and bury them more easily. In fact, the judge said she did not intend to make her pay for a crime committed as a defense against her father's abuse. The woman, who had claimed to have never had a romantic relationship, was not a virgin.

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### Patricide, Forensic Pathology, Forensic Psychiatry