



E52 Case Study: From Maternal Instinct to Staged Domestic Homicide

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After attending this presentation, attendees will understand how, through a process of comprehensive analysis of the crime scene, a reconstruction of a criminal behavior was obtained that was the driving motivation of a murder against two children which was perpetrated by their own mother.

This presentation will impact the forensic science community by describing how the criminal conduct of a staged domestic homicide has some repetitive patterns or common characteristics in terms of planning and execution, regardless of where in the world it occurs, without being influenced by sociocultural or economic factors of their executors.

A mother reported to the Mocoa police (Mocoa is the capital of the department of Putumayo in southern Colombia) that in the early hours of September 20, 2010, an unknown individual attacked her when she opened the front door of her residence. She was attacked until she lost consciousness. After regaining consciousness, she found her children in bed in the master bedroom. When approaching them, believing them to be asleep, she noted they were wet and without signs of life.

The initial investigation found that the woman's injuries were consistent with blunt trauma. The apparent coherence of her story led the authorities to think there was a perpetrator who had murdered the two children and left their mother seriously injured. The high social impact produced by a case of two murdered children and the assault on their mother activated both local and national law enforcement, resulting in the Criminal Behavior Special Unit of the Attorney General's Office being called in to support the investigation through a process of crime scene analysis and the possibility of developing a criminal profile.

On the basis of the crime scene analysis, the patterns of blood stains found, the comprehensive study of the evidence related to the victims, the assessment of the versions provided by the surviving mother and other witnesses, and the structural characteristics and safety of the building, the investigation team re-evaluated the hypothesis of an external aggressor and redirected their attention toward the mother.

This change in the case offered the team a clear vision about the dynamics of the events that led to the deaths of the two children. With the support of the analysis of forensic evidence at the scene, the Criminal Behavior Special Unit was forced to focus their attention on finding the motivation that drove this woman to kill her own children. The investigation focused on probing deeper into all areas of the mother's life and found an intricate world of love frustrations and abandonment, a mentally unhealthy woman, egocentric and possessive, with strong intentions to overcome any obstacle to achieve all personal desires.

After coordinating and fitting all parts of this criminal and forensic puzzle together, the prosecutors demonstrated definitively and beyond a reasonable doubt that the crime was committed by the mother in the form of a staged domestic homicide.

Mother's Killer, Children, Staged Domestic Homicide