



E88 Serial Killers in Colombia: A Comparative Study

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After attending this presentation, attendees will be aware of a brief comparative analysis of five serial killer cases in Colombia that occurred in the past 50 years and a recent special case that does not share the characteristics of others, a *sui generis* case.

This presentation will impact the forensic science community by showing, through comparative study of these cases, specific behavioral patterns shared by these murderers and how this becomes a snapshot of the phenomenon of serial killers in Colombia.

In Colombia, the names of Pedro Vicente Calderón, Pedro López, Daniel Camargo Barbosa, Luis Alfonso Garavito Cubillos, Manuel Octavio Bermudez, and Luis Gregorio Ramirez are not noteworthy for the vast majority, but if one speaks of the “Vampire bishop,” “The strangler of the Andes,” “The monster of cane fields,” or the “Beast,” memories and associations emerge more quickly. These men are recognized as murderers and in the literature are described as serial killers. Several have become old stories used to frighten children or horrific legends that are part of the criminal history of the country; however, not much is actually known about these men, their history, or all of the crimes they committed. The legal history of some of these murderers is lost in the archives or simply due to neglect. Fragments of these stories are recorded in one newspaper or another or in the memories of some judicial officers.

A thorough search for specifics about these murderers yielded information regarding their life stories, their murders, their *modus operandi*, the selection of victims, and how the murderers moved around the country. With this information, it was possible to conduct a comparative analysis of these serial killers. Thus, it was found that three of the men looked for male victims, children, two women, and especially girls. Four of these murderers showed a knack for winning the trust of their victims. Many of these victims lived in conditions of vulnerability due to financial or family factors. Several of these murderers killed not only in Colombia, but also moved to two and three other countries and committed crimes. All were caught, tried, and convicted. Some have since died, others are behind bars. One escaped from prison and today his whereabouts are unknown. The last of the serial murderers studied, who was recently captured and convicted, controlled several male victims by a sophisticated rope mechanism, and with this same rope system the victims took his life. The media dubbed this man “The monster of the ropes.”

In conclusion, this study has identified the manner in which the serial murderer has appeared in Colombia, the *modus operandi*, the offenders’ travel patterns, characteristics of the victims’ vulnerability, and the difficulties in the identification and association of cases involving a serial killer.

Serial Killers, Comparative Study, Criminal Behavior