



## Breakfast Seminars - 2017

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### BS3 Reliving the Jeffrey Dahmer Case 25 Years Later

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After attending this presentation, participants will recognize the characteristics of organized and disorganized serial killers.

This presentation will impact the forensic science community by providing a model death investigation of a serial killer and his motives.

On July 23, 1991, personnel from the Milwaukee County Medical Examiner Office and Milwaukee Police Department responded to an apartment where partially skeletonized remains of 11 individuals had been detected. The assailant, Jeffrey Dahmer, was quickly taken into custody. In this unique situation, Dahmer freely discussed his role in the murders with law enforcement and provided a valuable resource for collaboration of scene, anthropological, and autopsy findings to pathologists and law enforcement personnel during the investigation. Scene investigation and autopsy analysis of the bodies provided prosecutors with detailed evidence of motives and the psychological state of Dahmer during the course of a death spree that lasted nine months.

The evaluation of the scene allowed investigators to: (1) establish methods of death; (2) begin the preliminary identification process; and, (3) demonstrate the deteriorating mental capacity of the assailant. Forensic pathologists assisted with the identification, established the cause of death, and documented injuries that allowed investigators to question Dahmer on various injuries he inflicted upon his victims. An anthropological examination assisted with the identification and also resulted in the establishment of victim profiles.

A forensic psychiatrist constructed Dahmer's psychological profile, which was characterized by a destructive behavior in which his collection of fetishistic memorabilia provided an expression of his deep ambivalence and mixed hostility toward his victims. Frustrated with his sexual immaturity and continual rejection, Dahmer channeled his hostility into a sadistic sexual behavior characteristic of the psychopathology of a serial killer.

The multidisciplinary investigation that followed provided a number of conclusions that permitted the successful prosecution and conviction of Jeffrey Dahmer. Dahmer strangled his victims following his use of "chemical" restraints. He experimented with a method of injecting caustic material into the brains of his victims to sedate and pacify them into being helpless "zombies." Forensic autopsies demonstrated the methods of death, postmortem dissection, and disposition. Anthropological analysis suggested Dahmer was attracted to a certain anthropometric body type. Materials recovered from the scene confirmed the methods of an "organized" serial killer with souvenir-taking to enhance sexual pleasure.

The Jeffrey Dahmer case has captured and captivated the American consciousness for the past 25 years. This presentation will discuss pitfalls in the investigative process using the lessons learned in the Dahmer case. Participants will understand the complexity of the crime and relive the experience by confronting the difficulties encountered in real time by investigators at the scene, which played an important role in the judicial proceedings that followed.

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### Jeffrey Dahmer, Serial Killers, High-Profile Murders

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