



E66 A Case Study: From Maternal Instinct to Staged Domestic Homicide

Eric R. Ruiz Hernandez, MD, Calle 23D 86 28, Torre 6 Apto 303, Bogota, Cundinamarca 110911, COLOMBIA*

After attending this presentation, attendees will understand, through a process of comprehensive analysis of a crime scene, the criminal behavior and the driving motivation of a murder of two children perpetrated by their own mother.

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

In the early hours of September 20, 2010, a mother told the city police Mocoa, the capital of the department of Putumayo in southern Colombia, that an unknown individual attacked her when she opened the front door of her residence, and she was attacked until she lost consciousness. After regaining consciousness, she observed that the children were in bed in the master bedroom and, when she approached them, believing them to be asleep, noted they were wet and without signs of life.

At the beginning of the investigation, the woman's injuries were consistent with blunt trauma and the apparent coherence of her story the authorities to think there was a perpetrator who murdered her two children and left the mother seriously injured. The high social impact produced by a case of two killed children killed and the assaulted mother activated law enforcement, at both the local and national level; the Criminal Behavior Special Unit of the Attorney General's Office was called to support the investigation through a process of crime scene analysis and possibly developing a criminal profile.

On the basis of the processes of the crime scene analysis, the bloodstain patterns 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 crime being committed by the mother.

This change in the case offered the team a clear vision regarding 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 of finding the motivation that drove this woman to kill her own children. Therefore, the line of investigation focused on probing deeper into all areas of the mother's life and found an intricate world of love, frustration, and abandonment from a mentally unhealthy woman, egocentric and possessive, with strong intentions to overcome any obstacle to achieve all her personal desires.

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

Mothers Who Kill, Children, Staged Domestic Homicide