

E58 Football Hooliganism: A Case of Homicide by Being Struck by a Car

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Learning Overview: The goal of this presentation is to underline the importance of the forensic pathologist's role during the reconstruction of a crime scene. This is more frequently required in the case of violent deaths, especially suspected murders; he/she needs to apply a critical scientific mind to identify staged crime scenes.

Impact on the Forensic Science Community: This presentation will impact the forensic science community by detailing how the crime scene examination carried out by the forensic pathologist was the most important event in directing the investigation. A second look at non-organic elements from the same scene revealed what had really taken place.

Football (Soccer) hooliganism is a significant social burden in Italy, often characterized by episodes of vandalism and public disorder, not infrequently ending in death. The presented case report concerns a murder of a football supporter by a group of the opposing team during an ambush. In particular, the reconstruction of the homicide's dynamic by the police found that the man was run over while trying to attack the driver after starting a fight. The crime scene showed the presence of two cars placed one in front of the other, both with broken bodywork and broken glass, one of them with a specific sign of pedestrian loading on the anterior part and on the windshield with blood traces. The corpse was found about 20m from this car. Also, several wands were found on the road all around.

External examination of the corpse revealed a typical pedestrian distribution of lesions (bruises and wounds) of the lower limbs; moreover, multiple blunt injuries were found on the whole body, compatible with the use of the wand. The autopsy confirmed the lesions mentioned above, a relevant head injury with skull fractures and brain hemorrhage as the likely cause of death, and a chest trauma with multiple rib fractures. A large number of injuries in different parts of the body (affecting the head, thorax, abdomen, arms, and brain samples showed that all injuries were vital. These characteristics are typical of the application of "contusive" forces, being indicative of great trauma suggestive of road traffic accidents and were compatible both with the projection onto and with the impact of the body against external car parts and the asphalt, indicative of a car hitting a pedestrian, but showing also multiple blunt injuries of the body by a different tool like a wand.

The goal of this case report is to underline the importance of the forensic pathologist's role during the reconstruction of a crime scene. This is more frequently required in the case of violent deaths, especially suspected murders; he/she needs to apply a critical scientific mind to identify staged crime scenes. In this case, the evidence provided by the autopsy and witnesses questioned by the police officers were not decisive in resolving the case. Indeed, the crime scene examination carried out by the forensic pathologist was the most important in directing the investigation, and a second look at non-organic elements from the same scene revealed what had really taken place.

Struck by a Car, Crime Scene Examination, Ambush