

Criminal Investigation,

Seventh Edition

Chapter Ten

Injury and Death Investigation

Motivational Models

- Criminal Enterprise Homicide – murder committed for material gain.
- Personal-Cause Homicide – ensues from interpersonal aggression, and an underlying emotional conflict that propels the offender to kill.
- Sexual Homicide – a sexual element (activity) is the basis for a sequence of events that lead to death.
- Group-Cause Homicide – two or more people with a common ideology sanction an act, committed by one or more member(s) of the group.

The Scene

- Scene Safety – is the scene safe for the investigators.
- Confirm or Pronounce Death – medical personnel must make a determination of death prior to the initiation of a death investigation. However, in some cases it is obvious that death has occurred. Additionally, any scene with possible death needs to be treated as a homicide scene since it is a crime scene.

The Scene

- Conduct a Scene Walk-through – the purpose is to obtain an overview of the crime scene. Be careful about walking on or destroying evidence.

Chain of Custody

- Officers/investigators must establish and maintain a chain of custody for all evidence. The fewer people who handle evidence the better it is for court purposes.

The Autopsy

- Determine type of weapon used.
- Which wound was fatal.
- How long did the victim live after the injury?
- What position was the victim in at the time of the assault?
- From what direction was the force applied?
- Is there any evidence of a struggle or self-defense?
- Was the deceased under the influence of alcohol or any type of drug?

Identification of the Victim

- Personality reconstruction from unidentified remains – some clues may be found from clothing remains or other items.
- Fingerprints may be possible.
- Dental comparisons.
- Reconstruction of face.
- The body provides much information about the case, the suspect, and the victim.

Estimating Time of Death

- Body cooling – after death the body cools from 98.6 degrees. The temperature of the body can provide many clues about the time of death, (Algor Mortis)
- Rigor Mortis – after death the body initially becomes flaccid, within 1 to 3 hours they become increasingly rigid. A body is in complete rigor when the jaw, elbow and knee joints are immovable. This takes approximately 10 to 15 hours. A body will remain rigid for 24 to 36 hours. There are many variables that impact these times.

Estimating Time of Death

- Livor Mortis – a purplish color that appears under the skin on those portions of the body closest to the ground denotes livor mortis. Livor mortis is important for these reasons:
 1. When considered with other factors, it may help estimate the time of death.
 2. Because the skin must be relaxed and not lying flush against any surface, object, or even clothing folds for the lividity coloration to develop. This may indicate if the body has been moved.

Estimating Time of Death

3. The actual coloration of the skin may indicate the cause of death, as in the case of carbon monoxide poisoning certain forms of cyanide poisoning, or extreme cold, when the color of the lividity is not purplish but cherry red in color.
4. Cadaveric Spasm – the body may grip an item in death. The cases are few and the causes unknown.
5. Decomposition – as rigor passes the skin first turns green at the abdomen, the discoloration spreads. In time the body begins to swell. The decomposition of the body is dependent upon the temperature and other factors.

Estimating Time of Death

6. Determination of time of death by means of Carrion Insects. - forensic entomologist can assist in estimating the time of death based on what type of insects are in what state around the body.
7. Use of Aquatic Insects in Determining Submersion Interval – similar to burial on land it is possible to determine time of submersion or death through the use of this information.

Evidence from Wounds

- Firearm wounds – the wound can provide much information about the nature of the crime.
- Close and distant shots – the wound can tell the investigator if the victim was shot at close range or from a distance.
- Shotgun wounds – such wounds provide less information than other weapons.

Evidence from Wounds

- Firearm Residues:
 - Residue may be found on the hands of an individual.
 - Atomic Absorption Analysis and Neutron Activation Analysis – strive to detect antimony and barium deposited on the hands when a gun is discharged.
 - Removal of Gunshot Residue – use of a solution and cotton allows the removal of the residue.

Evidence from Wounds

- Incised and Stab Wounds –
 - Incised wound – cutting wound.
 - Stab wound – stabbing.
- Defensive Wounds –
 - Wounds received when an individual attempts to protect themselves from attack.
- Strangulation Wounds –
 - Ligature strangulation leads to pressure on the neck and marks are left on the neck.
 - Manual strangulation use of the arm or hands to strangle the victim.

Uncooperative Victim

- Victims may choose to not cooperate for many reasons. Some of the reasons include:
 - The assailant is a husband or friend of the victim. In such cases the victim may believe that they will be worse off without the suspect.
 - The victim wants to settle the dispute personally.
 - The victim believes that he or she deserved the assault.
 - The victim fears revenge if charges are pursued.

Suicide

- There are many reasons for suicide, some of them are:
 - Ill health or considerable pain.
 - Severe marital strife.
 - A recent emotionally damaging experience, such as unhappy love affair, separation, or divorce.
 - Financial difficulties, including the threat of a much lower standard of living.
 - Perceived or actual humiliation.

Suicide

- There are many reasons for suicide, some of them are:
 - Remorse over the loss of a loved one or over an act of one's own.
 - Revenge, a frequent motive for adolescents who have serious difficulties with parents and for spurned lovers.

Methods of Suicide and Evidence

- Gunshot wounds – it may be difficult to determine if the gunshot was self inflicted. Proximity of the weapon to the wound may assist in developing theories. Some individuals go to great work to make a suicide look accidental or a homicide.
- Hanging – the position of the body and attempts to make certain that they individual can not change their mind may indicate that the death was a suicide. Some hanging deaths may not be suicide, but an auto-erotic death. An auto-erotic death involves an accidental death while the individual is involved in a sex act.

Methods of Suicide and Evidence

- Sleeping Pills and other Pharmaceuticals – the investigator needs to determine if the suicide was accidental or purposeful.
- Drowning – the investigator needs to determine if:
 - Drowning was the cause of death.
 - Did it take place where the body was found.
 - Was the victim conscious when they were placed in or entered into the water.

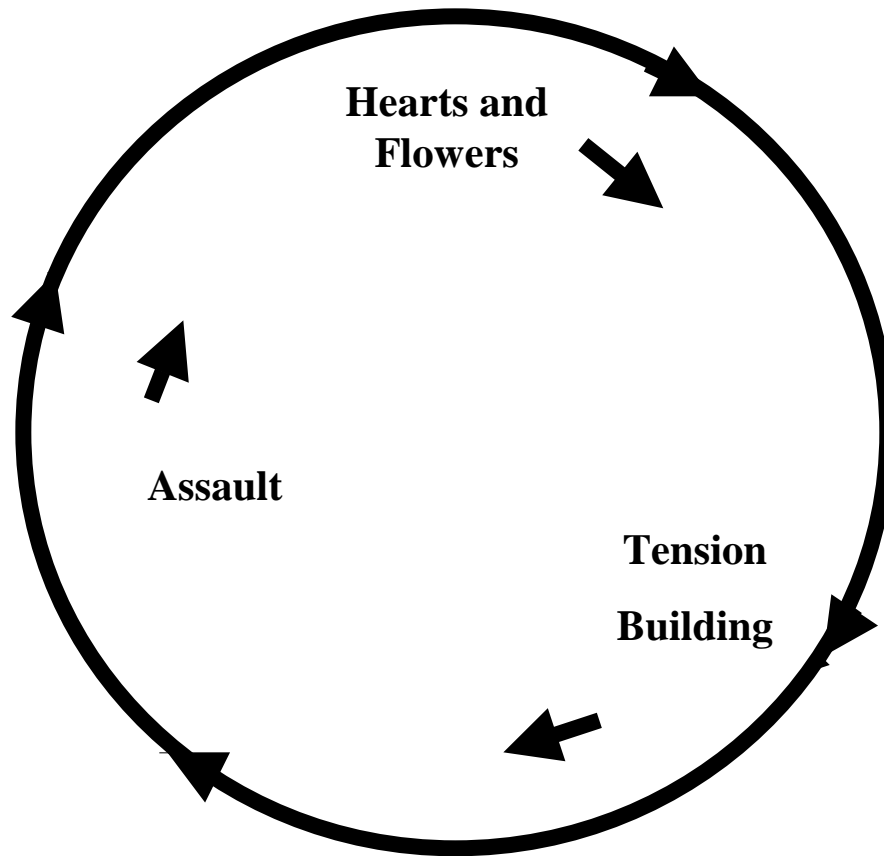
Domestic Violence

- The investigation of cases involving domestic violence is a complex. There are numerous variables that are involved in the investigation of such cases. Investigators need specialized training in the investigation of such cases. Some items to be aware of are listed below.
 - Dynamics of the relationship.
 - Double assaults where both individuals have assaulted each other.
 - Current state requirements where probable cause exists.
 - Treatment available.

Domestic Violence

- Investigative Techniques:
 - In many cases the investigator may be confronted with a victim that has decided that they do not wish to continue to support the charges against their intimate partner. The nature of a relationship involving domestic violence has been described as:

Stages of Domestic Violence



Stages of Domestic Violence

- The victim may decide that they do not wish to continue with charges once the relationship continues beyond the assault stage to the “hearts and flowers” stage. Additionally, the victim may have an emotional and financial stake in continuing the relationship.
- One of the controversial approaches to cases of domestic violence is to continue with the prosecution of cases of domestic violence prosecution against the will of the victim. In many jurisdictions this approach is used in an attempt to continue with the prosecution of the case.

Stages of Domestic Violence

- This means that investigators involved in the investigation of domestic violence cases need to continue to gather evidence in case the prosecutor wishes to continue with the prosecution.

Stalking

- Categories of stalking:
 - Relationship Stalkers – the stalking rises out of a relationship.
 - Stranger Stalking – research seems to support that many of these cases involve a male victim and a female victim. Cases of male suspects stalking female victims are certainly frequent. (Note: I suspect the text authors presentation in this area.)
 - Stranger Stalking – older male stalking a younger female.
 - Pseudo Stalking – hiding the real reason for the offense with what seems to be stalking.

Stalking Threat Management

The Los Angeles Police Department reviewed 74 cases and found the following:

- Not all stalkers threatened their victims, and not all who did actually attempted violence.
- The more dangerous offenders engaged in more personal contact, such as confrontations at the victim's home.
- The dangerous group comprised men and women in about equal numbers, but women and homosexuals were over-represented in relationship to the general population. (Note: readers need to remember that this conclusion is based on reported cases, rather than the totality of cases.)

Stalking Threat Management

4. The relationship offenders committed 75 percent of the dangerous acts.

Protective Orders

Protective orders can serve as the first line of defense for victims of stalking and domestic violence. These can be obtained from a court in the form of a temporary order or a permanent order. Victims need to understand that they need a “safety plan” that allows for plans for their safety in case of being confronted by the suspect.

The End