



D21 Second Impressions - Can Specific Murder Weapons Be Associated With the Gender of the Perpetrator?

Dayle L. Hinman, BS*, Farrell & Associates, 3830 South Highway A-1-A, Suite C-3 #200, Melbourne Beach, FL

After attending this presentation, the participant will understand the importance of 1) the team approach to focus an investigation, 2) the development of an investigative strategy, and 3) conducting a thorough crime scene analysis.

Shauna Card was an attractive 17-year-old high school senior. She was a friendly girl who often did volunteer work at a local hospital. She had no known enemies. Her parents were divorced and she had previously lived with her father and stepmother. Due to conflicts with her father's new wife, Shauna moved in with her mother in a two bedroom, two-bathroom apartment. Their unit was located towards the front of a very large apartment complex. Shauna did not have a car and she rode the school bus each day along with many of the other students from the apartment complex.

Shauna was an only child and she was deeply troubled by her parents' divorce. Her grades were suffering from her inner turmoil. Shauna's psychology teacher suggested that she write down her thoughts in a journal to help focus her feelings.

Shauna was last seen at approximately 1430 hours on January 31, 1995, as she was walking from the school bus to her apartment. Her mother arrived home from work at approximately 1800 hours. She used her key to enter the apartment, but she did not note if the door was indeed locked. She noticed that the light was on in the hall bathroom and the door was slightly ajar. She called out Shauna's name but when she received no answer, she looked into the bathroom.

Shauna was lying on her back in a pool of blood on the bathroom floor. She was fully clothed in the same garments she wore to school that day. She had sustained a large bruise to the area of her right eye and she had been stabbed multiple times in the face, neck, and back. Two butter knives, one steak knife, and a pair of scissors were lying next to her body. A steak knife, a butter knife, and a potato peeler had been returned to the kitchen and placed in a cabinet under the sink. These items all contained the victim's blood. Numerous 90-degree blood drops were discovered on the kitchen floor. Blood was also found on a towel in the living room, on a sweatshirt in her mother's bedroom and in the sink trap in the master bathroom.

A motive for this crime was not readily apparent. There was no indication of forced entry into the apartment.

The victim was fully clothed and there was no indication of a sexual assault. The apartment did not appear to have been searched. No items of value were missing. None of Shauna's fellow students or neighbors knew of anyone who was angry with her.

The use of the kitchen tools, i.e., potato peeler, scissors, butter knives, and steak knives, became a potential stumbling block in the investigation. Did the choice of these specific weapons mean that this was a feminine crime?

This presentation will take the attendees through the crime scene, the forensic evidence, and the investigation that led to the arrest and conviction of Shauna's murderer.

Homicide, Blood Spatter Interpretation, Crime Scene Analysis