

Case Report

Violent Sexual Homicide: An Unusual Case Report

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Abstract

Violent crimes against women with sexual overtones have always been perpetuated despite being considered one of the lowliest of acts. Recently there is an upsurge seen in these types of inhuman instances. This reflects an abnormal feudal psychosocial behavior, the underlying reasons being many and not completely explained. We present a case of sexual homicide where an unclothed female body was recovered from a river. Autopsy conducted the next day revealed a young female body with multiple injuries all over the body including bite marks, gross genital mutilation and fatal cranio-cerebral injuries. The alleged accused examined the day after showed numerous scratch abrasions on his body. We intent to discuss the psychosocial and behavioral problems arising out of illicit sexual relationship and hope it serves as a warning to the society of its possible fatal outcome. Finally the Forensic pathologist should do their duty meticulously to preserve every piece of evidence and give a scientific opinion to help the law to carry out justice against such monstrous act.

Key Words: Sexual assault; Homicide; bite marks; Genital mutilation

Introduction:

Violent crimes against women with sexual overtones have always been perpetuated despite being considered one of the lowliest of acts. Recently there is an upsurge seen in these types of inhuman instances.

Though sexual crimes against women are entities commonly dealt with in day to day Forensic practice, however homicides after sexual violence are occasionally met with.

This type of heinous crime reflects an abnormal feudal psychosocial behavior, the underlying reasons being many and not completely explained. Though rape is regarded as the most brutal and abominable crime in all civilized countries but it is the fastest growing crime against woman in our country.

There is one rape every 30 minutes. According to National Crime record bureau, Rate of crime committed against women in 2012 is 41.7. [1] Again killing of the victim after various sexual assaults reflects the abnormal psychology of criminal mind which plans to conceal the crime.

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Sexual homicide is defined by Ressler, Burgess and Douglas's criteria as Evidence or observations that indicate the murder was sexual in nature are-Victim attire or lack of attire, exposure of the sexual parts of the victim's body, Sexual positioning of the victim's body, insertion of foreign objects into victim's body cavities, evidence of sexual intercourse; oral, vaginal or anal, evidence of substitute sexual activity, interest, or sadistic fantasy. [2]

We intent to discuss here a case of sexual homicide where there is sexual assault, mutilation, killing and attempt to dispose of the dead body resulting out of such an emotional and psychological conflict in the mind of accused.

Case History:

An unclothed female body was recovered from the river Mahanadi, near a village of Cuttack District of Odisha. The dead body was identified by her father; she was missing from her home the previous evening.

He alleged that her daughter was gang raped and murdered. On police investigation her clothes were found near the river bank which was suspected as the scene of crime. The next day the body was brought to the mortuary of S.C.B. Medical College and Hospital for autopsy.

Autopsy Findings:

The dead body was of a female aged about 25-30 years found in advance stage of decomposition with distension of whole body, protrusion of tongue, softening of eyeball, post mortem peeling of cuticles, marbling, Purging.

The body was soiled with mud. Scalp hairs were easily pluck able and fly eggs were deposited.

External Injuries:

1. Abrasion with surrounding contusion were present over left side of face(temple), left cheek, over back and front of both knees.
2. Contusions were present over medial aspect of left breast, third web space of finger of right hand.
3. Bite marks in the form of interrupted abraded contusion circular in shape, 3cm in diameter, were present over outer quadrant of right breast, medial aspect including areola of right breast and over right cheek. (Fig. 1)
4. Small lacerations were present over right cheek and upper lip.
5. A 'U' shaped Laceration was present over labia majora and perineum. (Fig. 2)
6. There was post-mortem distension and prolapse of small intestinal loops through the wound of perineum.

Internal Examination:

Under surface of scalp was contused over left fronto-temporal region and anterior fibres of temporalis were contused. A linear fracture of left temporal bone was present which extends downward in the base of skull in the left ACF and crosses to right in the middle cranial fossa. Blood tinged brain matter was coming out mostly from anterior and middle cranial fossa.

Neck structures and Trachea were intact, Heart, lungs were Intact and softened. Stomach was Intact, contained semi digested food materials about 100ml, and mucosa was intact. Liver, spleen, kidneys were intact.

There was a tear in the pelvic cavity behind the post vaginal wall. Contusion of size 2cmx2cm was present over left side posterior aspect of pelvic cavity. (Fig. 3) Uterus was intact, empty, non-gravid, left side broad ligament is contused.

Chemical analysis of viscera was found negative, Blood sample, Vaginal, Perineal swab, Nail clippings, Scalp hairs were preserved for analysis. The cause of death was due to **"cranio-cerebral injuries. The genital injury could have been due to forceful insertion of hard and blunt object."**

History Given by the Suspected Accused:

As per his statement he had affair with the deceased since last 2 years and they had physical relation. Suspecting, her love affair with someone else, he got angry. On the day of incident, he got drunk, called the victim to the

river bank, had physical relation with her after that they quarreled and some altercation took place which resulted in death of the victim lady. There after he threw her body into the river water to dispose of the body in order to conceal the crime. The examination of the accused revealed multiple number of nails scratch abrasion on right side of neck, right arm and right forearm which are the signs of tussle and resistance by the victim.

Discussion and Conclusion:

This type of violent sexual homicide where a woman is raped, beaten and finally killed by her known lover is a rare instance in our locality. Rape is a crime against basic human rights and also violates one of the fundamental rights i.e. the right to life contained in Article 21.

According to Chikkara and Kodan, Rape is the fastest growing crime against woman in the country. There is 700% rise since 1971. Other known people are the major offenders, 75.1%. [3] In this case, there are evidences of injuries which are sexual in nature and there is also evidence of gross genital mutilation due to insertion of foreign body. (Fig. 2)

But cause of death is from other injuries and not directly from sex act. The crime is performed by the known person / acquaintance, therefore in order to avoid identification of the perpetrator, the victim was silenced by merciless killing and body was secretly disposed of.

The mutilations and destruction of identity may be done due to anger, suspicion, jealousy and also to prevent identification of the victim and to make it difficult to know the cause of death. A similar case was reported by Choudhary et al where a 25 year old female unclothed body was sexually assaulted and autopsy revealed found with crushed head and multiple injuries on her body and a wine bottle inside vagina, the upper part of the body was burnt post mortem to mask the identity. [4]

Such homicidal behavior may be the outcome of variable factors including abnormal psychological attitude like-Sexual jealousy, punishing for being unfaithful, alcohol and drug addiction, depression, erectile dysfunction, education, mental health problems in childhood, sadistic attitude and extremes can lead to lust murder and necrophilia.

As per Harris 2004, Jealousy is one of the top three reasons for non-accidental homicides. [5] Sexual jealousy can lead to male aggression and possessiveness is stated by Denisiuk. [6] It is based on a sexual partner's suspected or imminent sexual infidelity.

Expression may vary from anger and violent aggression to fear, grief, and depression.

Here accused psychology points towards sexual jealousy, infidelity, possessiveness, alcoholic intoxication and depression.

A study by Rajs et al showed during the 30 years period, 1961-1990, a total of 22 deaths with criminal mutilation / dismemberment of human body were registered in Sweden. They described mutilation in three categories as defensive, offensive (lust murder) and necromaniac mutilation. The characteristic of the mutilations were diverse.

In case of murder committed in association with sexual deviation, wounding is usually limited to breasts and sexual organs. [7] In our case also there are bite marks in breasts (Fig.1) and injury to genitalia. (Fig. 2)

As per Webb DA et al, assailants in sexual attacks including sexual homicide, rape and child sexual abuse, often bite their victims as an expression of dominance, rage and animalistic behavior. [8]

According to Michelle et al strangulation was the method of killing in 68.8% of sexual homicide [9] which is different in our case. Hence involvement in such affairs, cheating, addictions, abnormal psychology, disturbed personality may lead to dead end.

Therefore this case of illicit sexual relationship throw some light on the cruel aspect of humans and hope it serve as a warning to the society of the possible fatal outcome.

Finally the Forensic pathologist should do their duty meticulously to preserve every piece of evidence and give a scientific opinion to help the law to carry out justice against such monstrous act.

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Fig.1: Bite Marks over Breast



Fig. 2: Genital Mutilation



Fig. 3: Intra-Pelvic Injury

