

Packed Gunny Bag Found on a Bushy Area: A Scary Crime Concealment Investigation Report

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Abstract

Case Report

The crime scene speaks the truth only since it contains the treasure of information related to the crime commission. Crime scene investigators should look into the scene with an open mind and locate physical evidence to link the crime and the criminal. Irrespective of the size of physical evidence, crime investigators need to check out the evidence to wrap up the investigation. Due to a lack of knowledge, some investigators ignored the trace evidence like fibres, stains, and hairs in the initial stage of investigation presuming that they were unimportant. In spite of the science and technology development, the crime solvation may take one minute or even one decade, depending upon the nature and type of crime. Death scene investigation requires skill, knowledge and presence of mind because in some homicide cases, the offender used to conceal the murdered body and confuse the investigation. The crime concealment acts are being done, not only by professional criminals but also by the normal public. This act includes, charring the dead body, throw into the sea or river, burying, packing and transporting the body. The present case report is the one I examined at a crime scene wherein a female dead body was found packed in a gunny bag and disposed of in a bushy area. The deceased was identified and then the accused was arrested based on the trace evidence.

Keywords: Forensic Science, Crime Investigation, Gunny Bag, Female Dead Body, Crime Concealment Act.

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INTRODUCTION

Crime scene is the starting point of forensic sciences and laboratory analysis is another point to confirm the facts. Globally, crime scene investigators face challenges, because of the intelligence of some criminals. The crime scene speaks the truth only since it contains the treasure of information related to the crime commission. Crime scene investigators should look into the scene with an open mind in recovering the physical evidence so as to link the crime and the criminal. Different searching techniques are adopted to identify and collect scientific evidence like footprints [1], fingerprints [2], bones [3], etc., found at the crime scenes. Irrespective of the size of physical evidence, crime investigators need to check out the evidence to wrap up the investigation. Due to a lack of knowledge, some investigators ignored the trace evidence like blood stains [4], hair [5], handwriting [6], and soil [7], from the initial stage of investigation presuming it unimportant [8]. In spite of the science and technology development,

the crime solvation may take one minute or even one decade, depending upon the nature and type of crime. Also, the offenders adopted different techniques to escape from the crime act and confuse the crime scene investigators. Death scene investigation requires skill, knowledge and the presence of mind because in some homicide cases, the offender is used to conceal the murdered body and deviate from the track of investigation [9]. The crime concealment acts are being done, not only by professional criminals but also by the normal public. This act of crime concealment includes charr the dead body, throw into the sea, river or train, burying, packing and transporting the body etc. [10]. Investigation of homicide, suspicious death, and accidental death is challenging to the crime scene investigator, particularly when dealing with decomposed dead bodies or dismembered body parts at the crime scenes [11]. The present case report is the one I examined at a crime scene wherein a female dead body was packed in a gunny bag and disposed of in a bushy area. The

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deceased was then identified and the accused based on the trace evidence.

CASE STUDY

On the outskirts of a village, a big stitched gunny bag or gunny sack was left by someone in the bush area with a foul smell emanating from it, as shown in Figure 1.



Figure 1: A packed gunny bag among the bush

One of the villagers felt the disagreeable odour on his way and found the gunny parcel. He informed the villagers and the village Headman who complained to the police. The first officer from the police station arrived and the crime scene was guarded. The Inspector of Police visited the scene, a case was registered and requested the forensic service to assist in the investigation. As a field criminalist, I have visited and examined the scene. A packed gunny bag was found in a bushy area, half a kilometre away from the village. I noticed the discharge of body fluids, as appeared on the c gunny sack. Some

plants were found and flies were flying and sitting on the package. Based on the shape and size of the bag, I suspected a dead body might have been stuffed into the bag. I have documented the crime scene through crime scene sketches, photography and note-taking. The gunny sack was taken out from the bushy area for examination. The bag was properly stitched in an open end in the sack. I opened the sack and found a female dead body with a fouling smell. The dead body was taken out from the gunny sack and examined as shown in Figure 2.



Figure 2: The author is examining the dead body in the scene

She was a typical South-Indian woman, wearing a saree, blouse and petticoat. The body was in the initial stage of decomposition and was slightly bloated and flies were found on the body and

surrounding. No external injuries were noticed on the body except serum discharge. The dresses were intact, thus ruling out the possibility of sexual assault. On keen examination, I noticed a feeble continuous ligature mark

around the neck which may be the possibility of homicide. The place of occurrence was not this place, a secondary crime scene and the primary crime or place of homicide should be in a different place. The samples were collected for Forensic Science Laboratory analysis and the body was sent to the Department of Forensic Medicine for autopsy examination. I suggested to the Inspector of Police that known people viz. relatives, friends and even family members might have been involved in this incident and I returned to my headquarters. On the same day, the Police Inspector called me again to visit the house of the deceased in the same village and assist him. Accordingly, I rushed back to the house of the deceased and police officer officers were present there along with the inmates, the two sons of the deceased. I noticed some long hair pieces on a rough irregular wall and collected the same along with deceased hairs for comparison analysis at the Forensic Science Laboratory. The sons of the deceased were suspected in this investigation.

DISCUSSION

The autopsy examination reported that the cause of death was due to strangulation. The viscera was also preserved and forwarded to the Forensic Science Laboratory for chemical analysis. On interrogation, the sons confessed their homicide act because of a family dispute. Based on the confession, two sons were arrested for allegedly strangling the mother to death in their house. Then stuffing the corpse in a gunny bag at night, transported the bag in a bicycle to the bushy area and disposed of the parcel. Forensic Science Laboratory analysed the hairs from the deceased and the crime scene and reported that both hairs were from a similar origin. No poison was detected in the toxicological analysis. Thus the act of homicide was proved scientifically and I explained and reconstructed the crime before the Superior Police Officers and Court [12]. I have also attended the court and presented my testimony before the Judge, which led to a sentence for both sons of the deceased.

In this case report, the crime scene involved both primary and secondary crime scenes [13]. The primary scene was the house and the bushy area was the secondary scene. The gunny bag was made of jute, a cheap fibre that is biodegradable and nature-friendly. Different capacities of jute bags are available in India to pack and transport food grains, vegetables and other materials. But criminals used the gunny bags to pack and transport dead bodies, and drugs for their unlawful activities.

CONCLUSION

Body disposal of both suicidal and homicidal corpses is considered an illegal act and become a common phenomenon that has been occurring globally [14, 15]. In this case report, the author, also a former field criminalist handled the investigation meticulously and

proved the illegal act of homicide, transport and body disposal scientifically and got the conviction. If Forensic Investigating Officers understand crime perfectly and examine the scene sincerely without bias, then forensic solvation becomes appreciable and achieves justice.

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