

Investigating the “Accident”

Sgt. Jim Twardesky, MPA
Warren Police Department

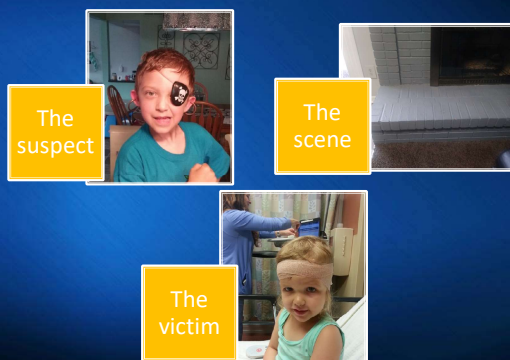
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Objectives

- Identify the key elements of child abuse investigations
- Learn how the scene, the injuries & good interviewing helps to distinguish between accidental & intentional injuries

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Case Study #1



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Child Abuse Characteristics

- Delay in time between injury & death
- Very intimate crime
 - No eyewitnesses, cameras, or useful DNA
- Rarely involve traditional weapons
- **Typically, the result of a caregiver overreacting to typical child behavior**

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Child Abuse Characteristics

- Non-offending caregiver challenges
 - Likely knew of previous abuse
 - Can be concerned w/ issues other than the child's wellbeing
 - Likely cares for the offender
 - Fear of child being taken away

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The Abusive Parent

- Reluctant to explain or gives inconsistent explanations for injuries
- Poor coping skills
- Sees child as a burden
- Typically isolated
- Expects too much of child



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3 Keys to Investigation:



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Timeline

- Who was with the child?
- Who else saw the child prior to the injury?
- Who was the first person contacted?
- Everyone in the home needs accounted for
- What was the child doing prior?

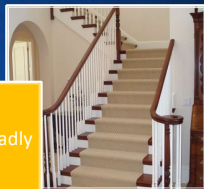
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History

- Is the child's injury consistent w/ the history provided by the caregiver?



Not deadly



Not deadly

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Keep in mind, kids bounce



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History Red Flags

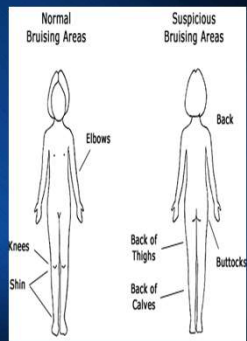
- History is vague or none given
- Explanation is inconsistent w/ severity of the injury
- Explanation is inconsistent w/ child's abilities
- Signs of neglect: malnourished, poor hygiene, not developing properly, etc.

Christian, Committee on Child Abuse and Neglect. The Evaluation of Suspected Child Physical Abuse. Pediatrics. 2015;135(5):e1337-e1354

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History Red Flags: Identifying Suspicious Injuries

- Injuries to protected areas
- Patterned injuries
- Multiple injuries in different stages of healing
- Fractures in suspicious locations

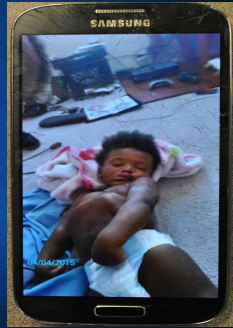


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Failure to Seek Care

- An unexplained notable delay in seeking medical care
- Failure to seek care can be abuse in and of itself
- Suggests cover-up or lack of concern



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Initial investigative steps:

- What history was given to medical professionals?
- What was the caretaker's behavior like?
- Was 911 called or was child taken directly to the hospital?
- Is the 911 call suspicious?



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Caregivers reaction: *Politeness is suspicious*

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Caregivers reaction should be appropriate

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Initial challenges: Two crime scenes

• The Child

- What are the child's specific injuries?

• The location

- Does the scene match the history?
- Any signs of neglect?



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Interviewing the caregiver

• Truthful account characteristics

- Has a beginning, middle & end
- More questions lead to more details
- Remains consistent
- Has been discussed w/ others
- Person has reasonable memory & provides details

David Buckley "How to Identify, Interview & Interrogate Child Abuse Offenders", 2006

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Triggering Mechanisms:

- Need to ID to understand the offender
 - Excessive crying, potty training issues, & feeding problems
 - Social isolation
 - External stress



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Doll Reenactments

- Visualization helps clarify the details
 - How is the caregiver positioned relative to the child?
 - How exactly was the child being held when the injury occurred?
 - How was the child positioned when placed and when found?

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Matching the Injuries to the Scene



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What Does the Home's Condition Tell You?



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Case study#2: Putting it all together

- 911 call



- Infant later dies at hospital as a result of head trauma



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The truth is in the details



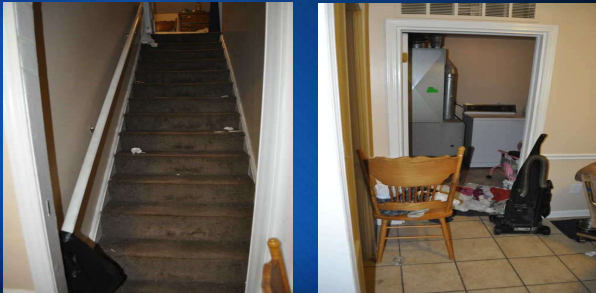
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Caretaker Interview



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See any Inconsistencies?



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See any inconsistencies?



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See any inconsistencies?



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Unexplained Injuries



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What Else Should we Find?

- A history of seizures
- No history of domestic violence
- No CPS history
- No delay in 911 call
- No previous unreported injuries



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Case Study#3



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**To conclude, true stories get better with
further examination**

**"If you tell the truth,
you don't have to
remember anything."
---Mark Twain**

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**For more information & available
training:**

**Check out my website at
Twardeskyconsulting.weebly.com**

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