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Forensic Psychiatric Expertise in a Case of Murder, Dismemberment and Cannibalism

Victoria de la Caridad Ribot Reyes^{1*}, Abelardo Román Concepción Serrade² and Noraima Rodríguez Gómez³

¹PhD, Forensic Psychiatrist, Legal Medicine Institute, Mental Expertise Department, Universidad de Ciencias Médicas de la Habana, Cuba

²MD, Forensic Psychiatrist, Legal Medicine Institute, Mental Expertise Department, Universidad de Ciencias Médicas de la Habana, Cuba

³Psychologist, Legal Medicine Institute, Mental Expertise Department, Universidad de Ciencias Médicas de la Habana, Cuba

Abstract

Cannibalism or ingestion of human flesh is an extremely rare practice in today's society and is considered a criminal behavior. They are usually associated with people with serious mental illness, although it is described in the profile of some personality disorders; either as a ritual of gratification or as an extreme case of paraphilia, without there being enough cases documented in scientific publications.

Keywords: Cannibalism; Anthropophagy; Personality Disorder; Forensic Psychiatry

Introduction

The acts of cannibalism with ingestion of human flesh are practiced by different peoples and cultures since ancient times [1]. However, their representation has been changing throughout history [2]. Traditionally, anthropophagy has been associated with factors of survival in the face of extreme need, as well as magical or religious reasons. In today's society, these cases are extremely rare and are usually associated with people with serious mental illness [3]. In this last representation, the influence of Psychiatry, Medicine and Criminology in the characterization of the phenomenon is clearly seen [2].

In Cuba, it is a highly isolated practice, always associated with criminal behavior, which is why the criminological and psychopathological analysis of the authors arouses great interest. That is why the objective of this work is to present the forensic psychiatric expert report made to a defendant to commit homicide against his partner, to dismember him and to eat his meat.

Case Presentation

The forensic psychiatric evaluation of a 35-year-old male was carried out, accused of the homicide of his homosexual partner, which he subsequently dismembered and ingested his flesh. No cause of death is required due to the state in which the corpse was found. When interviewing the accused, he denies previous attention for Psychiatry and adds that his maternal aunt suffers from Paranoid Schizophrenia. Family of dysfunctional origin, both absent parents, for what she lived during her childhood with her grandmother. He works as a folk dancer and is in his second year at the university. He has been punished on several occasions for robbery with force, robbery with violence, assault and injuries, serving a total of 10 years of deprivation of liberty. He is a smoker, is classified as a social drinker and has dabbled in the use of illegal drugs (Marijuana and Cocaine). It refers to multiple sexual partners and unstable relationships. I lived with the victim for about 3 years. He described him as a bad person because he swindled money he had saved to buy a house.

When asked about the fact offers several versions. First affirms that everything was done in self-defense because his partner wanted to kill him, then reports that his astral body detached from his body, wandered through the city and upon returning saw his deceased grandmother pass through a divine portal and committed the murder. Later she declares that she has a double personality since her interior lives Magdalena and she is the culprit of everything. At the end of the interview he says that Magdalena "is very bitch", wants to go to prison to be among men; however, he knows that since he is sick, he must be in a hospital.

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*Correspondence:

Victoria de la Caridad Ribot Reyes,
Legal Medicine Institute. Ave.
Independencia y Hernán Cortés,
municipio Plaza de la Revolución, La
Habana, Cuba.

Tel: 55512899

E-mail: victoriariobot@infomed.sld.cu

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Figure 1: Machover Test. Female representation.



Figure 2: Machover Test. Male representation.

The psychiatric examination shows an apparently cooperative attitude, although he gets upset when he is not allowed to follow the course of his speech. He is very evasive to the questions. On several occasions he complains that the experts do not try to understand it. Responds with clear, neat, detailed language, with marked use of extraverbal elements and great histrionic display. His intelligence impresses normal high. No element of psychotic psychological functioning is found. Lie and try to manipulate the experts. Labile and superficial affect; with aggressiveness that tries to disguise. He appears as a victim in all the criminal situations in which he has been involved. Always blame third parties. Impress simulation of a supposed mental disorder. Character traits include: histrionics, disrespect for rules, the need for prompt gratification, self-centeredness, impulsiveness and immaturity, without other signs or symptoms that qualitatively affect their psychological organization and their ability to critically analyze themselves and the surrounding reality.

Several tests were applied:

Machover: Impresses conflicts in the sexual sphere, identification with the female figure and spoiling the masculine. Marked histrionic and aggressive elements, difficulties to establish empathy and disproportionate sense of self-worth (Figures 1 and 2).

Rotter: Consistent elaboration, try to give a good image of yourself. He has criticism of his current situation. Projects a sense of a future that is truncated, personal and professional frustration, unpleasant (sad) emotional state. Features of histrionics, manipulator, egocentrism and extroversion are highlighted.

Bender: Evidence histrionics and no elements of organicity are observed. Make the angles properly, there is no substitution of elements and performs proper insertion of the figures. Projects lack of control in impulses and extroversion. There are no signs of disturbances in visual motor coordination or schizophrenia.

Rorschach: Adequate reality index. It emits well-crafted answers, which express a high normal intelligence. It offers answers that, at first, coincide with those usually seen. Then recharge the seen with elements that speak in favor of histrionics and intention to give the impression of suffering a psychotic disorder. In other pictures, despite not emitting popular responses, it does show very well-seen images. They emphasize elements that describe difficulties in interpersonal relationships and marked conflicts in the sexual sphere.

Impulsivity Rating Scale (IRS): obtains 5 points, consistent with

low level of impulsivity.

Electroencephalographic study: Very light signs of frontal cortical dysfunction.

The diagnosis after the survey was Mixed Personality Disorder (a predominance of dissocial and histrionic elements), so it is considered imputable.

Discussions

Several authors point to anthropophagy as behavior associated with mental illness [1,3,4] but, this behavior is described in the profile of some personality disorders [5].

Marietan H [6] describes cannibalism as one of the axes on which the psychopath's needs revolve, as manifestations of an inner freedom that creates its own codes that break with the commons. In serial killers cataloged as hedonistic psychopaths, cannibalism is given as a gratification ritual since there is usually a strong sexual trait in the crimes, even though it may not be immediately obvious; but some killers get a wave of excitement that is not necessarily sexual [7].

For some time now, psychologists have expressed that the natural association between the love-sexual and food instincts may, in extreme cases, lead to paraphilias, in which the maximum union between the two drives results in cannibalism [8].

The evaluated, with a dissocial structure accompanied by a broad histrionic display, reported feeling betrayed and hurt by the behavior of his partner, placing himself in a position of victim misunderstood by the experts.

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