

OFFICER PATRICIA ROBERTS



CASE 4

DEMOGRAPHIC

28-year-old black female, 67" tall, 135 pounds and excellent physical health at the time of death. Body Mass Index was 21.1 (Normal). Decedent died from a self-inflicted gunshot wound (12-gauge shotgun) to the head. The weapon and body were located inside her personal vehicle parked at her residence in the driveway.



One of her neighbors, a physician, returning home around 3 am from a call out to the Emergency Room was in his kitchen eating breakfast when he heard a loud single shot that he immediately recognized as a shotgun blast. He called 911, reporting the gunshot as having possibility originating from Patricia's home across the street. The responding officers arrived and located Patricia in the passenger front seat with a 12-gauge shotgun resting on her torso and extending down between her legs. Her right-thumb was inserted and resting on the trigger ring.

Suicide Notice

Responding to the scene was Patricia's boyfriend, patrol officer Rich Caldwell. He had just left her asleep about 45 minutes earlier. She had returned home from dinner and drinks with several of her girlfriends and Rich stopped by while on duty to see that she arrived home safely. Rich reported that she was in a melancholy mood since the anniversary of her parents' death had just past this week. She once again told Rich that she wanted to be with her mom and dad and that she was tired of living this life. Although she had consumed a considerable amount of alcohol and previously demonstrated this line of rhetoric before several times to Rich, he felt a more empathetic level with her expressive mood this time. Rich made sure she was asleep in bed before he removed her personal firearm from the bedside. He had planned on returning it in the morning at breakfast.

Background

Patricia and her younger sister grew up and attended school and church in this neighborhood with their parents. Her father was a local physician, and her mother was a stay-at-home mom. This allowed her mother time to volunteer at the school and other civic organizations and be at home when Patricia and her sister arrived home from school. All of that changed when Patricia was 12 years old. She came home and found both of her parents' dead from gunshot wounds. Police would later determine two-armed individuals, a man and woman entered the home to rob her father of his prescription pad and signature stamp and then executed both of them.

The investigation and court case took over four years to resolve in some form of justice for Patricia and her younger sister. The male perpetrator was sentenced to death while his female accomplice received life without parole. This life event sparked a career interest in law enforcement for Patricia. Her local police agency had grown close to her during their investigation and sponsored her to their police academy when she turned 21 years old. She was ultimately hired and began working in the patrol division.

Patricia met Rich Caldwell while attending the academy. He was two years older and was also attending college. He encouraged and motivated Patricia to attend college, where she received a bachelor's in criminal justice at the age of 25. Patricia and Rich's relationship continued to develop, and they talked about getting married.

Rich reported that Patricia had insisted that they not live together until they were married. They each maintained a separate home even though they would spend nights together alternating homes. Rich also reported that Patricia avoided talking about eventually starting a family and having children. She feared that something would happen to her as a police officer, and she did not want to leave behind any children. Although Patricia attended mental health therapy after the murder of her parents, she still had a difficult time with the anniversary date every year. She told Rich that she looked forward to joining her parents in heaven and being at peace with herself and the two perpetrators. Adding to her difficulty in understanding of the life event was the fact that the female perpetrator was only four years older and the male perpetrator was six years older than Patricia. Both were teenagers at the time of the robbery and homicides.

END OF SCENARIO