

Doctor Miller. - Doctor Catherman.

By The Court:

May I see Counsel?

(Side Bar consultation not made a part of the record.).

DOCTOR ROBERT L. CATHERMAN, being duly sworn according to law, testified as follows:

DIRECT EXAMINATION

By Mr. Ertel:

Q. Doctor, state your full name?

A. Doctor Robert L. Catherman.

Q. Doctor Catherman, where are you located at the present time as far as business address?

A. My business address is the Office of the Medical Examiner for the City of Philadelphia, it is 321 University Avenue, Philadelphia, Penna.

Q. Doctor Catherman, will you tell the Jury your background and experience and training for the occupation which you presently have?

A. I am a graduate of the Williamsport Public School System, of Bucknell University in Lewisburg with a Degree of Bachelor of Science in Biology; from Temple University School of Medicine in Philadelphia with a Degree of Doctor of Medicine. I had then a one year rotating internship and two years of specialty training in the field of Anatomic Pathology here at the Williamsport Hospital. I then entered the U.S. Air Force and served for two years at the Armed Forces Institute of

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Pathology in Washington, D.C. and upon my discharge there in the Fall of 1963 became an Assistant Medical Examiner for Metropolitan Dade County. Dade County is a large area surrounding Miami, Florida. I remained there until the end of June, 1967. The beginning of July, 1967, I became an Assistant Medical Examiner for the City of Philadelphia and in the Medical Examiner's Office there, and about two years ago became Deputy Medical Examiner. I am licensed to practice medicine in Florida and in Pennsylvania. I am certified by the American Board of Pathology in the field of Anatomic and Forensic Pathology and am currently working full time as a Forensic Pathologist Deputy Medical Examiner in Philadelphia.

Q. Doctor, when you say that you are a Diplomat, what does that mean?

A. Being certified in a specialty in medicine refers to the fact of a specialty, there are many specialties in the field of Medicine, and in each of the major specialties a group of individuals who are selected in that specialty are appointed to approve the credentials of various individuals practicing in that specialty throughout the country and on the basis of an examination and approval of training certify or do not certify you as a Diplomat in that specialty.

Q. Now, Doctor, I believe you have said you were certified in Forensic Pathology?

A. Yes.

Q. What is Forensic Pathology?

A. It is a sub-specialty of a yet greater specialty in

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medicine referred to as Pathology. Pathology is that part of medicine that examines the origin and cause of disease, or to put it another way, looks at abnormalities. It has three major divisions, Forensic, Anatomic and Clinical Pathology. Forensic Pathology is medical legal pathology and it is an evaluation or association between the discipline of law and the discipline of medicine. Perhaps more specific, it is the evaluation of the role of trauma or injury from whatever that cause may be on a normal individual, or an individual already suffering from some natural disease processes.

Q. Included in that is the determination of cause of death?

A. Yes.

Q. And time of death?

A. It encompasses time of death, cause of death, correlating circumstances, injury, correlates a number of observations made on the body at autopsy examination with a set of collective facts and circumstances surrounding the given individual's injury and/or death.

Q. You have said you have been with the office of the Medical Examiner both in Dade County, Florida and also the Medical Examiner's Office in Philadelphia, what is encompassed within your duties at those respective jobs?

A. Well, the basic duty was to determine the cause and with assistance, the manner of death in all cases that were judged Medical Examiner's jurisdiction and these cases include all of the deaths that are from other than natural disease., that

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is all known accidents, suicides, homicides, but not limited to them. They include the investigation of any sudden and unexpected or suspicious death, the deaths occurring in individuals under legal custody, that is in jail or prison, or in some other way under custody, of persons that might be dying of a condition that could pose a threat to the general public health, of persons dying with conditions or situations directly related with their employment. Certain deaths that occur in and about Doctors', Dentists offices, Hospitals where the treatment of that individual may have contributed to or caused the individual's death. There are perhaps others, but these are the general kind of cases which come under the classification of Medical Examiner's jurisdiction, and in all of judged to be his jurisdiction the basic responsibility is to, is the determination of cause and the manner of death.

Q. Now, Doctor, can you judge an approximation of how many these types of deaths you have participated in either investigating or related work?

A. Well, total number of cases is far in excess of the number of those which were examined in the sense of a complete autopsy and correlation of circumstances. If I take just the autopsy cases in Miami and in Philadelphia, it is approximately 3800. Total number of cases are many, many more than that, and involve investigation of cases that would not be as extensive as a complete autopsy examination.

Q. At this point, your Honor, we would offer Doctor Catherman as an expert in Forensic Pathology and offer him for cross examination.

By The Court:

Do you care to cross examine at this time,

Mr. Fierro?

By Mr. Fierro:

Not at this time and I doubt if I will ever.

By The Court:

Gentlemen, I assume now the matters that we talked about must be decided by the Court prior to going into any further examination, is that correct?

By Mr. Ertel:

I would think that would be appropriate.

By The Court:

Members of the Jury, there are certain matters again that must take place out of your hearing. We are going to recess now for the noon luncheon, but we will not begin at 1:15 as we usually do, but after I had an opportunity to meet with Counsel, and Counsel, would it be agreeable that we not meet now, but met at 1:15 in my office?

By Mr. Fierro:

Yes.

By Mr. Ertel:

Yes.

By The Court:

The Defendant is now excused. The Jury is now excused, and you will be advised by the Tipstaves and Court Bailiff.

(Recessed at 12:00 Noon, EDST.).

(Reconvened in Chambers at 1:15 P.M., EDST.)

S Ertel: own words  
"A picture is worth a  
1000 words"

(IN CHAMBERS.).

Judge Tlik  
Justice P.S. Court.

By The Court:

What I would like to decide first is whether or not I am going to permit Mr. Ertel to use the Exhibits which are the three slides which we viewed this morning outside of the presence of the Jury, and then if there is any further offer you desire, we will go into that, but let's take the three slides first.

By Mr. Ertel:

I think they are 56, 57 and 58.

(Off-the-record discussion.).

By Mr. Ertel:

I am quite willing to withdraw one.

By The Court:

That one was the one I was not going to permit it.

By Mr. Ertel:

There is nothing of great note on that one. We could cut off the breast portion or put a piece of tape over it.

By The Court:

You take that one back.

By Mr. Ertel:

The only purpose we are offering either of the Exhibits now are for the markings on the neck to show the strangulation marks and show the line of petechiae as the Doctor will explain, and he can point it out to the Jury, it will make it more vivid in his explanation. Certainly, anybody can explain

what it is, but seeing it is an aid." We can, if necessary, take a piece of tape over the eyes and head so all you can see is the neck, if you want us to do that, so we can limit that all they see is generally the neck region?

By The Court:

Any objection?

By Mr. Pierro:

He has the rest of the face which is showing, in affect, a death mask. As I understand the law, a photograph is admissible when it tends to explain or is necessary for its' use by a witness, but if it tends to excite and may become inflammatory, it should be excluded if the witness does not need it. Now, in this case here is a Forensic Pathologist, and there are other photographs now in evidence that he can use, but particularly the slides, this Forensic Pathologist can tell this Jury what he found and can say how this girl died and where the marks are without showing this awful death mask.

By The Court:

Do you have a black and white photograph of what is shown on that first slide?

By Mr. Ertel:

Not to the degree that we can see it on a slide.

By The Court:

No. 2 you are withdrawing?

By Mr. Ertel:

Whatever one that is.

By The Court:

That is not the number, but it was the second one you showed us. Now, the back one?

By Mr. Ertel:

The back one, I can, if you want, I can cover it from the hair line and just to show the neck.

By Mr. Fierro:

If he does that on the third one, my argument prevails as to the first one. I will have no objection to the third if all he shows is the back of the neck.

By Mr. Ertel:

I said that I would do that on both photographs.

By Mr. Fierro:

On the first photograph, how can you do it?

By Mr. Ertel:

We need the scratch marks on the face.

By Mr. Fierro:

They are not important.

By Mr. Ertel:

Yes they are important.

By Mr. Fierro:

In what way?

By Mr. Ertel:

Those scratch marks, the lines of scratch marks he is going to explain how they came to be on the face. He has to show the direction and angle.



By Mr. Pierro:

Will you tell us how he will explain they came to be there?

By Mr. Ertel:

That was the final death throee of the person and she was reaching up to get the hands from her, in his opinion, they are her own marks.

No. 58 we can say from the lower lobe of the ear to the, right at the hair line, that would be the lower lobe of the ear, then to the hand underneath the shoulders, we could put a piece of tape across.

By The Court:

Well, as far as No. 57 is concerned the Court holds, although you indicated you would withdraw it, I will not permit that one.

By Mr. Ertel:

We will section off the other side of the face as long as we have the marks on the other one.

By The Court:

Now, you don't have a black and white of this?

By Mr. Ertel:

We have a black and white, but it don't show up.

By The Court:

Of that same photo?

By Mr. Ertel:

I don't think so, no, no.

By The Court:

Now, I think your objections are full enough on these two, on No. 56 and 58 I am holding that the probative value outweighs, the other one I said does not outweigh, I ruled the other one out because the probative value does not outweigh the risk of undue prejudice to the Defendant, and on these two I am holding that the probative value outweighs the risk of undue prejudice to the Defendant. I am going to let these two in.

Mr. Fierro, is there anything other, any other offer you want from Mr. Ertel concerning Catherman?

By Mr. Fierro:

No, I suspect I know what he will testify to. He just made a statement that he, Doctor Catherman, will testify in his opinion that the scratch marks were made by the girl in her death throes. Now, I object to that.

By The Court:

I thought he said the "death throes" was his own words. What is he going to testify to?

By Mr. Ertel:

That in his opinion they were caused by the girl trying to struggle.

By Mr. Fierro:

He would be guessing, this is a matter that somehow the Jury should be able to, by factual presentation, make its own conclusion. The District Attorney said he is going to testify that in his opinion the girl made scratch marks on her face, whether

it was in death throes or not, I am saying this man is Forensic Pathologist, that does not mean he is allowed to stand up and guess she scratched herself. Him saying "In my opinion she scratched herself.", without more is nothing more than, you don't have to be a Doctor to say that and he cannot possibly explain that, he can say "Yes, it could have happened.", but to say in his opinion she did, I think it is prejudicial unless Doctor Catherman is going to say he found under her fingernails her own skin and own blood, then I will withdraw the objection.

By Mr. Ertel:

He is not going to say that.

By Mr. Pierro:

Then I will object to that, he would be guessing.

By The Court:

Under the proper qualification, if he had an opinion, not guess or conjecture, the Court will over rule your objection, but make it on the record so it appears twice.

Anything else?

By Mr. Ertel:

That is all.

By The Court:

Anything else?

By Mr. Pierro:

No.

(RETURNED TO COURT ROOM AT 1:30 P.M., EDST.).

(Doctor Robert L. Catherman returned to stand.).

Dr. Catherman.

By The Court:

Proceed.

By Mr. Ertel:

Q. Doctor Catherman, you have already explained your background and qualifications. Did you have the occasion to examine the body of Jennifer Hill on or about October 29, 1973?

A. I did.

Q. Can you explain where you examined that body?

A. It was at the morgue at the Williamsport Hospital. I arrived in Williamsport sometime around 5:30 from the Philadelphia area on the afternoon of that date, and then began an autopsy examination really at ten minutes of six or 5:50 that afternoon.

Q. (To The Court.). Now, by stipulation, your Honor, we have entered into the record Commonwealth's Exhibit No. 41, that is the weather report.

By Mr. Fierro:

Yes.

By Mr. Ertel:

And again by stipulation with Mr. Fierro, he has agreed that I may read to the Jury the maximum temperatures for the dates of the 19th to the 28th, and also as to the precipitation which was no rain.

By The Court:

Any question, Sir?

By Mr. Fierro:

There was rain on the...

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By Mr. Ertel:

On the 28th there was rain.

By Mr. Fierro:

Beginning when?

By Mr. Ertel:

We will have to have testimony, but it is while the body was there.

By The Court:

So stipulated?

By Mr. Fierro:

Yes.

By The Court:

You may read them.

By Mr. Ertel:

This is an official Climatological Data for the Williamsport Airport. On the date of October 19th, the maximum temperature was 54; the minimum temperature was 33; the average was 44 and there was no rain or precipitation. On the 20th of October, the maximum temperature was 61; the minimum temperature was 47; average was 54; no rain or precipitation. The 21st the maximum was 58; minimum was 39; average 49; no rain or precipitation. The 22nd, 63 maximum; 35 minimum; average 49; no rain. The 23rd, 65 maximum, 35 minimum, average 50; no rain. The 24th, maximum 67; minimum, 38; average 53; no rain. The 25th, maximum 67; minimum 36; average 52; no rain. The 26th, maximum 69; minimum 35; average 52; no rain. The 27th, maximum 60; minimum 43;

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No need  
for  
Jury  
Counsel  
make

328.

average, 52; no rain. The 28th, maximum 54; minimum 41; average 48, there was precipitation, water equivalent of .05.

Q. Doctor, would you describe briefly what you did in the autopsy as far as disrobing the victim and so on?

A. Upon the beginning of my examination I was shown the body of this decedent still partly clothed. I conducted an external examination of the body, describing what I saw in the way of clothing. Then, after the body was unclad, then the external findings of the surface of the body, and then the internal observations of the body cavities, that is the head, the chest and abdominal contents. I checked various specimens.

I was present and had various photographs of the body taken, that is at my direction by somebody else present at the autopsy. I collected materials or samples of blood and urine and other tissues for certain chemical and other toxicological studies, some blood for typing and material from the mouth, the anus and rectum and the vaginal areas for certain chemical studies as well as for preparation of some slides on which staining would be placed for examination principally for the presence or absence of sperms. After that I made a report of their examination, drew conclusions and prepared a final report with conclusions.

Q. Do you have that final report with you, Doctor?

A. Yes.

Q. May I have it?

A. Yes.

Q. Do you have a copy for Defense Counsel?

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A. Yes.

Q. Now, Doctor, when you disrobed the body, can you describe the garb of the individual as you disrobed the body?

A. Yes. When I first saw it, the body was partially clad in a jersey with a white numeral "33" on it, a white bra. This was all that was over the upper portion of the body, which was pushed up, elevated so that it was higher over the left shoulder than across the right side of the body, and the left breast was exposed, that is the bra was above the level of the left breast, it covered the right breast in the usual fashion. It was hooked in the back in the usual fashion. It was bare, that is the body was bare from that level down to the lower legs where there was a pair of blue denim type jeans that were sort of rolled down around the legs, a pair of multi-colored panties, a pair of socks and a pair of gym sneakers, tennis shoes.

Q. All right, now after you did that, Doctor, did you examine the neck area of the body?

A. Yes, in addition to the other external aspects of the body after the clothing were removed.

Q. And did you have photographs taken of the neck area?

A. Yes, in addition to other portions of the body.

Q. Doctor, at this point I am going to show....

By The Court:

Before you show those the Court wants to make a statement. The slides about to be shown are not pleasant slides to look at, and if anyone in the audience desires to leave, they

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may do so at this time. The Court instructs the jury that these slides are admitted into evidence for the purpose of showing the nature of the wounds received by the deceased, in helping you to understand the testimony of the Doctor who is now about to testify about them. They are not pleasant slides to look at, and you should not let them stir up your emotions to the prejudice of the Defendant. Your verdict must be based on a rational and fair consideration of all of the evidence and not on passion or prejudice against the Defendant, the Commonwealth, or anyone else connected with this case. You must not allow these slides to inflame your minds against the Defendant, nor must you allow any of them or any of the other Exhibits to inflame your mind against the Defendant. They are put into evidence only to aid you in the deliberations of this case and they will be available for you, some will be sent with you when you go to the Jury Room to deliberate on this case, and others will be available for you upon request. You may proceed, Sir.

By Mr. Ertel:

Q. Prior to the looking at those slides, Doctor, did you come to a conclusion as to the cause of the death?

A. Yes, after a thorough examination of both the external and internal indications of injury and the other findings in this body?

A. I did.

Q. What was that conclusion?

A. That the individual so named in this case, Jennifer Hill, died as a result of manual strangulation.



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Q. Now, Doctor, looking at the slide which is Commonwealth's Exhibit No. 58...maybe if I could have a little more light, looking at the slide No. 56, Doctor, can you explain what that shows in relation to your findings as far as manual strangulation is concerned....I beg your pardon, it is No. 58?

A. Commonwealth's Exhibit No. 58 depicts on the decedent's body on the back of the center of the neck and the back of the left side of the neck here, tiny little areas of scratch marks that are described as superficial abrasions, that is the reference to a scratching injury on the surface of the skin. These marks, which are similar somewhat to these, represent various pressure marks from the places where the body had rested on various objects. The dark colored scene here is a portion of the exposed area of the back which was not clothed which was resting against a fair amount of wet mud and dirt, which was observed at the first time the body was examined and then later washed clean by me. The significant findings on this photograph indicate on the back of the neck, in the center and to the left, superficial, described as slightly curvilinear, that is not exactly straight, short scratch marks, abrasion marks.

Q. Were you able to draw any conclusion from those abrasions or along with your other examination?

By Mr. Fierro:

I object to the word "conclusion", opinion would be correct.

By The Court:

Reword your question.

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By Mr. Ertel:

Q. Were you able to arrive at an opinion based upon these particular marks and your other examination?

A. Yes.

Q. What was that opinion?

A. That these represent marks associated with affects of an assailant's hands, most likely fingernail imprints.

Q. Could you tell me whether they were fingernail or thumbnail imprints?

A. No, I could not be certain of that.

Q. Are you completed with slide No. 58?

A. Yes.

Q. Slide No. 56, can you identify that, please?

A. This slide identified as Commonwealth's Exhibit No. 56 shows the front of the decedent's face and is particularly of importance because of the numerous tiny pinpoint indications of blood spots referred to as petechiae, they are tiny ruptured very small blood vessels which appear like little red spots of paint on the surface of the skin. These were visible on the head, above the level of the neck, and appear most concentrated about the skin of the upper and lower eyelids and the whites of the eyes, both the lids and the globe itself, as well as the skin of the face.

Q. What is it an indicia of?

A. Together with the other findings of the injuries on the front and back of the neck, the internal findings of bruising in the region of the voice box, they are supported and

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in my opinion indicated or indicative of manual strangulation with compression of the airway, obstruction of the blood returning from the head to the body, to a certain extent with obstruction with the blood going from the main body to the head.

But its' elevated pressure within the blood vessels of the skin and areas which I described as a result of compression of the blood flow coming back from the head to the body, along with the lack of oxygen that caused the damage to occur in the blood vessels and they rupture and as blood leaks out of them result in these tiny little pinpoint size.

Q. Doctor, right next to the right eye and I note on the Exhibit some marks, can you identify and tell us what they are?

A. These are additional, rather larger than those described by me on the back of the neck, areas of superficial, that is on the surface, scratching away of the skin, leaving behind a scratch mark or a brushburn appearance, which appears as these areas of reddish to brownish coloration.

Q. Doctor, other than the markings which you have described, and I don't believe you did describe them on the front of the neck, or did you?

A. They are not well shown on this Exhibit, but they were, there were markings on the front of the neck visible to to, from the outside, similar to those seen on the back of the center of the neck, together with some faint blueish discoloration in the form of bruising.

Q. Doctor, other than the markings you have shown, was

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there anyother evidence that you noted on thebody which was as a result of trauma?

A. Yes.

Q. Where was that?

A. Well, internally as I examined the area of the neck there were areas of bruising over the tip of the left submaxillary gland, one of the salivary glands that is underneath the left side of the jaw, the strap, as in an ordinary strap muscle. These are the flat groupings of muscles on the front of the voice box or larynx that go from the base of the tongue down to the top of the breastbone, the deeper layers of those on the front of the voice box had indication of bruising and the inside layer of the voice box itself, the larynx had indications of bruising on it.

Q. They were internally, were there anyother external marks on the body other than what you described, as a result of trauma?

A. There was other external marks that were associated with the affects of the injuries which I interpreted as being most likely post-mortem, that is occurring after death. There were a fair number of very superficial, again, on the surface, scrapings of the skin along the back and sides of the legs where they were near or in contact with the ground, associated with the dirt. There was some slipping away of the surface layers of the skin where the body was in contact with the dirt that was present over the back of the body, and these I interpreted as being changes occurring as a result of the interval

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of time from the time of death until I saw the body.

Q. Now, Doctor, you said you took some samples, can you tell us what exactly you did as far as samples? For instance, did you take finger scrapings?

A. The fingernail scrapings, along with other samples were taken in conjunction with me by Corporal Donald Houser, or Trooper House, I don't know if it is specifically Corporal, of the State Police, Montoursville Barracks. He was physically present at the time, and between the two of us we collected, he actually took possession of them rather than having them go from me to him, at the time the examination and their recovery was made.

Q. You took the scrapings and handed them to him?

A. They were taken as an automatic process, about the same time, in other words.

Q. Did you get any report as to those particular scrapings at all?

By Mr. Fierro:

Excuse me, I want to object, I don't know about his doing, getting a report, or whether he made the examination and report, I would like to know.

By The Court:

Yes, the objection is sustained.

By Mr. Ertel:

Q. Did you make any report of those findings?

A. No, not of those findings. Those were, the results from any analysis made on that material was to be handled in the

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taken from the mouth, vagina, or anus and rectum.

Q. What other tests did you provide, if any?

A. The blood was obtained and I did a grouping or typing on that. It showed her to have a Type "A" "RH" Positive blood. Certain other materials were taken by me, samples of tissues and submitted directly to Doctor Frederick Reiders, who is the Director of the Laboratory of the National Medical Services, Inc., a Toxicologic Laboratory in Willow Grove, Penna., for an analysis that he would conduct, looking for anything of abnormality that was present. I did not make a report of those studies. I have a receipt for the delivery of that material to Doctor Reiders.

Q. You do have a verbal report, is that correct?

A. Yes.

Q. What, if anything unusual was the result of the toxicology that you ordered?

By Mr. Fierro:

I object, I believe he is asking....

By The Court:

The objection will be sustained.

By Mr. Ertel:

Q. Did you also examine the stomach contents of the victim?

A. Yes. As a part of the examination which was conducted, I observed the amount of stomach content, and also examined it for the nature of that content, and some of that content was submitted as toxicologic specimen, some of it was

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examined initially by me at the time of my autopsy and subsequently back in Philadelphia under a more thorough examination under what is called a dissecting microscope, that is just to magnify its' condition a little bit, but not greatly. In, I found in the stomach content, portions of partially digested food, which I could identify as being bread or french fries or both, some fragments of lettuce and onion and potato. I found one grape skin, a grey, dark green intact grape skin, and also the pulp of the grape with some brownish seeds within it, somewhat digested but only partially so. The stomach contents had a somewhat oily appearance, that is it gave a sheen with droplets on the surface of the liquid and the material that made it up, and it also had, to my detection a slightly oily odor.

Q. Did you find any scraps of meat?

A. There were also small fragments of tannish, brown material which on initially examination could be fragments of meat which under the dissecting microscope are consistent with portions of digested meat.

Q. Now, Doctor, assuming the following facts, that this young lady had ingested a hoagie, some french fries, a milk shake, at somewhere in the vicinity of noon on the day she disappeared, and assume further she ate some grapes in the period of maybe two hours, two to three hours later, and further that she was last seen alive at the time of 4:30 in the afternoon, do you have an opinion as to the time of death of this girl?

A. Yes.

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Q. What is that opinion?

A. That the death occurred on the day of disappearance and that the death probably occurred between when she was last seen alive and 6:00 perhaps 8:00 P.M. that evening, more likely to be between roughly when she was last seen alive and up until 6:00.

Q. Now, Doctor, you have also explained that there were some markings on the head as you showed in the Commonwealth Exhibit which was a slide, do you have an opinion as to what those markings were?

A. Yes.

Q. What were they?

A. Those markings, in my opinion.....

By Mr. Fierro:

Excuse me, I want to object to this. I would like to know specifically what markings the District Attorney is referring to.

By Mr. Ertel:

Q. Would you explain the markings you are referring to?

A. Yes, specifically there were two areas of markings which I found in my examination, one of which was referred to in the one of the two Commonwealth slides that were shown. These were on the right side of the temple of the body, across the right cheekbone area. Another grouping of very faint, but definite smaller, shorter, but in a line-type pattern, they were lengthy and narrower, across the left side of the jaw, are the ones to which I would address my opinion.



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Oblique  
= check  
POST  
MORTEM  
REPORT

Q. Very good, will you give us your opinion?

By Mr. Fierro:

I will object to that, unless the witness further establishes from a pathological basis why he has that opinion, rather than a judgment or his conclusion .

By The Court:

The objection is over ruled.

By Mr. Ertel:

Q. What were they?

A. They were, in my opinion, consistent with scratch markings and whether caused by the decedent in trying to extract an assailant's hands about her neck or by the assailant causing the manual strangulation, I could not say for certain.

Q. Which direction were the scratches?

A. They were, as we say in one instance, on the side of the right temple on the cheek and others were in somewhat oblique fashion across the left side of the jaw. That is oblique, not perpendicular, vertically, they were on a slant.

~~Q. Cross examination.~~

CROSS EXAMINATION

By Mr. Fierro:

Q. Doctor Catherman, I notice from your report that you just handed the District Attorney and I got a copy of it, Post-mortem, and I notice from your testimony, is this a correct statement, that in your examination of this girl you found no evidence of sexual molestation?

A. That is correct.

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Q. That is correct, isn't it?

A. Yes, Sir.

Q. All right, no evidence whatsoever, isn't that correct?

A. There was no indication of this girl having been sexually molested in the general lay understanding of that term.

Q. Well, in any understanding, can you tell us that this girl was sexually molested in any way?

A. Not unless you define for me what you mean by "sexually molested"?

Q. I don't know, we may have a different definition, you and I, and I am talking about the ordinary common language used every day by these people who are going to decide this case, did you as a Forensic Pathologist find any evidence that this girl was sexually molested?

A. There was no indication of that. My findings, however, do not exclude some kind, whatever that might be, of sexual molestation. I just didn't find any injury.

Q. Did you find in your report that there was any, that is what I would like to know?

A. I did not describe any injuries which would, I would relate to sexual molestation in that sense.

Q. Injury or not, is there anything in this report that you can show me that says that you, in your opinion, on examination, that you have an opinion that there was some sort of sexual assault upon this child?

A. No, Sir.

Doctor Catherman.

Q. Now, I am interested in your saying that the death occurred between 4:00 and 6:00 P.M. and then you put the limit as high as 8:00 P.M., didn't you?

A. Yes.

Q. Then you are not sure that it was 4:00, 5:00, 6:00, 7:00 or 8:00, are you?

A. No, Sir.

Q. In other words, this Jury, from your opinion, may decide that the death occurred at 8:00, couldn't they?

A. They could.

Q. All right, of course you have fixed the date of death as October 19th, which is the date this child disappeared, but you based that date, you fixed that date based upon what somebody told you, that is two things, somebody said to you, "Doctor Catherman, this girl disappeared October 19th around 4:30 in the afternoon and that this girl ate such and such that day.", and so you fixed the time of death using, among other things, those two items, isn't that correct?

A. Yes.

Q. So that, Doctor Catherman, if you had been told that this girl was still alive on October 20th, the next day, and ate substantially the same food, you would now have to say that you are going to change the date of her death, aren't you?

A. Yes, Sir.

Q. As a matter of fact, if we make it October 21st, you are going to change her date of death again, aren't you?

A. You could continue that up until about three to five

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days prior to the 28th when I believe she was discovered, and I would say would, I would say it would be my opinion it would not be less than that time.

Q. But nevertheless, as you have just said it could be three to five days before she was discovered and she was discovered on the 28th and allegedly disappeared on the 19th?

A. That is correct.

Q. So we can take it up to as high as October 25th according to what you say?

A. 24th.

Q. All right, I will go with you on the 24th, so that if you, as a Pathologist, were told that this girl was still alive on the 24th and ate substantially the same food that was described, you would have to say that, in your opinion, her death could have occurred on that day at around 4:00 to 8:00 P.M., or any prior day from the time she disappeared, is that correct?

A. Yes.

Q. But you can't fix, what I am trying to get at, you can't fix the date?

A. No, Sir, I can't, not specifically. They only do that in "dime novels" or TV shows and the movies.

Q. They practice law like that in movies and we can't.

A. I wish I was able to, it would make my job easier.

Q. Now, Doctor, we come to this, this girl undoubtedly, and was, we accepted your opinion, was manually strangled, and that means, and we are not trying to say the Jury does not understand, but I want to be explicit, I don't care to carry this

Doctor Catherman.

on too much farther, but she was not strangled, for example, by the use of a rope or anyother mechanical instrument, she was strangled by the use of human hands?

A. That would be my opinion. The choice of that terminology is to exclude the other common form of strangulation which is referred to as ligature strangulation where the mode of strangulation is by some ligature, something that encircles the neck, commonly a piece of rope, a wire, coat hanger, whatever it might be.

Q. That is what you and I are now saying we are excluding?

A. That kind.

Q. Any mechanical thing whatsoever, you and are saying according to your opinion this girl was strangled by somebody's human hands alone and not by another instrument?

A. That is my opinion.

Q. That is all we are asking, what is your opinion. Did you find, Doctor, that this little girl had been, I will use the word, because I am not a Doctor, had been "doped", that is to say given some foreign substance to make, to render her unconscious?

A. This, there was no indication of any kind of "dope" present, based on my present understanding of the analysis that we, that were conducted on the tissue specimens submitted, let's put it that way.

Q. Did you find anything conducting your autopsy that showed this girl was given some sort of foreign substance that she

may have inhaled or ingested, however she got it into her body, that would have rendered her unconscious, this includes anything, alcohol "dope", whatever you can think of?

A. I did not observe any of those things either at the time of my autopsy. I know of none of these things being found on the analysis, however there are substances in this world that could have been present and not be detected in the normal fashion, but I think we are talking about the usual kind of things referred to as "dope"?

Q. Right?

A. There was none found.

Q. When I said "dope", I said alcohol or anything else?

A. I am including that.

Q. What I am trying to get out of you, as far as you know, in making your examination of this girl, you would have to give your opinion that this girl was not given anything to knock her out before she was strangled?

A. That would be my opinion.

Q. Now, I want to ask you something else, you examined this body minutely, I do know, did you see any evidence that this girl suffered a blow, a trauma of any form, which would knock her out before she was strangled?

A. No.

Q. What, would I be making a correct statement if I said that you, Doctor Catherman, would have to opinion, based upon your examination, that this girl was alive and well a split second before, whoever it was, began strangling her?

A. Yes.

Doctor Catherman.

Q. And I notice that you say here that she is five foot one and weighed between 120 and 125 pounds, is that correct?

A. Yes.

Q. You know you said in your report, and I won't look at it, correct me if I am wrong, that there was one or two finger-nails missing?

A. That is correct, there were.

Q. Do you know or should I look it up, from which hand... wait a minute the torn nails of the right ring and little fingers, is that correct?

A. Yes.

Q. Now, you said "little fingers", does that mean both little fingers?

A. No.

Q. You probably mean the plural of the right ring and little?

A. Correct.

Q. On the right hand?

A. Yes, Sir.

Q. The torn nails of the right ring and little fingers, are they the items, among others, that you gave to this Trooper?

A. No, Sir, that was an observation made among other observations at the time I did my external examination, I merely observed those nails on those two fingers showed an appearance different from the remaining nails on the same hand and the other hand. Now, what was given for comparison was the nail from the right middle finger.

Doctor Catherman.

Q. The what?

A. The right.

Q. The nail?

A. The right middle finger, the nail, I am sorry.

Q. I will go on, and it was the nail from the right middle finger that was given, among other specimens, to Tr ~~er~~ Houser, then what happened to the torn nails....excuse me, I will ask it that way, what happened to the torn nails of the right ring and little fingers, did you find the torn nails?

A. No, I did not.

Q. You didn't?

A. No.

Q. All you did was observe that they were torn?

A. I observed that they were irregular and ragged as though they had been torn away.

Q. Well, your report says "torn", isn't that your opinion?

A. I think that it says "As though they were torn away.", it was my opinion based upon their appearance that they were torn or broken away.

Q. I read, for example, number four under "External Evidence of Injury", you begin "The torn nails of the right ring and little fingers have, as have been described above..."?

A. Yes, referred to an earlier paragraph which gives the description in more detail.



Doctor Catherman.

Q. So I assume you believe, that is have a medical opinion, that the right ring and little fingers, those nails were ripped or torn or broken away in some violent fashion?

A. In some fashion.

Q. Well....

A. It usually does not take much violence to rip off a nail.

Q. It takes a little?

A. It takes some, yes.

Q. It was not done with a fingernail file or pair of scissors?

A. No, they were not cut nor filed.

Q. It was done, let's say, in an abnormal fashion?

A. Yes.

Q. For example, it could have been done by the girl struggling for her life, using her hands to try to dislodge in some way the attacker?

A. In fact, they could have been caused by her scratching her own neck.

Q. Could have been?

A. That is a possibility.

Q. And could have been caused by her trying to ward off the assailant, catching the nails in a part of his body or clothing or whoever that was, isn't that way one of the ways it could have happened?

A. That is another possibility.

Q. That is what you said before, you said that, for

Doctor Catherman.

example the scratches that you saw on her face could have been caused either by this girl herself or by her assailant, either way?

A. That is correct.

Q. The same with her torn nails, those nails could have been ripped off her fingers either because she was trying to attack or ward off her assailant or in the violence of her own struggles scratching herself, either way?

A. Yes.

By Mr. Ertel:

I object, there are other possibilities.

By Mr. Fierro:

Let him answer, he is an expert.

By The Court:

Over ruled.

By Mr. Fierro:

Q. Isn't that correct?

A. Yes, that is among the possibilities this could have occurred.

Q. That is what I am interested in, these two possibilities?

A. Yes, Sir.

Q. For example, are you, I will ask you this, to me it would sound a little bit silly, is it possible some animal could have come up and chewed them off?

A. That is a possibility, not likely in my opinion, but a possibility.

Doctor Catherman.

Q. That was to cover some of the other methods. Are the two possibilities that I asked you about, the most likely ones, let's put it that way?

A. In my opinion they would be.

Q. They are the most likely?

A. Yes.

Q. You have also said, Doctor, that you found, interpreted, and opined that the scratches or whatever you fellows in medicine call them, I call them scratches, the marks on the back of her neck, what do you call them?

A. I think fingernail scratches is good enough.

Q. I will call them fingernail scratches, I think you testified that the fingernail scratches on the back of this girl's neck were probably made by the assailant?

A. Yes, Sir.

Q. Isn't that correct?

A. Yes.

Q. That is your opinion?

A. These are now the specific short curved scratches that are different from those along the side of the right of the face and across the left side of the jaw.

Q. I am talking about the ones you described on the back of her neck?

A. The back of the center and the left side of the neck and also the front.

Q. Right?

A. Yes, those are the ones I am referring to that in association with the injuries underneath them are the fingernail

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scratches.

Q. You said that in your opinion were made by the assailant?

A. Yes.

Q. So that assailant, whoever it was, would likely have gotten her skin and her blood under some of his fingernails, wouldn't he or she?

A. He might or might not, or she, he or she might or might not. There was no indication that these scratches drew blood in that sense of the fact there were scrapings of superficial skin.

Q. Let's talk about the superficial skin, you said there were scrapings that means something was taken off this body, I believe these fingernails, right?

A. That is what I mean by the scrapings of superficial skin.

Q. Whoever her assailant was, would have those scrapings of her skin underneath these nails, wouldn't he?

A. If they adhered to and stuck fast, yes.

Q. Well, as a Forensic Pathologist you know quite often in these manual strangulation cases that it is more likely the assailant will have such scrapings under the nails, isn't that true?

A. I would not say more likely, you put it on that basis, it is more likely than what?

Q. More likely than not?

A. I will say it is about equal that the assailant

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and the victim have scrapings from the victim's skin under their fingernails.

Q. Do I catch it this way, that your present answer means that both of them, that is the victim and the assailant would likely have scrapings under their nails?

A. Of the victim's skin?

Q. Yes?

A. Yes.

Q. Both of them would?

A. Yes.

Q. Well, I am talking about the assailant, that means the assailant would too?

A. That is correct, but I am just saying it was not necessarily that he would have more so than.

Q. No, I am just trying to find out whether the assailant would more likely than not have?

A. More likely than not, yes.

Q. Thank you. Now, I don't know whether there were any prints of human hands on this girl's neck that could have been identified to that degree that they could have been matched or attempted matched, were there?

A. I do not know either, I saw none and to the best of my knowledge in my presence there were no attempts to identify any such prints in any way. I did not see any.

Q. Doctor, I would assume that as a Forensic Pathologist that you not only can opine, but you actually know in the course of your work, that any human being would, was alive and well and is

Doctor Catherman.

being manually strangled, will make some effort to protect themselves from death, wouldn't you say that is a fair statement?

A. Yes, I would.

Q. And that in the course of trying to protect, in this case herself, from death, that she would more likely than not, inflict some damage on the assailant?

A. No, I can't say that.

Q. You can't?

A. No.

Q. What would she be....

A. She might or might not. In my experience, the absence of injuries on a given assailant who has caused the death of a person by manual strangulation says nothing to me about the fact he couldn't have done it.

Q. I understand that, but you would not be surprised to learn that the person who manually strangled another, had upon the assailant's face or hands, marks inflicted upon that assailant by the victim, that would not surprise you, would it?

A. No, in fact I would want to know if this was the case.

Q. You would ask about that, wouldn't you?

A. Yes.

Q. The absence of it, that is some form of traumatic infliction upon an assailant in a manual strangulation case, the absence of that, while not necessarily conclusive to you as a Forensic Pathologist, would indicate something, wouldn't it?

Doctor Catherman.

A. Yes.

Q. What would it indicate to you, Doctor?

A. That he was not injured during the time that he attacked the individual, if he, in fact, did.

Q. That would be in and of itself an unusual circumstance?

A. No.

Q. No?

A. Not unusual circumstance, it would be an observation to take into consideration with among many other factors.

Q. Would you consider it unusual if these others, other factors were that the other person was well, alive and kicking, wouldn't you then opine that the victim should have done some sort of damage to the attacker?

A. Let me get it straight, that the victim was well, alive and kicking?

Q. A second before the strangulation began?

By Mr. Ertel:

I object to that, I don't know how he intends to allow that up.

By The Court:

Q. Do you understand the question?

A. I think in a hypothetical way I do.

Q. Do you feel qualified to answer?

A. Yes.

Q. The objection is over ruled.

Doctor Catherman.

A. That an injury could be sustained in that assailant which might not ever be detected, which such as many injuries that go undetected when you injure yourself by being bumped or inflicted against a blunt surface.

By Mr. Fierro:

Q. Is it unusual for a victim who is healthy and alive, let's say a split second before he, or she in this case, is being strangled, is it unusual for that victim in a struggle for life to try and take her hands and remove the assailant's hands or to try to push the assailant away, or to try to strike at the assailant's face, things of that nature, is that unusual?

A. I would say it would not be unusual.

Q. It would be the usual thing to do?

A. I can speculate that it would be, since I never saw something like this actually occur, I don't know with certainty.

Q. You would expect that is the usual thing for the victim to try to do?

A. Right.

Q. Doctor, are you the person who took the fingernail scrapings from underneath the deceased nails, do, did you do the actual scrapings yourself?

A. I think the physical act was done by me and Corporal Houser actually collected them as they were obtained. They were never in my possession as such, which then I gave to him by receipt. It was a direct transfer at my direction.



Doctor Catherman.

Q. You have not seen that since, have you?

A. No, I haven't.

Q. Now, without somebody telling you, if someone walked into this Court Room with fingernail scrapings, could you take those scrapings, go back to your Laboratory or whatever you did concerning Jennifer, and say "These are the same scrapings that I took.", can you do that?

A. Not if I was just shown a collection of scrapings, I would not be able to say that those are the precise scrapings which I took at sometime three months or so ago.

Q. You can't say that?

A. No.

Q. Now, I will put it this way, assuming that this Trooper Houser, whoever, comes into this Court and has these scrapings and I hand them to you and I say, "Doctor Catherman, I would like to have you positively identify that what the Trooper brought in here are the same scrapings that you took from Jennifer's nails.", independently of what he tells you, can you do that?

A. I would not be able to do that without his testimony that these were the ones he obtained in my presence and handled them there in such fashion.

Q. Without his testimony, can you scientifically do that?

A. I already said if you give them to be cold, just looking at them I would not be able to tell if they were her's or somebody else's.

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Doctor Catherman.

Q. I mean by use of scientific or otherwise, I don't care, but not having the Corporal.....

By Mr. Ertel:

I object.

By The Court:

Over ruled.

A. No.

By Mr. Pierro:

Q. You can't do it, can you?

A. No.

Q. Doctor, I am showing you what has been marked as Commonwealth's Exhibit No. 3, and what this shows, and the only reason I am showing it to you, concerns the clothing of the child as she was found, and I simply want you to look at the clothing, do you recognize that?

A. No.

Q. You don't?

A. No, because this contains a coat which was not actually on the body, but lying over it. I seen this photograph before, but when I examined the body it was not a part of what I examined and described.

Q. So the coat shown in Commonwealth's Exhibit No. 3, when you received the body that coat was not on or did not accompany the body?

A. That is right.

Q. Commonwealth's Exhibit No. 6, Doctor, also shows a portion of the clothing on the decedent, and I want to tell you

Doctor Catherman.

so you won't be surprised, this item here is the inside of this pea jacket, somebody called it a pea jacket, you did not, of course, as you have already said, see that pea jacket when you saw the body, correct?

A. I examined it without that jacket.

Q. But take a look at this like a football jersey, which is also shown in Commonwealth's Exhibit No. 5, I am sure that was on the body when you saw it?

A. Yes.

Q. By the way....

A. Let me say this, that a jersey either identical to or this actual jersey was on, I don't see enough here to identify the number "33", it looks like a numeral "33".

Q. It is a "33", but that is not what, why I want to ask you any questions about it, I simply wanted to establish what you did or didn't see. Now, I take you back to Commonwealth's Exhibit No. 5, if you will look underneath this jersey, this white thing looks like a bra?

A. It is.

Q. It contains the girl's right breast?

A. The way which I first saw it.

Q. And that is the way you first saw it, isn't that correct?

A. Yes, it is also above the level of the left breast which I first saw it.

Q. It does not contain the left breast, is that correct?

A. Yes.

Doctor Catherman.

Q. Now, you said you disrobed or in assistance with others you disrobed the body?

A. Yes.

Q. You removed the bra?

A. Yes.

Q. And other articles of clothing?

A. The articles which I described.

Q. Oh, yes, not the jacket, we know that. Did you know, I mean did you notice that the bra was ripped, torn or damaged?

A. No.

Q. It was not, is that correct?

A. It is correct that it was not.

Q. Did you notice that the "T" shirt, or whatever you want to call it, that had the numeral on....

A. The jersey.

Q. We will call it whatever you say, did you notice that that item was ripped, torn or damaged in any way?

A. Only to the extent that it had some wet dirt staining on it, nothing, not otherwise damaged in any way.

Q. We are not worried, because it was laying near the ground, we are talking about some external force maybe like an animal or human being ripping or tearing or damaging the cloth, did you notice such damage to that jersey?

A. No.

Q. To the other items that the decedent was wearing, which I believe, which includes, I believe, she was wearing

sneakers, did you, Doctor, in examining the clothing as you dis-  
robed the body find any evidence of any ripping, tearing or  
damage to the other items of apparel?

A. Yes.

Q. On what?

A. Wearing damage, particularly to the sneakers,  
otherwise they were not damaged in the sense that you are  
asking.

Q. Now, you know what I am asking, I want to know....

A. They were not torn, ripped or otherwise parted in  
any way, they showed some wearing damage.

Q. We are talking about the unusual say caused by  
some human agency through use of violence, you did not notice  
any such item to any item of clothing on this decedent, did you?

A. No.

Q. No further questions.

RE-DIRECT EXAMINATION

By Mr. Ertel:

Q. Doctor, you were asked about your time of death,  
and asked you, asked if you were given the same set of circumstances  
this could be another day, taking that set of circumstances, if  
I were to tell you that on the day in question, the 19th,<sup>11</sup> and I  
eliminated the 4:30,<sup>11</sup> she had a hoagie, french fries and  
milk shake for lunch and had those grapes in the early afternoon,  
would you be able to establish a time of death in relation to the  
time she ate, approximately?

A. Yes, approximately.

Doctor Catherman.

Q. Based on the stomach content, how much time would elapse between the time of eating and the time of death?

A. It would have been at least several hours, two to four hours, and probably not more than eight to ten hours depending upon the stress and general health or condition of the individual in that period of time.

Q. Let's put one more factor in, Doctor, she had this lunch, she had the grapes in the afternoon, she played football or kickball during the early afternoon hours up until approximately 3:30 in the afternoon, would that give you a better indication of time of death, could you approximate it closer just with those facts?

A. Just with those facts, it would be my opinion she died sometime late in the afternoon or evening of that day.

Q. So the time she was seen alive makes, the last time she was seen alive does not make any difference as far as the content is concerned?

A. No, I was basing it on the nature and type of stomach content that I observed in connection with the circumstances of the meal which she was last known to have eaten as you provided in the assumption of facts that I was given.

Q. Now, Doctor, how long does it normally take to digest food?

A. Well, the books tell you the stomach empties after an average meal and in from two to four hours, but being human, an individual, as we all are different, that somewhat varies from person to person, although the average is given to be

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somewhere between two and a half to four hours or so. The finding of food partially digested in a stomach up to as much as four to six hours after it has been taken in would not be unusual, and under given conditions of illness, emotional stress, or other external factors acting upon a body might not be unusual for as much as twelve or even eighteen hours.

Q. Was the grape that you observed in the stomach in relation to the other food, was that less digested or more digested?

A. The grape I examined was in two parts, the pulp had come from the skin, that is it was parted from the skin. The skin was still as if I were to take a grape skin now and pop the pulp out of it. The pulp or content showed some degree of digestion, but was not to the extent that the other material was softened and digested.

Q. Now, incidentally, the digestive process, when does it end? Does it end at death?

A. Well, reasonably at death. There is no further digestion in the sense that is considered digestion following death.

Q. Doctor, now you were asked many questions about strangulation and reactions, how long does it take, can you describe the process of strangulation generally as to what it does and how long it takes?

By Mr. Fierro:

I would like to have that restricted to this victim. He made the autopsy.

Doctor Catherman.

By The Court:

See if he can do it to this victim first, in this particular case.

By Mr. Ertel:

Q. Can....

A. Yes, I could offer an opinion.

Q. Will you do so?

A. The process of manual strangulation, which is in my opinion is what occurred here, the process, is the process of compressing the neck and the structures within the neck and the principal structures involved are the airway, the blood vessels taking blood back to the body from the head, and those taking blood from the body to the head, as well as certain little pressure points of chemical and pressure receptors that occur along the major artery that is going up each side of the neck, with the constriction and compression of those structures, particularly with the closure of the airway, there is then lack of oxygen getting into the body system and as soon as that lack of oxygen is detected by the brain and its' use of oxygen, abnormality begins and that is in the form of loss of consciousness. It does not mean that the individual dies immediately at that point, but there is loss of consciousness. This would probably take a maximum of a minute or so, and then depending upon the duration of the compression, death as a result of further changes that take place, because of the restriction of blood to and from the head, pressure against these receptors that are both chemical and pressure sending other signals by way of nerves to the



Doctor Catherman.

heart and to the breathing senses, everything would stop or cease in the matter of several more minutes, and without any kind of attempt to recover or resuscitate, the individual would then, the death would then occur.

Q. Doctor, I note that you gave the maximum of a minute before unconsciousness, can you give us an approximation of a minute?

By Mr. Fierro:

I object to that statement, because the Doctor didn't say a maximum of a minute, he said a minute or so.

By Mr. Ertel:

I believe that is a correct restatement.

By The Court:

Reward your question.

By Mr. Ertel:

Q. You noted a minute, can you give us a range of time possibly from which the person may go unconscious?

By Mr. Fierro:

He didn't say a minute only.

By Mr. Ertel:

Q. I asked for a range of time, Doctor, as to the time person would go unconscious from application of strangulation by force?

A. I think within a minute or so and in here we can't be that absolute, because it does not begin at 30 and stop at 29, but purposes for discussion about 30 seconds to a minute and a half which would be 90 seconds, a minute or so.

Doctor Catherman.

Q. You were asked a question about broken fingernails and you were given two alternatives, as I recall either from trying to get the hands off of her throat or on the assailant, did you give any consideration to the fact this child was playing in the afternoon kickball and other physical activities?

A. Among other possibilities, some activities in the afternoon of the death could have resulted in the tearing of those nails.

Q. Were you able to specify the time for or an approximate time when those nails were torn?

A. No, I was not.

Q. Thank you, I have no further questions.

By Mr. Fierro:

I have nothing further.

By The Court:

May I see Counsel?

(Side Bar consultation not made a part of the record.)

(Excused from witness stand.)

By The Court:

The Court will recess. The defendant is excused and the Jury is excused. Everyone else remain seated.  
Court is recessed.

(Recessed at 2:50 P.M. and reconvened at 3:15 P.M.)

By The Court:

Proceed, Mr. Ertel.

By Mr. Ertel:

Officer Houser.

Corporal Houser.

CORPORAL DONALD J. HOUSER, being duly sworn according to law, testified as follows:

DIRECT EXAMINATION

By Mr. Ertel:

Q. State your full name, please?

A. Donald J. Houser.

Q. Your occupation?

A. I am a Corporal with the Pennsylvania State Police stationed at Montoursville.

Q. How long have you been a Corporal in the Pennsylvania State Police?

A. Approximately three years.

Q. How long have you been a State Trooper?

A. Approximately 17 years.

Q. Corporal Houser, in the investigation of this case did you have a particular role as the Property Officer and Custodian?

A. I did.

Q. Explain basically what your role is as Custodian or Property Officer?

A. I was mainly the Receiving Officer, we have a Custodial Officer who is in charge of all of the evidence at the Barracks. In this case it was my duty to receive the evidence, sign it in, and turn it over to a Custodial Officer.

Q. After you go to the Custodial Officer, did you remove the evidence then and transport it to various places like Laboratories and soforth?