

Bomb Thrown Incident in an Agricultural Land. Perplexed Act of the Perpetrators: A Real Crime Scene Report

Prof. T. Nataraja Moorthy^{1*}, A. Manivannan², M. Muhammad Naeim³

^{1,3}Department of Diagnostic and Allied Health Science, Faculty of Health and Life Sciences, Management and Science University, University Drive, Off Persiaran Olahraga, Shah Alam, 40400, Selangor, Malaysia

²Additional Superintendent of Police, Cyber Crime Wing, Virudhunagar district, Tamilnadu, India

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*Corresponding author: Prof. T. Nataraja Moorthy

Abstract

Currently, forensic crime scene investigators face challenges because of the diplomatic acts of the offenders. The actors are very cautious in leaving their evidence during crime operations and depositing their statements during interrogations. Researchers have shown that the investigators need to have the basic knowledge in science, engineering, and medicine fitted for legal or public argumentation. The major impediment to an investigation is the loss or removal of a piece/pieces of evidence from the crime scene. The reason is that human traffic at a crime scene is likely for items to move, misplace, or steal. Only a knowledgeable investigator can handle such critical situations efficiently and conclude the presentation in the legal system. The present case report is an example of such scenario wherein four persons were admitted to a government hospital with explosion injuries, investigated in Tamilnadu, India. They had alleged that when they were walking in an agricultural agricultural land, four persons (as named by the injured) had thrown bombs on them hidden behind a haystack. A case was registered u/s attempted murder and explosives act, and the named four persons from the village were brought to the police station for further investigation. Immediately many villagers have assembled near the police station and demanded the release of these four persons from the police custody since they were innocents and not at all committed the offense. The District Superintendent of Police directed the forensic crime scene investigator (CSI), the corresponding author (hereafter as TN), to assist the police investigation. Accordingly, the CSI immediately rushed first to the hospital with the Superintendent of Police and observed the injured and inquired them and the medical doctor who treated them and recorded their statements. TN then visited the alleged bomb blasting area and no possibility of explosion observed in the said site and finally opined that the allegation of bomb thrown on the wounded was false. The author uncovered the perplexed act of wounded forensically and the police arrested the wounded for crime act concealment and treated under police custody. Later the wounded were prosecuted and finally sentenced by the Honourable Judge, accepted the forensic findings.

Keywords: Crime scene investigation, bomb thrown, injured, false allegation, perplexed act, identified, India.

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INTRODUCTION

Forensic crime scene investigators are currently facing challenges because of the diplomatic acts of the offenders to conceal or hide their criminal activities [1]. The actors are very cautious in leaving their evidence during crime operations and depositing their statements during interrogations [2]. The explosion investigation covers incidents ranging from minor accidents in the home or workplace to major terrorist attack. The forensic crime scene investigators try to identify the seat of explosion, the materials found in the site and to reconstruct the crime occurrences [3]. Researchers have shown that the investigators need to

have basic knowledge in science, engineering, and medicine fitted for legal or public argumentation [4]. Bomb scene investigation explores the investigative process and enables investigators to find the evidence and make sense of what is found [5]. Chemical explosives are classified as low or high explosives according to their decomposition rates and explosive residue; significant physical evidence found in the crime scenes provides valuable information to crime investigators [6]. Physical evidence is a silent witness, as traced and used by the crime scene investigators to solve the puzzle even when the dead bodies are involved in the crime scenes, in the form of suicide or homicide, or simulation [7-10]. The major impediment

to an investigation is the loss or removal of a piece/pieces of evidence from the crime scenes, with or without their consent. The heavy movement of human traffic in a crime scene is likely for items moved, misplaced, or stolen. Only a knowledgeable investigator can handle such critical situations efficiently and to arrive a conclusion for the presentation in the legal system. The present crime scene is an example of crime concealment act wherein the actor has concealed their crime act of explosion and tried to implicate four innocent villagers, as if they were involved in the bomb thrown act. The mystery was solved only through

forensic observation and uncovered their unlawful act that prosecuted legally and sentenced.

GIST OF THE CASE

Four persons were admitted to a government hospital, with explosion injuries, reported at Tamilnadu, India. According to their statement, when they were on the way back home in an agricultural land, four persons had thrown bombs on them hidden behind a haystack and named the bomb-throwers by the wounded as the statement recorded by the medical officer and police officer. Based on the statement, a crime sketch was drawn by TN as shown in figure 1.



Fig-1: Crime scene sketch showing the bomb thrown act on the four persons (admitted wounded) from the rear haystack (Based on the statement of the wounded persons)

The Police registered a case, as attempted to murder with explosives act. As named by the injured, the Police secured the said four persons in the village and brought to the police station for further investigation. On inquiry, the four persons have denied the allegation. During this time, many villagers have assembled near the police station and demanded the release of these four persons secured in the police station, since they were all innocents and would not have committed this offence. The District Superintendent of Police arrived at the police station and sought the service of forensic crime scene investigator (CSI) to assist the investigation. Accordingly, the CSI (TN) immediately arrived the police station, and then initially rushed to the government hospital with the Superintendent of Police to know information from the injured. The CSI enquired the injured, and their statements were the same as reported to Police. Then the CSI discussed with the medical officer who treated the wounded. The doctor stated that they sustained explosion and burn injuries mainly in the hands and lower abdominal regions, interestingly all injuries were alike and in similar areas for all the fours. The CSI examined the dresses worn at the time of bomb-throwing and observed the characteristic odour of black powder or gun powder, classified under low power explosive. Based on the medical officer's statement and the medical record, it revealed that all the four wounded sustained similar

types of injuries on the identical areas of the body and the CSI recorded the statements. He preserved the clothes of the wounded for onward transmission to the forensic sciences department, Chennai, for further chemical analysis. Then TN decided to go to the bomb thrown area along with the police officers.

Examination of the alleged bomb thrown area and crime reconstruction

The police officers and CSI have proceeded to the alleged bomb-thrown site, and many of the villagers have also followed. As shown by the villagers, CSI and police officers arrived at the haystack area and made a thorough search to trace any physical evidence such as bloodstains, explosive residue, and burned cloth pieces. The CSI also adopted different searching techniques with the villagers and police men, tried to trace the evidence but in vain. There was no evidence of bomb blasting or crater mark in any of the surrounding place. At length, TN opined that there was no possibility of explosion or bomb thrown and it appeared false statement of the wounded. Then TN recalled the injury pattern and examination of alleged blasting site, and finally suggested the possibility of bomb-making by the four injured in some area here, when they were in sitting position as shown in figure 2 and made improvised explosive device, using low power explosives.

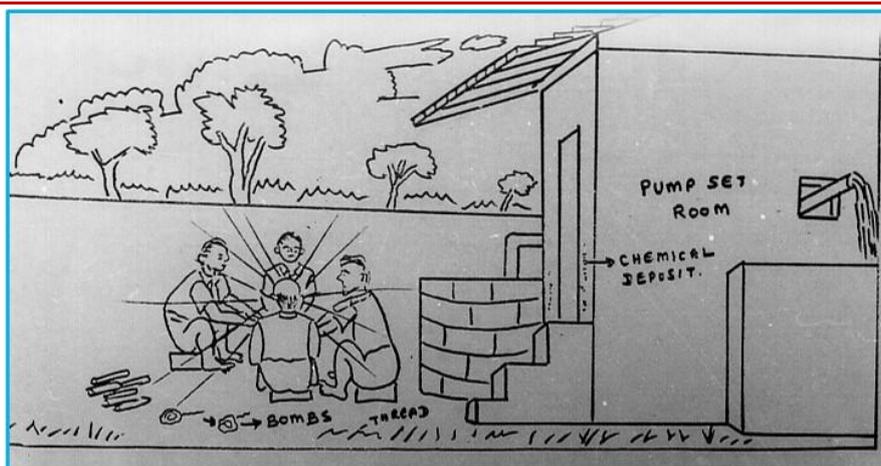


Fig-2: Crime scene sketch showing the sitting position while made bombs near a pump set room

While made the improvised bombs (IED) in a place with sitting position, there was a possibility of accidental explosion led to cause similar injuries in the identical body area with similar types of injuries in hands and abdomen, as reconstructed by the CSI. Then TN made a thorough search along with police officers, around 10 km radius. The villagers were also voluntarily participating in the search along with CSI to trace the alleged blasting site. The CSI could identify some cloth pieces, thread pieces, brown stains and newspaper pieces near a pump set room in remote hill area. Also, TN located some chemical deposit on the wall of the pump set room (Fig 2), smelled gun powder. As a reconstruction, the bomb making place was thus identified and collected the explosion evidence to send for forensic laboratory analysis. As a crime reconstruction, TN had prepared a sketch covering the blasting site, presence of blasting evidence, as presented in figure 2 and explained the police officer, treated medical officer and the crime reconstructed was accepted by the Supdt of Police and the medical officer who treated the wounded. The SP posted police guards to the injured in the hospital until they had recovered and then taken to police station for further investigation. The Supdt of Police explained the wounded, regarding the absence of any explosive residue in haystack area and presence of some explosive residue in the wall of the pump set room. Also SP explained the crime reconstruction done by the CSI. Thus, the interrogation cornered the four injured and they had no choice expect to admit their offense. They have finally confessed that they had made some throw-down-type bombs for their use in a planned community procession. Actually, under a tree, near the pump set room they sat around, as shown in figure 2 and made throw-down type bombs using gun powder and accidental explosion occurred during the manufacture and all sustained injuries in their body areas of the fours. The police recorded their statements for prosecution and remanded them. The CSI (TN) also prepared a crime scene report and submitted to the police investigating officer with copy to the Supdt. of Police, that filed in the court. The suspects retained in the police stations, as named by the

wounded were released from the police custody. Undoubtedly it was an act of crime concealment by the wounded with an intention to misguide the police and the investigation process. There are many incidents wherein the perpetrator committed the crime and the act was concealed by committing another crime. Explosive residue is a trace evidence and there are other trace evidences such as soil [11], hair [12], fire debris [13, 14] and other microscopic materials [15] found in crime scenes provide valuable information to link the crime and criminal. Hence the crime scene investigators need to be knowledgeable whenever dealing with trace evidence. There are incidences wherein untrained officers with lack of knowledge used to ignore the evidence, considering unimportant for the investigation and thus lost the chance of criminal identification [16].

CONCLUSION

In the court trial, the author (TN), then CSI, had attended the court as a prosecution witness and presented his testimony before the judge. The defence lawyer who appeared for the accused had raised some irrelevant questions with the intention to confuse, but the author had tackled the same. The author explained the facts before the prosecution, defence lawyer and Honourable Judge. At the day of judgement, the Honourable Judge accepted the crime reconstruction by the author and the case finally ended with conviction.

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