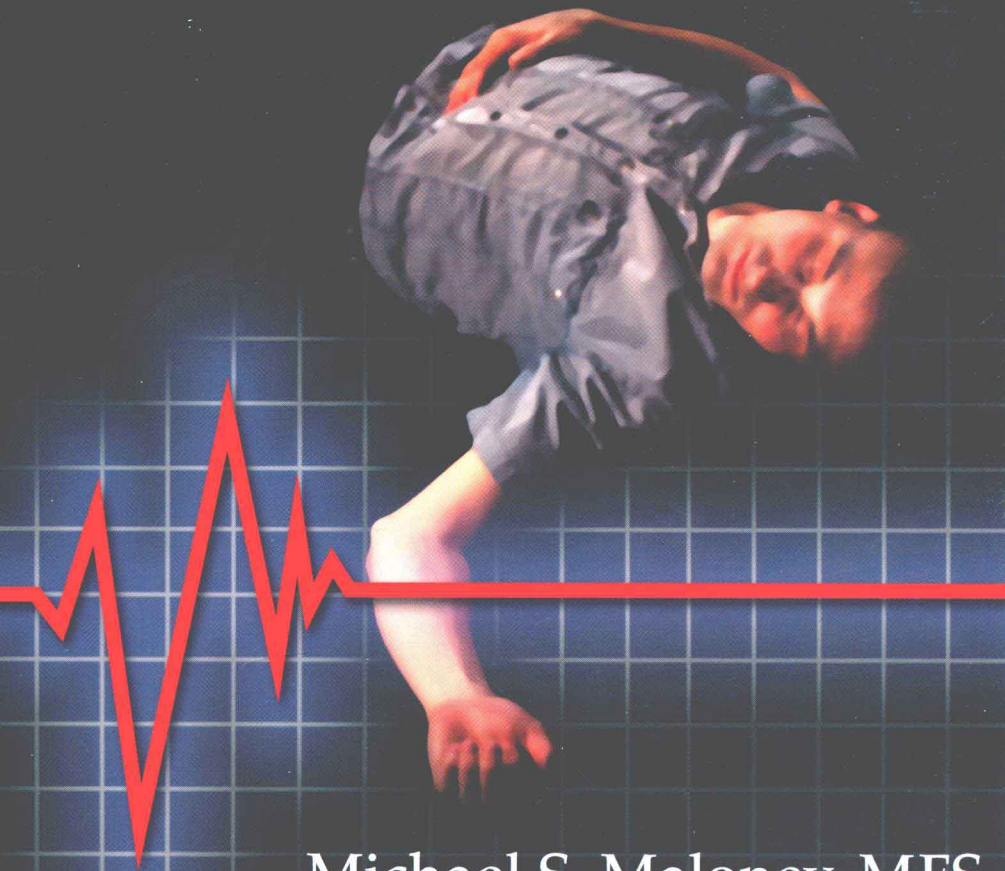


# Death Scene Investigation

## Procedural Guide



Michael S. Maloney, MFS



CRC Press  
Taylor & Francis Group

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# Preface

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This book is meant to be used at the scene as a practical field guide when responding to a death investigation. Some information in the various chapters of the guide may seem repetitious; this is meant to facilitate its field use by minimizing the need to flip back and forth while processing the scene. The guide is separated into the following sections for ease of use:

**Section I, Death Scene Investigations** includes procedures for preparing to and responding to the scene. The death investigation decision tree provided in Chapter 2 is an easy-to-follow process to lead the investigator to a preliminary indication of cause of death. The investigator then uses the appropriate chapter in Section I to facilitate a thorough scene investigation.

**Section II** covers the **Recovery of Human Remains** from open field, aquatic, and buried sites, as well as search techniques to locate clandestine graves.

**Section III** details **Wound Dynamics** and the evidence they may present at the scene.

**Section IV** is used to supplement the death investigation when **Special Death Scene Investigations** such as child or infant deaths, sexual deaths, or scenes involving multiple victims are encountered.

**Section V, Death Scene Management, Tasks, and Responsibilities** covers the responsibilities, duties, and the necessary techniques to accomplish death scene management, documentation, evidence processing, and death scene procedures.

**The appendices** include information on processing bloodborne pathogens, a series of worksheets that may be reproduced to assist the investigators at the scene thorough documentation of their activities, and a sudden unexplained infant death investigative report form.

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# Acknowledgments

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The foundation for this guidebook was established in 1996 while I was involved in co-authoring a government publication, *The Field Guide for Crime Scene Processing*, for the Naval Criminal Investigative Service (NCIS). This guidebook covered not only basic crime scene investigation techniques, but also chapters dealing with death investigations. It has been 15 years since my involvement with the publication of that guide book. It is my hope that following the concept of that field guide, a guide specific to death scene investigations, will be useful. Though the concept for this guidebook is borrowed from that publication, the information and procedures have largely been rewritten, updated, and expounded upon while writing with the law enforcement death scene investigator in mind rather than the military special agent. I would like to thank the co-author of that original guidebook, Special Agent (Retired) Donald Housman. The dynamics of working with him during my career as a forensic consultant was truly phenomenal; any thoughts, reports, research, or process I was involved in the development of were sharper, clearer, and more relevant as a result of working with him.

I would also like to thank Special Agent Thomas Brady, NCIS senior forensic consultant, for his insights and approach to death scene analysis and for being my partner at death scene locations I would rather not visit again; Lou Eliopolus, chief of NCIS Forensic Science Division, author and the best homicide analyst I have ever met; Detective Lou Camelbeek, Tom Green County Sheriff's Office (Retired) for teaching me what it meant to be a law enforcement officer; Ted McDonald and Chris Stewart, senior instructors at the Federal Law Enforcement Training Center, for their incredible expertise in all aspects of crime and death scene investigations; Iris Dalley of Bevel, Gardner and Associates for reviewing the original manuscript; the special agents of the NCIS and, in particular, the Forensic Science Division; and Paul Susanbach, who knows what he has done.

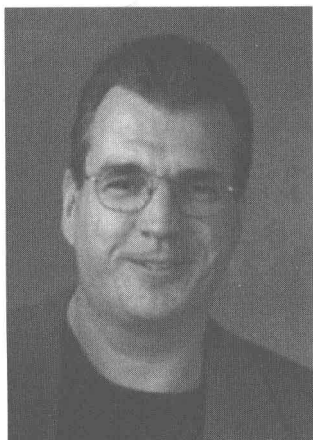
My thanks to Becky Masterman, David Fausel, and Prudy Board of CRC Press for putting up with a first-time author and all of the frustration that goes with it as well as Tom Bevel and Ross Gardner for introducing them to me.

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# Author

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Michael Maloney is a partner with Bevel, Gardner and Associates. He holds a Master of Forensic Science degree from the George Washington University as well as having completed a Fellowship in Forensic Medicine from the Office of the Armed Forces Institute of Pathology. For sixteen years he served as a special agent for the Naval Criminal Investigative Service (NCIS) and spent his last ten years as a senior forensic consultant. Prior to his retirement after 25 years of Federal Service he was the senior instructor for death investigations and sex crimes in the Forensic and Investigative Skills Branch of the Federal Law Enforcement Training Center with the Department of Homeland Security.



Mr. Maloney has undergone extensive training and is considered a subject matter expert in a variety of forensic disciplines including death/crime scene reconstruction, death/crime scene processing, wound dynamics/evidence of injury, and bloodstain pattern analysis. He is the former president of the Association for Crime Scene Reconstruction and has held membership with the American Academy of Forensic Science, International Association of Bloodstain Pattern Analysts, and the International Association of Identification.

Mr. Maloney has been responsible for providing forensic investigation, coordination, and reconstruction for incidents involving death investigations, serial crimes, and crimes of extreme violence. He processed and reconstructed the terrorist attack on the North Arabian Gulf Oil platforms during Operation Iraqi Freedom. He served with the International War Crimes Tribunal for the former Yugoslavia in Bosnia where he led the forensic processing and reconstruction on two sites of mass execution. He also served as an onsite forensic consultant to the Weapons of Mass Destruction Task Forces at the Olympic Games in Atlanta Georgia and the Summit of Eight

Conference in Denver, Colorado. He recently processed and reconstructed the events surrounding the death of 24 Iraqi citizens in Haditha, Iraq. He was recognized for his innovative approach to this scene as the 2008 recipient of the August Vollmer Award presented by the International Association of Chiefs of Police (IACP).

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# Foreword

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*Death Scene Investigation: Procedural Guide* is the answer to a long recognized dilemma—how to have every death investigated by an experienced death investigator. Using his considerable experience in death investigations and forensics, Mr. Maloney has created a procedural guide that gives everyone including the medical examiner's investigator, coroner, crime scene investigator, or detective an on scene guide for processing the death scene. This field guide will assist in understanding the story the scene tells as well as developing investigative direction. The Death Investigation Decision Tree is an innovative, easy to use tool that ensures the scene investigation is focused, directed, and complete while prompting the investigator to see the “red flags” that are present but sometimes overlooked. This should be the first tool used on the scene after familiarization with the scene and basic facts. Easy to follow chapters and complete bulleted procedures are presented in a manner that minimizes the need to flip back and forth through the guide. The spiral bound format is designed to fit in a cargo pocket for easy access and transport to the scene. Unlike textbooks, this guide stands out because it is specifically designed for use in the field. The medical examiner, coroner, and homicide detective should not overlook this guide as well; it is a handy reference for proper procedures to employ in a wide variety of death scenes.

**Tom Bevel**

*President of Bevel, Gardner & Associates, Inc.*



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