Catching Killers: Cause of Death

1. Why did doctors originally think that John Powell died?
2. Why was an autopsy performed?
3. What is the job of the forensic pathologist? How do they do this?
4. Describe the process of an autopsy.
5. Who was the first autopsy ever performed on?
6. What happened during the autopsy of John Powell that caused the forensic pathologist to become suspicious? What was it?
7. What percentage of the population can’t smell cyanide?
8. Describe the story of Margaret Lofty’s death.
9. What was in her lungs?
10. What was in her stomach?
11. What conclusion does the medical examiner draw?
12. How does Charles Burnham connect to this case?
13. What do Alice and Margaret have in common? List all things.
14. What happens during the “fresh” stage of decomposition?
15. What happens during the “bloat” stage of decomposition?
16. What happens during the “active decay” stage of decomposition?
17. What happens during the “advanced” stage of decomposition?
18. When does decomposition end?
19. How can weather affect decomposition?
20. Describe the state of Margaret’s body when it was exhumed.
21. What did the toxicology tests show on Margaret?
22. Describe the state of Alice’s body when it was exhumed.
23. What was the pathologist able to determine from the bodies?
24. How was Bessie Munday related to the deaths of Alice and Margaret?
25. What did John Powell die from?
26. Describe Donald Harvey.
27. Why was Donald Harvey originally a suspect?
28. What did police find in Harvey’s apartment?
29. Describe Harvey’s confession. Give as much detail as possible.
30. How many patients at Drake Hospital did Harvey confess to killing?
31. Describe the embalming process.
32. What did the pathologist find on Bessie’s body? Why was this important?
33. How does the pathologist try to prove how the three wives died?
34. Do you believe the technique the detective and pathologist used to try to prove how George Smith could have killed his wives was ethical? Why or why not?
35. What technique was the most possible way to simulate an accidental drowning?
36. What is one of the symptoms of arsenic poisoning?
37. What was found in the bodies of the two other individuals that were originally thought to have died from pneumonia?
38. How many murders were the police able to link Harvey to?
39. Describe vagal inhibition.
40. Why Smith was only charged with Bessie’s murder?
41. How long did the jury take to reach a verdict?
42. Why did Smith kill his wives?
43. How many people did Harvey estimate that he murdered?
44. How many people is it believe that Harvey actually killed?
45. What was Harvey’s sentence?
46. Describe a virtopsy.