

Comparative analysis of the autopsy reports of Destiny Jacobo and Eliza Jane Scovill

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Abstract

Destiny Jacobo, a 21 month-old Hispanic female toddler, died suddenly in December of 1995 in Los Angeles, California. The Los Angeles County Coroner, Dr. James K. Ribe, conducted an autopsy on Destiny on December 9, 1995 (Case No 95-09550). Ribe listed the cause of death in his report of February 13, 1996 as shaken baby syndrome with associated head trauma. He also alleged that there was forcible rectal insertion causing a retrorectal contusion. Destiny's parents were accused of abusing and killing their daughter. They were convicted and sentenced to life in prison. The mother has been incarcerated since 1996; the father served five years of a life sentence before being released in 2001. Destiny's family and their attorney requested that I review the autopsy report to identify the probable cause(s) of their daughter's sudden acute illness and death. My analysis of the autopsy report indicates that the child died as a result of infections and vitamin K deficiency. It also shows that the allegation of sexual abuse is not supported by medical facts.

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Keywords: shaken baby syndrome (SBS), child abuse, head trauma, autopsy inconsistencies
