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A fatal near-range gunshot below the chin in a child

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A fatal near-range gunshot below the chin in a child

A 14-year-old child was shot from distance in a neighboring country. The all available data was taken from the father without any idea about the scene investigation or the witness statements. On external examination, we have found a near-range gunshot entry wound with an ovalshaped entrance defect in the submental region. The defect edges were crenellated and scalloped showing the appearance of a "rat-hole" surrounded by concentric soot area with deposited burned grains and enfumage zone (Image 1). A reentry wound surrounded by a red-purple zone in the tongue underside (Image 2) and an exit wound in its upper side were found. At the frontal region, a stellate exit wound was seat of brain matter and bone splinter (Image 3). X-ray showed bone fractures without any metal object (Image 4). At autopsy, the tongue was shredded and there was a massive hemorrhage in the aero digestive crossroads. The external beveling of the exit wound was associated with skull bursting, sub- and extra-dural hematomas, and multiple brain hemorrhagic foci. Lack of ballistic study, we only confirmed that "penetrating cranio-facial trauma with at least one near-range gunshot below the chin" was the cause of death. Thus,

all hypotheses of accident, suicide or homicide were possible provided the shot was fired from short distance. After confronting the father to this finding, he confessed that he tried to conceal the truth in order to protect his older son. The deceased was shot by his 16-year-old brother, while they were playing "cops and robbers" game.

Figure legend

Image 1: A near-range gunshot entry wound in the submental region.**Image 2:** A reentry gunshot wound in the tongue underside.**Image 3:** A stellate exit wound in the frontal region.**Image 4:** X-ray showed bone fractures without any metal object.

