

# A Rare Case of Antemortem Hanging; Exhibiting Features of Fetishism & Transvestism

Arora V<sup>1</sup>, Assudaney A<sup>1\*</sup>, Banyal A<sup>1</sup>, Chauhan A<sup>1</sup>, Kumar D<sup>2</sup>, Parmar V<sup>3</sup>, Sharma S<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup>Department of Forensic Medicine, Dr RPGMC Kangra, Tanda, Himachal Pradesh, India.

<sup>2</sup>Zonal Hospital, Dharamshala, Kangra, Himachal Pradesh, India.

<sup>3</sup>Department of Forensic Medicine, Dr. RKGMC, Hamirpur, Himachal Pradesh, India.

## ABSTRACT

Paraphilias persistently indulged in abnormal and unorthodox sexplay by using objects or parts of the body or fantasies in which complete satisfaction is sought and obtained without sexual intercourse. Cross-dressing may be done by different individuals, which may be inconsistent with their gender allocation for various reasons. However, when such individuals may be found in a dead condition, it raises suspicion in the minds of investigating authorities. In the present case, we discuss a case of a cross-dressed person who was found hanging in female attire. There was no evidence suggesting autoerotic activity, nor did he cross-dressed to take up activities like those of a 'drag queen' ('Drag' is a form of cross-dressing as performance art.). The prevalence of transvestic disorder is unknown. The majority of epidemiologic data relating to paraphilias derive from clinical populations, especially large-scale studies that are limited to jail inmates or sexual offenders and there are no studies in the general population. Paraphilias are also considered part of OCD spectrum disorders.

**Keywords:** Paraphilias, Transvestism, Fetishism, Eonism.

*Int J Eth Trauma Victimology* (2024). DOI: 10.18099/ijetv.v10i01.08

## INTRODUCTION

### Transvestic Fetishism (Eonism)

Havelock Ellis coined the term after Chevalier d'Eon de Beaumont, a noted French diplomat who lived the latter part of his life dressed constantly as a female.<sup>1</sup> Cross-dressing is the act of wearing garments not commonly linked to one's gender.<sup>2</sup> There are numerous examples of prominent personalities from history that cross-dressed & sometimes actually lived in the same manner. Many times, cross-dressing was also done to thrive in movies/theatres.<sup>3</sup>

In the present case study, we will elaborate on a case of cross cross-dressed person who was found hanging in female attire. We will discuss how multiple factors play a key role(s) for a person to be found dead in such a manner. The current case study highlights the importance of large-scale studies that are limited to jail inmates or sexual offenders and there are no studies in the general population.

### Case Presentation

A body was found hanging by a tree in a secluded place (cattle shed) by police personnel of police station Dharamshala, Kangra (H.P). As per inquest papers submitted by police, it was the dead body of a male who was a servant in some nearby house and had left his master's house in the evening after doing his routine work.

The body was found hanging by a tree in a 'pashu shala', a secluded place, the next morning (Figure 1).

The body was of a male but was dressed in female attire. Police brought the body to the mortuary of DRPGMCH Tanda for post-mortem examination. As per police inquest papers,

**Corresponding Author:** Assudaney A, Department of Forensic Medicine, Dr RPGMC Kangra, Tanda, Himachal Pradesh, India., e-mail: drashirwadassudaney@gmail.com

**How to cite this article:** Arora V, Assudaney A, Banyal A, Chauhan A, Kumar D, Parmar V, Sharma S. A Rare Case of Antemortem Hanging; Exhibiting Features of Fetishism & Transvestism. *Int J Eth Trauma Victimology*. 2024;10(1):38-40.

**Source of support:** Nil

**Conflict of interest:** None

**Received:** 10/06/2024;

**Received in revised form:** 19/06/2024;

**Accepted:** 22/06/2024;

**Published:** 30/07/2024;

the clothes worn by the deceased were reported to be those of the deceased's sister, who had later confirmed the missing of the same clothes a few days back. Police also confirmed that a few other female clothes were also lying at the place where the body was found. The body was of moderate built & moderately nourished male, wearing blue colored kameez soiled with whitish stains, red colored brassiere, blue colored salwar, white colored panty stained with creamish-yellow-colored stains & a pair of reddish-black-cream colored female sandals. A blue colored blouse & a pair of brown colored sandals were lying by the side of the body. Ornaments were those usually worn by females, which included a white metallic ring, a white metallic kada, a yellow metallic beaded necklace (mangalsutra) and another yellow metallic beaded necklace (Figures 2-4). A blue-colored dupatta with a fixed knot over the right lateral aspect of the neck was present *in-situ*. On removing the dupatta from the neck, a reddish brown-colored, parchmented, oblique & incomplete ligature mark was present. A few inconspicuous injuries were present on the body.



Figure 1: Photograph of hanging from the backside



Figure 3: Photograph of male body in female attire



Figure 2: Photograph of male body in female attire



Figure 4: Photograph of male body with female ornaments

On internal examination, all organs were congested in appearance. Viscera, blood & urine were preserved for chemical analysis. Ligation material was sealed in a cloth parcel. Clothes, footwear (Figure 5) & belongings were sealed and sent to FSL to look for the presence or absence of seminal, salivary stains. Blood on gauze was preserved & handed over to police in a sealed envelope for grouping/cross matching/DNA profiling if required by IO. A sealed vial containing blood for genetic make-up was also handed over to police. A sealed envelope containing one anal swab, one anal smear, one

penile swab & one penile smear from the glans region was also handed over to police. In the chemical analysis report, ethyl alcohol was detected in the urine & its quantity was 122.78 mg%. Human semen was detected over the salwar, underwear worn and underwear lying by the side of the body & penile swab and smear. Saliva was detected in the shirt.

The cause of death in this case was asphyxia due to constriction of the neck and the findings are consistent with ante-mortem hanging. The case appears to be that of 'transvestic fetishism (eonism)'.



Figure 5: Photograph of male body with female footwear lying by its side

## DISCUSSION

Persons dying in a cross-dressed manner is an uncommon phenomenon. Multiple factors play a key role(s) for a person to be found dead in such a manner. Not all cross-dressed people indulge in auto-erotic activity.<sup>4</sup>

Usually, there is no hormonal disturbance or genital abnormality<sup>5</sup> in such cases.

Transvestic Fetishism, in a broad sense, may cover a wide range of cross-dressing, sexual behavior and feelings. The transvestic behavior may range from dressing up with clothes of the opposite sex, without obvious deviant sexual behavior, to cross-dressing with gender identity.<sup>6</sup>

According to Karpman, only a small portion of male transvestics are homosexual. The prevalence of transvestic disorder is unknown.<sup>7</sup> The majority of epidemiologic data relating to paraphilias derive from clinical populations,

especially large-scale studies that are limited to jail inmates or sexual offenders and there are no studies in the general population.

Paraphilias are also considered part of OCD spectrum disorders.<sup>8</sup>

In day-to-day life outside his home, the victim dressed worked, and behaved as a normal male. When secluded, he would behave like a female, which could be ascertained by the objects/attire that were found.

Thus, the current case study highlights the importance of recognizing cross-dressing in the light of various circumstances to reach a proper conclusion.

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