

MEETING ABSTRACT

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The altruistic homicides of Jean-Claude Romand: an autopsy of family secretes

Alexia Paraskevoulakou^{1*}, Vasiliki Antonopoulou²

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Background

The case of Romand concerns a man who pretended to be a medical doctor and killed his family while the fake identity he had cautiously impersonated for 18 years was about to be exposed. The purpose of this study is to determine the motive of Romand's following criminal act. In 1993, Romand smashed his wife's skull and shot his children while asleep. Afterwards, he joined his parents for a meal and shot them both. Later that night, he attacked his ex-mistress, but strangely enough, the few words she uttered, made him apologise and release her. He finally returned to his family home, which still contained the bodies of his dead wife and children, and set it on fire.

Materials and methods

After a bibliographic review of all reliable sources relative to this clinical case, we shall focus on the subversive events preceding the criminal act and examine three key aspects of Romand's life: 1) his enigmatic relationship with women, and especially with his wife and his mistress 2) the paternal role model he was for the local community, strongly suggesting that Romand assumed the exceptional role of a sacrificial figure 3) the criminal sequence.

Results

Romand's case extraordinarily contradicts the utilitarian motive allegation.

Conclusions

Romand's criminal gesture finds its own reason only if examined through the specificity of altruistic homicides. He tragically spared his family circle the shaking

encounter with an intimate stranger who chose to invent the life he most certainly could have lived. This study represents a step toward understanding altruistic homicide risk.

Author details

¹Department of Psychology, University of Paris VIII, Paris, France. ²Hospital of Paidon Agia Sophia, Athens, Greece.

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¹Department of Psychology, University of Paris VIII, Paris, France