

To make sense of the evidence, we look into the evidence and situation given.

Based on the cross shaped wound on the right temple, it is likely that at the point of shooting, the gun was held up really close towards the person's head. The irregular wound could well be the effect caused by the bullet penetrating through the body and exiting there; it would also explain the bullet lodged in the wooden window frame marked X.

The static from the TV could indicate that it was on a Ruritanian TV show prior to the killing of the person. However, the TV may not have been switched off or changed to some other foreign channel because the person may have been fast asleep or already murdered/suicided (depending on the mortis state). The killing (through the struggling if it was indeed a murder) and/or the loud volume of the TV before the channel shut down may have caused the loud noise prior to 1am.

Algor/rigor mortis from the corpse can be used to determine the time of death. The rate of cooling is affected by the size of body, location as well as how heavy the clothes worn are. In this case, it is mentioned that this is indoors (at 25°C) which would mean typical cooling rates for the most part. The fact that there is stiffness in the jaw means that at least 2 hours has elapsed since the killing (hence before 2am). The arms being slightly stiff means that it would fall around the lower end of the range of 4 to 6 hours for the rigor mortis to take place. The body temperature was found to be 3.4°C below normal body temperature; using the general rate of around 0.6–0.8°C per hour, this would give a time of 4 to 6 hours after death, just like that from rigor mortis. This ties in well with the loud noises that the death could have very well happened at around 11pm to midnight the day before the investigation.

There is discoloration that resulted from the heart stoppage (livor mortis): gravitational pull causes the red blood cells to settle towards the ground and hence cause discoloration in the lower parts; in this case, it would mean that the killed person is lying face up, possibly with the legs in a lower position relative to the rest of the body. The muddy marks on the floor means that someone walked in from outside, which would probably be muddy due to the cold, wet weather. This could be either the person who is lying on the bed or the murderer who then disappeared. The clear footprint would likely be the person removing the shoes and then getting onto the bed. Additionally, the security door chain being in place which prevents the door from opening even

with the master key means that a murderer, if present, would have to be on the same side of that door at the time the manager came to check on Chalet 3. This, as mentioned in parts (b) and (d), could be a suicide or a murder.

Evidence that may point towards a suicide:

Suicide note shows clear intent for the person to commit self-harm which would explain why the gun is right by his side; immediately after he shoots himself, it would not be possible for him to fling the gun far away from him. If it were a murder, the gun would probably be removed and hidden elsewhere e.g. outdoors so that the evidence that could trace the murderer would be harder to find. He might have gotten drunk from the binge on wine (through the half-filled wine) and hence could not make good judgments, which may have contributed to the suicide.

Evidence that may point towards a murder case:

The fact that there is ONE clear footprint, which could have come from the sneakers of the person who was killed (and would be clean since he may have not left the room recently). This clear footprint could have been created in the struggle when he was being dragged by the murderer. This could also explain why there is a broken bedside table lamp, as it was knocked over during that struggle. Additionally, the bruising may not have been caused by the gun but rather by some other object that was meant to cause the abrasions, which the murderer took in order to avoid detection (through fingerprints, scratches etc. which could be traced to him).

However, the gun was left behind and the suicide note forged to mislead the police and allow him to escape scot free.

What else to find:

In both the suicide and murder cases, there is a necessity to check for gun shot residue. When the gun is fired, this residue spreads out over an area of one metre. If this is believed to be a murder case, finding the possible gun man and measuring the concentration of nitrite residues as well as various other tests to measure metal concentrations would help resolve the murder.

In the case of suspected murder, the suspected gun man involved could have his gun checked against that of the type found at the scene, since the cartridge case tends to be left behind when it is fired.

Checking for DNA and fingerprints on the door to find out whether there was the presence of the murderer, as they would inevitably have to touch

the door to open it. Also check windows if they are the kind which can be opened. Perhaps also the cigar/cigarette butts to compare it to the brand which a suspected gunman could find. Comparison of handwriting of the suicide letter to any other documents in the room to determine who actually wrote it.

I feel that it is more likely to be a murder. This is because suicide notes, placement of gun etc. could be placed in an attempt to fool the police and hence make them less likely to check for anything that may have to do with the murderer.



Feedback from the Peers (yes, peer 5 is indeed a Wanker):

Part A

peer 1 → You have all your answers in your PDF file, you should follow the assignment format.

peer 2 → You have got the right answer with enough explanation. Answer is competent.

peer 3 → Not precise enough, information about the TV was not taken into account.

peer 4 → Whilst I agree that identifying a death as either a murder or suicide requires an holistic approach taking into account all the circumstances/evidence at the scene I must firstly address your opening remarks above; labelling some of your fellow students as wankers is neither acceptable or professional. I will, however, rise above your remarks and be objective and constructive. Your answer to part a) is clear, concise and comprehensive.

peer 5 → I dont see any time of deadso when did he died

Part B

peer 1 → You have all your answers in your PDF file, you should follow the assignment format.

peer 2 → The answer you gave is quite hard to read and find.

peer 3 → Obvious answer of the door locked from the inside not included in answer

peer 4 → good points made in the section "evidence pointing towards a suicide" regarding the position of the gun post-mortem and the influence of alcohol on an act of suicide - supporting references to relevant cases would further enhance the answer; you could also have also included in this section the point (in the first paragraph on page 2 of your answer) about the security chain

peer 5 → I dont see any answer so i can said more

Part C

peer 1 → You have all your answers in your PDF file, you should follow the assignment format.

peer 2 → The answer reaches the moderate level, need to be improved.

peer 3 → Only GSR mentioned, and there's only elaboration about the technique, not how it supports the suicide case.

peer 4 → You say that your answer to part c) is contained under "what else to find" - GSR evidence is an appropriate answer, however, no reference is made to presence of GSR on the deceased's right hand which would be the case in a suicide (the paragraph seems to refer to the gunman only); I note that you make reference in paragraph 2 of your essay that "the gun was held really close to the head" - this would have been a good point to have included here with reference to supporting suicide cases - this anatomical landmark being a typical spot for suicide shootings

peer 5 → No answer again its weir but sorry no point to give

Part D

peer 1 → You have all your answers in your PDF file, you should follow the assignment format.

peer 2 → The reason you gave is good enough, up to competent level.

peer 3 → Not the strongest evidence presented. Also, if the victim was being dragged there wouldn't be a "clear footprint".

peer 4 → your answer included some valid points e.g. broken lamp/bruising on the deceased/footprint marks to support the theory of a struggle which led to murder and the possibility

of a staged suicide; more comprehensive explanation of how this evidence could be linked to a person other than the deceased e.g. presence of blood, fingerprints, DNA etc would merit a higher score

peer 5 → Ouf no answer again its really weird but what can i do

Part E

peer 1 → You have all your answers in your PDF file, you should follow the assignment format.

peer 2 → Your pdf is really quite hard to read and find. It took me much longer time to comment on your answer.

peer 3 → Not comprehensive enough. The additional evidence you cite (presence of other person in room, cig butt etc) would probably not be enough to convict the murderer. See rubrics for the type of evidence that would be more useful.

peer 4 → yes, I have been thoroughly reading the pdf all the way through; my score for this answer is 1.5 (not available on the drop box) you say that your answer to part e) is contained under "what else to find" - I thought that mention of the cartridge case was a good point - more explanation of how striations on the bullet/casing could be compared to a test firing with the crime scene gun (to link/disregard the weapon to the death) could have added merit to the answer; you made reference to a struggle/DNA and fingerprints, but could have provided a more logical detailed explanation of how this evidence would support a murder theory.

Part F

peer 1 → You have all your answers in your PDF file, you should follow the assignment format.

peer 2 → Next time, please give your answer in the corresponding space and do not leave such inconvenience to us.

peer 3 → Not answering the question. How are you going to refute the opposing argument? Plus no mention of the largest piece of evidence against the murder theory, which is the door locked from inside. Overall not very well done. I don't know how much I gave you in total; I'm not gonna bother to count for you. I tried my best to grade you according to what your answers were worth, though I think you don't deserve it. Firstly, your comment in the first box saying "there will always be wankers" was unkind and uncalled for since the people who are grading your work are probably not the same as those who presumably gave you low marks in your previous assignment. Plus it does not help you to attack your graders this way. Your picture does not help at all. It only shows how lazy you were; you could have copy-and-pasted the relevant sections into the boxes, which would have made it much easier for the graders to follow. If you could put pictures and stuff into the other boxes I'm pretty sure you could have done that. Telling us you need at least a 10 most definitely does NOT help as well. I hope you don't see these comments as personal attacks, but as honest opinions from someone who hopes you learn from your mistakes, not academically but in your character and your expectations.

peer 4 → your answer to part f) in the penultimate paragraph of your essay alludes to the very valid concept of staged suicide, but a much fuller explanation would be needed to refute a legal argument of suicide in court, and merit a higher score; I couldn't see how your photograph and the last paragraph of your essay was relevant to answering part f) of the case study. Overall, I think, the use of sub headings throughout your essay as reference points for the answers to each part of the case study would have facilitated the reading and review and improved the persuasiveness of the arguments

peer 5 → it donest answer the question im sorry