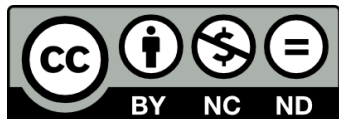




Forensic photography

Prof. Thomas Wenzel

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for the Istanbul Protocol in Europe**

www.istanbulprotocol.info



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Note

The following slides use actual „everyday“ settings provided by actual clients.

The technical quality is not optimised, equipment used is simple and affordable to simulate „real live“ working conditions.

Written informed was obtained for this use of the pictures.

Forensic photography, Example I

Please look at the following slide of a picture taken during documentation of a torture survivor.

Take your time.

Consider: what was done properly, what could be better ?



Scar (machete,
cut, 7 years old)

Ruler giving size and
standard colour

Relevant data:
Name; birth date,
day and location
picture was taken



Please rate

	1 -6	What could be done to improve results ?
Quality of picture:		
Identification of relevant information (location, time, file number):		
Qualifiers (standard colour scale, standard ruler):		
Metadata available (bit, author, camera, (shutter speed if applicable), aperture, GPS data if available)		

Examples for solutions

		What could be done to improve results ?
Quality of picture:		Use a ring flash/light, use a tripod
Identification of relevant information (location, time, file number):		File and picture number, examiner name Add electronically (beware: the last option might compromise integrity)
Qualifiers (standard colour scale, standard ruler):		Keep closer and parallel
Metadata available (bit, author, camera, (shutter speed if applicable), aperture, GPS data if available)		Add

Tools

Depending on setting you can achieve better light by using a ring light or soft box



– a photo should not have too many shadows nor lack contrast.

Control of background colour and avoiding irrelevant objects (by using a sheet or paper) can further improve quality.

Tools

Forensic rulers and scales

- If no other means are available, any object with clearly defined size and colour can be used.
- Forensic rulers – provided also for example by IRCT (www.irct.org) can take different shapes, including an L shape, that facilitates measuring size of lesions in two dimensions.

IP and ARTIP tools

- The Istanbul protocol Annex provides a body chart that should be used to localise injuries and correlate them to the pictures taken.
- You can also use tools (photo documentation sheet, time line, simple ruler) provided in the ARTIP tool box.

Example II

Look carefully at the following picture.

Consider:

- which instruments could have caused this scars (1, 2, 3) ?
- how was the instrument (s) probably used ?

Example II



- 1
- 2
- 3

Explanation sample II

Scars caused by cuts after he fell to the floor, using a machete (large knife).

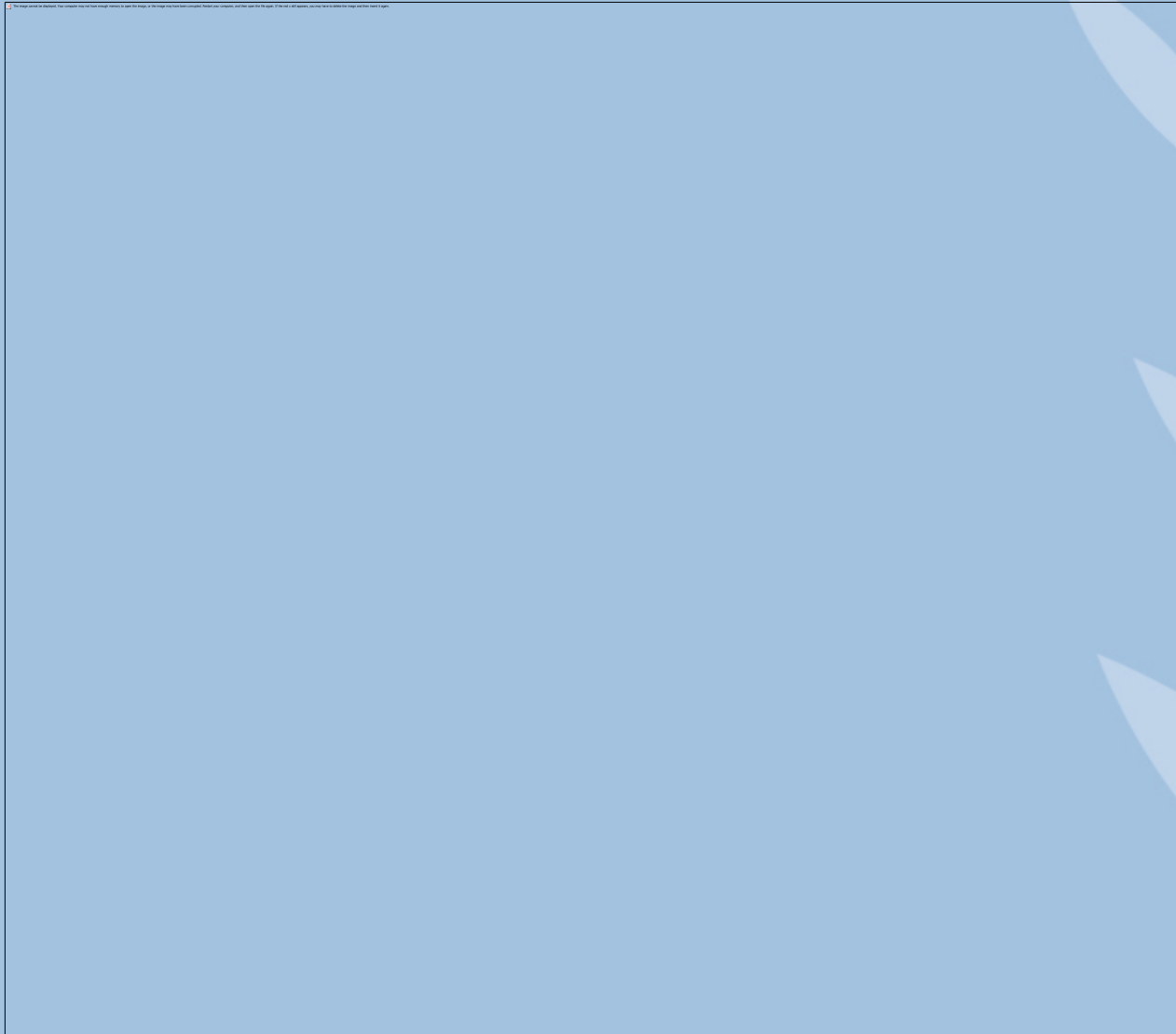
Time: about 8 years before the picture was taken.

Example II - continued

Consider:

How could we explain the strong keloid (scar) formation and different look in scar 3 ?

Example II - continued



Example II - continued

Explanation:

While scars 1 – 2 had smooth edges, the machete slipped in 3 and originally left a ragged open scar with border dehesion and tissue damage. First treatment was by simple bandages, as no other treatment was available in a situation of unrest.

Surgery was performed in the host country in Europe to control excessive keloid formation several years before examination, confirmed by medical record.

Example II - continued

Consider:

Which next steps could be taken ?

Example II - continued

Explanation:

- Neurological examination to demonstrate damage to nerve function.
- MRI to check for blunt brain injury indicators, neuropsychological testing.
- Ultrasound to explore tissue injury.
- Bone-scintigraphy (X-ray if not available) to check for possible bone injury.

Example II - continued

Consider:

- MRI of the brain demonstrated no pathological findings, as did neurological examination.
- Bone scintigraphy yielded increased activity in the lower right tibia and left right lower proximal fibula.

Are this results contradictory or how could they be interpreted ?

Example II - continued

Not all beatings must lead to blunt brain injury and/or changes in **MRI**.

While insufficient MRI methodology might lead to a false negative finding, (not true in our case), they also might not show up 8 years after the event.

This therefore does not contradict the report or the results of bone scintigraphy that are in good agreement with

Example II - continued

Further point to be considered:

memories might be unclear or contradictory due to posttraumatic stress.

Example II - continued

Further findings in the present case:

- Posttraumatic stress disorder, flash backs and night - mares reflecting attack by machete, flash backs of family members killed
- Major depression, recurrent
- Symptoms starting after event, no prior or family history of mood or anxiety disorders

Summary

„Best possible“ quality pictures are an important part of an examination.

Rule I: Even a simple photo is better than no picture.

Rule II: Professional or even improvised tools and good documentation of information on pictures taken can improve results significantly.

Summary

A good documentation is an integrated set of information, using an interdisciplinary approach.

Different aspects and findings should be seen in context of the different findings and the narrative (report of the client).