

Forensic investigations of less lethal weapons

Carl Wigren

CRT Less Lethal Inc., USA

With the current political climate and social change, civil disturbances are increasing in major cities. To control civil unrest, police agencies rely on less lethal weapons to gain control of situations while reducing the potential of serious injury and death. In the chaos of the events and the resulting aftermath, police officers involved in these disturbances are often scrutinized for their actions. In the post event analysis of these events, wounds from the injured and the less lethal devices themselves can be examined for clues as to what occurred during the event.

The most widely used less lethal weapon in the world today is the TASER or conducted energy weapon. Statistically, it is the most successful at stopping a violent aggressor, yet it is the most controversial. Often during a prolonged struggle, the device can be deployed for an extended time in an effort for the police officer to gain control of a combative subject. In cases where a death or other unintended negative outcome occurs proximal to a TASER deployment, forensic clues related to the TASER components can be explored. The results of those analyses can reconstruct the event helping to remove conjecture related to the facts of the incident.

Biography

Carl Wigren MD is a diplomate of the American Board of Pathology certified in forensic pathology. He provides autopsy services to Coroner jurisdictions in Washington State and consulting services in Washington, Idaho, Oregon, and Florida. He has a medical staff appointment at Skagit Valley Hospital in Mt. Vernon Washington. He serves as Adjunct Clinical Assistant Professor for the Pacific Northwest University of Health Sciences in Yakima Washington. He is a member of the American Academy of Forensic Sciences, American Professional Society on the Abuse of Children, International Association of Coroners and Medical Examiners, National Association of Medical Examiners, Washington State Association for Justice, and the National Association of Criminal Defense Lawyers. He is active in teaching recently completing a Science Communication Fellowship at the Pacific Science Center where he has served as a consultant on several health and forensic science related topics; serving as a medical student preceptor; and providing community programs on the forensic sciences.

crtlrick@gmail.com