ABSTRACT

TITLE:	Patterns in Methods of Body Disposal: An Analysis of Choice Rationale and Urbanization
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PRESENTED AT:	2015 Undergraduate Research and Creative Activities Symposium, Fort Lewis College

ABSTRACT: In 1999, Hochrein and associates presented the findings of The Buried Body Cases Analysis Project (BBCAP), a nation-wide study that identified patterns in the methods by which murders were committed and the variable ways in which bodies were disposed of between the years of 1994 to 1997. The present study provides a partial update to the BBCAP by looking for similar patterns in murders committed in Arizona, Colorado, New Mexico, and Utah between the years of 2000 to 2014 and comparing these patterns to those described in the earlier study. A better awareness and understanding of these murder and body disposal patterns can aid forensic professionals in future criminal investigations. Searches of NEXIS Systems database provided a total of 119 newspaper articles describing relevant murder cases, and population data was collected from FBI Uniform Crime Reports and Bureau of Justice Statistics. Patterns observed in the current study were similar to those reported by the BBCAP; the most common method/cause of death between the two studies was by the use of a gun, followed by strangulation. The majority of the victims knew their killer, and bodies were seldom altered. Contrary to expectations, there is no significant relationship between the murder rate and population size of metropolitan areas in the Southwest. One significant difference between the BBCAP report and the current study is the average age of offenders, which is between 14-19 years of age in murders committed in the Southwest between 2000 and 2014.