

Minds on trial uss iowa assignment

Law



The investigation resulted in a decision that Warthog deliberately caused the explosion. This outcome came under intense scrutiny and ultimately was subjected too hearing in 1989. The US Iowa was officially retired from service In October 1990 (Ewing & McCann, 2006). A psychological autopsy, also known as an equivocal death analysis, Is an investigation into the psychological state of a particular individual of interest and occurs in deaths, whether accidental, homicidal, or suicidal, where traditional Investigations have failed to determine cause of death.

In the case of the US Iowa, the equivocal death analysis was conducted by FBI agents Richard Alt and Roy Westwood. Both men were experienced agents (Ewing & McCann, 2006). Alt and Westwood used several pieces of evidence to draw their conclusion regarding Warthog. These included his possession of the books Getting Even: The Complete Book of Dirty Tricks and the Improvised Munitions Handbook. The latter was a military manual.

They also reviewed his naval records and the fact that possessed few civilian pieces of clothing, a rundown vehicle, and had little money at he time of his death. Most, if not all, of the evidence used by Alt and Westwood was provided by the Navy Itself. The final assessment was that Warthog was a suicidal individual dissatisfied with himself and his life. His desire was to die in service with an honorable burial. It also concluded that he possessed the knowledge needed to create such an explosion, as well as the ability and opportunity (Ewing & Mccann, 2006).

According to Ewing and McCann (2006), the panel of experts reviewed included the validity of the Navy's conclusion about Warthogs involvement in

the incident, whether or not the materials used to complete the psychological analysis were valuable, was the investigation exhaustive, what were Warthogs motives, the likelihood that Warthog committed the alleged act, could alternative conclusions be drawn from the material provided to Alt and Westwood, and what are the limitations of this type of analysis.

Four of the expert panelists concluded that the analysis's outcome was at least plausible. The other ten dissented. All identified the analysis as being too speculative. Each had diversely differing opinions. One felt the evidence did not support the claim that Warthog was suicidal. Another felt the FBI should have conducted their own interviews instead of relying solely on those and the conclusions drawn by Alt and Westwood had many problems (Ewing & Mccann, 2006).

Personally, I would have conducted an investigation independent of naval influence with the exception of that presented by personal interviews with survivors of the incident and prior fellow soldiers and commanders of Warthog. That being said, using the information provided to Alt and Westwood, I would agree that Warthog was suicidal, had glorified and idealistic visions of his own death, had the knowledge, ability, and means to cause the explosion to occur. There was little evidence presented to support intent to continue life beyond this assignment.