

## **FORENSIC SCIENCES**

### **ADVENTURES IN BABY-SITTING: HOW NOT TO TREAT YOUR WARD!!!<sup>MAS</sup>**

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Perhaps one of the saddest and most tragic cases in recent times occurred during the evening hours of September 9, 1995 in Kalispell, MT. Two and a half year old Joshua Scott Norman died as the result of intentional poisoning at the hands of his teenage (15 years old) baby sitter. Early efforts at denial of any wrong doing on the part of the baby sitter were quickly dispatched through the combined efforts of the State Crime Lab's Medical Examiner, Toxicology Section, and Chemistry Section. The lab was able to show that young Joshua Norman had succumbed to lethal levels of codeine and phenol (one of the active ingredients found in Pine-Sol). The lab's

analytical results provided the investigators of the Kalispell Police Department the necessary tools to challenge the baby sitter's questionable participation. After 10 days of compassionate, though painstaking, interviews the baby sitter confessed to intentionally "dosing" her young ward. Consequently, the baby sitter was remanded to adult court where she pled guilty to homicide. This case, though tragic and heartbreaking as it was, may not have had a successful conclusion if not for the combined efforts and close communications between the State Crime Lab, the Kalispell P.D., the Flathead County Coroner's Office, and the Flathead County Attorney's Office.