



## Pathology & Biology Section – 2008

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### G71 A Cadaver Encased Within Concrete: A Case Report

Gilles Tournel, MD, PhD\*, Anne Becart-Robert, DDS, Benoît Bourel, PhD, Axelle Balgairies, Cédric Houssaye, Valéry Hedouin, PhD, and Didier Gosset, MD, PhD, Institut de Médecine Légale de Lille, 1, place de Verdun, Faculté de Médecine, Lille, 59045, FRANCE

The goal of this presentation is to present an amazing case report on a cadaver encased within concrete.

This presentation will impact the forensic science community by showing the particularities of the crime scene and the autopsy of this deceased person.

Encasings within concrete are relatively rare forms of hiding or disposing of a body. At first, these cases are often treated as "matters involving a missing person". In this case report, the circumstances and findings are described in which a body was encased within concrete. It is of importance to note that the body may be preserved quite well in concrete, which allows not only the identification of the victim but also the determination of the cause of death, even after a prolonged postmortem interval.

A male cadaver aged 65 is discovered in reinforced concrete in a cellar. Circumstances of his death, circumstances of his burial, identification, autopsy findings, and the perpetrator's behavior are described. In March 2003, Mr P's brother goes to the Police Department and says he hasn't seen his brother for five years. The police investigations lead to his wife. She says her husband was very violent physically with herself and their son. Five years ago, during summer, her husband fell on the floor in their house. Because she was afraid of his reactions, she went away from the house, came back three weeks later and discovered her husband dead, still at the same place. She decided alone to remove the body. With the help of her son, she put her husband in her car, enveloped in several layers of tissues, and deposited him in a cellar of another house. She said she built a wall alone and placed the body under 70 centimeters of reinforced concrete.

Crime scene and autopsy findings are described. The body was found dressed like on the day of his death. His wife had put a plastic bag on his head and pins on his nose. She said it was to avoid a putrid flow. She wrapped the body into several blankets. The body was putrefied (three weeks of putrefaction) and conserved in the same state. Identification was easy, rapid, and completed odontologically. No traumatic lesions were discovered during the autopsy. Several hypotheses were proposed for the manner of the death: toxic, natural or asphyxia by plastic bag. Anthropological analysis is detailed to determine the origin of the lesions. On the body, in the blankets, *Calliphora vicina* larvae and *Calliphora vomitaria* pupae were discovered. An entomologist expert tried to precisely determine the postmortem delay since it was crucial for the investigations to conclude the delay between the death and the encasing in the cellar. These findings are compared to police investigations. These findings are compared to literature on bodies disposed in reinforced concrete, on the behavior of this woman. The body conservation is detailed according to different methods of burial. Moreover, after denunciation, selenium intoxication was suspected. The investigation and findings on selenium are described.

This case is amazing, and has required a multidisciplinary approach to be elucidated. The authors underline, one more time, the importance of the description of the death scene associated with the autopsy findings to understand and to conclude on the cause and the manner of death.

#### **Anthropology, Concrete, Entomology**