H119   Unearthing Peru's Buried Secrets: La Cantuta Revisited

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The learning objectives of this presentation are to discuss the physical evidence of one of the most serious violations to Human Rights (HHRR) that took place in Peru during the regime of President Alberto Fujimori (1990-2000, and to present the results of the second examination of the human remains, 14 years after they were recovered using a multidisciplinary approach combining forensic anthropology and human genetics.

This presentation will impact the forensic community by showing the importance of forensic anthropological analysis in cases of human rights violations particularly those involving enforce disappearance and attempted destruction of the evidence through the analysis of a case in Peru.

Governments in the process of national judicial reform are tasked with investigating human rights (HHRR) abuse and extra-judicial executions of former regimes, often many years after the crimes occurred. The rule of law projects underway in Peru are in the process of locating and exhuming graves and performing postmortem examinations (sometimes even second autopsies) from past HHRR violations. Investigations into such cases not only have the challenges associated with "cold cases" but often must sort through evidence previously altered to cover–up crimes committed. The following presentation is a discussion of such a case in Peru, representing one of the most serious HHRR cases during the regime of President Alberto Fujimori (1990-2000).

In July 1993 authorities exhumed some boxes containing burnt human remains in a land fill in the outskirts of Lima. The location of the remains was tipped to the media by "COMACA" (Commanders, Majors and Captains) a dissident group within the military opposing the regime of President Alberto Fujimori and his spy chief Vladimiro Montesinos. According to the same information, the human remains belonged to nine students and a professor (two females and nine males) abducted a year earlier (17-18 July 1992) from the University of La Cantuta, East from Lima. At the time, the University of Lima had been under military control and the now known the students and the professor were abducted by a task force of the military under the direct command of *Montesinos* also known as the "Colina" group, who were responsible for several other major crimes (http://www.cverdad.org.pe/ifinal/ pdf/TOMO%20VII/Casos%20IlustrativosUIE/2.22.%20LA%20CANTUTA.pdf).

At the time of the initial investigation, the Office of the Prosecutor concluded that the remains had been buried and then exhumed to be burnt and reburied in secondary graves. The identity of the remains was deter-mined to belong to one of the missing students. Further a set of keys opened the locker of a second missing student. However there was no information regarding whether all ten victims were buried in that location, nor was the cause of death estimated for any of the remains. Following the passage of Laws (Law 26479 and 26492) passed in 1995 under the Fujimori regime, giving amnesty to all members of security forces and civilians accused of HHRR violations, such as those committed by the "Colina" group, the Inter- american Court of Human Rights ordered the Peruvian State to investigate the case properly and to locate and identify the human remains of the ten victims among other reparative measures (http://www.corteidh.or.cr /docs/casos/articulos/seriec_162_esp.pdf). Following this order by the Court, the Peruvian Forensic Anthropology Team (EPAF) was appointed by the Peruvian Judiciary to carry out the exhumation and analysis of the remains fourteen years after their initial discovery.

This presentation discusses the process and result of this investigation. It also emphasizes important issues and challenges of investigating HHRR cases under transitional judiciary reform and highlights critical methods for anthropologists working in similar contexts. The exhumation of the remains uncovered four heavy coffins containing the disarticulated and fragmented remains representing at least nine individuals. Most of the weight and volume of the coffins were made only by refuse, probably collected during the initial operation. Only eight individuals were however related to the case, since the ninth individual was represented by a single distal phalanx of a child aged 8 to 10 years. The missing students and professor were between the ages of 18 and 48 years. At least three individuals had been exposed to fire at different temperatures (from combustion to calcination), showing typical changes associated with postmortem burning.

One individual was complete and sustained four gunshot wounds to the head, two of which were caused by a "double tap". Three other unrelated cranial fragments showed posterior gunshot wounds indicating a certain pattern concerning the manner of death of the victims (homicide). Methods for identification including STR DNA analysis are discussed.

Fifteen years after the fact, all remains of the missing students and professor have not been located. The results of the analysis corroborate testi- monies of some of the perpetrators. It is clear however that a negligent recovery by the Peruvian police in 1993 contributed to add unrelated evidence (refuse and child's phalanx), but were not thorough enough as to find the remains of all victims. It is expected that in its forthcoming sentence, the Peruvian Court will order further investigations to determine the where- abouts of the victim's remains in order to repatriate them to their families.

Fujimori, Disappearance, Double-Tap