



Pathology Biology Section – 2011

G66 Soccer Scams, Search Engines, Scientists, and Slaughter: Investigating a Complex Double Homicide in North-East England

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After attending this presentation, attendees will see the value of using relevant subspecialty expertise in forensic pathology and the benefits of good communication between the various experts and investigating authorities in ensuring that evidence given in court is reliable and supported by validated scientific principles.

This presentation will impact the forensic science community by showing how a complex case can be brought to a satisfactory conclusion by methodical examination of the available evidence.

In 2008, two Chinese nationals who had been students at Newcastle University were found dead in their home. They had clearly been the victims of homicide and a pet had also been killed. There was virtually no evidence at the outset as to when or why the murders had occurred and no suspect existed. Scene examination showed that both victims had been bound and suffered significant blunt force trauma. At autopsy, evidence of incised wounds was identified in one victim and signs of asphyxia in the other.

The brains were submitted to a forensically experienced neuropathologist who provided valuable evidence with respect to the survival period after injury. The meal that one of the victims had eaten when last seen alive had been at the restaurant where she worked. The nature of this meal was known and the gastric contents of this victim were examined by both the pathologist and a scientist to attempt to identify the components of the stomach contents and the degree of digestion.

Although a national appeal was made on television for information, a suspect was developed by an unusual method. A strong case including DNA evidence was made and ultimately this individual was convicted on two counts of murder.

Good communication between the experts and police led to the development of a powerful and reliable case assisted by relevant subspecialist expertise.

Blunt Trauma, Homicide, Organized Crime