

CONFIDENTIAL

Lab Ref: T/4333/79 (H/99/19641, H/99/19641)

Review of Investigation into the Suspicious Death of Blair Peach

Further to my original report dated 20th July 1999, I have been asked to comment further on the scope of my search in May 1999 for 62 hairs which I understand from the original examination notes had been recovered from various items associated with this investigation.

23rd April 1999: I was informed that all records associated with cases examined during 1979 had been destroyed after approximately six years. If available the records could have indicated whether recovered material had been retained and if so, the located, or whether the material had been destroyed and if it was, under who's instruction.

4th May 1999: I contacted Person 150, the scientist responsible for the original examination of the items in this case. Person 150 did not recall retaining any material associated with his examinations.

22 April to 7th May 1999: A search led by the then Head of Exhibit Stores (Person 182) did not find the recovered hairs. The search included the storage cases, racking, the "corners" and other non-routine areas in case the items had fallen or become dislodged from their original positions.

30 June 1999: Confirmed the outcome of the search with Commander Quinn and Officer 94. Agree to continue searching for any retained material. Agreed further examination requirements of the available items.

14 July 1999: Confirmed with Officer 94 the search of the Lambeth facility was exhausted and no items relating to this case had been found. My report of the 20th July 1999 then followed.

My further involvement related only to the co-ordination of the Mitochondrial DNA provision.

Person 160
Head of Service Delivery

17th March 2010

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United Kingdom

Direct Line: *****
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www.forensic.gov.uk

Our reference T/4333/79 and H/99/19641
Your Reference: Blair PEACH

Dear Officer 95,

Review of Investigation into the Suspicious Death of Blair Peach

You have asked for a summary of my involvement in the search for retained materials for the above mentioned case, following a request from Officer 96 of your team.

When I originally spoke on the phone to Officer 96 in January, I was asked to ascertain if the FSS still had the 62 hairs mentioned in the original case notes from 1979. There were hairs recovered from various items submitted to the laboratory including truncheons and items of clothing. I was also asked what the status was of the 3 hairs tested in 2000 by FSS scientist Person 186 using the mitochondrial DNA method - and whether anything remained from these hairs.

I responded to Officer 96's request by e-mail on 1st February 2010 to explain the following: Regarding the 62 hairs, I understand that in 1999 Person 160 (FSS) was contacted and asked if these hairs could be located. A search was conducted in the FSS Laboratory in Lambeth for the hairs (known to have been mounted on glass slides) at this time, and they could not be located. Unfortunately we still do not have a recorded location for the hairs as our records dating back to 1979 are incomplete.

I asked for our current retained materials records to be checked for anything under the relevant case numbers and nothing could be found. I must ass the caveat that the search was under the above two lab ref numbers (T/4333/79 and H/99/19641) and I stated that if Officer 96 was aware of any other review of this case over the years to please let me know as there could be another lab ref assigned to the case that I could search under. I also stated that I had not requested a full scale physical search within the FSS for these hairs.

Regarding the 3 hairs removed from items DF7 (Truncheon from Officer 59 - one hair removed) and PM/103 (Truncheon from Officer 51 - 2 hairs removed), these were tested in 2000 using mitochondrial DNA methods and a report was issued by Person 186 from the FSS. Officer 96 had confirmed that the MPS have a copy of this report. I checked with Person 186 and she confirmed that the entire hair was consumed as part of the DNA test - therefore no hair remains. What does remain is a small

amount of DNA extract (liquid) which is generated from the mitochondrial testing. This small amount of liquid is the leftover from the original DNA extract generated by the DNA test and therefore is probably not much use at this stage - what I mean is that in theory it would give the same result as reported by Person 186 in 2000.

Subsequent to my correspondence with Officer 96, you contacted me to ask for some further information, access to the case files and some further searches to be undertaken. My colleague Person 187 became involved at that point and met with you on Friday 5th March. Person 187 has written to you separately to outline the actions he took following your meeting.

Yours sincerely

Person 188

Re : T/79/4333 – 62 hairs – Blair Peach case

I was approached on Tuesday 2nd March by a member of our Customer Relations department. They had been in discussions with Officer 95 from the Metropolitan Police in relation to the retained materials in question. I was brought up to speed on the case and asked if I was potentially available to attend a meeting on Friday 5th March with Officer 95 and his colleague Officer 97. On the 3rd March this meeting was confirmed.

It was my understanding that the case (T/79/4333) was submitted in 1979. The T prefix denoted that the case category was “suspicious death”. The case files are still available and a letter from Person 160 dated 20th July 1999, states that a number of hairs (62) were taken from a variety of exhibits. A search for these hairs was carried out in 1999 but the materials could not be located.

Prior to the meeting, on the 4th March, I had instructed several staff to search in the areas I thought that these materials could potentially be. I asked the Team Leaders of the Biology, and Marks and Traces teams to search all rooms under their control. This search consisted of all drawers, cupboards and filing cabinets within the scientific areas of the 3rd and 4th floor. Evidence of these searches is attached (Appendix 1).

In addition to this I asked the Lab Attendant manager to once again search through the retained materials logs, and also to open any crates within the sub-basement storage area identified as being either the property of Person 150 (RO in the case), or of stemming from this era. I have attached an email from the manager to state that the retained materials were not located. (Appendix 2).

As part of the meeting with Officer 95 I introduced them to a member of staff who has dealt with numerous enquiries in relation to retained materials as part of their role in Cold Case reviews. I attach a letter from her detailing what the policies relating to the retention and destruction of samples were thought to be around that time. (Appendix 3).

Person 187

10th March 2010

Appendix 3

I have been responsible for co-ordinating the Metropolitan Police's Coldcase Rape Investigations at the FSS since 2002. During this time, I have looked into the way that exhibits and items are retained at the lab pre-1996 when the FSS was the Metropolitan Police Forensic Science Laboratory (MPFSL).

In relation to retained slides and tapings, which were held at the MPFSL as opposed to being returned to the force (as exhibits were). These items would be held at the lab for a retention period of 30 years for murder cases (M prefix lab references) and 7 years for all other cases (this would include cases such as suspicious deaths and rapes which have since had their retention times increased).

Having spoken to former MPFSL employees this seems to have been the general consensus for retention periods, however, no paperwork is held at the FSS to support this. I have previously researched this issue and found a document which states that the retention policies of the MPFSL were written in 1984, which was set by the Home Office, the police and the CPS; prior to this there were Home Office circulars which dealt with retention periods (see attached).

When items were destroyed there would have been paperwork retained which documented these destructions, however, these would also have been subject to a retention period of 6 years and as such would have subsequently been destroyed.

I have logged many slides from the MPFSL, and those not currently logged (1970-1977) are filed in chronological order in storage. These have both been searched and the slides relating to T/4333/79 have not been located amongst these.

During the search I also looked to see if other T cases had been retained. There are only a few cases, which are likely to have been missed during destruction periods (due to having been retained by scientists at the time).

It is my belief that, having looked into the retention of laboratory retained materials in several cold case reviews, that policies existing at the time of the MPFSL meant non-murder cases (non M-prefix cases) would have been destroyed after 7 years. No documentation has been located to support this, other than the recollection of former employees and the lack of retained materials which tends to support this. It is my understanding that the Home Office will have copies of these documents which could confirm this. The Home Office circulars are listed as: 40/1973; 41/1973; 125/1976; 55/1980; 74/1982; 25/1987, I have not personally viewed these documents.

Person 189

5th March 2010

From: Person 190
Sent: 04 March 2010 15:21
To: Person 187
Cc: Person 191, Person 192, Person 193, Person 194, Person 195

Person 187,

The following areas have been searched for the slides from T/4333/79:

B3026 lab and office area
B3037 (wet chem)
orange lab on the 4th,
front area of B3036
Exhibit stores B3027 and 3033
Marks prep room B3032
Comparator room B3038
Manufacturing marks room B3039
GRIM B3029
Microscope bay B3028
Office area B3030
White lab
Lab 3034
Lab 303a
3006
3041
3042
3043
3043a
3044
B4002
B4005
SOIT Offices
Orange Lab
Green Lab
Cyan Lab
Red Lab
Pink Lab
Blue Lab (+ filing cabinet outside)
Black Lab (+ filing cabinet outside)
4027
4028
4029
4030
4034
4040
4048 (fibres room)
Corridors outside 4029, 4028.

No slides have been found

Person 195
Service Delivery Team Leader

Violent Crime
FSS London
Internal: *****
External: *****

Restricted - UKCJS

05/03/2010

Person 187

From: Person 196
Sent: 11 March 2010 13:34
To: Person 187
Cc: Search for hairs in case number T/4333/79

Dear Person 187,

Here are the areas searched in relation to the above case number:

Hair collections
Paper and botany room - Cupboards and slide collections
Comparitor room - slide drawers
Retired R.O's collections
L.A retained materials spreadsheets
Sub basement - searched for crates relating to Person 150 and other members of staff who worked at the Laboratory at the same as Person 150. No crates were found in relation to Person 150. Person 160 had three crates which were searched and nothing was found.

Regards

Person 196
Senior Assistant Forensic Scientist
Homicide
Internal telephone extension: *****
External telephone extension number: *****
E.mail address: *****