

A dozen human pieces – case report on a gruesome murder

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Abstract

The case material consisted of 12 (twelve) unidentified human body parts received in 2 lots under 2 different reference numbers on different dates. The first lot consisted of 4 human body parts and the second lot consisted of 8 human body parts brought under different forwarding letters, inquest reports and dead body challans, separately for each part. Each part was examined individually to find out whether they belong to a single and the same individual or else wise. Age and sex of each part was approximated. All the body parts (part-1 to part-12) were reconstructed and their complexion, contour, built, morphological structure, status of rigor mortis and direction of hairs and anatomical alignment were compared. Finally we came to the conclusion that though the body parts were brought under separate References, forwarding letter, inquest reports and dead body challans, *yet all* the 12(twelve) body parts belonged to a single and same individual. Photographs were taken for superimposition; muscle tissue samples from each of the parts were preserved in normal saline along with the right femur for DNA analysis.

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INTRODUCTION

Criminals, after committing the crime, make an effort to conceal the facts to go scot free. Here is a case where, monetary fraud forced a man to kill his friend in the most gruesome manner and to confuse the investigating authorities and the forensic pathologists, he disposed the body parts in three different locations.

CASE REPORT

Four unidentified human body parts was brought for post-mortem examination to the Forensic Medicine Department, Silchar Medical College, Silchar, Assam on 10th March 2013, with different inquest and dead body

challans for each part. On the following day, again 8 unidentified human body parts were brought for post mortem examination. The I/O made a requisition in addition to all the relevant papers for each of the parts, to examine each part individually and also to find out whether they belonged to a single and same individual.

HISTORY

Police suspected the body parts to be of a person; Mr X, who disappeared 3 days ago, whose wife lodged a complaint of his disappearance to the police. That day afternoon, police found four human body parts, in a black polythene bag on the bank of a river, below a bridge, in the outskirts of Silchar town. When shown to the family members, they couldn't identify him. Next day morning police, found 3 more body parts in a similar bag, near one pond, with the help of sniffer dogs, on the same day police found five more human body parts inside a similar bag, in a drain. Parts were sent for post mortem as unidentified human body parts; later on, after the post mortem was carried out, wife and family members identified Mr. X from his clothes and a ring, and accepted the body. After a few days the murderer was caught, who was a friend of Mr. X, who had some monetary problems with Mr. X. The weapon used was a Dao, used by

butchers, and after killing Mr X, the assailant cut the body into pieces, filled in 3 carry bags and threw in 3 different location, riding Mr X's motorcycle, which he threw it in a pond.

Findings during autopsy

3 black polythene bags were opened:

- 1st bag contained 4 human body parts; two thighs and two arms along with clothes
- 2nd bag contained 3 human body parts; the thorax with clothes, left foot and right foot.
- 3rd bag contained 5 human body parts; the head, right forearm, left forearm, right leg and left leg with clothes.

Each part was labelled from 1 to 12 and examined individually. All the parts were then lined and examined to find out if they belong to a single and same individual.



Part 1: Left thigh of length 38cm



Part 2: Right thigh of length 39 cm

Both parts covered with part of a black pant. Separated by post mortem chop wounds at the groin and knee joint exposing the cut ends of femur both proximally and distally. Complexion of the parts swarthy, built average, shape cylindrical and male type. Rigor mortis passed off completely with early decomposition changes in the tissues. Ends of bone found completely developed with no epiphyseal parts.



Part 3: Right arm, covered by part of white check shirt



Part 4: Left arm, covered by part of white check shirt

Separated from rest of the body by post mortem chop wounds at the shoulder and elbow joints. Complexion swarthy, rigor mortis passed off, built average and male type. Tissues show early decomposition changes.



Part 5: Consisted of the thorax, with a white check shirt

Separated from the head by an ante mortem chop wound at the middle part of neck. Ante mortem blood clot firmly adherent to the margins and floor of the incised injury at neck level. Complexion swarthy, built average, nipple present and male type, the soft tissues show early decomposition changes. The part is also separated by a post mortem chop wound at the thoraco abdominal junction thereby exposing the lungs and the heart, and post mortem injuries at both shoulder joint



Part 6: The left foot, dimension 24cm X 11cm



Part 7: The right foot, dimension 24cm X 11cm

Separated from rest of the body by post mortem chop wounds at the lower part of ankle joint. Complexion swarthy, rigor mortis passed off, built average and male type. Tissues show early decomposition changes.



Part 8: The right forearm



Part 9: The Left forearm

Separated from rest of the body by post mortem chop wound at the elbow joint. Complexion swarthy, flat antero posteriorly, rigor mortis passed off, built average and male type. Tissues show early decomposition changes.



Part 10: The right leg, length 46cm



Part 11: The left leg, length 47cm

Separated from rest of the body by post mortem chop wounds at the level of knee and ankle joints. Complexion swarthy, rigor mortis passed off, built average and male type. Tissues show early decomposition changes.



Part 12: The head

Separated from rest of the body by an ante mortem chop wound at the middle of the neck level. Complexion swarthy, rigor mortis passed off, built average and male type. Tissues show early decomposition changes. Hairs of the scalp can be pulled out easily. The following ante mortem injuries were also found in the head.

1. Incised injury, horizontally placed, 12cm X 2cm at the upper part of face cutting the nose in the middle going deep into maxillary cavity.
2. Incised injury horizontally placed in the upper lip 10cm X 1cm cutting the lip completely up to the jaw.
3. Incised injury at the vertex of scalp, perpendicular to sagittal suture 8cm long cutting the scalp.
4. Incised injury of size 8cm X 2cm at the nape of neck, horizontally placed and cutting the scalp and 1st cervical vertebrae.
5. Incised injury of size 6cm X 1cm horizontally placed, 1cm below Injury No. 4.

All the injuries as described in the head had ante mortem blood clot firmly adherent to the margins and floor of the wounds. All the injuries were caused by sharp cutting heavy weapon. Brain inside cranial cavity found liquefied. On removal of soft tissues and scalp tissue, the skull show steep forward with more pronounced frontal prominence. U shaped palate, square shaped orbit with roundish margins, prominent glabella and fronto- nasal angle, all male characteristics.

Reconstruction



On reconstruction, body parts were identical in their complexion, contour, built, morphological structure, status of rigor mortis and direction of hairs and

anatomical alignment. Also there is a conglomeration of upper and lower aspects of body parts in the three lots. By measuring the length of femur and arm span height of the person was determined. By examining the skull, femur and other external features, it was found that the victim was a male and age was between 30- 40 years. The conclusion was that though the body parts was brought under separate reference numbers, forwarding letter, inquest and dead body challans, *yet all* the 12 body parts belong to a single and same individual. Soft tissue from each part and right femur preserved and handed over to the investigation for DNA analysis.

Possible Sequence of Injuries

The victim was attacked over his head with a heavy sharp cutting weapon, following which the victim became unconscious. Then he separated the head from rest of the body with a chop wound, which resulted in instantaneous death. The rest of the injuries were post-mortem wounds.

Opinion

1. All the body parts belong to a single and same individual.
2. Sex of the individual is male and the age approx. 30 - 40 years with an approx. height of 170cm.
3. All injuries sustained in part 12 were ante mortem. Chop wound separating Part 5 from Part 12 was also ante mortem and it was the decapitating injury.
4. All the injuries, both ante mortem and post mortem were caused by sharp cutting heavy weapon.
5. Death was due to shock as a result of the injuries sustained in the head (Part 12) followed by decapitating injury separating part 12 from part 5. All ante mortem injuries were homicidal in nature.
6. Time since death was approx. 48-72 hours

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