

D/S/C Steve Bridge
 Investigations Office
 Wollongong Local Area Command
 PO Box 5125
 WOLLONGONG NSW 2500



Dear Sir,

Re: DEATH OF WILLIAM ROONEY
Our ref: ICN 02/18939

I refer to your facsimile dated 17 October 2002, which relates to the death of Mr Rooney approximately 17 years ago.

It appears a specific issue has arisen in your investigation of this death, involving the possible detection of semen in the rectum of the deceased as a result of a possible sexual assault shortly before his death. The aim of the examination would be to attempt to positively link a suspect's DNA to that found in the deceased's remains.

Generally, semen can be detected in various body orifices for a considerable time after death as long as there is no significant decomposition of the body. Unfortunately, decomposition does dramatically affect the ability to retrieve such trace evidence. I have not found much data in the scientific literature on DNA in decomposed suspected sexual assault cases, except for one reference indicating matchable DNA was found 37 days after death. I suspect that it is highly unlikely that any useable DNA will be available at this very late stage in the case of the death of Mr Rooney. Unless the body has been expertly embalmed and is in a dry environment, I don't think you would be able to find much more than skeletal remains at best.

In conclusion, except in very unusual circumstances, I am of the opinion that there is an extremely low chance of retrieving DNA from an assailant in this case.

Yours sincerely,

J Duflou
 Department of Forensic Medicine

23 October 2002