



VICTORIAN INSTITUTE OF FORENSIC MEDICINE

THIS DOCUMENT DETAILS THE NATURE AND RESULTS OF THE MEDICAL INVESTIGATION INTO THE DEATH OF

JAMES MEEK CASE NO. A00141/23

My name is Linda Elizabeth ILES and my professional address is the Victorian Institute of Forensic Medicine, 65 Kavanagh Street, Southbank, Victoria 3006.

I am a registered medical practitioner practising as a specialist in forensic pathology.

My qualifications are Bachelor of Medicine (MB), Bachelor of Medical Science (B Med Sci) and Bachelor of Surgery (BS) with Honours, from the University of Tasmania. I am a Fellow of the Royal College of Pathologists of Australasia by examination in anatomical pathology. I hold the Diploma in Medical Jurisprudence in Pathology from the Society of Apothecaries of London (DMJ (Path)), and am a founding fellow of the Faculty of Post Mortem Imaging of the Royal College of Pathologists of Australasia.

I am employed as a Forensic Pathologist at the Victorian Institute of Forensic Medicine and am an Adjunct Associate Professor in the Department of Forensic Medicine at Monash University.

My practical experience in Forensic Pathology commenced in 2000. I commenced full time professional forensic pathology practice in Victoria in 2005. I was subsequently employed as a Consultant Forensic Pathologist in the Section of Forensic Medicine and Science at the University of Glasgow from March 2007 until January 2009 and received specialised training in Forensic Neuropathology at the University of Edinburgh. I resumed practicing forensic pathology in Victoria in July 2009.

I am head of Forensic Pathology Services at the Victorian Institute of Forensic Medicine and co-ordinate the Institute's neuropathology service.

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AUTOPSY REPORT

Case No. A00141/23
Re : MEEK deceased

I have been requested by Mr Tom Allcurch, senior solicitor for the solicitor assisting the Special Commission of Inquiry into LGBTIQ hate crimes, to provide an opinion on materials related to the death of MR JAMES MEEK

MATERIALS PROVIDED

- Post mortem report of Dr Christopher Lawrence
- Crime scene photographs x2
- Mortuary photographs x2
- Photos of ring x2

SYNOPSIS OF MATERIALS

Autopsy report

1. Dr Lawrence's autopsy report describes blunt head injuries. In addition, he describes at page 4:
 - a. On the posterior aspect of the left hand is a 30 mm red bruise.
 - b. On the second phalanx of the left fourth finger is a purple bruise.
2. Two scene photographs demonstrating a man, presumably Mr Meek, lying in a prone position, fingers of both hands slightly flexed, with a key ring or similar in the palm of his right hand. Broken crockery located adjacent to his right hand.
3. Two mortuary photographs of Mr Meek's left hand demonstrating the following:
 - a. On the back of the left wrist an ill-defined red bruise.
 - b. On the back of the proximal phalanx of the left ring finger, adjacent to the metacarpophalangeal joint, an ovoid red bruise.
 - c. About the left little and ring fingers, somewhat ill-defined areas of pallor and indentation of the skin extending across the dorsal aspect of the ring and little fingers.
 - d. The remaining photographs demonstrates a gold coloured signet ring

QUESTIONS AND REPOSSES

Q1. *Do I agree with Dr Lawrence that there are visible compression marks on the ring finger of Mr Meek's left hand?*

Based on the photographs provided, I agree with Dr Lawrence's observation that there are visible compression marks on both the ring and middle fingers of Mr Meek's left hand.

Q2. *Do you agree with Dr Lawrence that any such compression marks could have been caused by the presence of a ring that has been removed?*

Yes, these types of marks could be accounted for by the decedent previously wearing a ring in that location.

Q3. *What, if any, are the other possible explanations for marks of these kind?*

Compression marks of these kind can be seen on the fingers after removal of rings, both in life and after death. These types of markings, such as demonstrated in the photographs, could be caused by any prolonged pressure applied to the skin in this area by a firm thin flat object. If the marks were demonstrated to be circumferential, one could be more specific about their origins. I note in the scene photographs that Mr Meek's left hand is located adjacent to and possibly lying on portions of fragmented pottery. I cannot exclude the possibility that the back of his left ring and little fingers are not lying on a linear edge of the smashed pottery.

Q4. *How could the removal of a ring cause these type of compression marks?*

- a. *Would such marks be more likely to occur if the ring was removed before or after death?;*
- b. *Whether such marks are consistent with forcible removal of a ring?*

As above, these compression marks may be caused by the wearing of a ring. These marks can be observed, both if a ring was removed before death and after death. By a way of example, ring marks are frequently visible by decedents in a mortuary setting when rings have been removed after their death. The marks in of themselves do not necessarily indicate the "forcible removal" of a ring.

Q5. *Having regard only to the compression marks and injuries to Mr Meek's left hand and ring finger, what is the probability that injuries were caused by the forcible removal of a ring, rather than by other means?*

The location of bruises on the back of Mr Meek's wrist and the back of his index finger, *could* be accounted for by finger placement in the action of attempting to forcibly remove a ring. However, it is noted that Mr Meek has suffered a number of blunt force injuries elsewhere to his body. Whilst the position of bruising may be accounted for by this mechanism, the medical evidence is insufficient to provide an indication of the probability that the injuries (i.e. the bruises) were caused by the forcible ring removal or by other means.

I, Dr Linda Iles, acknowledge for the purpose of Rule 31.23 of the Uniform Civil Procedure Rules 2005 that I have read the Expert Witness Code of Conduct in Schedule 7 to the said rules and agree to be bound by it.

I hereby acknowledge that this statement is true and correct and I make it in the belief that a person making a false statement in the circumstances is liable to penalties of perjury.



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