

ISSUE:

Request for crime scene fingerprints in the unsolved homicide case of Ernest Allan HEAD, murdered 17 June 1976, to be forwarded to overseas jurisdictions for comparison.

BACKGROUND:

Ernest Allan HEAD, born 27/02/1932, was found dead in his unit at ■■■49 Grosvenor Crescent, Summer Hill, on 22 June 1976. He had been stabbed 35 times to the chest, face, back and abdomen, as well as to the left leg, arm and buttock. There was a large pool of blood around the body and a trail of blood leading from the bedroom. Crime scene analysis indicated that the deceased had been lying in bed when the stabbing attack commenced. The deceased ran down the hall way and into the kitchen where the attack finished. Indications were that the murder occurred on the evening of 17 June 1976.

A fingerprint examination of the crime scene located a palm print, in blood, on the western wall of the kitchen above where the body was laying. This palm print was checked against the fingerprint database without being identified. Additionally, approximately 200 sets of elimination prints were submitted and examined without identifying the person responsible for leaving the palm print.

The case was further reviewed (Major Crime case 76/48) in 2005 without the fingerprint being identified. It is highly likely that the palm print in blood was left by the person responsible for the murder of Ernest Allan HEAD.

COMMENT:

Ernest HEAD was born in Malaysia and moved to Australia in 1960. He was an active homosexual. Background checks indicated that prior to arriving in Australia he associated with homosexuals in the Commonwealth military forces based in Malaysia. He also had family and friends in Singapore and frequented the Mandarin Club. It is probable that he met his killer through a casual sexual encounter.

Given the violence of the attack and the fact that property had been stolen from the deceased, it is considered unlikely that the offender has not previously been fingerprinted for a criminal offence, if not before the murder, at some time since. As the person has not been fingerprinted in Australia consideration needs to be given to forwarding the fingerprints to possible overseas jurisdictions for comparison. The relevant jurisdictions identified are the United Kingdom, New Zealand, Malaysia, Singapore, Hong Kong and Taiwan.

RECOMMENDATION:

The attached report outlining the circumstances of the murder and reasons for forwarding the fingerprints overseas is forwarded to the Forensic Services Group for action.

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State Crime Command
29 September 2005

1. Commander, Homicide Squad
2. Commander, State Crime Command
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29 September 2005

The Commander
Forensic Services Group

Fingerprint Major Crime case no. 76/48 - murder of Ernest Allan HEAD at Summer Hill, 17 June 1976: Request for crime scene fingerprints to be forwarded for comparison with overseas databases – United Kingdom, New Zealand, Malaysia, Singapore, Hong Kong and Taiwan.

* * *

Ernest Allan HEAD, born 27/02/1932, was found dead in his unit at [REDACTED] 49 Grosvenor Crescent, Summer Hill, on 22 June 1976. He was found laying on his front with his head turned to one side. He had been stabbed 35 times to the chest, face, back and abdomen, as well as to the left leg, arm and buttock. There was a large pool of blood around the body and a trail of blood leading from the bedroom. Crime scene analysis indicated that the deceased had been lying in bed when the stabbing attack commenced. The deceased ran down the hall way and into the kitchen where the attack finished.

Inquiries with neighbours indicated that an argument and commotion had been heard coming from the deceased's unit on the evening of 17 June 1976 and the deceased had not been heard from or seen alive after that time. This time was consistent with the estimated time of death.

The crime scene was thoroughly examined and a large number of items seized and analysed. There was no indication of blood at the crime scene from any person other than the deceased. There was evidence that the deceased, a homosexual, had been the passive partner in anal intercourse shortly prior to his death and a quantity of semen was recovered during the post mortem and from a handkerchief found at the scene. The semen was tested to determine a blood grouping and it was determined that the semen came from a person with a different blood group to that of the deceased. Unfortunately the physical evidence (swabs and handkerchief) have not been located at this time.

Also located at the crime scene, in an ashtray and on the floor, were a number of cigarette butts. The deceased did not smoke and was described by friends as an obsessively neat and tidy person who would not have allowed cigarette butts to remain on the floor. Saliva from the cigarette butts was analysed and it was determined that the saliva came from a person with the

same blood group as the person who left the semen at the crime scene. The cigarette butts have been located and resubmitted to DAL for DNA analysis.

Along with the cigarette butts was a match box obtained from the Mandarin Club. These matches had been used to light the cigarettes located at the crime scene. Since it was identified that approximately the same number of matches were missing from the box as there were cigarettes smoked at the scene, it was theorised that the person responsible for the murder had recently attended the Mandarin Club and there purchased the cigarettes and obtained the matches. The cigarettes were of a relatively rare type, being unfiltered Benson and Hedges brand and were available at the Mandarin Club.

A **fingerprint examination** of the crime scene located a palm print, in blood, on the western wall of the kitchen above where the body was laying. This palm print was checked against the fingerprint database without being identified. Additionally, approximately 200 sets of elimination prints were submitted and examined without identifying the person responsible for leaving the palm print.

A further review of the fingerprint evidence (Major Crime case 76/48) was made in 2005 by Detective Sergeant Damian LIDDLE. Forensic Cases contained in the folder were: -

76/4365 - Examination of premises at ■/49 Grosvenor Crescent, Summer Hill at 11am on 2 July 1976 by Constable Stone and Money. Palm print in blood located; and

76/4175 - Examination of premises at ■/49 Grosvenor Crescent, Summer Hill at 2am on 24 June 1976 by Sgt Stone and Constable Sandri. Fingerprints labelled B located in Kitchen, bathroom and bedroom.

These fingerprints have not been identified. It is highly likely that the palm print in blood was left by the person responsible for the murder of Ernest Allan HEAD.

Background checks of the deceased indicated that he was born in Malaysia and lived there until he came to Australia in 1960. He was an active homosexual, and despite an English surname, was actually of Eurasian appearance.

Prior to coming to Australia the deceased worked in a bar or nightclub frequented by military personnel attached to Commonwealth forces stationed in Malaysia. He was associated with a number of homosexual soldiers and military police and was in fact sponsored by two former military police officers in his application to immigrate to Australia.

Interviews with associates of the deceased located many men (and a few women) who had visited the deceased at his unit. Most denied ever having a sexual relationship with him, although this could be due to the social attitudes towards homosexuality at that time. At least one male described the casual

sexual relationship he had with the deceased, and given the description of how the relationship started, it is likely that the deceased was promiscuous and went looking for new partners. In view of this, and the fact that all known associates of the deceased have been eliminated from the investigation through the unidentified palm print, it is likely that the person responsible for the murder was a person engaged in a first time or casual sexual encounter with the deceased.

Given the violence of the attack and the fact that property had been stolen from the deceased, it is considered unlikely that the offender has not previously been fingerprinted for a criminal offence, if not before the murder, at some time since. As the person has not been fingerprinted in Australia consideration needs to be given to forwarding the fingerprints to possible overseas jurisdictions for comparison.

It is requested that the crime scene fingerprints be forwarded to the following jurisdictions for the following reasons:

United Kingdom and New Zealand

During his time in Malaysia the deceased frequented premises that were regularly attended by soldiers of Commonwealth forces stationed in Malaysia. Some of the persons the deceased associated with were British and Australian servicemen. It is presumed, given the Commonwealth participation in those forces that the deceased also associated with New Zealand military personnel. It is possible that the deceased had, unknown to his friends, entertained a visitor from the United Kingdom or New Zealand, either a person he knew from Malaysia or a person introduced through such an associate.

Malaysia and Singapore

The deceased was born in Malaysia and lived there until he was 28. He had family including brothers and sisters, living in Singapore. It is considered possible that the deceased had, unknown to his friends, entertained a visitor from Malaysia or Singapore.

Hong Kong and Taiwan

The possible connection to the Mandarin Club cannot be ignored. It is known that the deceased occasionally visited those premises. It is possible that he met an overseas visitor at the club and invited him back to his home. If that was the case there is a possibility that the overseas visitor came from Hong Kong or Taiwan. It is unlikely that such a visitor would have come from mainland China.

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