

**ES088F: A Foundation for Medical and Forensic Geology
Preliminary Information For Final Report (Part 1 of 3)**

The Xavier Pye-Hurd Case

Bulletin #1: prepared July 15, 2006

(Preliminary Findings of CSI, London, Ontario Investigation Team)

Note: Before you start attempting to solve this case, please note that names of characters, addresses, streets, property/house plans, investigative units, and police units are purely hypothetical. Names and geographic locations of towns and cities and geological aspects of these locations can be considered *approximately* true to reality. The date of the Bulletin (July 15, 2006) is also hypothetical (for now, just humour us and try to pretend that it's still summer).

This bulletin is one of three that you will receive for the purpose of solving this hypothetical case. The two remaining bulletins, and the format of the report will appear over the next few days. This will provide some time for you to digest the information in manageable pieces and to prevent overwhelming you with all of the information at once. Please carefully read this document and think through the evidence provided in preparation for the next bulletin.

Background of the Case

At 4:00 pm, July 14, 2006, Susan Spitschis, occupant of 664 Redrum Street, London, Ontario, phoned London Police to report that she had not seen her neighbour, Xavier Pye-Hurd (male, age 44) at his home (666 Redrum St.), since Friday, June 30, 2006, and was becoming worried for him.

In an initial interview with police, Ms. Spitschis at 5:00 pm, July 14, 2006, stated that X. Pye-Hurd had told her that he was planning on doing some fossil collecting over the Canada Day weekend "somewhere toward Kettle Point and then up to Georgian Bay to camp I think he said. A bit of a strange hobby, but I think it's the only thing lately that has kept him sane." She added that he had offered to pick up a few flagstones for her over the weekend to replace the cracked ones in her patio. She also commented: "Being in construction, and being a bit of a rockhound, Xavier knew exactly where the stones came from – the name sounded like 'Able' or 'Ebel' or something like that. He said that he was going to be camping within less than an hour's drive of the quarry and that nobody was going to be working there on the Canada Day Saturday anyway, so he would just go there and grab a couple slabs on the sly and bring them home in his car." The woman said that when she last saw Mr. Pye-Hurd that Friday (approximately 2:00 pm, June 30, 2006), she saw him load some camping supplies into the trunk of his car, put on some new hiking boots, and then drive away.

After talking to Ms. Spitschis, police interviewed the victim's other next-door neighbour, Ursula Betsy-Didd (668 Redrum St.) at 5:45 pm, July 14, 2006. Ms. Betsy-Didd stated that X. Pye-Hurd was "the best neighbour a person could have – always friendly and very helpful." She added "he's such a nice guy-I always thought he deserved a lot more than the wench of a wife he ended up with." When asked to comment further on Mr. Pye-Hurd's spouse (Ms. Ditzzi DeWitt), Ms. Betsy-Didd replied "judging by the kind of people she hangs around with, I doubt she's had a single honest

job in her life.” She added that Mr. Pye-Hurd and Ms. DeWitt had been separated for the past year and that Ms. DeWitt was now living with a “biker type” in Bancroft.

Police noted that the back door of the victim’s residence was ajar. Judging by the extensive damage to the lock, it had obviously been forced open. They walked inside the house to do a preliminary search for evidence indicating the possible whereabouts of Mr. Pye-Hurd. Immediately noted by police was a putrid odour and an obvious clustering of flies at the junction of the baseboard and hardwood floor on the south side of the house. It appeared these insects were seeking the source of this scent but unable to reach it. Suspecting the possible presence of a corpse under the floor, forensic investigators were called in.

Upon cutting a small hole in the kitchen floor at the south side of the house, the investigators discovered a severely decomposed corpse of an adult male loosely wrapped in a blue tarpaulin. The forensic staff reported that as soon as the first floorboard was cut, they were surprised at the both the stench and the huge number of green bottle flies that emerged from the hole. Inspection of the basement on the south side of the house, directly below the kitchen floor, subsequently revealed that the space beneath the floor where the body had been found was a crawlspace that had been “walled off” from the main basement by a cement barrier. The barrier had obviously been constructed relatively recently as it lacked the mould and cobwebs that obscured the other cement surfaces throughout the basement.

Inspection of the Victim’s Remains

Examination of the corpse found in the crawlspace produced a wallet containing various credit cards and a driver’s license of Xavier Pye-Hurd, verifying the suspicions of the police that the remains were those of the owner of the house. As noted above, the remains were in an advanced stage of decomposition, having obviously undergone considerable bacterial decay and subject to partial consumption by fly larvae. The number of adult flies that emerged from the crawlspace indicated that they had completed at least one life cycle. However, evidence of activity by insect species typical of later corpse colonization (e.g. beetles) was conspicuously absent.

Despite the advanced state of decomposition evident in the tissues of the corpse, it was clear that duct tape had been used to bind the victim’s ankles and knees. The wrists were noted to be strapped together behind the victim’s back. Duct tape had also been wound several times around the victim’s head at the level of the mouth.

Some distinctive mineral grains were recovered from the back of the victim’s shirt, pants and boot soles. Directly adhering to the shirt were dust- to sand-sized grains of two different rock materials, both vitreous and translucent, but one distinguished by a greyish white colour and the other characterized by a striking “royal blue” colour. Preliminary laboratory inspection of the grayish white material has revealed that it contains well-formed rhombohedral crystals with rhombohedral cleavage traces. The blue material (sometimes containing streaks of white), was described as being to be massive in form, lacking well-defined crystal faces and exhibiting conchoidal fracture; white-coloured veins and irregular patches were also noted in some fragments. The exterior of the blue tarpaulin (i.e. the surface on the opposite side of that in contacts with the corpse), were also noted to contain grains of the blue mineral, but to lack the greyish coloured mineral grains of the type found on the victim’s clothes.

Other Evidence From the Pye-Hurd Property

Aside from the corpse found in the crawlspace, little evidence was recovered from the interior of the Pye-Hurd residence to suggest what may have happened to Mr. Pye-Hurd after June 30, 2006. However, a recent telephone bill found in the victim's mailbox indicated that the only long-distance call made by the victim in the month prior to his disappearance was made at 9:30 pm June 29, 2006, to an individual in Bancroft, Ontario. The number was subsequently traced to the residence of a Mr. Charles Eberth at 13 Friday Lane, Bancroft.

Additional Information Obtained From Witnesses

Pye-Hurd's neighbour, U. Betsy Didd confirmed to police that Mr. Eberth was the boyfriend of Mr. Pye-Hurd's estranged wife Ditzzi DeWitt and that Ms. DeWitt had moved in with him "after Ditzzi and Xavier split up." Pye-Hurd's other neighbour, Ms. Spitschis confirmed that Ms. DeWitt was now living in Bancroft with Eberth. Spitschis also said that Pye-Hurd had commented the night before he left that his ex-wife, Ditzzi, demanded to know exactly where he was going. She said further: "Ditzzi had Xavier wrapped around her finger-he would pretty much obey whatever she told him to do, even if it made no sense at all. She even got her boyfriend to come over and slap him around, just to make sure he did whatever she wished. She's a real princess, that one."

Comments on Progress of Case, and Suggestions for Further Study

The above evidence is all that has been gathered thus far on the Pye-Hurd Case (as of July 15, 2006). At the present time, Charles Eberth and Ditzzi DeWitt are the primary suspects for the murder of Xavier Pye-Hurd. Bancroft Police have been advised to visit residence of Mr. Eberth and Ms. DeWitt for initial interrogation and preliminary inspection of their property. Police are also advised to question the couple's neighbour at 15 Friday Lane. Grey-Bruce O.P.P have been requested to report any possible sightings of the victim since June 30, 2006. Further information on the case will be supplied as it is supplied by our colleagues. We recommend all members of the Investigative Unit to carefully read the details of this bulletin in the event that additional evidence is soon supplied.



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