

was probably planned by the three suspects, as one of them already had a mixture of rattlesnake venom and sodium azide in the pipet with the attached needle and pipet tip.

Soon a shoving match ensued and victim 1 was shoved roughly so that her head smashed into a microscope on the bench. This stunned her so that she was easily overcome and the venom/poison mixture was injected into her jugular vein. Two holes were produced to mimic a rattlesnake bite, but the holes were too small and too closely spaced to be an actual snake bite. The venom/poison mixture caused a relatively rapid death in victim 1, first by stopping her brain activity and then by causing her heart to stop beating. Then they attempted to clean the blood from the microscope and surrounding area using paper towels.

Victim 2 had followed victim 1 to Clark Hall. Based on some conversations she overheard earlier she may have feared what might happen to her friend when she left with the three suspects. She hid in the Microbiology Prep area where she could have easily seen the first murder. At some point she apparently knocked a microscope slide onto the floor which alerted the suspects that someone was watching them.

Two of the suspects quickly grabbed her so she couldn't leave the lab, while the third suspect reloaded the pipet with more venom/poison mixture. While two of the suspects held victim 2 the third suspect injected the poison as was done to victim 1. Death followed fairly quickly.

To dispose of the bodies, the suspects loaded the two victims onto a metal lab cart and wheeled it to the elevator. Because they were on the cart, the victims did not leave any blood along the path they were taken. The cart was more thoroughly cleaned, but there were still minute traces of blood visible using luminal. How they got the elevator to the basement and prevented the alarm in the museum from going off is uncertain, but earlier in the day an elevator repairman was in the backroom of the museum doing some repairs, so he might have left the elevator unlocked and the alarm disarmed.

Once in the museum they made their way to the back room and dumped the bodies of the victims. They then returned the cart to the Genetics lab, cleaned it thoroughly and fled the building.

The nature of the crime seemed to implicate a pair of killers working together to overcome the victims. Suspect 1 was seen frequently during the week in which the crime occurred and the two were lab partners. Both of them were also missing from dinner the evening of the crime. They both claimed they had been sleeping during that time, but there was no corroborating evidence for this. Based on these bits of evidence the two were arrested.

Continued collection of evidence in the areas between the Microbiology Lab and the storage room in the Hansen Museum turned up a few spots of blood on the carpet of the elevator. A DNA analysis of this blood showed it to be from a female and it matched that of another student in the class. When confronted, this student claimed she had a nose bleed while taking the elevator from first to second floor the morning the crime was committed.

The carpet in the Hanson Museum was searched for physical evidence and numerous hairs were found, many of them animal hairs. Hairs belonging to both victims was also found. Hairs from two other people were also found, and enough DNA was extracted from them to identify three new suspects (suspects 3, 4 and 5), all three of them students enrolled in PacificQuest and lab partners. One of these was the same female whose blood was found in the elevator (suspect 3). Hairs from suspects 1 and 2 were entirely absent, suggesting that they were not likely responsible for the crime.

Among the numerous blood spots on the victims' clothing, a few spots turned out to belong to suspect 3 and DNA extracted from some flecks of saliva on one of the victims' clothing matched with suspect 4. This new evidence was strong enough to arrest these suspects, and the original pair of suspects were released. After extensive interrogation, suspect 3, whose blood was found in the elevator, finally admitted to the crime and testified that suspects 4 and 5 were accomplices.

Pieced together from the evidence and interrogations, the following is a reenactment of the murders:

An argument between suspect 1 and victim 1 ensued. The nature of the argument involved some mutual "love" interest" and some rumors suspect 1 believed were started by victim 1. Considering the weapon used, the situation

## Murder in the Lab

Who would think that such a quiet place as Angwin could be the site for a notorious double murder. On July 26, 2007, Dr. Ness was teaching a course in Forensic Biology. That evening, when the students were checked into the dorm, it was found that two students were missing. By the end of the week the students were still missing and it was assumed that they had run away. Some of their friends claimed that they had overheard them discussing plans to leave.

On Saturday, August 18, Dr. Ness was preparing the Hansen Museum for visitors who were planning to be there later in the day. Upon entering the museum he noticed a strong odor, like rotting meat, coming from the storage room at the back of the museum. In the room he found two bodies, both female. They were both still clothed and had latex gloves on their hands. A variety of maggots were found in the body, including hairy maggots and very late stage blow fly maggots. Because of the constant temperature in the storage room, the insects present showed the time of death to have been 22-23 days prior. This placed the time of death around the time the students disappeared.

DNA samples from the victims, along with dental evidence, confirmed that these were the two missing students. Both victims showed signs of head trauma and each had what appeared to be a bite on the neck by a pit viper, possibly a rattlesnake. The maggots seem to have avoided the flesh surrounding these bites. Chemical analysis of the flesh in the vicinity of the bites revealed traces of rattlesnake venom and small amounts of sodium azide, a potent electron transport chain inhibitor, suggesting this was the primary cause of death.

Considering the location of the bodies, the crime scene was hypothesized to be the Microbiology Lab in Clark Hall. Confirmation of this came when one of the microscopes was found damaged with traces of blood from victim 1 on it. A microscope slide with fingerprints on it was found also. The fingerprints matched with suspect 1. Traces of blood from victims 1 and 2 were also found on some paper towels in the garbage can in the Microbiology lab. A discarded hypodermic needle attached to the end of a micropipette tip was also found, and it contained traces of rattlesnake venom and sodium azide.