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BBMP says Sandeep was not killed by dogs. Police say he was. What does the evidence say?

Full text of forensic evidence review by US experts made public for the first time: investigation of Sandeep's death bungled by both police and coroner; Cause of death likely humans, not animals.

FULL INQUEST/JUDICIAL INQUIRY WARRANTED

5 August 2011 – Bangalore

Glaring inconsistencies in official accounts and conclusions about the death of 2 ½ year old Sandeep on the night of 1 July in the Yelahanka New Town area of Bangalore led to investigation of the incident by an expert forensics team from the US. Crime scene photos, videos of the boy's remains and of the location of the incident, the official post mortem report, and the police report were analyzed by Mr. James Crosby, a former police officer, fatal dog attack forensic investigator and canine aggression specialist, along with forensic odontologist Dr. Ken Cohn, veterinary forensic science specialist, expert in bite analysis and Professor in the Department of Pathology, Immunology and Laboratory Medicine at the University of Florida's School of Medicine. Their conclusion: the cause of Sandeep's death was far more likely due to human actions than to animal attack.



The US forensic team's findings are startling in the degree to which they differ from those of the Bangalore police and post-mortem physician, who claim that Sandeep died as a result of dog bite. The American team agreed that the child was a victim of violent death. However, their analysis found it far more likely that the boy's death was the result of human involvement, either vehicle accident or homicide, than dog bite. They noted that the cause of death could not be definitively established because neither the autopsy nor the police investigation had been adequately thorough. Both Mr. Crosby and Dr. Cohn recommend a full, proper investigation into the incident. Key points of the American forensic team's findings are as follows:

- The straight-edged, clean removal of scalp tissue is a type of wound not caused by a dog. There are no ragged edges or torn spots typical of a dog-caused injury. The incision appears to be more consistent with injury caused by cutting with a sharp edged instrument. The portion of skull beneath the removed scalp tissue is clearly defined, yet shows no tooth marks or other visible scratches or defect. Had the scalp been removed by a dog, there would be visible teeth marks on the underlying bone.
- The lack of blood on the ground below the child's head indicates that the child was moved after the violent injury was sustained, leading to the conclusion that the violent injury and appreciable loss of blood occurred elsewhere.
- The lack of blood on the surface of the child's abdomen, right leg, inguinal area, and on the severed leg and the exposed bone of the severed leg indicates that the leg may have been removed post-mortem. The head of the femur of the child's left leg is missing and shows what may be an angled fracture or mechanical severance, an injury unlikely to have occurred by dog(s) either chewing off an attached leg or pulling on a leg and torso strongly enough to separate the tissue and bones. To physically pull the child's leg off would require a strong enough grip that clear, deep bites would show on the extremities. Such bites are not apparent.
- The entire tissue surrounding the child's left upper thigh has been removed cleanly. This is inconsistent with canine consumption of fresh human remains. Such consumption should produce ragged, irregular removal of chunks of tissue. A dog, or pack of dogs would not selectively and cleanly remove only one leg of a victim. A dog consuming a leg would have continued downward further along the leg rather than rotate the bone for clean removal at a consistent level.
- Canine predatory behavior typically includes violent shaking of a victim (particularly a child-sized victim) that can result in cervical fracture and severance of the cervical spine, leading to death. The autopsy makes no mention of any spinal injury. X-rays should have been taken as part of the autopsy in order to help determine cause of death. No x-rays were taken.
- The child's body was discovered approximately 700 meters from the Neha Prakash Hospital where he was sleeping. This would require the dog(s) to have removed the child from the apparently secure facility, down a city street for nearly half a mile, and then stop and partially consume the body. This is highly improbable and not consistent with normal canine predation.
- There are no apparent full-dentition bites on the visible surfaces of the child's body that would indicate that a single dog, or pack of dogs, dragged this body any significant distance. For a child to be dragged as much as 700 meters there would be significant bites showing full dentition contact and multiple instances of release and readjustment by the dragging dogs. These significant bites and readjustments of grip are not present. There are no tearing or shearing injuries showing directional pull.
- The child's severed leg was found in the immediate vicinity of the rest of the body. If the leg had been severed during a dog attack, it would be normal for at least one of the dogs to carry the severed limb away from the scene, most likely back to the dog's den.
- The official police report states "*Any sort of valuables or gold ornaments are not found on the body of the deceased.*" (Police report transcript, section VII). Yet the photographs clearly show not only a gold colored bracelet on the victim's wrist, but a cord or ligature tightly pulled around the front surface of the child's throat. There is no indication in the autopsy that the tissue beneath the cord was examined for bruising or injury nor is there any record of signs, or absence thereof, of asphyxia or ligature injury. A close examination of this artifact and the tissue beneath should have been conducted to insure that this was not involved in the cause of death.
- The autopsy report indicates, on page 3, under "More detailed description of injury/disease" that "*Time since death could not be ascertained precisely as the body kept in cold storage.*" Yet on page 1 of the autopsy, the time log shows the Medical Examiner's Office was dispatched at 10:00 AM, received the body at 10:15 AM, and the autopsy began at 10:30 am. Hence cold storage was in fact a non-issue and should not have prevented examiners from ascertaining the time of Sandeep's death.

In short, although Sandeep's body did show signs of post-mortem animal scavenging, the evidence does not point to dog bite or dog attack as the cause of death. Inadequate attention to detail is apparent in both the autopsy and the police investigation. A full inquest and judicial inquiry into Sandeep's death is in order, especially considering the likelihood of human involvement, possibly even murder.

The full text of the US team's forensic report is attached, as are the CV's of James Crosby and Dr. Ken Cohn.

About James Crosby (Consultant, Canine Behavior and Aggression)

Retired Police Lieutenant (Jacksonville Sheriff's Office, Jacksonville, Florida), former Animal Control Division Manager, and professional dog trainer James W. Crosby has extensive experience in the area of dog attacks and dangerous dogs. Mr. Crosby has investigated multiple fatal dog attacks and has evaluated many dogs post-attacks. He currently consults with Animal Control and Law Enforcement Authorities on serious and fatal dog attacks, combining crime scene investigation, forensic evaluation, detailed interviews and dog evaluation to give detailed behavioral analyses of the incidents. Mr. Crosby is the author of *The Guide to Investigating Fatal Dog Attacks*, to be released mid-2011.

About Dr. Kenneth Cohn (past President, International Veterinary Forensic Science Association)

Dr. Ken Cohn is a Board certified forensic odontologist with many years of civil and criminal trial testimony experience. Adjunct Professor in the Department of Pathology, Immunology and Laboratory Medicine, School of Medicine, University of Florida, Gainesville, Dr. Cohn has just completed a two-year term as the President of International Veterinary Forensic Science Association (IVFSA). He serves as consultant to the C. A. Pound Human Identification Lab at the University of Florida and consultant to several medical examiner's offices in central Florida. Dr. Cohn has lectured about, and presents hands-on courses on human and animal bite mark analysis.

About The Voice of Stray Dogs

The Voice of Stray Dogs (www.strays.in) focuses on factual Data, Information, and Analysis & Opinion on ABC, ARV, Legal and other issues concerning strays. We are a volunteer group who believe that strays, which have been living in our midst for over 14,000 years or more, share our space and our lives, and should be treated humanely.

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