

# Dead pig hit with tyre lever

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By Bret Christian

An experiment in which a dead pig was dressed in a black T-shirt and hit repeatedly with a tyre lever was "inconclusive and unhelpful", according to a leading pathologist who took part in the procedure.

"We were trying to do something that smacks of CSI (a TV show based on police forensic work)," Dr Karin Margolius, senior forensic pathologist based at Nedlands' QEII Medical Centre, told the Supreme Court this week.

The prosecution case was that tyre levers provided the firm link between the accused and their alleged victim.

The tests were carried out after a crescent-shaped wound was found on the back of Mr Walsham.

The prosecution suggested it matched the end of one of three tyre levers in the possession of three men on the night Mr Walsham died.

The three men have been charged with Mr Walsham's wilful murder.

Dr Margolius said the crescent-shaped wound was 12 to 24 hours old, and was made a minimum of six hours before the time of death.

Mr Walsham died in hospital at 5.30am, February 28, 1998.

He was found fatally injured on the road about 2.40am that day.

The court was told that striking the pig with the tyre lever at different angles and with varying force did not replicate the wound.

An expert in textile technology told the court that the T-shirt worn by the pig bore indentations of the tyre lever when he examined it long after the experiment.

The indentations were visible to the naked eye.

Professor Michael Pailthorpe, of NSW, also examined the black Nine Inch Nails T-shirt worn by Mr Walsham the night he died.

There was no sign of indentation or distortion to the shirt's cotton fabric visible in the area of the wound, even when magnified 50 times by a stereo microscope.

"As soon as it is distorted it will go into its new shape until it's ironed," Professor Pailthorpe said.

"I could not see anything."

A combination of heat, high humidity and a flat surface was necessary to remove such creases, he said.

A very flat roadway or metal ambulance stretcher "might do it".

A roadway with rough stones or any sort of padding on the stretcher would not.

He did not know if a person could produce enough heat or humidity to flatten a crease.

He agreed that when ironing with a steam iron, two or three passes were sometimes needed to remove creases.

White material that appeared to be skin on the inside of Mr Walsham's T-shirt was never tested to see whether it was his skin.

Aleksander Bagdonavicius, senior forensic biologist with the government laboratory Pathwest, said that not all samples submitted by police were tested.

"The police department asked us not to do 60% of samples they sent up," he said.

The tests cost \$200 each.

Blood on the T-shirt was also not tested to see whether it was Mr Walsham's.

The ends of the tyre levers did not yield any material or DNA.