APPLICATION OF AGE-OLD FORENSICS TO INVESTIGATION

ABSTRACT

Violent crimes and the desire to solve the mystery surrounding them have existed since the beginning of mankind. The origins of forensic science can be traced back to 3000 B.C when Egyptian Pharaohs ordered investigations into the cause of death of officials. The ancient world lacked standardized forensic practices, which enabled criminals to escape punishment. Criminal investigations and trials relied heavily on forced confessions and witness testimony. However, ancient sources contain several accounts of techniques that foreshadow concepts in forensic science developed centuries later.

Source: Google Images

INTRODUCTION

This study was conducted to examine the application of age-old forensics to investigation, as forensics is a dynamic field of knowledge and skills which can be highly helpful and useful for criminal investigation. Knowledge of forensics provides the investigator with the ability to recognize and seize on evidence opportunities that would not otherwise be possible.

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Case report 1:

In one of Song Ci's accounts (Washing Away of Wrongs), the case of a person murdered with a sickle was solved by an investigator who instructed each suspect to bring his sickle to one location. (He realized it was a sickle by testing various blades on an animal carcass and comparing the wounds). Flies, attracted by the smell of blood, eventually gathered on a single sickle. In light of this, the owner of that sickle confessed to the murder.

Source: Google Images

Case report 2:

Effective fire with any weapon depends largely upon judging distance accurately. Inaccurate judging of distance will make even a very well-aimed volume of fire miss the mark. This is particularly so in case of close grouping weapons like the self-loading rifle and the machine gun. Judging distances is also essential for target indication.

Although an infantry soldier is not expected to open fire beyond 300m, it is important that he should be able to judge distances accurately up to 600m for the following reasons:

- He may be called upon to indicate targets to the supporting arms or even direct their fire when necessary.
- He can pass back accurate information when acting as observer or sending bomb reports or shell reports.
- He will be better prepared to open fire at the correct range in case of an approaching enemy.

In such case, it is better to estimate the range using age-old forensic popularly called the appearance method. This method is commonly practiced and fully mastered. In this method the appearance of objects at different ranges is taken as a guide in judging the distances, as follows:

- At 200m, all parts of the body are clearly visible.
- At 300m, the outline of the face becomes blurred.
- At 500m, the body appears to taper slightly from the shoulders but movement of the limbs can still be seen.
- At 600m, the head appears as a dot. The body tapers distinctly and its details cannot be distinguished.

Source: Google Images

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

This poster was possible because of the work of

- Prof Eddy Ehikhamenor
- Dr. Akhinwu Wilson
- Captain L Jibril
- Ibikunle Omolara
- Staff and Students of CEFPADS (Centre for Forensic Programmes and DNA Studies-UNIBEN)

Case report 3:

In ancient India, some suspects were made to fill their mouths with dried rice and spit it back out. Similarly, in ancient China, those accused of a crime would have rice powder placed in their mouths. In ancient middle-eastern cultures, the accused were made to lick hot metal rods briefly. It is thought that these tests had some validity since a guilty person would produce less saliva and thus have a drier mouth; the accused would be considered guilty if rice was sticking to their mouths in abundance or if their tongues were severely burned due to lack of shielding from saliva.

Source: Google Images

CONCLUSION

In ancient times, the manner of death was naturally assumed by where and how the victim had been found. For example, a man found in a body of water would naturally have drowned, while a man found lying broken and bloodied along the side of a road would have naturally fallen and possibly been dragged by a horse. Suspicion of motive and the word of others against a possible murderer took precedence over any other facts, and when all else failed, torture was readily available to procure a confession.

The application and awareness of age-old forensics to investigation is a mix of human resources having different levels of education and exposure to training besides variant thinking patterns and perceptions. The force with better education and training feel that forensics is inevitable for successful criminal investigation. This is because the issue of criminal investigation is a very serious and fragile one to deal with in the sense that the crime rate in any society depends on the efficient and effective management of the established institution saddled with the responsibility to tackle crime.

RECOMMENDATION

Based on the foregoing and in order to further advance strategic investigative techniques as well as improved performance during investigation and crime solvability rate, the following recommendations are put forward:

a) Relevant security agencies should make proper consultations with the elders and highline with history, in order to avoid mistakes that were made in the past.

b) The Police should give adequate and continuous training to personnel in the field of criminal investigation, and only such men should be deployed to the investigation departments to enable them exhibit their training skills.

c) Policemen should be trained in the use of modern and scientific equipment in the investigation of criminal matters.

d) There should be a computerized data bank where records of all persons arrested in connection with any criminal matters are kept and especially those involved in violent crime.

e) Police should adopt new professional culture, ethics of professionalism, merit-based recruitment and promotion, discouraging political interference and establish forensic laboratories.

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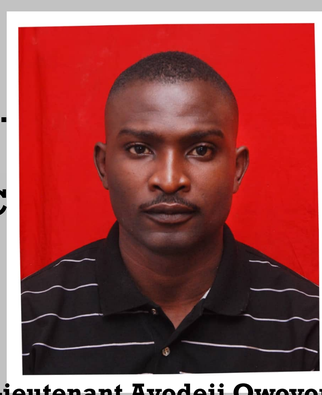

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