

The Case of Simon Hall 7th December 2010

In June 2009, Contact Traces was contacted by the Criminal Case Review Commission to provide expert assistance in this case. Our chief scientist, Tiernan Coyle, took up the case and agreed with the CCRC to conduct an independent review of the fibre evidence.

After a comprehensive review of the case, including the examination of fibres recovered by the Forensic Science Service and the re-examination of the exhibits from the scene of the crime, the findings demonstrated that:

- The flock fibres found at the crime scene were different to those recovered from locations relating to Simon Hall
- The flock fibres were different to those obtained as a result of an industrial enquiry with suppliers of flock fibres
- The green pigmented polyester fibres described at Simon Hall's trial were not green, they were black
- The pigmented polyester fibres were a type known to be of low value evidentially.

On that basis it was impossible to support the position taken by the Forensic Science Service on the fibre evidence at the trial of Simon Hall in 2003.

Notes for Editors:

Contact Traces was established in 2006 to provide the UK with specialist services in forensic fibre examination. Contact Traces has recently been offered accreditation to ISO17025, the standard recommended by the Forensic Regulator. Contact Traces provides services to both the prosecution and defence sectors of the criminal justice system and perform examinations in over 100 fibre cases per year.

Tiernan Coyle has been a forensic scientist for over thirteen years. He has performed forensic fibre examinations in over 800 cases for both the prosecution and defence. He was the forensic fibre expert in the re-investigation into the death of Damilola Taylor in 2006. He has a portfolio of publications on the subject of forensic fibre examinations and analytical chemistry, and is one of the UK's leading experts in forensic fibre examination.