

WANTED: The Blood of Kevin Cooper

On August 1st, 1983, two days after Kevin Cooper was arrested for the Ryen/Hughes murders, a vial of blood was taken from Cooper. San Bernardino County Sheriff Department Deputies Stockwell and Schecter drew Cooper's blood and placed it into a vial which they labeled VV-2.

On August 2nd, 2004, Dr. Melton, a non-law enforcement hair and blood testing expert hired to do hair testing in the Cooper case discovered that blood inside vial VV-2 contained the DNA of two or more people! Dr. Terry Melton tested the blood from vial VV-2 unaware of the fact that the state did not intend to send her that vial labeled VV-2.

VV-2 is the blood sample collected from Cooper at the time of his arrest - that blood sample should only contain Cooper's DNA!

On April 22, 2005, Holly Wilkens, the counsel for the State stated in court that the blood in the vial labeled VV-2 was completely consumed! There isn't any more of Cooper's blood in vial VV-2. Why isn't there anymore of Cooper's blood in vial VV-2, and what happened to it? Where did it go? We know one thing for certain, neither Cooper nor his attorneys used VV-2 and its contents, nor did they know it was contaminated with the DNA of two or more people, and completely consumed. Whose DNA is mixed in with Cooper's?

Ninth Circuit Court of Appeals Judge Fletcher wrote in his 100+ dissent from the court's denial of Cooper, "Cooper's counsel told the district court that Dr. Melton's finding that the DNA of two or more people was in the blood that came from vial VV-2 was "extremely alarming and mandate[d] further inquiry." The district court refused to allow any investigation into the issue, even though the presence of additional DNA in vial VV-2 clearly pointed to evidence tampering by the State."

A second area of evidence being "completely consumed" in Cooper's case is blood drop A-41. Again, from Judge Fletcher, "A single drop of blood in the hallway outside the Ryen master bathroom. The crime lab conducted serological testing of this blood drop (entered into evidence as A-41) under suspicious circumstances. The criminologist who conducted the testing arrived at one result, and then altered his records to show a different result that conformed to Cooper's known blood characteristics. The drop of blood has a history of being "consumed" during testing and then inexplicably reappearing in different form for further testing when such testing would prove useful to the prosecution.



Figure 1: A-41 - very small blood drop, to be consumed multiple times

In 1999, criminalist Daniel Gregonis, the same person who altered the records to match Cooper before his original trial, checked A-41 out of the evidence storage room for 24 hours. He did so without a court order, or the knowledge of Cooper's attorneys, but by the order of D.A. John P. Kochis. He also took out Cooper's saliva at this time as well. Before this incident, the state had refused Cooper's request for DNA testing. After this incident, they allowed it and got the results they wanted. If one of Cooper's attorneys hadn't found the check-out sheet from that time period, no one would know to this day that Gregonis went in and removed that evidence.



Figure 2: A-41, with Gregonis' initials after "checking out" in 1999

This is the same evidence that Gregonis testified in October 1984 that A-41 and the paint chips with blood on them had been processed and discarded. Even before October 1984 Gregonis had testified that bloodstain A-41 had been completely consumed during testing.

How can a bloodstain that had been completely consumed during testing in the 1980s be DNA tested in 2001? As Judge Fletcher wrote "There is a strong likelihood that the results of the blood tests performed on A-41, presented at trial, were false evidence. There is also a strong likelihood that state actors tampered with A-41 to ensure that it would generate inculpatory results when Cooper's post-conviction DNA testing was conducted in 2002."

The State of California wants Cooper's blood. We want to know the truth, the whole truth, about what happened to it!