

Man from 1,500 years ago had violent death

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A man, who died up to 1,500 years ago in Australia, was repeatedly speared and then axed, say scientists who studied his remains.

What crime the Aborigine had committed will never be known, but "he sure trod on someone's toes," said Allen Madden, cultural and heritage officer for the Metropolitan Local Aboriginal Land Council.

The remains were found last January by EnergyAustralia workers laying cables in Narrabeen, beneath a bus stop. The man has been called Octavia Man, because he was found near the corner of Ocean and Octavia streets, the Sydney Morning Herald reported in its Saturday edition.

Jo McDonald, an archaeologist and Sydney University researchers, has pieced together his last moments.

"One spear went into the stomach from the left side, just above the blade of the hip bone. It probably passed through the large intestine and the bottom of the left kidney," McDonald said.

The second spear lodged in his spinal column, the third punctured his skull and a stone axe "finished him off."

The findings will be presented next week at the annual conference of the Australian Archaeological Association in Fremantle.

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