

# MSU scientists turn tables on century-old murder

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(PhysOrg.com) -- It was one of the most infamous murders in British history: Hawley Crippen, a doctor from Michigan, was convicted and hanged in 1910 for murdering his showgirl wife and burying some of her remains in their London cellar.

But now, a hundred years later, a team of [forensic scientists](#) led by Michigan State University's David Foran has provided evidence that those [remains](#) were not Cora Crippen's.

In fact, they were not even from a woman.

In a study published in the January issue of the *Journal of Forensic Sciences*, Foran and colleagues compared the DNA from tissue used in the century-old trial that helped convict Hawley Crippen to that of Cora Crippen's maternal relatives.

If the remains were Cora Crippen's, they would share specific DNA characteristics with her current day relatives. But there was no match, said Foran, a forensic biologist and director of MSU's Forensic Science Program.

"Based on the genealogical and mitochondrial DNA research, the tissue on the pathology slide used to convict Dr. Crippen was not that of Cora Crippen," Foran said. "Further DNA testing showed that the tissue was male in origin."

The research team also includes Brianne Kiley and Carrie Jackson from MSU and John Trestrail, who's now retired from the Center for the Study of Criminal Poisoning in Grand Rapids.

To learn more, read the [study](#) and a previous [special report](#) on the Crippen case.

Provided by Michigan State University

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