THE OXFORD INCIDENT

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Bioterrorism strikes at home

Last year’s anthrax attacks were the first wide-scale acts of bioterrorism in the nation's history. It prompted Congress to shut down for two days, and postal facilities, government buildings, local businesses and thousands of people underwent testing for contamination.

Number of deaths: 5

Bob Stevens, 63, Florida photo editor.

Joseph Curseen, 47, Washington postal worker.


Kathy Nguyen, 61, New York City hospital worker.

Ottilie Lundgren, 94, Connecticut retiree.
THE OXFORD INCIDENT: ANTHRAX IN CONNECTICUT
MULTIPLE INVESTIGATIONS
Wednesday Nov. 14th
Ottile Lundgren, 94, becomes ill with flu-like symptoms.

Saturday Nov. 17th
Four vials of Lundgren’s blood test positive for bacteria. Tests show bacteria matches properties of anthrax.

Friday Nov. 16th
Lundgren’s niece takes her to Griffin Hospital’s emergency room. Doctors suspect pneumonia.

Sunday Nov. 18th
Second anthrax test at Griffin inconclusive.
INVESTIGATIVE TEAM

- HOSPITAL STAFF
- FBI
- CT PUBLIC HEALTH
- EMERGENCY SERVICES
- MAJOR CRIME SQUAD
- FORENSIC SCIENCE LABORATORY
DIFFICULT DIAGNOSIS

- Chronic Pulmonary Disease
- Steroid treatments
- Atypical thoracic x-ray
- Rural lifestyle
Tuesday
Nov. 20th
Staff tells Gov. Rowland about a possible anthrax case. Neighborhood sealed off, house tested for presence of anthrax.

Wednesday
Nov. 21st
Centers for Disease Control confirms anthrax. Cipro offered to postal workers, relative. Lundgren dies at 10:32 a.m.
SCENE  INVESTIGATION
Responding to Anthrax Contamination

Sweeping a room

Biohazard specialists have been sent to several locations across the country to respond to possible anthrax contaminations.

**Suiting up**
Investigators are fitted with air filter masks and wear Tyvek biohazard suits sealed with duct tape.

**Evidence**
Evidence that may point to the source of the contamination is bagged, tagged and taken to an investigative laboratory.

**Ducts**
Scrapings are taken from filters in air ducts.

**In the air**
Hand-held devices suck up air to test for floating microbes.

**Inhabitants**
People who were in the room at the time of the contamination may be decontaminated in a shower of detergent or bleach. Their clothes may be tested or destroyed. Exposed individuals are tested and given antibiotics.

**Swabbing**
Swabs and adhesives can capture microbes resting on a surfaces. The swabs are tested on site or in a lab.

**Containing the area**
Plastic sheeting may be used to minimize the spread of bacteria outside the area.
SCENE SEARCH

Swab - Quick Test
Confirmatory test
Inter-Agency Cooperation
DECONTAMINATION AREA
Multiple Testing of the Scene

RESULTS:
Traditional Thinking

- It usually takes between 2,000 to 10,000 spores to cause Inhalation Anthrax
Connecticut Findings:

- Ottilie Lundgren was exposed to a very small quantity of spores --- poor health, age, and reduced immune response led to an unexpected case.
SUSPECTED SOURCE
Anthrax Source Found In Neighboring Town

On the front
62-bar code for the address and ZIP code that enables machines to sort mail down to carrier route.

On the back
A code imprinted by bar code sorting machine that shows which machine sorted the letter, along with the date, time and facility.
CONFIRMS MAIL IS SOURCE OF ANTHRAX IN CONNECTICUT
New Evidence Procedures at Department of Health

Developed with the FSL --

- Retain package
- Note seals & condition
- Secure evidence
- Handle to limit loss or deterioration of physical evidence
- Forward *all* materials to Forensic Lab after bio/chem testing
AFTERMATH

- Multiple checks of post office distribution center
- Numerous hoaxes and threats
- Development of evidence documentation procedures for health department
- Statewide review of collection and search procedures.
Hoax
ANTHAX
Hoaxes: Available Options

- **Do nothing and live with the results**
  - Minimal time commitment
  - Minimum resource allocation
  - Easier

- **Do everything possible**
  - Taxes resources (typically limited success)
  - Stressful – May be hazardous

- **Do what is reasonable**
HOAX at the DEP
SUSPECT AGENT TESTING AT HEALTH DEPARTMENT

- Level 3 Biohazard laboratory
- Hazardous materials testing
- Personal protection prevents contamination by examiners
HOAX at the DEP

- “Victim” of threat arrested for interfering with investigation
- Subject lied to the FBI – knew the True Identity of the Individual Responsible for Anthrax Hoax at the CT DEP HQ.
No prosecution of perpetrator of hoax because . . .

- No Documentation
- No “chain”
- No Evidence!
The Case of the Governor
GOVERNOR ROWLAND RECEIVES “ANTHRAX” THREAT LETTERS
LETTER TO GOVERNOR

ANTHRAX IS DEADLY. YOU BREATHE AND DIE.
THIS IS ONLY BEGINNING. AMERICANS WILL DIE.
DEATH TO AMERICA AND ISRAEL.
ALLAHU EKBER.
DOCUMENT EXAMINATIONS

- Paper, Envelope, and Stamp
- Watermarks, Mfg. Details
- Folds, Physical Characteristics
- Ink, toner samples
- Linguistics - style, format
Document Examination - Non Destructive

- Writing, type, font, process
- Macro - Microscopic examination
- Lighting (indented, strokes, defects)
- ESDA - Indented and Latents
- Alternate Light Examination
Sequential Processing at the Forensic Science Laboratory

Team Approach

- Documentation
- Photography
- Alternate Light Examination
- Trace (hairs, fibers, stains)
- Latent Fingerprint
- DNA samples
Latent print development
Hair from envelope seam
DNA From Envelope Flap
Search of “OBL” Suspect’s Home
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OUTCOMES

- Identification of the source of the agent
- Protection of the public welfare
- Individualization of the person(s) responsible
- Preservation of evidence for court
- Prosecution of offenders