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# Wednesday 13.06.07

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# Feral media is driven by impact - Blair

#### ( continued from page 1

of fear in which those in public life dare not attack the media's sensationalist culture for fear for the media's counterblast.

In a world of 24-hour news and huge diversity of outlets, he said, it is impact that gives a competitive edge. "Of course the accuracy of a story counts. But it is secondary to impact. It is this necessary devotion to impact that is unravelling standards, driving them down, making the diversity of the media not the strength it should be but an impulsion towards sensation above all else."

"News is rarely news unless it generates heat as much as or more than light. Second, attacking motive is far more potent than attacking judgement. It is not enough for someone to make an error. It has to be venal. Conspiratorial."

Moving on to the regulation of newsinevitable: "As the technology blurs the distinction between papers and television, it becomes increasingly irrational to have different systems of accountability based on technology that no longer can be differentiated in the old way."

The Guardian | Wednesday June 13 2007

He also questioned whether papers needed some system of accountability that went beyond sales. He said: "The reality is that the viewers or readers have no objective yardstick to measure what they are being told. In every other walk of life in our society that exercises power, there are external forms of accountability, not least through the media itself.

The prime minister's aides admitted he had thought long and hard before making the speech, but felt free to do so now that he was, in his own words, leaving office "still standing". Ministers conceded privately that the regulatory structure of newspapers may change over the next decade, but did not believe it would lead to direct regulation. "It is possible we could end up with a kitemark that websites pass certain tests, but it is a long way away," said one minister.

There is also ministerial and industry scepticism that EU legislation and the convergence of newspapers and broadcasting would see a single regulatory structure for newspapers and TV.

The coming EU legislation is likely to make the broadcast regulator, Ofcom, papers, Mr Blair said changes were responsible for regulating the internet, but is likely to leave unregulated the con-

Leader comment, page 34>>

#### **Guardian Unlimited**

#### Commentisfree...

Carrie Gibson welcomes the end of male chauvinism in golf clubs >> David Steel on why the Catholic Church is still wrong on abortion >> Robert Fox on why the US is playing with fire by arming Sunni insurgents >> Terry Macalister on why it's naive to expect corporations to take the lead

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#### If the U21 team is the future of English football, maybe it's time to find a new sport **Hattenstone**

Guardian News & Media, 119 Farringdon Road, London EC1R 3ER. 020-7278 2332. Fax 020-7837 2114. In

The Guardian | Wednesday June 13 2007

# News



# Woolmer case ends with no match-fixing, no poison, no killers - and no resignations

Pakistan cricket coach died from natural causes Pathologist's initial report incorrect, police admit

Sandra Laville and Omar Waraich

The case of the cricket coach, the hotel room and the broken hyoid bone finally ended vesterday with the prosaic admission by the Jamaican police that Bob Woolmer was not murdered

All talk of match-fixing, poison, and killers waiting in the shadows was dismissed by Lucius Thomas, the Jamaican police commissioner, and Mark Shields, the British police officer who is his deputy.

After three months, acres of newsprint and rampant speculation, Mr Thomas announced that Woolmer, an overweight man in his 60s with diabetes and heart problems, had suffered what perhaps was always a far more likely fate: death by natural causes. But none of the men responsible for

launching the costly murder inquiry, involving scores of police officers taking hundreds of statements, DNA samples and fingerprints, resigned from their posts yesterday. Neither Mr Thomas nor Mr Shields would concede that the affair had been embarrassing for the Jamaican police guess a pathologist' service. "I don't know what is embarrassing about it." said Mr Thomas. But Inzamam-ul-Haq, the Pakistan

cricket captain during the World Cup, condemned the Jamaican police's handling of Woolmer's death. Inzamam, who was questioned at length by the police investigating what they thought was murder, told the Guardian: "We were convinced from the start that it was a natural death. I feel that the Jamaican police and the doctors misrepresented the investigation. At an international level in cricket this should never have happened.

"It's not a matter of me wanting an apology. Nothing could diminish the tension and hassle I suffered."

Mr Woolmer was found dead in his hotel room by a chambermaid on March 18, the day after his team were knocked out of the cricket World Cup by Ireland in the biggest shock of the tournament's history.

Mr Shields, the former Met officer who led the inquiry, said it was not the police's job to publicly second-guess the written findings of a pathologist, in this case that of Dr Ere Seshaiah, the government pathologist who stated that Woolmer had been strangled on the evidence that the hyoid bone in his neck was broken.

Mr Shields admitted that it was he who had stated early on he was "100% sure" that Woolmer had been murdered because there was evidence in the hotel room pointing to that conclusion. But he said that was no reason for him to step down. "I would ask why?" he said. "We conducted a thorough, professional investigation. We were given facts in the beginning which we took at face value. We had to conduct an investigation. We cannot publicly second-guess a pathologist and his opinion, our job is to investigate."

Asked to account for his comments about the compelling evidence in the room, he said he was referring to a pillow in the room which could have been used during the strangulation and would have accounted for the fact there were no marks on Woolmer's neck. Other evidence found included a pool of vomit.

Mr Shields said the fact that the Jamai-



'We had to conduct an investigation. We cannot publicly second-

March 17 Ireland beat Pakistan in

Jamaica. Bob Woolmer tells a press

conference: "I'd like to sleep on my

March 18 Early in the morning Wool-

mer emails his wife in Cape Town.

10.45am: Woolmer is found uncon-

**March 19** First post mortem results

March 22 Jamaican police question

and fingerprint every member of the

ken bone has been found in Woolmer's

says tests showed the cause of death as

Pakistan squad as reports that a bro-

neck. Jamaican police commissioner

asphyxia as a result of strangulation

March 23 Speculation that Woolmer

March 31 Jamaican police accept an

**April 3** UK officers and a senior British

**April 29** BBC's Panorama programme

claims Woolmer was poisoned as well

was involved in match fixing

pathologist arrive in Jamaica

as strangled

offer of help from the UK police

inconclusive. Police say they are treat-

scious in his hotel room by a chamber-

maid. Midday: Woolmer is pronounced

future as coach of Pakistan.'

ing the death as suspicious

from the British Home Office pathologist Dr Nat Carey and two other experts showed they were being thorough. Although the pathologists involved did not conduct a second postmortem exami-

nation, digital photographs and X-rays of the first analysis and the hyoid bone in question were sent to Dr Carey and the other experts. "They all formed the opinion that the bone was not fractured," Mr Shields said. "We have stated today that his [Dr Seshaiah's] report was incorrect."

**Timeline** The murder that wasn't

Asked if it would not have been better to keep the initial findings private until further investigations were made, he said in an ideal world that might have been so. "But I had to consider the circumstances ... every step of the inquiry became the subject of media speculation."

The decision to reveal the findings of the pathologist's report was a "collective" one. He added that withholding the information would undoubtedly have led to accusations of a cover-up. Mr Thomas said his officers had inves-

tigated allegations that match-fixing had been at play, and found no evidence. There was also no evidence that Mr Woolmer had been poisoned. After releasing Dr Seshaiah's findings – that Mr Woolmer had been asphyxiated by strangulation – police launched a murder inquiry. But behind the scenes they sent the results to Dr Carey in the UK, and two other experts, one in South Africa and one in Canada, all of whom disputed the findings and said the death was as a result of natural causes.

May 4 Woolmer's remains are cre-

Office pathologist concludes that

Woolmer died of heart failure

May 15 Dr Nat Carey, a British Home

**June 4** Jamaican police say they are

awaiting the results of a third pathol-

ogy report into Woolmer's death

Woolmer was not murdered

**June 12** Jamaican police announce

A sign in memory of the coach who was

considering his future with Pakistan

mated in South Africa

can police set up a review by Met officers 
The last expert gave their findings last and called in second and third opinions week. Dr Seshajah was not available for comment last night. An aide in his office in Kingston said: "Dr Seshaiah is not here, he is carrying out a postmortem at the moment. We don't know whether he wants to say anything or not."

> Neither Mr Shields nor Mr Thomas would comment on Dr Seshaiah's credibility. They referred all questions to Gilbert Scott, permanent secretary in Jamaica's Kingston

was contacted but made no comment. In South Africa, Mr Woolmer's wife, Gill, and her two sons, said they were relieved to learn that no foul play had Jamaican police and Mr Shields in person for the way they had treated her family and asked to be allowed to grieve. Additional reporting by Ross Sheil in

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