



# Crime Scenes: Clues from Nature

**Dr Paola Magni**

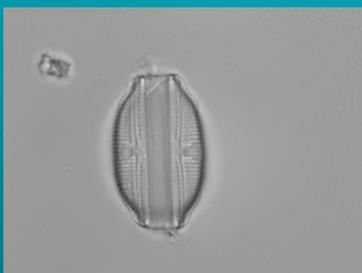
School of Veterinary & Life Sciences, Murdoch University

**Monday, 21<sup>st</sup> of November, 2016**

**7.00 pm Kings Park Administration Building, Fraser Ave**

Investigators have the job to reconstruct the events of a crime and identify its cause. Despite movies showing a different and of course exciting perspective, it is not as easy a job as portrayed. The reason is because investigators have to confront the uniqueness of each crime scenario, a combination of the particular aspects of the place where the crime occurs, environmental conditions and organisms involved. The crime scene is not a closed system and the presence and activity of plants, animals and microorganisms can modify the crime scene by adding and erasing information. However, information left by nature – if correctly interpreted and contextualized – can also provide useful clues for the investigation process because they can characterize the time, the manner and the people involved in these events.

A number of real cases will be presented in which insects, crustaceans, molluscs, microorganisms and plants were witnesses to a crime and were used as key evidence in the success of the investigation.





## Biography

### Dr Paola Magni



Paola is a forensic biologist with her main focus in entomology and organisms involved in crime scenes in aquatic environments. She graduated with a Masters degree in Natural Sciences at University of Turin (Italy) followed by a Masters in Forensic Entomology from Michigan State University. She completed a PhD in Biology thanks to a collaboration between the University of Turin and UWA Centre for Forensic Science.

She attended the FBI Human Remains Recovery School conducted at the University of Tennessee and specialized in the extraction and identification of diatoms in human tissue for the diagnosis of drowning at the University of Skopje (Macedonia). In 2007 she opened the first Forensic Entomology Laboratory of the Italian Public Health Service and she provided courses for Universities and Police agencies. She works as a forensic expert for the Italian Courts in cases involving humans and animals in both terrestrial and aquatic environments.

She is an early career researcher with publications in international journals and book chapters. She is the senior author of the most recent book on forensic entomology published in Italy and one of the developers of SmartInsects, the forensic entomology App used by pathologists and law enforcement officers around the world. Beside this, she is the scriptwriter for the Italian version of CSI.

She is now working at Murdoch University, as a researcher and lecturer in Forensic Science.