

Friday, 20, 2009

Cousin of Murdered DNA Scientist: MISSING

Doctor of Archaeology disappears as case involving murdered DNA Scientist continues

MEXICO CITY: New twist in mystery of murdered DNA scientist - cousin goes missing

Archaeologist Mary Carmen Valencia, 35, was last seen 16 days ago. Her first cousin, Dr. Pedro Juan ('PJ') Beltran was assassinated earlier this month.

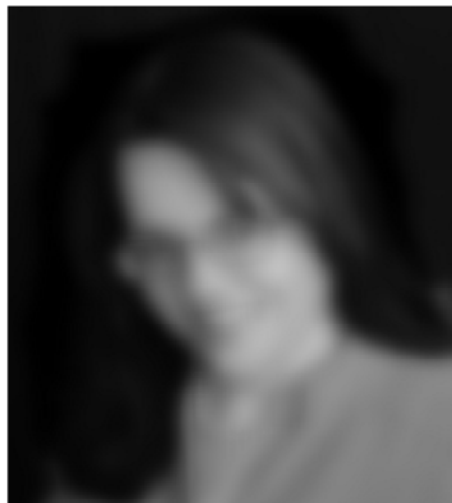
After Beltran's murder, Valencia requested compassionate leave from her employer, the Universidad Iberoamericana.

She did not attend Dr. Beltran's funeral 8 days later. Two weeks later, Miss Valencia had still failed to make contact with her mother. The family is now seriously concerned for Valencia's safety.

Referring to the ongoing investigation into the murder of Beltran, Detective Martin Lopez admitted, "The two cases may be linked."

A scientific collaborator of Beltran's - Dr. Jackson Bennett of San Francisco, USA - is the only suspect in Beltran's murder.

Bennett is the only lead in what is thought to be a terrorist-related killing.



The murdered Mexican scientist PJ Beltran and suspect Jackson Bennett are geneticists. It is thought that they exchanged vials of bio-hazardous material at Mexico City airport, leading to Beltran's murder. Police are now searching for a Bennett as well as a vial containing potentially harmful biological material.

It is unclear how Mary Carmen Valencia may be involved.

A police search of Valencia's home found blood-stained surgical dressings. The blood, however, was not Valencia's.

A security guard at Valencia's apartment buildings reported an American male in his thirties staying with Miss Valencia for some days after Beltran's murder.

Police refused to speculate on whether Bennett was the man staying with Valencia. However, this paper can confirm that the guard positively identified Bennett photograph in a scientific journal.

"I don't believe Dr. Bennett is a terrorist," said Antonio Delgado, 29, a security guard. "He and Miss Valencia left separately on the 6th. It seemed like they were good friends. But the day they left, they were acting edgy. Like they were watching their backs...and not from the police."