

# UNIVERSITY OF SYDNEY

## SCHOOL OF MATHEMATICS AND STATISTICS

### Statistics Seminar

Friday October 12, 2.00pm., Carslaw Lecture Room 173 (Level 1)

## **Games in a court of law**

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### **Abstract**

Whilst working in Hong Kong, I was asked by the Government to assist enquiries regarding an alleged case of police corruption. An officer had suddenly acquired large increases to his wealth. He claimed that this was due to his luck in the casinos of Macau. He did indeed make four trips to Macau – immigration records confirmed this – so I was asked the likelihood of a gambler achieving the wins that the officer claimed to have made on these trips.

The officer was charged with "being a crown servant and being in control of pecuniary resources or property disproportionate to present or past official emoluments". The case had considerable interest to lawyers, being the very last one held in HK under an act which put the onus of proof onto any public servant to prove that his assets were acquired legally.

As it turned out, the gambling game which the officer said that he played was one involving a modicum of skill. This greatly complicated my assignment, which was difficult enough anyway (as formulation of the prosecution's brief to me in mathematical terms was not straightforward).

Because of the skill element, game theoretical issues came to the fore. Since I have recently been researching the theories developed at the time, a talk now is apposite.

I had my day in court, and that was interesting. In terms of the contribution of statistical reasoning to the law, however, the case was something of a disaster.

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