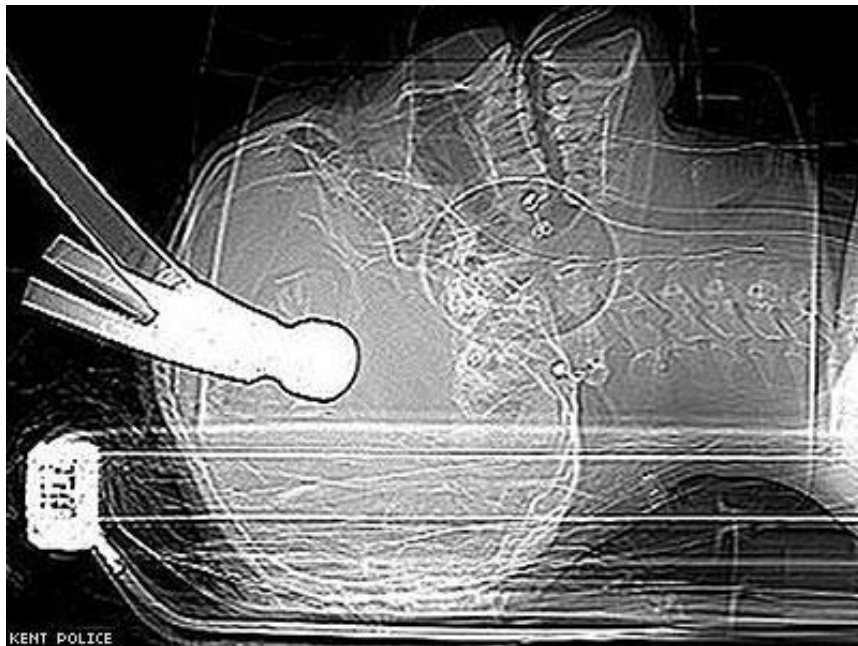


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U.K. Man Gets 14 Years After Bashing Gay Roommate's Skull

By Thom Senzee

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A homophobic 21-year-old British man who hit his sleeping roommate in the head multiple times with a claw hammer after

learning the new roommate was gay will spend the next 14 years in prison, serving out a conviction for attempted murder, reports U.K. LGBT outlet *Pink News*.

Joseph Williams struck his roommate, 18-year-old Connor Huntley, so hard that the hammer was lodged in Huntley's head, according to court documents. Various media outlets reported that Williams openly acknowledged a deep-seated hatred of gays, even telling a neighbor that he was unsure he could live with Huntley because he might hit him. In court, prosecutors connected Williams' homophobia to his "Catholic background." Much of Williams' sentence will reportedly be served in a psychiatric hospital.

Williams called a police emergency line to report the crime, telling the operator, "I did it ... I hit him on the head with a hammer in his sleep," according to the *London Evening Standard*. "As you are talking there is a body in my flat and my mental health's deteriorating as well."

Prosecutors told the court that Kent Police found that Huntley was still alive, lying on an inflated airbed with a hammer embedded in his skull. Huntley and Williams had been matched as flatmates by their landlord. The night of the attempted murder was Huntley's first night in his new home.

"To hit someone more than once with a hammer in their sleep hard enough for the hammer to be embedded in their head clearly demonstrates an intention to kill them," prosecutor Philip Bennet told the court, according to the *Standard*.

Huntley suffered a depressed skull fracture and a penetrating brain injury, but miraculously survived the near-fatal injury, reports the *Standard*. His family has asked for privacy as Huntley recovers from brain damage caused by the attack.

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