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Pandemia: morte misteriosa del britannico che ha rivelato l'insabbiamento cinese

Come il primo britannico noto per aver contratto il coronavirus, Connor Reed ha fatto molto per illuminare il pubblico anglofono sull'allora misteriosa malattia.

Rinchiuso con la forza nel suo appartamento di Wuhan per 16 settimane, malato per 24 giorni con ponte di atroci sofferenze e disperazioni, il giovane insegnante di inglese è diventato un volto familiare in televisione, inviando rapporti video dall'epicentro della nascente pandemia.

«Tra i milioni che hanno ascoltato i suoi inquietanti dispacci – con un misto di orgoglio e preoccupazione – c'erano i suoi genitori gallesi, Rod e Hayley Reed, che ora vivono in Australia» scrive il giornale britannico *Daily Mail*. «Giovedì, rannicchiati insieme ai figli più piccoli Morgan, 17 anni, e Oliver, otto anni, i coniugi Reed si sono riuniti ancora una volta intorno a uno schermo, a 10.000 miglia di distanza a Brisbane. Questa volta per vedere il funerale di Connor».

Una quindicina di giorni fa, apparentemente guarito dal virus, questo ventiseienne è stato misteriosamente trovato morto nel suo dormitorio alla Bangor University, dove aveva da poco iniziato un corso di laurea in cinese e linguistica.

Impedito dall'embargo sugli spostamenti calato dal governo di Londra, la famiglia non ha potuto effettuare il viaggio di 24 ore verso Galles. Genitori e fratelli hanno potuto vedere solo tramite un video live dal Colwyn Bay Crematorium.

«Ora, l'imperativo più urgente della famiglia è scoprire come Connor ha incontrato la sua morte» scrive il *Mail*.

Poco dopo le 22 di domenica 25 ottobre, i coinquilini di Connor lo hanno trovato svenuto sul pavimento della sua camera da letto. Il motivo della sua morte prematura finora rimane sconosciuto.

Era passato quasi un anno da quando si era gravemente ammalato di virus mentre insegnava inglese a Wuhan, e sembrava che stesse combattendo in forma. Sebbene fosse costretto a studiare online piuttosto che a frequentare le lezioni, il padre afferma che Connor era in uno stato d'animo «ottimista» e si stava godendo il suo corso, iniziato a settembre.

Il padre pare rifiutare l'idea che Connor possa essersi tolto la vita.

Connor aveva trascorso tre anni in Estremo Oriente, passando per la Malesia e altre città cinesi prima di stabilirsi a Wuhan, dove era rimasto colpito dall'atmosfera colorata della strada e dal calore della gente del posto.

«Forse – scrive il quotidiano – gli piaceva fare shopping nel vivace mercato del pesce della città, con i suoi pipistrelli in gabbia e altri animali selvatici».

Il 25 novembre 2019, tutto è cambiato. Nel suo diario, ha descritto le tre fasi distinte della sua malattia. Ha avuto inizio con sintomi simili al raffreddore che sono scomparsi dopo cinque giorni con l'aiuto di alcune bevande calde a base di miele e whisky; in seguito ha avvertito dolori alle ossa e febbre; il giorno 12, i suoi polmoni così gravemente malmessi da fargli temere che potesse soffocare.

Nel frattempo, Dusk, il suo gattino domestico, si è improvvisamente ammalato ed è morto. All'ospedale locale i medici hanno diagnosticato una polmonite e prescritto antibiotici, ma Connor temeva che potessero indebolire il suo sistema immunitario, e così non li ha presi.

Dopo 24 giorni il ragazzo gallese si sentiva di nuovo bene. Durante la sua malattia, la vita a Wuhan era andata avanti normalmente. Nessuno sa se le autorità cinesi fossero già al corrente dell'esistenza del COVID-19.

Connor è andato in ospedale dopo aver sviluppato un'infezione al torace, ma ha continuato a riprendersi dalla malattia. In modo preoccupante, tuttavia, i funzionari del Partito Comunista ordinarono a tutti di rimanere a casa solo 37 giorni dopo che Connor si ammalò per la prima volta, un fatto che annotò nel suo diario.

Passarono altri 15 giorni prima che fosse formalmente informato che era stato infettato dal «Virus di Wuhan». Quando ha dato la spaventosa notizia agli amici su Facebook, si è rapidamente diffusa.

All'inizio di marzo, tre settimane prima che Boris Johnson annunciasse il primo lockdown, Connor stava avvertendo milioni di britannici – tramite questo giornale e interviste televisive – della sofferenza che attendeva chiunque fosse stato infettato.

Diffidente nel criticare il suo paese ospitante, tuttavia, Connor ha sempre descritto la gestione della pandemia da parte della Cina in termini positivi.

La sua morte rimane un mistero, al punto che stanno scomodando una nuova teoria per casi simili, chiamata «COVID lungo».

Tim Spector, professore di epidemiologia genetica al King's College di Londra, ha dichiarato al *Mail* che le vittime del «COVID lungo» potrebbero presumibilmente morire di trombosi, o coaguli di sangue, mesi dopo un'apparente guarigione.
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Mystery death of Briton who revealed Covid cover-up

 [dailymail.co.uk/news/article-8922933/Mystery-death-Briton-revealed-Covid-cover-up.html](https://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-8922933/Mystery-death-Briton-revealed-Covid-cover-up.html)

November 6, 2020

Mystery death of the Briton who revealed Covid cover-up: Student, 26, whose video dispatches from Wuhan exposed pandemic to the world is found dead in his university dorm in Wales

- **Student Connor Reed, 26, caught the virus while working at a school in Wuhan**
- **Became famous for haunting dispatches as the first Briton to have caught Covid**
- **Connor was found dead in his room at Bangor University on Sunday, October 25**
- **Parents Rod and Hayley Reed, who now live in Australia, spoke to The Daily Mail**

By [David Jones for the Daily Mail](#)

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As the first Briton known to have caught [coronavirus](#), Connor Reed did much to enlighten us about the then mysterious disease.

He provided our first insight into its worst symptoms by way of an evocative diary published in the Mail. And he relived the 'Hallelujah' moment when, after 24 hellish days during which he had felt close to death, he began to recover.

Forcibly locked down in his Wuhan flat for 16 weeks afterwards, the young English teacher became a familiar face on television, sending video reports from the epicentre of the nascent pandemic.

Among the millions who listened to his haunting dispatches — with a mixture of pride and concern — were his Welsh parents, Rod and Hayley Reed, who now live in Australia.



Connor Reed (pictured), the first British national believed to have caught coronavirus late last year, was found dead in his dorm at Bangor University on October 25



The now-infamous Huanan wet market in Wuhan where many believe the virus originated



The halls of residence at Bangor University, north Wales, where Connor was found dead

On Thursday, huddled together with younger sons Morgan, 17, and Oliver, eight, Mr and Mrs Reed once again gathered around a screen, 10,000 miles away in Brisbane. This time to watch Connor's funeral.

For a fortnight ago, having apparently made a full recovery from the virus, this 26-year-old was mysteriously found dead in his dorm at Bangor University, where he had recently begun a degree course in Chinese and linguistics.

Prevented by the travel embargo from making the 24-hour journey to Wales, his parents and siblings could only watch the moving service via a live feed from Colwyn Bay Crematorium.

'You'd think we would have felt disconnected from Connor because we were so far away, but I didn't feel that way at all,' his father told me in an exclusive interview after the 30-minute service.

'It was just nice that we were at least able to see him. Afterwards, we had a glass of wine and talked about all the incredible things he did in his life.'

Now, the family's most pressing imperative is to discover how Connor met his death.

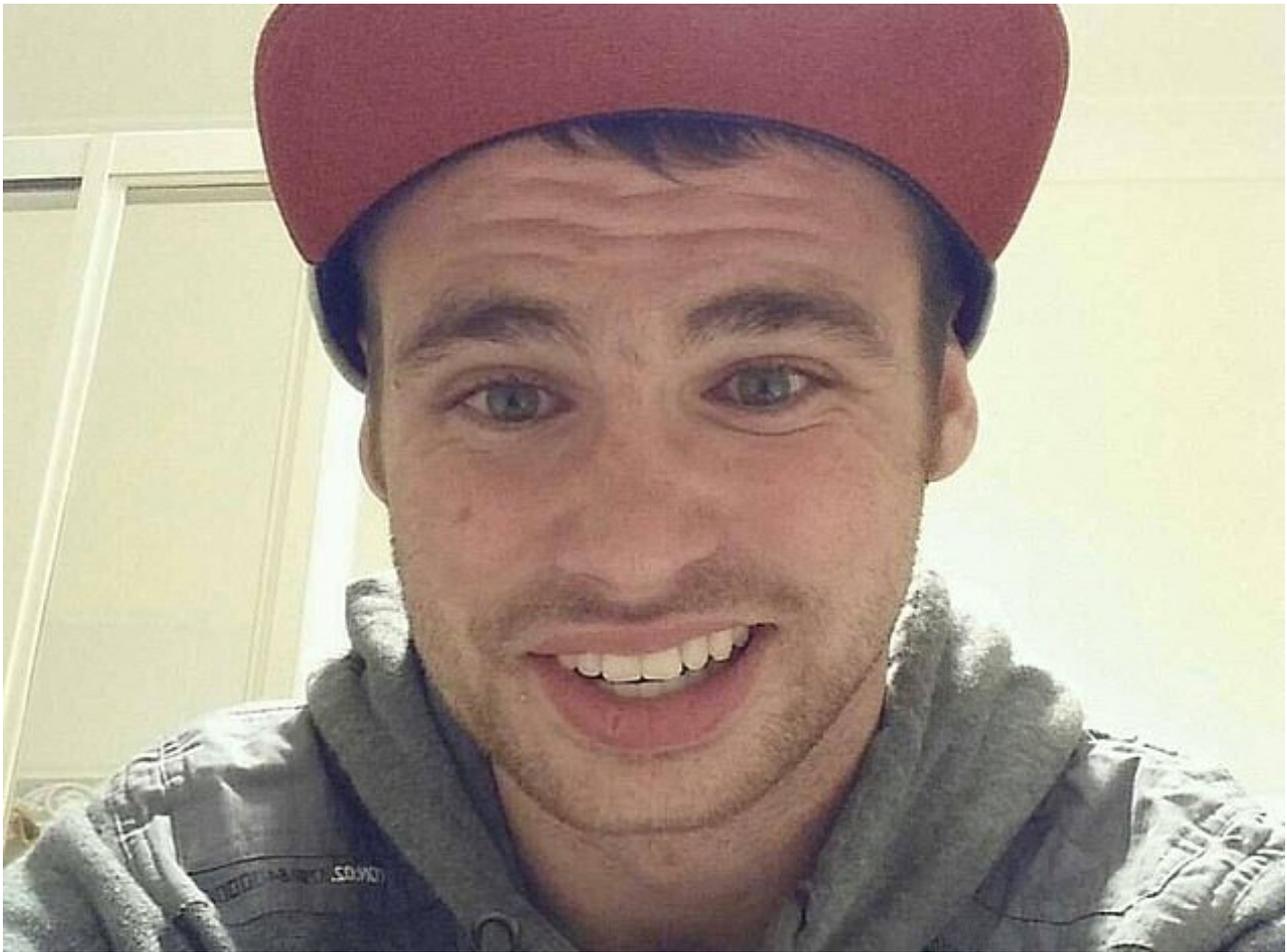
Shortly after 10pm on Sunday, October 25, Connor's housemates found him collapsed on his bedroom floor. The reason for his premature death so far remains unknown.

Nearly a year had passed since he fell seriously ill with the virus while teaching English in Wuhan, and he seemed to be fighting fit.

Though compelled to study online rather than attend lectures, Mr Reed says Connor was in an 'upbeat' frame of mind and enjoying his course, which started in September.



Connor Reed pictured with his mother Hayley



Connor Reed is believed to be the first Briton to have contracted coronavirus

All the indications were that he had rediscovered the irrepressible zest for life for which he was remembered at Thursday's funeral.

Connor's father is well aware that when a young man dies suddenly and the police say there are 'no suspicious circumstances', this euphemistic phrase invariably indicates that he has committed suicide.

Indeed, as a volunteer for an Australian help group for fellow construction workers who are suffering emotional problems, the 55-year-old carpenter has been trained to identify the danger signs.

Yet having kept in close contact with Connor in recent weeks, and phoned him two days before he died, he says nothing made him suspect his son was struggling.

Nor, he says, were there any obvious pointers: no note, no empty medicine bottles or instruments; no outward physical injuries. 'I can see why people might think it was suicide, but I can't see it,' he says.

'He said the people in his dormitory were nice (he shared with three others on campus) and he had made friends. He was happy.

'I have never known him to take drugs, and surely that's the first thing they would look for, but they haven't told us they've found any.

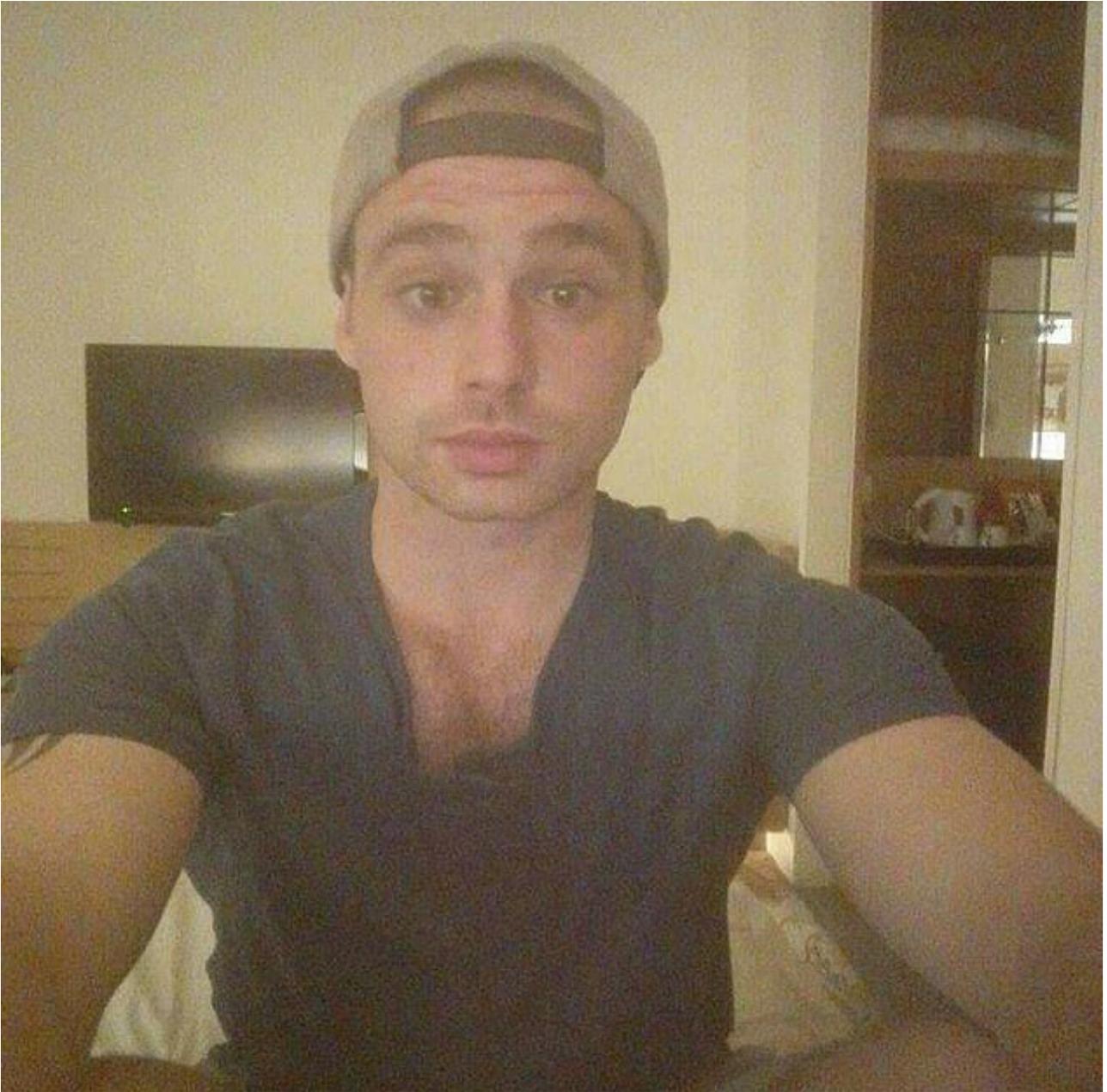
'At first, the police thought he had fallen off a chair in his bedroom (hitting his head on the floor), but the university says not.

'A post-mortem examination has been done because we've got a report from the coroner saying it was inconclusive.





Connor with his mother



Writing for the Daily Mail in November, Connor described his symptoms, initially putting the illness down to a bad flu

'The only thing they said of interest was that they were doing more tests, but it could be up to 12 weeks before we know anything.

'I did think it might be Covid-related, but then I thought there'd be a tell-tale sign — a cough or something.' Pausing for a moment to compose himself, he adds: 'We may never know the truth — but we have to try to find it.'

To find some kind of peace, of course they must.

So what became of this articulate, personable young man after the first Covid wave subsided and he faded from the spotlight, and might his story yield any clues?

Hailing from a large family in North Wales, his parents moved to Hertfordshire before emigrating to Australia's Gold Coast when Connor was 12.

At his funeral, members of his family attested to his youthful exuberance and thirst for adventure.

Determined to wring every drop of excitement from life, Connor was never destined to follow his father into the building trade.

He was forever dreaming up get-rich-quick schemes, and his father says his plan, after graduating from Bangor, was to make millions from some unspecified Anglo-Chinese business venture.

After leaving school, he briefly worked as a salesman in a Brisbane electrical store, but in his early 20s he returned to the UK to live with relatives in England.

Then, one day, he phoned his father and announced, without any prior warning, that he was moving to China to learn Mandarin. 'Are you nuts?' Mr Reed asked. But his son was serious.

Connor spent three years in the Far East, passing through Malaysia and other Chinese cities before settling in Wuhan, where he was excited by the colourful street ambience and the warmth of the local people.

Perhaps fatefully, he enjoyed shopping at the city's bustling seafood market, with its caged bats and other wild animals, from where the virus might first have spread to humans.

But then, on November 25 last year, everything changed. In his diary, he described the three distinct stages of his illness.

It began with cold-like symptoms that disappeared after five days with the help of a few hot toddies made from honey and whisky; returned to cause aching bones and a fever; then struck 'with a vengeance' on day 12, constricting his lungs so severely that he feared he might suffocate.

Meanwhile, his pet kitten, a British blue named Dusk, suddenly became ill and died.

At the local hospital doctors diagnosed pneumonia and prescribed antibiotics, but Connor feared they might weaken his immune system, and so he didn't take them.

After 24 days, he felt well again.

Throughout his illness, life in Wuhan had been going on as normal. Whether or not the Chinese authorities were already aware by that time that Covid-19 existed is anyone's guess.

Connor went to hospital after developing a chest infection, but went on to make a recovery from the illness

Disturbingly, however, Communist Party officials only ordered everyone to stay at home 37 days after Connor first fell ill — a fact he recorded in his diary.

A further 15 days passed before he was formally notified that he had been infected by the 'Wuhan coronavirus'. When he broke the frightening news to friends on Facebook, it quickly spread.

By early March, three weeks before Boris Johnson announced our first lockdown, Connor was warning millions of Britons — via this newspaper and TV interviews — of the misery that lay ahead for anyone who became infected.



Wary of criticising his host country, though, Connor always described China's handling of the pandemic in positive terms.

Perhaps he sincerely believed they had reacted promptly and that their draconian lockdown — which permitted only one person from a household to venture outside the home briefly for essential supplies every three days — was justifiable.

His father believes so. By the same token, he says: 'You don't 'diss' China when you are living there. At that time he was the face of coronavirus in the UK, I suppose, and he had a bit of a profile.

'His media work gave him something to do with his time during his lockdown, but by the end he wasn't going to do any more because he was worried about what the Chinese government might think. He was very careful not to rub them up the wrong way.'

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At Connor's funeral, his family also stressed the hardship he had endured during those 16 weeks when he was shut away, alone, in his Wuhan flat.

'People in China have to do as they're told. There are no exceptions. We don't know what happens to those who don't do as they are told,' the service's humanist minister, Richard Butler, told mourners.

In all, he added, Connor, spent 20 weeks alone in lockdown. This included quarantine in Australia, where he spent the summer with his family, and a further 14 days' quarantine after his arrival in Britain in September.

Yet he had 'coped with it well', the mourners were told.

But had he? After his long weeks of isolation, his return trip from China to Australia became a gruelling and costly marathon.

Since his visa had expired, the Chinese authorities delayed his transfer from Hong Kong for three days; several airlines refused to carry him, and some of the flights he managed to book on to were cancelled without refund.

When he finally reached Brisbane, however, he and his father spent their time renovating a house Mr Reed had bought, staying there together at night amid the dust and rubble.

'I don't want this to be all about 'poor Connor', because we had a great time when he was here,' says Mr Reed.

Deciding he needed academic qualifications to back up his fluent Mandarin, Connor applied without success to study at several Chinese universities. This may have had something to do with the deteriorating relations between China and Australia over trade, his father surmises.

When he was offered a place at Bangor, therefore, he 'leapt at the opportunity'.

So, in September he was on his travels again, flying for almost 24 hours to Manchester, and then on by road to North Wales.

His father wonders now whether the long flight — possibly exacerbated by some lingering coronavirus complication — may have damaged his son's health.

'I don't think it was Covid-related, but you never know,' he says.

The theory seems worthy of consideration. A study by researchers from Imperial College London, published in August, found that coronavirus commonly causes blood-clots in the lungs.

And Tim Spector, professor of genetic epidemiology at King's College London, told the Mail that victims of 'long Covid' — the effects of which are now emerging — could conceivably die from thrombosis, or blood clots, months after an apparent recovery.

This week, however, North West Wales Coroner Dewi Pritchard Jones, who is investigating Connor's death, told the Mail that he is exploring 'other avenues' and believes he is close to confirming the cause of death.

'Blood clots in major organs are routinely checked for at post-mortem,' he said.

'With Covid, it is invariably in the lungs that clots stick.

'I am looking at other avenues, but I don't want to tell you my theory in case it proves unfounded. We think we know what happened, but I have to prove it.

'I am waiting for results to come back from the lab, and I am hoping that will explain everything.'

He declined to disclose the nature of these tests, but it is believed he is awaiting a toxicology report.

If so, this seems to suggest some form of overdose, albeit perhaps accidental.

Whatever the truth, Mr Reed reiterates that his exuberant, much-loved son will be remembered as a 'happy child and a happy adult'.

'It's just sad that we won't see how his life would have turned out, after having so many adventures at an early age,' he says stoically.

He is also rightly proud that Connor, through his courageous and lyrical dispatches, enhanced people's knowledge in the early days of the pandemic.

'Whenever we're missing him, we'll only have to put his name into Google and he'll be there. Connor will be on the internet for ever; he has his place in history,' he says.

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