

Office of the Chief Medical Examiner

CB # 7580 Chapel Hill, NC 27599-7580

Telephone 9199662253

REPORT OF AUTOPSY EXAMINATION

DECEDENT

Document Identifier B200804574

Autopsy Type ME Autopsy

Name Matthew Josiah Silliman

Age 18 yrs

Race White

Sex M

AUTHORIZATION

Authorized By Samuel Simmons MD

Received From Wake

ENVIRONMENT

Date of Exam 12/04/2008

Time of Exam 9:00

Autopsy Facility Office of the Chief Medical Examiner **Persons Present** Ms. Molly Hupp, Ms. Tracy Gurnsey, Dr. Radisch, Mr. Bill Holloman, Dr. Allison Hall, Det. Butler of the Wake County Sheriff's Dept. and Agent Como of the CCBI (in observation room)

CERTIFICATION

Cause of Death

Asphyxiation (see comment)

The facts stated herein are correct to the best of my knowledge and belief.

Digitally signed by

Samuel Simmons MD 26 February 2009 14:00

Deborah L. Radisch MD 27 February 2009 17:09

DIAGNOSES

Plastic bag over head affixed with plastic ties (ligature) around neck

Circumferential patterned ligature mark around neck

Posterior periesophageal hemorrhage

Duct tape occluding mouth

Plastic ties binding wrists and ankles

Patterned ligature marks on bilateral wrists

Blunt force injuries of the head

Laceration of occipital scalp with underlying hemorrhage

Small subgaleal hematoma

Terminal gastric aspiration

IDENTIFICATION

Body Identified By

Dental Exam

EXTERNAL DESCRIPTION

Length 69 inches

Weight 166 pounds

Body Condition Intact

Rigor Present, easily breakable

Livor Posterior, red-purple, and fixed

Hair Brown with blonde highlights, approximately 2" in length with a trimmed beard and mustache

Eyes Dark with cloudy corneas

Teeth Natural and in fair condition

Received in a zippered disaster pouch is the body of a well developed, well nourished adult white male appearing compatible with the reported age. The body is initially identified by visual comparison with antemortem photographs

and by documents accompanying the disaster pouch, with subsequent confirmation of identification by dental examination and radiograph comparison.

Within the zippered disaster pouch, the body is enclosed in a black and gray Coleman sleeping bag. The sleeping bag is removed to reveal a clear plastic bag over the head held in place by two connected white plastic ties around the neck, and a loose clear plastic bag over the feet. The plastic bag over the feet is removed to reveal two connected white plastic ties binding the ankles, over the pants and socks. Two interlocked white plastic ties bind the wrists in front of the body, over two pairs of gloves. The clear plastic bag over the head is removed to reveal dark colored duct tape in place over the mouth. Pink vomitus is present in the mouth and on the face, within the clear plastic bag.

The clothing consists of a dark coat with a vertical cut down the back, a black hooded sweatshirt with a small tear in the hood, a gray-blue flannel shirt, a black shirt, camouflage pants, gray underwear, green socks, and brown fingerless gloves over green gloves. Black nail polish is present on the fingernails and the ears are pierced bilaterally with a dark metal piercing in the left ear. Personal effects consist of a black Sharpie marker in the pants pocket, Kleenex, a black cigarette lighter, and a black pouch in the outer coat pocket (black pouch contains \$1.27 in change, a white metal bracelet, a white metal ring with a clear stone and a small white paper packet with tape).

On the right medial forearm there is a partially indiscernible message which reads "I Love (indiscernible word)." On the left medial forearm is a partially indiscernible message written in black ink and pink discoloration consistent with ink which reads "(indiscernible words) fail." There also appears to be a cross-shaped symbol on the left medial forearm in black ink outlined by similar pink discoloration or ink.

INJURIES

HEAD AND NECK:

On the posterior mid occipital scalp at a point 3 1/2" below the top of the head is a laceration which measures 1 1/8" x 1/8". Underlying this laceration is a small amount of subcutaneous hemorrhage. There is no underlying skull fracture or brain hemorrhage or contusion. Slightly below and to the right of this laceration, under the right posterolateral occipital scalp is a small subgaleal hematoma. There is no visible overlying injury to the external scalp or underlying skull fracture or brain injury.

The plastic ties around the neck and plastic bag over the head are removed to reveal, on the neck, a circumferential patterned ligature mark measuring 1/4" in width. The ligature mark is most prominent anteriorly and laterally. Dissection of the neck reveals slight posterior periesophageal hemorrhage. The hyoid bone and laryngeal cartilages are intact. No injury or hemorrhage to the strap muscles or large vessels of the neck is identified.

EXTREMITIES:

The plastic ties from the wrists are removed. The left wrist contains a patterned ligature mark 1/4" in width which is circumferential. The right wrist contains a similar, patterned ligature mark 1/4" in width which is most prominent on the dorsal portion of the wrist.

No distinct ligature marks are present on the ankles after removal of the plastic bag and plastic tie bindings.

No other significant internal or external injuries are present.

All bindings, the plastic bags, duct tape, clothing, and personal effects are submitted as evidence.

DISPOSITION OF CLOTHING AND PERSONAL EFFECTS

The following items are released with the body

None

The following items are preserved as evidence

The previously described small white paper packet with tape is received by Det. Butler of the Wake County Sheriff's Office on 12-04-08. The remaining personal effects, sleeping bag, clothing, plastic ties, plastic bags, duct tape, blood spot card, and a sample of pulled head hair are received by Agent Como of the CCBI on 12-04-08.

PROCEDURES

Radiographs

One postmortem lateral radiograph of the head showing occlusal amalgams in teeth #2 and #15 is compared with the antemortem dental films and descriptions of matching amalgams from the office of Dr. Kevin Atkins of Apex, North Carolina from October 2006. There is concordance of the restorations on the films.

Chemistry

Vitreous fluid is obtained for electrolyte analysis.

INTERNAL EXAMINATION

Body Cavities

The bilateral pleural and peritoneal cavities contain no significant fluid. No adhesions are present. All body organs are present and in their normal anatomic relationship.

Cardiovascular System

Heart Weight 320 grams

The pericardial sac is free of significant fluid and adhesions. The coronary arteries arise normally, follow the usual distribution and are widely patent, without evidence of significant atherosclerosis or thrombosis. The chambers and valves bear the usual size-position relationships and are unremarkable. The myocardium shows no evidence of acute infarction, scarring or focal lesions. The aorta and its major branches are intact without significant atherosclerosis.

Respiratory System

Right Lung Weight 580 grams

Left Lung Weight 550 grams

Except as noted, the upper and lower airways are free of debris and foreign material. The lungs are normally formed. The parenchyma of both lungs shows moderate congestion without obvious consolidation or focal lesions. The pulmonary arteries are free of thrombi or emboli.

Gastrointestinal System

The GI tract is intact throughout its length and is unremarkable. The appendix is present. The stomach contains approximately 150 ml of tan-pink fluid and food material.

Liver

Liver Weight 1400 grams

The capsule is intact and the parenchyma is unremarkable. The gallbladder contains approximately 10 ml of dark green bile and no gallstones. The extrahepatic biliary tree is patent.

Spleen

Spleen Weight 120 grams

The spleen is normally formed. No focal lesions are identified.

Pancreas

Normal size, shape and consistency without focal lesions.

Urinary

Right Kidney Weight 110 grams

Left Kidney Weight 130 grams

The kidneys are of normal size and shape. The capsules strip with ease from the underlying smooth cortical surfaces. The renal architecture is intact without focal lesions. The ureters are intact without dilation. The bladder contains approximately 150 ml of clear urine.

Reproductive

The prostate gland is unremarkable.

Endocrine

The thyroid gland is of normal size, shape and consistency.
The bilateral adrenal glands are grossly unremarkable.

Neurologic

Brain Weight 1580 grams

The leptomeninges are thin, delicate and congested. The cerebral hemispheres are unremarkable. The vasculature at the base of the brain is intact without significant atherosclerosis. Coronal sections reveal normal architecture without focal lesions.

Skin

Except as noted, no focal lesions are identified.

Immunologic System

No residual thymus gland is identified. There is no evidence of lymphadenopathy.

Musculoskeletal System

Grossly unremarkable. There are no fractures identified within the skull or of the axial and appendicular skeletons. Except as noted, examination of the soft tissues of the neck including the strap muscles and large vessels reveals no abnormalities. The hyoid bone and laryngeal cartilages are intact. The lingual mucosa is intact and the underlying musculature is devoid of hemorrhage.

MICROSCOPIC EXAMINATION

Cardiovascular

One section of heart shows slight perivascular fibrosis and no other significant pathologic abnormality.

Respiratory

Sections of lungs show vascular congestion, scattered macrophages, slight autolytic changes, and postmortem accumulation of intra-alveolar proteinaceous fluid and bacteria. Vegetable and food material is also noted within the small- to medium-sized airways, without hemorrhagic or inflammatory reaction, consistent with terminal aspiration.

Liver

A section of liver shows mild periportal inflammation, scattered pyknotic cells, and slight autolytic changes.

Genitourinary

A section of kidney shows slight autolytic changes and no significant pathologic abnormality.

Neurologic

Sections of brain show focal perivascular red blood cell extravasation.

SUMMARY AND INTERPRETATION

The decedent was an 18 year-old-man who was found dead in an abandoned house. His hands and ankles were bound with plastic ties, duct tape was covering his mouth, a plastic bag was secured over his head with plastic ties, and his body was inside a sleeping bag.

Significant findings at autopsy include a circumferential patterned ligature mark on the neck with slight posterior periesophageal hemorrhage, patterned ligature marks on the bilateral wrists, blunt force injuries of the head evidenced by a laceration of the occipital scalp with underlying scalp hemorrhage and an adjacent but separate small subgaleal hematoma, and evidence of terminal gastric aspiration.

Postmortem toxicological analysis reveals bupropion (120 mg/L aorta blood and 19 mg/L vena cava blood) and its metabolites threo bupropion (6.2 mg/L aorta blood, 5.6 mg/L vena cava blood, and 23 mg/kg liver tissue), erythro bupropion (present in aorta blood) and morpholinol bupropion (present in aorta blood), as well as ethanol (170 mg/dL-0.17%) in aorta blood. No benzodiazepines, cocaine, opiates, other organic bases, or oxymorphone were present in aorta blood.

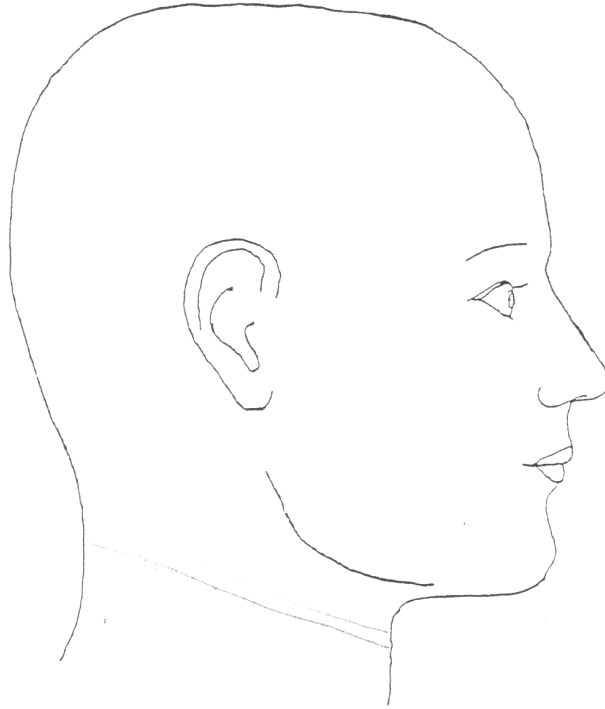
Given the autopsy and investigative findings, it is our opinion that the cause of death in this case is asphyxiation. The concentration of bupropion is potentially lethal, and along with acute ethanol intoxication, likely played a role in respiratory depression and sedation prior to death from asphyxiation due to ligature strangulation/suffocation.

DIAGRAMS

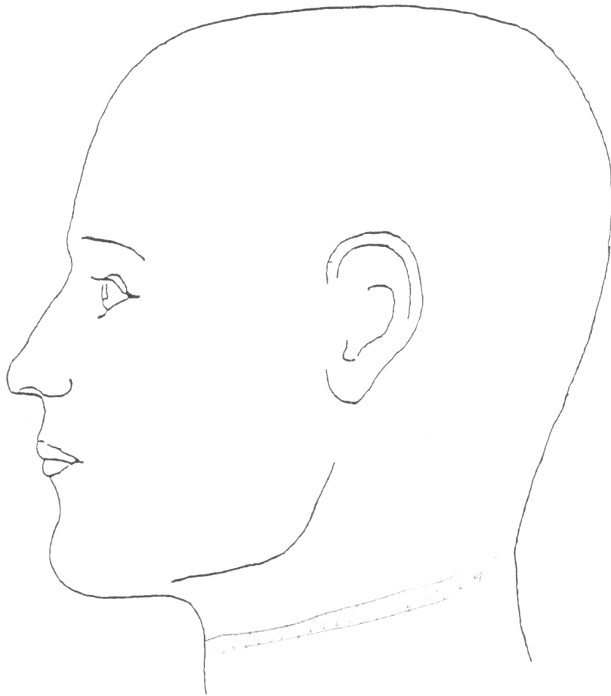
1. Head (left/right)
2. Head (front/back)
3. Adult (front/back)

BODY DIAGRAM: HEAD (left/right)

Right



Left



circumferential, patterned ligature
 mark, ~1/4" wide

- most prominent anteriorly + laterally
- slight posterior ^{per-}esophageal hemorrhage

DEENR 1920 (4/97)
Medical Examiner

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State of North Carolina

Name of Decedent: S. Hyman

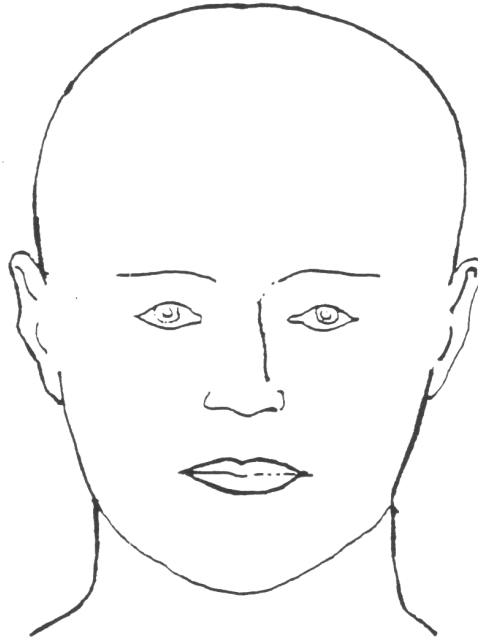
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Autopsy # B08-4574

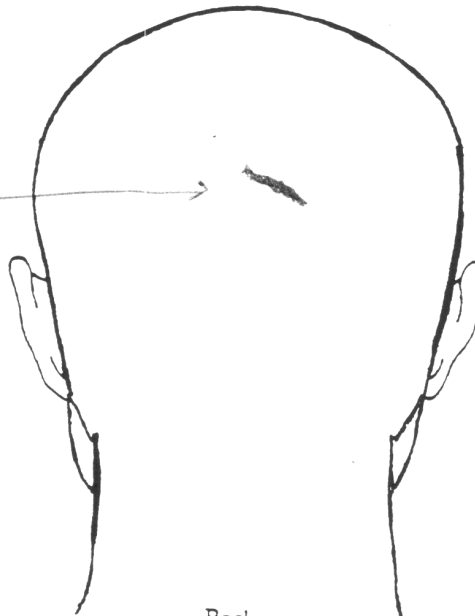
Chapel Hill, North Carolina 27599-7580

Examined By: SBS/DR Date: 12/4/08

BODY DIAGRAM: HEAD (front/back)



Front



Back

laceration

1 1/8" x 1/8"

3 1/2" ↓ TO H

- slight underlying hemorrhage w/in scalp
- no injury to skull or brain

DEHNR 1919 (4/97)
Medical Examiner

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BODY DIAGRAM: ADULT (Front/Back)

FRONT

BACK

