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SUPPLEMENTAL REPORT

No. 81-15167

An autopsy was performed on the body of
the DEPARTMENT OF CORONER



Wagner, Natalie
Also Known As:
Wood, Natalie

at _____

Los Angeles, California on November 30, 1981 @ 1330 Hours
(Date) (Time)

From the anatomic findings and pertinent history I ascribe the death to:

(A) Drowning and other undetermined factors

DUE TO OR AS A CONSEQUENCE OF

(B)

DUE TO OR AS A CONSEQUENCE OF

(C)

DUE TO OR AS A CONSEQUENCE OF

(D)

OTHER CONDITIONS CONTRIBUTING BUT NOT RELATED TO THE IMMEDIATE CAUSE OF DEATH:

May 20, 2012

RE-EVALUATION:

Reason for re-evaluation:

The Los Angeles County Sheriff's Department (LASD) had reopened the case in the fall of 2011 and had requested the current Chief Medical Examiner-Coroner to re-evaluate the case. They had interviewed the former Chief Medical Examiner-Coroner Dr. Noguchi, who did the autopsy, and other witnesses. During the interview with the former Chief Medical Examiner-Coroner Dr. Noguchi, they were made aware of a consultation report by one Mr. Paul Miller. The current Chief Medical Examiner-Coroner arranged a meeting with Mr. Paul Miller on January 24, 2012 at request of LASD Detective Lowe. Dr. Noguchi, Detective Hernandez, Detective Rubino, Detective Hecht, Chief Craig Harvey of the Operations Bureau and Mr. Miller attended the meeting. Report of Mr. Paul Miller which had been retrieved from Department of Coroner microfilm archives was authenticated by him during this meeting. A copy was given to both LASD and Mr. Miller. There was another meeting with detectives on March 2, 2012, where the current Chief Medical Examiner-Coroner discussed his evaluation of the case and concern for non-accidental mechanism for certain bruises of the upper extremities. He also opined that there was no evidence of head trauma and that the bruises especially in the upper extremities appeared fresh and could have occurred before she entered the water.

On April of this year the Sheriff's Department asked the current Chief Medical Examiner-Coroner to formalize his findings into the form of a report. The current Chief Medical Examiner-Coroner also met with Dr. Noguchi to discuss the autopsy report and Mr. Miller's report. Documents evaluated by the current

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Chief Medical Examiner included: 1). Complete autopsy report from Coroner's case 1981-15167 (Natalie Wood Wagner). This autopsy report included the investigator's reports of Ms. Pamela Eaker, Form 3A listing the medication, evidence record, Form 6 showing the preliminary exam, a typed autopsy report, the neuropathology report, microscopic exam report, toxicology reports and the chemical tests reports on right and left heart blood. 2). Mr. Paul Miller's evaluation. 3). Photographs. 4). Sheriff's department complaint report 081-008981873490 and follow-up supplemental report 081-08981873496. 5). Sheriff's department satellite photo and map of the Isthmus area.

Summary of the Circumstances:

- A) Ms. Wood's body was recovered from the Pacific Ocean on November 29, 1981 and she was pronounced on 0744 hours. After the body was recovered the Sheriff's personnel placed same in a hyperbaric chamber building for safekeeping. When recovered she was dressed in a blue and red plaid flannel nightgown and argyle socks. A red down jacket she was wearing was removed after she was pulled from the water. She had no underclothing. By the time Medical Examiner-Coroner's investigator Ms. Eaker got to the scene and took time of death parameters it was 1330 hours. Rigor mortis was 3 to 4+ at that time. There was lividity in the back that blanched. The environmental temperature at that time was 63°F and liver temperature was 65°F. The surface temperature of the water at that time at 7:44 am was 62-63°F. Ms. Wagner reportedly was found face down floating in the ocean, 200 yards off the Blue Cavern Point, Isthmus area of Catalina Island north of where the dinghy was found near the shoreline. The dinghy, which was located, had the key in the ignition in the off position, the gear was in neutral and the oars were tied down indicating the boat was never used. The decedent Ms. Natalie Wood, her husband, a friend, and the skipper of the Wagner family were spending the weekend at Catalina Island. The main vessel which they were traveling in was called the Splendour and was tied up to the mooring N1 in the Isthmus harbor. The dinghy which was near the shoreline when Ms. Wagner was found is a 13 foot Zodiac boat. It was called the Valiant.
- B) On November 28, 1981 Mrs. Natalie Wood, her husband, a friend and the captain were reportedly at a restaurant. They had been consuming alcohol and were seated for dinner between

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1900 to 1930 hours. The restaurant owner indicated the group left the restaurant to return to the boat at approximately 2200-2230 hours on November 28, 1981. According to the restaurant manager they all appeared intoxicated. He actually called the Harbor Patrol to assure that the decedent's family and decedent reached the Splendour safely.

- C) During the initial interview the husband of the decedent indicated that he, Ms. Wood, the ship's captain and another actor friend were drinking in the main cabin of the boat and they realized that Mrs. Wood was missing and also the Zodiac was missing. This was around 12 midnight.
- D) The restaurant manager indicated that they heard Mrs. Wagner's husband call for help around 0130 hours on November 29, 1981. A search was soon begun with Harbor Patrol, Baywatch, private searchers, L.A. County Sheriff and U.S. Coast Guard. The decedent was identified by the captain of the Splendour at 0830 hours on November 29, 1981.
- E. The captain indicated that they had gone ashore in the afternoon of 11/28/81 to have dinner and were initially at the bar drinking until 7 pm to 8 pm. After dinner they left for the Splendour around 10 pm or 11 pm and continued drinking onboard. The captain indicated that they discovered Ms. Wood the decedent missing only around 12 midnight. They presumed she had gone ashore and back to the bar. At 1:30 am the husband called Isthmus employees to look for Ms. Wood. According to the bartender, who attended to them on November 28, 1981, they continued to drink till 7:30 or 8 pm. They were generally quiet. Neither the victim nor her husband acted drunk but the ship's captain and their friend did appear intoxicated. According to the bartender they left the restaurant at 10:15 pm. All four of them made a toast and broke their wine glasses. He felt they were all pretty shaky. At the restaurant, Ms. Wagner had been dressed in blue designer jeans, a yellow sweater and a red down jacket. She also had jewelry which included a necklace and two or more rings.

The Zodiac dinghy boat involved in the incident was found against the rocks at an area called Blue Cavern Point, 1-1/4 miles northeast of the Isthmus pier where the Splendour was moored. The victim Ms. Wagner was found approximately 200 yards north of the Blue Cavern Point. It appeared that the Zodiac had just drifted to the position where it was found, having never been started. The dress Ms. Wood was wearing was a one piece plaid blue and red nightgown with no underclothing. The autopsy

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was conducted by Dr. Joseph Choi, Deputy Medical Examiner. Other Medical Examiner staff involving the case included Dr. Thomas T. Noguchi, Chief Medical Examiner-Coroner and Dr. Ronald Kornblum, Deputy Medical Examiner. Autopsy was conducted on November 30, 1981 at 1330 hours. Ms. Wagner was 43 years old, weighed approximately 120 pounds and was 64 inches in height. The right forearm showed a 4 inch x 1 inch diffuse bruising on the lateral aspect and few bruises on back of hand. The left wrist showed a slight deformity in the lateral condyle of the ulna and there was also a superficial fresh bruise in this area 1/2 inch in diameter. There were multiple small 1/2 inch to 1 inch fresh bruises in the left anterior lateral thigh. There was a 2 inch recent bruise to the left knee. There were recent bruises to the right upper leg in the area and right ankle. The anterior neck showed a small scratch. There was also superficial abrasion in left forehead, left brow and the left upper cheek area with an upward direction. There was white froth in the nasal oral area. There were recent bruises to the back of the left thigh. A few day old bruises were on the back of the right thigh and knee but there were fresh bruises and scratches to the right posterior leg. There were no petechiae in the conjunctiva of the eyes. The bruises showed no particular pattern. The blood in the chambers of the heart was fluid. The left anterior descending coronary artery showed focal narrowing by 30% with atherosclerotic plaque. The larynx, trachea, and bronchi were filled with large amount of white froth. The right lung weighed 800 grams and the left lung weighed 750 grams. The liver was unremarkable grossly and microscopically. The stomach contained 500 cc of semisolid partially digested food material which could be either chicken or fish-type substance. The small intestine contained 2 pills consistent with vitamin-like substance. There was a smell of alcohol in the stomach contents. The urinary bladder was filled with 300 cc of amber colored urine. The brain showed no injury and was examined by the neuropathologist. Microscopic findings of the brain showed no diagnostic features except for mild to moderate congestion. Microscopic sections of the right forearm, knee and right ankle showed fresh hemorrhage consistent with fresh bruise of superficial nature. Toxicology showed ethanol of 0.14 gms%. Ethchlorvynol and trichlorethanol were not detected. Caffeine was present at a concentration of 0.02mg%. No other neutrals were detected. Cocaine, codeine and morphine were not detected. Phencyclidine was not detected. Barbiturates were not detected. Freon 11 and 12, methane, butane, propane, hexane, and toluene were all not detected in

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the head space study. The magnesium in the right heart serum was 11.7 mg/dL and chloride in the right heart was 106 mEq/L. Specific gravity in serum of right heart autopsy specimen 1.0063 gm/mL. Propoxyphene was present at 0.07 mg% and cyclizine was present at 0.045 mg%. Phenothiazines were not detected. A sexual assault kit was collected at the Forensic Science Center by Mr. Njavro. Also hair samples were collected from head and arm areas. Dr. Noguchi collected nasal swabs during the postmortem exam. The specific gravity of the left heart serum was 1.040 gm/dL. The magnesium in the left heart blood was 22.5 mg/dL and chloride was 154 mEq/L.

Based on the autopsy findings, chemical tests result of high magnesium and chloride on the left heart compared to the right heart, the cause of death was established as drowning. Time of death was established to be around midnight of November 28, 1981. Case was closed as accidental drowning by Drs. Noguchi, Kornblum and Choi.

Discussion and opinion by the current Chief Medical Examiner-Coroner.

The autopsy findings, results of the chemical tests done on the right and left heart blood are all supportive of drowning. The only evidence available for review at this time was the histopathological slides taken during the autopsy of the bruises and liver and the neuropathology slides. Five items of evidence were collected and placed into the Department of Coroner evidence unit on November 30, 1981.

- A. An EDTA tube of blood was received at 1525 hours.
- B. Blood swatch was received at 1525 hours.
- C. Modified sexual assault kit was received at 1445 hours.
- D. Hair kit was received at 1445 hours.
- E. Pubic hair kit was received at 1445 hours.

Ms. Sandberg, Acting Supervising Criminalist provided a detailed memorandum to Chief Medical Examiner-Coroner/Interim Director on the status and evidence disposition, which will be an attachment to this report. However, medical evidence envelope containing prescription drugs belonging to the case was found (see form 3A in the autopsy report). This was released to the Sheriff's Department.

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There are conflicting statements as to when the decedent went missing from the boat and whether there were verbal arguments between the decedent and her husband. It was clear from the restaurant manager's statement that the call about her missing from the Splendour came only at 1:30 am on November 29, 1981. The fact that her stomach contained 500 cc of partially digested food material supports the opinion of the time of death being around midnight, especially given the information that dinner was consumed between 8 and 9 pm on November 28, 1981. With the presence of fresh bruises in the upper extremities in the right forearm/left wrist area and a small scratch in the anterior neck, this Examiner is unable to exclude non-accidental mechanism causing these injuries. The Zodiac dinghy was not available for Sheriff's detectives for evaluation when they went to examine the Splendour with the new owner. The original theory of Mr. Miller that there were scratches on the starboard side of the dinghy could not be evaluated further, as no nail clipping was collected during the original autopsy examination. So this theory cannot be verified. Based on (a) the fact that she was wearing a blue and red plaid flannel nightgown, down jacket, socks with no underclothing, but had jewelry (ring/bracelet right hand, 3 rings on left hand and a chain around her waist), (b) the intoxicated state, (c) lack of any life jacket, (d) dinghy having never been used, (e) her bladder still containing 300 cc of urine, (f) lack of history of any suicidal ideation or note, (g) the time of incident (around midnight) in darkness, this Medical Examiner is unable to exclude non-volitional, unplanned entry into the water. Also, given the temperature of the water and the time of death opined in autopsy report, it looks as though that Ms. Wood drowned within a short time of her entry into the water. The location of the bruises, the multiplicity of the bruises, lack of head trauma, or facial bruising support bruising having occurred prior to the entry into the water. Since there are many unanswered questions and limited additional evidence available for evaluation, it is opined by this Medical Examiner that the manner of death should be left as undetermined. The case was discussed with the former Chief Medical Examiner-Coroner Dr. Noguchi. Both Dr. Kornblum and Dr. Choi, who are the other Medical Examiners who handled the case, are deceased. The case could not be discussed with them.

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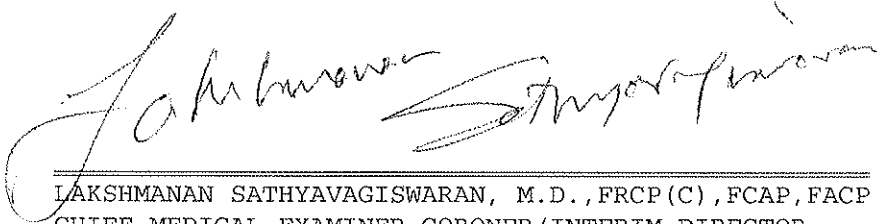
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The cause of death will be changed to drowning and other undetermined factors. Manner will be changed to undetermined. How injury occurred will be listed as found floating in ocean. Circumstances not clearly established.



LAKSHMANAN SATHYAVAGISWARAN, M.D., FRCP (C), FCAP, FACP
CHIEF MEDICAL EXAMINER-CORONER/INTERIM DIRECTOR

6-15-2012

DATE

LS:mtm/C
T-05/29/12



DEPARTMENT OF CORONER



DATE: June 5, 2012

TO: Lakshmanan Sathyavagiswaran, MD
Chief Medical Examiner – Coroner/Interim Director

FROM: Michelle Sandberg *MS*
Acting Supervising Criminalist

REGARDING: Status of Natalie Wood Evidence – Coroner Case #1981-15167

The Evidence Unit record for Natalie Wood was reviewed and reveals the following:

- Five items of evidence were received into our Evidence Unit on November 30, 1981. Based on a final mode of “Accident”, the below two items were disposed of on December 13, 1986.
 - Hair Kit
 - Pubic Hair Kit

- According to the Evidence Log, the remaining three items listed below were booked into our evidence unit and are still in our custody. An exhaustive search to locate these items was conducted on March 6, 2012 and none were located. It is possible that based on the final mode of “Accident” these items were also disposed without documentation or released to LASD without documentation.
 - EDTA/Whole Blood
 - Blood Swatch
 - Modified Sexual Assault Kit

- During the above mentioned search a medical evidence envelope containing prescription drugs belonging to this case was found. Documentation of this item was entered onto the evidence log, LASD was notified and the evidence was released to LASD Evidence Technician Garrett on March 20, 2012 at 1000hrs.
 - Medical Evidence



DEPARTMENT OF CORONER



The Toxicology Unit record for Natalie Wood was reviewed and reveals the following specimens were collected and received into our Toxicology Unit on November 30, 1981 unless otherwise stated. Records of disposal were not maintained in 1981 but all below listed specimens are presumed to have been discarded.

- Autopsy blood
- Bile
- Urine
- Liver
- Kidney
- Stomach
- 2 additional tubes of blood
- Intestinal contents
- Nasal swabs

The Histology Unit record for Natalie Wood indicates ten histology slides have been maintained. Records of disposal were not maintained in 1981 but the 2 listed jars are presumed to have been discarded.

- 5 regular slides (includes re-cut of slide #3) – received into Laboratories on 12/08/1981
- 5 neuropathology slides– received into Laboratories on 04/05/1982
- 1 Jar containing regular histology blocks – received into Laboratories on 11/30/1981
- 1 Jar containing neuropathology blocks – received into Laboratories on 12/14/1981



DEPARTMENT OF CORONER



In Summary....

Evidence	Item still in our custody?	Disposed	Disposition Unknown	Date Collected	Date Rec'd Into Laboratories	Date Released
Hair Kit	No	On 12/13/1986			11/30/1981	
Pubic Hair Kit	No	On 12/13/1986			11/30/1981	
EDTA/Whole Bld	No		✓		11/30/1981	
Blood Swatch	No		✓		11/30/1981	
Modified SAK	No		✓		11/30/1981	
Medical Evidence	No			11/29/1981	03/17/1983	03/20/2012
Autopsy Blood	No	Yes*		11/30/1981	11/30/1981	
2 additional tubes of blood	No	Yes*		11/30/1981	11/30/1981	
Bile	No	Yes*		11/30/1981	11/30/1981	
Urine	No	Yes*		11/30/1981	11/30/1981	
Liver	No	Yes*		11/30/1981	11/30/1981	
Kidney	No	Yes*		11/30/1981	11/30/1981	
Stomach	No	Yes*		11/30/1981	11/30/1981	
Intestinal Contents	No	Yes*		11/30/1981	11/30/1981	
Nasal Swabs	No	Yes*		11/30/1981	12/08/1981	
1 Jar containing Neuropathology blocks	No	Yes*		12/14/1981	12/14/1981	
Neuropathology slides x 5	Yes				04/05/1982	
1 Jar containing regular Histology blocks	No	Yes*		11/30/1981	11/30/1981	
Regular slides x 5	Yes				12/08/1981	

* Date of disposal is unknown