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County of Los Angeles, Department of Coroner Investigator's Narrative



Case Number:

Decedent: ARMSTRONG, RUSSELL LYNN

Information Sources:

 Los Angeles Police Department-West Los Angeles Detective Jones



Investigation:

On Monday 08/15/2011 at 2109 hours, Officer Veloz from the Los Angeles Police Department-West Los Angeles made a first call to the Los Angeles County Coroner's Office to report a suicidal death of a 47 year-old white male that had hung himself. On Tuesday 08/16/2011 at 0200 hours, Lieutenant Joe Bale assigned this case to me. I arrived on-scene at 0250 hours and I cleared the scene at 0430 hours. No note was located and there are no signs of foul play.

Location:

The incident occurred and the decedent died in his bedroom at the residence located at West Los Angeles CA, 90077.

Informant/Witness Statements:

I spoke with Detective Jones at the scene, and she told me the following:

The decedent was last seen alive by his roommate on Friday 08/12/2011 at approximately 2000 hours. They had dinner together and then they went to their bedrooms. The decedent did not mention anything about committing suicide, and told the roommate that he was having dinner with his wife tomorrow. On Sunday 08/14/2011, the roommate started getting phone calls from friends asking him about the decedent since no one has seen or heard from him. The decedent did not go to dinner with his wife on Saturday 08/13/2011. On Monday 08/15/2011 at approximately 2000 hours, the roommate went to the decedent's bedroom and knocked on the door. When there was no answer, he peeked through a window and saw the decedent. 911 was called and Paramedics from the Los Angeles City Fire Department arrived on-scene. On Monday 08/15/2011 at 2016 hours, Paramedic Nordquist #47842 from ENG99 determined death. The decedent was depressed because he was having financial issues and relationship problems. No note was located and there are no signs of foul play.

Scene Description:

A large single story residence is located at West Los Angeles. decedent's bedroom was located in the east end of the residence. Located in the north wall, northwest portion was a door to a closet. Located along the north wall, central portion was a bench with some clothes on it. Located in the north wall, northeast portion was a door leading into the bathroom. Located in the east wall, northeast portion was a window with a pillow between the pane and the window handle. Located along the east wall, central portion was a nightstand with a lamp, then the bed, and then another nightstand with a lamp on it. Located in the east wall, southeast portion was another window with a pillow between the pane and the window handle. Located in the south wall, central portion was an entrance into an office/sitting room. Located in the southwest corner was a TV stand with a TV and other miscellaneous electronic equipment on it. In front of that was a box with bills and mail in it. Behind it was a large fireplace with miscellaneous items on the hearth. Located in the west wall, central portion was a door leading into the rest of the residence. Located along the west wall, northwest corner was a cabinet. On top of the cabinet was a piece of paper with a name written on the outside and blank on the inside with a gate opener on top of that piece of paper. Next to that was a pile of checks and some cash. Located in the northwest corner of the room was a bench. Located on the floor, just north of the bench was a pair of slippers. The decedent was located hanging in the northwest corner of the bedroom, with his legs between the bench. An orange extension cord was double wrapped 3 times around a wooden beam below the ceiling. The cord then

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County of Los Angeles, Department of Coroner Investigator's Narrative



Case Number:

Decedent: ARMSTRONG, RUSSELL LYNN

continued behind the cabinet with the rest of the extension cord on the floor, just south of the same cabinet.

Evidence:

I did not collect any evidence regarding this case. On Tuesday 08/16/2011 at 0355 hours, I cut the extension cord at the scene. I left part of the extension cord around the decedent's neck to be removed by a Medical Examiner at a later date and time, and I placed the rest of the extension cord with the decedent.

Body Examination:

The decedent is a 47 year-old white male with short brown hair, brown eyes, is clean-shaven, and he has all of his natural teeth. No scars or tattoos were noted. The decedent was wearing a black short sleeve T-shirt, a pair of black briefs, and a pair of black socks. The decedent was located hanging in the northwest corner of the bedroom. His face was tilted down with the top of his head facing west. His right arm was straight with his right hand in front of his outer right thigh. His left arm was straight with his left hand in front of his left hip. His right leg was straight with his right foot resting on the floor and was pointing west. His left leg was straight with his left foot off the ground and was also pointing west. The extension cord was double wrapped around the decedent's neck twice with a slip knot against the lower central portion of the back of his head. The ligature mark around his neck is consistent with the ligature used and it extended over the hyoid bone. Petechia was noted in both eyes. His lips and protruding tongue were both dehydrated. All of his fingertips were partially dehydrated. There was an abrasion to his outer elbow and there was another abrasion to his inner upper right forearm. There were 2 round abrasions to the outer right central portion of his back. There was an abrasion with bruising to the back central portion of his right thigh. There was a bruise to the back central portion of his left thigh. Lividity was consistent with the position found, in both of his forearms, both of his hands, both of his legs, and both of his feet, and was fixed. Lividity was a 3 and resolving. Because of the time lapse, I did not take a liver temperature.

Identification:

On Tuesday 08/16/2011 at 0544 hours, the Los Angeles County Regional Identification System positively identified the decedent as Russell Armstrong with a DOB of 12/21/1963 by his fingerprints through Livescan. On Tuesday 08/16/2011 at 0548 hours, the Department of Justice confirmed the decedent's identification as Russell Lynn Armstrong with the same DOB by his fingerprints through Livescan.

Next of Kin Notification:

Per Detective Jones, on Monday 08/15/2011 at an unknown time, a friend notified Taylor Ford-Armstrong, the decedent's wife of her husband's death. I have not spoken with Taylor Ford-Armstrong at the time of completion of this report.

Tissue Donation:

Due to the time lapse, the decedent is not viable candidate for tissue donation.

Exam Notification:

There are no exam notifications regarding this case.

Him



County of Los Angeles, Department of Coroner Investigator's Narrative



Case Number:

Decedent: ARMSTRONG, RUSSELL LYNN



Date of Report



COUNTY OF LOS ANGELES PRELIMINARY EXAMINATION REPORT - FIFL D

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at

AUTOPSY REPORT

No.



ARMSTRONG, RUSSELL

I performed an autopsy on the body of the DEPARTMENT OF CORONER

Los Angeles, California	on <u>AUGUST 17, 2011 @ 0730 HOURS</u> (Date) (Time)	
From the anatomic findings and pertin	nent history I ascribe the death to:	
HANGING		
DUE TO, OR AS A CONSEQUENCE OF		
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C)		
DUE TO, OR AS A CONSEQUENCE OF		
D)		
OTHER CONDITIONS CONTRIBUTING BUT NOT RELATED TO TH	HE IMMEDIATE CAUSE OF DEATH:	

Anatomical Summary:

- I. Hanging.
 - A. Ligature: Electric extension cord.
 - B. Ligature furrow around upper neck suspended at the back of the neck.
 - C. Petechiae on eyelids and conjunctivae.
 - D. Protruding tongue with dark dry tip.
- II. Body decomposition, early stage.
- III. See Toxicology Report.

Page .

AUTOPSY REPORT

No.

ARMSTRONG, RUSSELL

CIRCUMSTANCES:

See the Investigator's Report.

EVIDENCE OF TRAUMATIC INJURIES:

Hanging:

Ligature: Orange electric extension cord, about 3/8 inch in diameter, cut into three pieces at the scene by the investigator. Two pieces came with the body, with one piece around the neck. The cord was wrapped around the neck three times with a slipknot and suspended at the back of the neck/head. The ligature is submitted into evidence.

Ligature furrow: Three overlapping ligature furrows are around the upper neck, measuring from 1 inch to 1-1/4 inches wide, going upwards and backwards, behind both ears, and suspended at the back of the neck. Layer-wise dissection of the neck shows no soft tissue hemorrhage. There is no fracture of the hyoid bone or thyroid cartilage.

Numerous fine petechiae are present on the eyelids and in both conjunctivae.

There is a protruding tongue with a dark dry tip.

Other injuries:

There are small superficial abrasions at the back of the right upper arm and right back, measuring from 1/2 inch to 2-1/2 inches.

EVIDENCE OF THERAPEUTIC INTERVENTION:

None. There has not been postmortem intervention for organ procurement.

CLOTHING:

The clothing items consist of a black T-shirt, pair of black underwear, and pair of black socks.

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NOTE: The following observations are limited to findings other than injuries.

EXTERNAL EXAMINATION:

The body is identified by toe tags and ankle band and is that of an unembalmed, refrigerated adult Caucasian male who appears about the reported age of 47 years. The body weighs 181 pounds, measures 69 inches, and is very well-built and well-nourished.

The body shows early stage of decomposition changes. There is a green discoloration of the abdomen. The arms and legs show dark red discoloration, most prominent at the fingertips. Rigor mortis has been abolished. Livor mortis is present in both legs and both forearms with Tardieu spots on both legs.

The head is normocephalic and covered by 2 inch long brown straight hair. There is no balding. Examination of the eyes reveals irides that appear to be brown in color and sclerae that are white. The oronasal passages are unobstructed. Upper and lower teeth are present. There are no significant scars or burns. Tattoos are not present. The external genitalia are those of an adult male. The extremities are unremarkable.

INITIAL INCISION:

The body cavities are entered through the standard coronal incision and the standard Y-shaped incision. No foreign material is present in the mouth, upper airway and trachea.

NECK:

The neck organs are removed en bloc with the tongue. No lesions are present. Both hyoid bone and larynx are intact and without fractures. No hemorrhage is present. The tongue when sectioned shows no trauma.

CHEST/ABDOMINAL CAVITY:

Neither pleural cavity contains fluid or adhesions. The parietal pleurae are smooth and intact. The lungs are well-expanded. Soft tissues of the thoracic and abdominal walls as

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well as the internal organs show early stage of decomposition changes. The organs of the abdominal cavity have a normal arrangement, and none are absent.

SYSTEMIC AND ORGAN REVIEW

MUSCULOSKELETAL SYSTEM:

No abnormalities of the bony framework or muscles are present.

CARDIOVASCULAR SYSTEM:

The aorta is elastic and of even caliber throughout. There is mild atherosclerosis. There is no aneurysm.

Within the pericardial sac, there is a minimal amount of serous fluid. The heart weighs 400 grams. It has a normal configuration. The right ventricle measures 0.4 cm thick, and the left ventricle measures 1.5 cm thick. The chambers are normally developed and are without mural thrombosis. The valves are unremarkable. The myocardium is unremarkable. There are no defects of the septum. The great vessels enter and leave in a normal fashion. The coronary ostia are widely patent. There is minimal coronary atherosclerosis. The blood within the heart and large blood vessels is liquid.

RESPIRATORY SYSTEM:

A small amount of secretions is found in the lower bronchial and upper respiratory passages. The mucosa is unremarkable. The lungs are subcrepitant, and there is mild congestion. The left lung weighs 360 grams, and the right lung weighs 260 grams. The pulmonary vasculature is without thromboembolism.

GASTROINTESTINAL SYSTEM:

The esophagus is intact throughout. The stomach is empty. The mucosa is unremarkable. The small intestine and colon are opened and examined and are unremarkable. The appendix is present. The pancreas is unremarkable.

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HEPATOBILIARY SYSTEM:

The liver weighs 1070 grams. The capsule is intact and smooth. The parenchyma is dark red and soft. The gallbladder contains about 10 cc of bile and no calculi. The periportal lymph nodes are not enlarged.

URINARY SYSTEM:

The left kidney weighs 150 grams, and the right kidney weighs 160 grams. The kidneys are normally situated, and the capsules strip easily revealing a surface that is smooth. The cortico-medullary demarcation is preserved. The pyramids are not remarkable. The peripelvic fat is not increased. The urinary bladder is unremarkable. It contains about 3 cc of brown urine/fluid.

GENITAL SYSTEM:

The prostate is without enlargement or nodularity. Both testes are in the scrotum and are unremarkable.

HEMOLYMPHATIC SYSTEM:

The spleen weighs 110 grams. The capsule is intact and smooth. The parenchyma is dark red and soft. There is no increased follicular pattern. Lymph nodes throughout the body are small and inconspicuous. The bone is not remarkable. The bone marrow of the ribs is unremarkable.

ENDOCRINE SYSTEM:

The thyroid, pituitary and adrenal glands are all unremarkable. The parathyroid glands are not identified. The thymus is unremarkable.

SPECIAL SENSES:

The eyes are not dissected. The middle and inner ears are not dissected.

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HEAD AND CENTRAL NERVOUS SYSTEM:

There is no subcutaneous or subgaleal hemorrhage in the scalp. The external periosteum and dura mater are stripped showing no fractures of the calvarium or base of the skull. There are no tears of the dura mater. There is no epidural, subdural or subarachnoid hemorrhage.

The brain weighs 1600 grams and is extremely soft. The leptomeninges are thin and transparent. A normal convolutionary pattern is observed. Coronal sectioning demonstrates a uniformity of cortical gray thickness. The cerebral hemispheres are symmetrical. Anatomic landmarks are preserved. Cerebral contusions are not present. The ventricular system is unremarkable. The pons, medulla and cerebellum are unremarkable. Vessels at the base of the brain have a normal pattern of distribution. There is no atherosclerosis or aneurysm. The cranial nerves are unremarkable.

SPINAL CORD:

The spinal cord is not dissected.

HISTOLOGIC SECTIONS:

Representative sections from various organs are preserved in one storage jar in 10% formalin.

TOXICOLOGY:

Blood, bile, liver tissue, urine, and vitreous fluid have been submitted to the laboratory. A comprehensive screen is requested.

SPECIAL PROCEDURES:

None.

PHOTOGRAPHY:

At-scene photographs are reviewed. No additional photographs have been taken.

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RADIOLOGY:

None.

WITNESSES:

None.

DIAGRAMS USED:

Diagram Forms 16, 20, and 22 were used during the performance of the autopsy. The diagrams are not intended to be facsimiles.

OPINION:

Death was caused by hanging. The manner of death is suicide.

YULAI WANG, M.D.

DEPUTY MEDICAL EXAMINER

YW:am/brr:c

D-08/17/11 @ 1100 hours

T-08/18/11

9-6-2011



EXTERNAL EXAM Sex 14 Race Age Height Weight Hair Eyes Sclera Teeth Mouth Tongue -Nose Chest Breasts -Abdomen -Scar Genitals of Edema __ Skin Decubitus -HEART Wt. 400 RV Q.F Pericardium Hypertrophy Septum LV /J Dilation Septum Muscle Valves Coronaries - 10% alm AORTA VESSELS **LUNGS Wt.** Adhesions Fluid Atelectasis Oedema Congestion Consolidation Bronchi Nodes PHARYNX TRACHEA THYROID THYMUS

PERITONEUM Fluid Adhesions LIVER Wt. 1070 Capsule Lobules Fibros loab GB Calculus Bile ducts SPLEEN Wt. 110 Color Consistency Capsule Malpigment PANCREAS _ **ADRENALS** KIDNEYS Wt. Capsule Cortex Vessels Pelvis Ureters Ureters BLADDER 3 cc. bin wiffin **GENITALIA** Prostate -Testes -Uterus Tubes **Ovaries OESOPHAGUS** STOMACH Contents DUOD. & SM. INT. APPENDIX LARGE INT. ABDOM. NODES SKELETON Spine Marrow Rib Cage Long bones

SCALP CALVARIUM BRAIN WILL GOD Dura Fluid Ventricles Vessels Middle ears Other **PITUITARY** 21 SPINAL CORD L. P TOXICOLOGY SPECIMENS Blood, Bre, Cirk Wring Vata SECTIONS FOR HISTOPATHOLOGY Å MICROBIOLOGY DIAGRAMS (6, 20, 22 X-RAYS 6 OTHER PROCEDURES h **GROSS IMPRESSIONS** I hanging

I decomp. eas

Date

3/05)

LARYNX HYOID

8-17-2011

ABDOMINAL WALL FAT 3 _

Time

09:40

olothy:

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Deputy Medical Examiner

ARMSTRONG. RUSSELL

13

ben. straight, 2"

livedity legs foreary a tarder spots

Date

8-17-2011

Deputy Medical Examiner

M.D.

(Rev. 7/09)

2011-5408

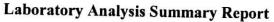
Hanging **22** ARMSTRONG, RUSSELL SUI 13 ligation; Orange electric 1/8 dramet-extension cord cut 3 pieces at Octobran fine numeros on eyelide conjunction Scand ley Inv. two pieces & Sex Date 8-17-2011 M.D. Deputy Medical Examiner

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Department of Coroner, County of Los Angeles

FORENSIC SCIENCE LABORATORIES





To:

Dr. Wang

Deputy Medical Examiner

PendingTox

The following results have been technically and administratively reviewed and are the opinions and interpretations of the Analyst:

Coroner	Case Numb	er:	Decedent: ARMSTRONG, RUSSELL LYNN				
<u>SPECIMEN</u>	SERVICE		DRUG		RESULT	<u>ANALYST</u>	
Blood, Hear	t						
	Alcohol		Ethanol		Negative	S. Brooks	
	Bases		Basic Drugs		ND	S. DeQuintana	
	ELISA		Barbiturates		ND	J. Lintemoot	
	ELISA		Cocaine and Metabolites		ND	J. Lintemoot	
	ELISA		Fentanyl		ND	J. Lintemoot	
	ELISA		Methamphetamine & MDMA		ND	J. Lintemoot	
	ELISA		Opiates: Codeine & Morphin	ie	ND	J. Lintemoot	
	ELISA		Opiates: Hydrocodone & Hyd		10000	J. Lintemoot	
	ELISA		Phencyclidine		ND		
						J. Lintemoot	
Inc. Incom	n Percent nclusive	mg/dL mg/L ND ng/g	Milligram per Deciliter Milligram per Liter Not Detected Nanograms per Gram	QNS TNP ug ug/g	Quantity Not Sufficient Test Not Performed Micrograms Micrograms per Gram		
mg Milli	grams	ng/mL	Nanograms per Milliliter	ng/mI	Microgram per Millilitan		

In accordance with the Department's Evidence Retention Policy, the blood specimen(s) will be retained for one-year and all other specimens for six-months from Autopsy.

Nanograms per Milliliter

Administratively reviewed by:

Daniel T. Anderson, M.S., FTS-ABFT, D-ABC Supervising Criminalist II TOXICOLOGY

Microgram per Milliliter

1 4-6-2011

ug/mL