

JAN 20 09:20:20

# Coroner Report Santa Barbara County Sheriff

19-11420

Supplement No  
ORIG



4434 Calle Real

Reported Date  
09/02/2019

Santa Barbara, CA 93110-1002  
Report Type  
CORONER

Officer  
BAISA, R

(805) 681-4100

Administrative Information									
Agency		Report No		Supplement No		Reported Date		Reported Time	Status
Santa Barbara County Sheriff		19-11420		ORIG		09/02/2019		03:32	Incident
Report Type			Location						
Coroner's investigation			PLATTS HARBOR SANTA CRUZ ISLAND						
City		Rep Dist	Area	Beat	From Date		From Time		
Santa Barbara City		101	1	10	08/02/2019		03:32		
Officer				Assignment		Entered by		Assignment	
3542/BAISA, R				CORONER BUREAU		3542		CORONER BUREAU	
RMS Transfer	Report Title		Approving Officer			Approval Date			
Pending	Coroner Report		3768			03/02/2020			
Approval Time									
09:04:30									
Cause of death (COR only)		Due to (COR only)		Manner of death (COR only)		Date/Time of death pronounced			
Smoke inhalation		Boat fire		Accidental		08-02-2019/0443			
Determined by (COR only)		Dr. will sign		Hospitalization		Mortuary			
Investigation		N		N		Welch-Ryce-Haider			
Removal Status		Date/Time NOK notified		NOK notified by:		NOK notified via			
Family request		09-06-2019/1519 hours		Det. Nunez		In person			
NOK relation to decedent									
[REDACTED]									
Person Summary									
Inv#	Inv# No	Type	Name			MNI	Race	Sex	DOB
COR	1	I	BALTZ, NEAL GUSTAV			987770	W	M	[REDACTED]
Summary Narrative									
On 09-02-19, at approximately 0443 hours, 42-year-old, Neal Baltz died from smoke inhalation when the vessel he was on, for a diving expedition, caught fire.									

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**Decedent - Coroner Investigation 1: BALTZ, NEAL GUSTAV**

Involvement		Invl No	Type	
Decedent - Coroner Investigation		1	Individual	
Name		MNI	Race	Sex
BALTZ, NEAL GUSTAV		987770	White	Male
Type	Address	DOB	Age	Juvenile?
Home	[REDACTED]	[REDACTED]	47	No
ZIP Code	Date	City	State	
Type	ID No	OLS		
Operator License				
Type	ID No			
Social Security Number				
Relationship	Name	Race	Sex	
	[REDACTED]	[REDACTED]	[REDACTED]	
Address	City	State	ZIP Code	
	[REDACTED]	[REDACTED]	[REDACTED]	
Relationship	Name	Race	Sex	DOB
	[REDACTED]	[REDACTED]	[REDACTED]	[REDACTED]
Address	City	State	ZIP Code	
	[REDACTED]	[REDACTED]	[REDACTED]	
Phone Type	Phone No			
	[REDACTED]			
Relationship	Name	Race	Sex	DOB
	[REDACTED]	[REDACTED]	[REDACTED]	[REDACTED]
Phone No				
	[REDACTED]			

<b>Medical</b>					
Citizenship	Place of Birth	Occupation	Coroner Case No	NOK Notified?	
US	Illinois	ENGINEER	19-11420	Yes	
Premise Sealed?	Property?	NOK Name	Mortuary Name	On Call?	
No	No	[REDACTED]	WELCH-RYCE-HAIDER	No	
Family Request?	Other?	Injury Place	Injury Date	Injured At Work?	
Yes	No	BOAT	09/02/2019	No	
Injury Premise					
PLATTS HARBOR SANTA CRUZ ISLAND SANTA BARBARA, CA 95060					
How Injured					
DECEDENT DIED FROM SMOKE INHALATION FROM BOAT FIRE.					

**Narrative**  
Continuations:  
Neal Baltz is the decedent.  
[REDACTED]

**Related Case:**  
Coroner Case #19-11452. This report documents the recovery and examination of the decedent's right leg.

**Narrative:**  
On 09-02-19, at approximately 0516 hours, the Santa Barbara Sheriff's Office was notified by the Ventura Fire Department of a vessel on fire in the Channel Islands off the coast of Santa Barbara County. The Coast Guard responded along with Ventura Fire Department and Santa Barbara County Fire Department. Upon arrival at the scene the vessel was found to be fully engulfed in fire. The call had originally come into the Coast Guard at 0332 hours, on 09-02-19.  
Reports to the Coast Guard said there were possibly be 34 subjects trapped below the water line, in the vessel. The vessel was identified as the "Conception" and it was in jurisdiction of the Santa Barbara Sheriff's Office near Santa Cruz Island, not in Ventura Sheriff's Department jurisdiction. The location was later found to be 300 yards offshore of Platts Harbor on Santa Cruz Island. See Santa Barbara County Sheriff's Department case number 19-11415 for full details.

Det. Morris was notified of the incident by Sergeant Valencia. Sergeant Morris requested the response of  

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**Narrative**

Detective Henslin, Detective Biedinger, and Detective Carlson to the Coroner's Bureau to assist in the incident at approximately 0525 hours.

Detective Baisa was also called at that time and asked to respond to Ventura Harbor to act as the liaison for the Sheriff's Office.

It was later found the vessel, the "Conception" contained 33 passengers and six crew members. Five of the crew members were rescued, but none of the 33 passengers had been found.

During the course of the morning four deceased passengers had been located by Coast Guard personnel. The Coast Guard transported the decedents to the Santa Barbara Harbor.

At 1150 hours, on 09-02-19, Sgt. Morris, Detective Henslin and Detective Biedinger responded to the Santa Barbara Harbor to retrieve decedents documented as 1 through 4.

At 1220 hours, on 09-02-19, the decedents were brought to Santa Barbara Harbor. Detective Henslin and Detective Biedinger transported two decedent's each to the Santa Barbara Coroner's Bureau, where physical examinations were later conducted on them.

At that time digital photographs were taken of the decedents along with samples collected for DNA analysis identification and for an expanded toxicology panel. All of the decedents retrieved on 09-02-19, were found to have significant thermal burns to their bodies with limbs missing due to the intensity of the fire. None of the decedents could be identified by physical characteristics.

At 2030 hours, on 09-02-19, Sgt Morris, Det. Biedinger, Det. Henslin, Det. Carlson, Det. Baisa, Deputy Bruening and staff from the Los Angeles County Coroner's Office responded to the Santa Barbara Harbor for retrieval of 16 additional bodies recovered from the Conception, documented as decedents 5 through 20.

The decedents were then transported to Coroner's Bureau for examinations, drawing of fluids for toxicology and DNA analysis, and collection of personal property.

At approximately 2330 hours, on 09-02-19, all the examinations of the decedents were completed and the decedents were placed in a portable morgue provided by the Los Angeles County Coroner's Office.

On 09-03-19, at 1930 hours, Sgt Morris, Det. Biedinger, Det. Henslin, Det. Carlson, Det. Baisa, Deputy Bruening and staff from the Los Angeles County Coroner's Office responded to the Santa Barbara Harbor for retrieval of 13 more remains recovered from the Conception, documented as decedents 21 through 33.

The decedents were then all transported to the Santa Barbara Coroner's Bureau, where physical examinations, digital photographs, and fluid samples for DNA analysis and toxicology where conducted on each recovered decedent.

All of the decedents recovered on 09-03-19 were placed on portable coroner racks and secured in the Santa Barbara Coroner's Bureau morgue.

On 09-09-19, at approximately 1400 hours, Pathologist Dr. Manny Montez, Detective Henslin, Detective Baisa, and Sgt. Morris, along with representatives from the FBI and ATF performed tracheal examinations of the remaining decedents at the Coroner's Bureau.

On 09-10-19, at approximately 1830 hours, Detective Baisa met with Santa Barbara Sheriff's Department Sgt. Nelson, at the National Park Service, 1901 Spinnaker Drive in Ventura, Ca. Sgt. Nelson provided Detective Baisa with a bag of suspected human flesh, a backpack and an air vent from the Conception that had suspected human hair embedded in it. The suspected human tissue and other items were found in the bow of the Conception.

The items later numbered 35 and 36 were transported to the Santa Barbara Coroner's Bureau where digital photographs were taken of the suspected human tissue and suspected human hair, which was removed from the vessel air vent.

The suspected human tissue and hair were later flown to the Sacramento County Coroner's Office in Sacramento, Ca., under the care of Sgt. Morris and Deputy Bruening for DNA analysis.

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542/BAISA, R

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**Narrative**

At approximately 1330 hours, on 09-11-19, Detective Henslin and Detective Biedinger responded to Santa Barbara Harbor, after Divers from the Los Angeles Police Department located the remains of a decedent, near the location of the Conception fire. The Los Angeles Police Department collected the remains, with a section of hair, documented as numbers 37 and 38.

The decedent and the remains were then transported to the Santa Barbara Coroner's Bureau, where a physical examination, digital photographs, and fluid samples for DNA analysis and toxicology were conducted on the recovered decedent.

The sample of collected hair was packaged and sent along the DNA samples of decedent number 37 for DNA analysis in Sacramento California, under the care of Detective Henslin, who flew to the Sacramento Airport and provided the samples to Sgt. Morris who was still in Sacramento.

The samples were then taken to the Sacramento County Coroner's Office, for DNA analysis.

**Physical evidence:**

A series of digital photographs were taken of the decedent at the Coroner's Bureau by Forensic Personnel from the Santa Barbara Sheriff's Department. The photo card was later downloaded for storage at the Coroner's Bureau.

**Identification of decedent:**

The decedent was positively identified by a DNA comparison, with samples submitted by the decedent's [REDACTED]. The DNA comparison was conducted via the Sacramento County Coroner's Office.

**Physical evidence:**

A series of digital photographs were taken of the decedent at the Coroner's Bureau by Forensic Personnel from the Santa Barbara Sheriff's Department. The photo card was later downloaded for storage at the Coroner's Bureau.

**Examination of decedent:**

On 9-2-19, at 1337 hours, an examination of the decedent was conducted at the Coroner's Bureau. The decedent was received unclothed and supine within a blue colored body bag. The decedent was male. A tag with case #19-11420 was attached to the body bag.

The decedent was not identifiable due to extensive and severe postmortem thermal injuries. Severe 4th degree thermal burns were present. There were no recognizable facial features. There was no facial structure above the jaw. The top of the skull was missing and brain matter was visible.

The chest and abdomen were charred from extensive 4th degree thermal burns. The burns extended through muscle and fatty tissue. Charred intestines protruded from the abdomen.

The legs displayed 4th degree burns. The left leg was attached by skin, but separated from the left distal femur. The right leg was detached at the left distal femur. Both distal femurs displayed severe 4th degree burns and charring at the ends. The right leg was detached from the distal femur and was not with the decedent during this initial examination. The remainder of the right leg was later recovered and documented under Case #19-11452.

The arms displayed extensive 4th degree burns with charring at the ends. The right arm did not extend below the elbow. No lower portions of the right arm or hand were present. The left arm displayed extensive 4th degree burns and the left hand was charred and unrecognizable.

The decedent was rolled to his side and the rear of the body was examined. The left side of the back of the torso and buttocks displayed 3rd degree burns. The remainder of the back of the torso displayed severe 4th degree burns with cracking that displayed fatty tissue beneath the skin. There were no indications of a struggle or defensive wounds to the decedent, specifically the hands, arms, and chest.

Samples of bodily fluids were obtained from the decedent to include 2 tubes of cardiac blood (including one for DNA).

A tube of cardiac blood was submitted to Alere Forensics for toxicology analysis. The remaining fluid sample was

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1542/BAISA, R

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03/02/2020 09:05

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**Narrative**

refrigerated at the Coroner's Bureau pending a need for toxicology analysis.

**Post mortem examination :**

Due to the severity of the decedent's thermal injuries and obvious traumatic injuries, along with the circumstances regarding the incident, regarding the vessel he was on becoming ignited, a post mortem examination was deferred.

**Forensic toxicology :**

On 9-12-19, a toxicology report was received from Alere Forensics regarding the decedent's carbon monoxide saturation. The report indicated the following:

**Carbon monoxide                      64%**

On 9-15-19, a toxicology report was received from Alere Forensics regarding the decedent's cyanide saturation. The report indicated the following:

**Cyanide      < 1 mcg/mL**

On 9-28-19, a toxicology report was received from Alere Forensics regarding a toxicology screen. The report indicated the following:

**Basic Drug Screen                      None Detected**

**Volatiles  
(EtOH, IPA, MeOH, Acetone)              None Detected**

The reports were reviewed with Dr. Manny Montez and the carbon monoxide level was found to be contributive to the decedent's death.

**Consultations with Forensic Pathologist :**

I reviewed the circumstance surrounding this death with Dr. Manny Montez. Dr. Montez opined that the decedent died as a result of smoke inhalation due to boat fire.

**In review of the circumstances of this death:**

On 09-02-19, at approximately 0443 hours, 42-year-old, Neal Baltz died from traumatic injuries sustained when the vessel he was on, for a diving expedition, caught fire.

**Cause of Death:**

It was determined that the decedent (BALTZ) died as a result of the following cause;

**SMOKE INHALATION      (MINS)**

Due to:

**BOAT FIRE                      (MINS)**

**Manner of death:**

The manner of death will be certified by the Office of the Coroner as **ACCIDENTAL**.

**Final Disposition :**

The decedent was released to representatives of Welch-Ryce-Haider Funeral Chapels in Santa Barbara, Ca. No property or medication was collected.

**Case closed**

# Santa Barbara County Sheriff



4434 Calle Real

Santa Barbara, CA 93110-1002

Report Type  
FORENSICS

(805) 681-4100

19-11420

Supplement No  
0001

Reported Date  
09/10/2019

Officer  
AVALOS, T

## Administrative Information

Agency	Santa Barbara County Sheriff		Report No	19-11420	Supplement No	0001	Reported Date	09/10/2019	Reported Time	10:20	Status	Incident
Report Type	Forensics BOC		Location	FRYS HARBOR SANTA CRUZ ISLAND								
City	Rep Dist	Area	Beat	From Date	From Time							
Santa Barbara City	101	1	10	08/02/2019	03:32							
Officer	4688/AVALOS, T		Assignment	FORENSICS	Entered by	4688	Assignment	FORENSICS	RMS Transfer	Pending		
Approving Officer	Approval Date	Approval Time										
2901	09/19/2019	12:13:22										

## Summary Narrative

This report contains information in reference to the Coroners request for Forensics assistance in photo documenting the bodies recovered from the Conception Boat Fire Incident.

## Narrative

### E-FILE ATTACHMENTS:

None

### NARRATIVE:

On Monday, 09/02/19, at 1200 hours, Coroner Sgt. Jarrett Morris advised that our assistance was requested at the Coroner's Office for the mass casualty that had occurred earlier in the morning off the Santa Cruz Island. They were requesting assistance with photo documenting several recovered bodies from the Conception boat fire, and if possible, rolling fingerprints for identification purposes.

### PHOTO DOCUMENTATION (Body #2, male):

On Monday, 09/02/19, at 1337 hours, I contacted Detective Biedinger and Detective Carlson. The recovered bodies had been transported to the Santa Barbara County Coroner's Bureau. I began photo documentation on a body bag labeled #2. Its contents were that of a male body #2. His entire body was badly burned from head to toe. His right lower arm was missing. The left hand was too burned to provide fingerprints. The bottom portion of his left leg was missing. The decedent's burned body reveals no clothing. No visible scars or tattoos are noted and no fingerprints were available. No clothing or personal items were collected, stored or booked.

The above photographs were later uploaded into the Forensic Unit's digital evidence hard drive under case 19-11420 for future reference.

~END OF REPORT~



ALERE FORENSICS AT REDWOOD TOXICOLOGY LABORATORY

3650 Westwind Blvd. Santa Rosa, CA 95403  
Phone 866-584-0887 FAX 707-703-1319

Agency # 19-11420

FORENSIC LABORATORY REPORT

AF # 2019-003242

To: Erice Bruening  
Santa Barbara County Sheriff-Coroner

Sample Collection Date: September 2, 2019

Decedent: Neil Baltz

The following evidence was submitted to the Laboratory by a representative of the Santa Barbara County Sheriff-Coroner on 9/5/2019 via FedEx:

Submission 01: One tape sealed and initialed screw top metal canister containing a second screw top metal canister containing one tube of cardiac blood with paperwork marked in part "#2 Doe John". The name "Baltz, Neil" was supplied on 9-9-19.

Item # 01-A: One gray top tube with approximately 5 mL of cardiac blood collected at 2330 hours.

Service Request:

FP760B - Carboxyhemoglobin/Carbon Monoxide - Blood

**Confirmation/Screen Results**

Analyte Name	Concentration	Method	Sample Type
Carbon Monoxide	64 %	AVOXimeter 4000	Blood



2019-003242-0002

Respectfully,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Lauren J. Marinetti".

Lauren J. Marinetti, Ph.D., F-ABFT  
Laboratory Director

Date of Report: September 12, 2019

*Alere Forensics at Redwood Toxicology is accredited by The American Board of Forensic Toxicology (ABFT) and is recognized by the State of California as a Title 17 Forensic Alcohol Laboratory.*

All samples, including the sample packaging, will be retained at the laboratory for one year after the date of report. After one year, the samples and packaging will be destroyed unless the client requests that the samples be returned or an alternate retention policy has been set up with the laboratory. The laboratory cannot ship controlled substances.

**Comments**

None



ALERE FORENSICS AT REDWOOD TOXICOLOGY LABORATORY

3650 Westwind Blvd. Santa Rosa, CA 95403  
Phone 866-584-0887 FAX 707-703-1319

Agency # 19-11420

FORENSIC LABORATORY REPORT

AF # 2019-003242

To: Brice Bruening  
Santa Barbara County Sheriff-Coroner

Sample Collection Date: September 2, 2019

Decedent: Neil Baltz

The following evidence was submitted to the Laboratory by a representative of the Santa Barbara County Sheriff-Coroner on 9/5/2019 via FedEx:

Submission 01: One tape sealed and initialed screw top metal canister containing a second screw top metal canister containing one tube of cardiac blood with paperwork marked in part "#2 Doe John". The name "Baltz, Neil" was supplied on 9-9-19.

Item # 01-A: One gray top tube with approximately 5 mL of cardiac blood collected at 2330 hours.

Service Request:

F1048B - Misc. Chemicals (Qualitative) - Blood

**Confirmation/Screen Results**

Analyte Name	Concentration	Method	Sample Type
Cyanide	< 1 mcg/mL	Color Screen	Blood



2019-003242-0003

Respectfully,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Laureen J. Marinetti".

Laureen J. Marinetti, Ph.D., F-ABFT  
Laboratory Director

Date of Report: September 15, 2019

*Alere Forensics at Redwood Toxicology is accredited by The American Board of Forensic Toxicology (ABFT) and is recognized by the State of California as a Title 17 Forensic Alcohol Laboratory.*

All samples, including the sample packaging, will be retained at the laboratory for one year after the date of report. After one year, the samples and packaging will be destroyed unless the client requests that the samples be returned or an alternate retention policy has been set up with the laboratory. The laboratory cannot ship controlled substances.

**Comments**

The limit of detection for the cyanide color screen is 0.5 mcg/mL.



ALERE FORENSICS AT REDWOOD TOXICOLOGY LABORATORY

3650 Westwind Blvd. Santa Rosa, CA 95403  
Phone 866-584-0887 FAX 707-703-1319

Agency # 19-11420

FORENSIC LABORATORY REPORT

AF # 2019-003242

To: Brice Bruening  
Santa Barbara County Sheriff-Coroner

Sample Collection Date: September 2, 2019

Decedent: Neil Baltz

The following evidence was submitted to the Laboratory by a representative of the Santa Barbara County Sheriff-Coroner on 9/5/2019 via FedEx:

Submission 01: One tape sealed and initialed screw top metal canister containing a second screw top metal canister containing one tube of cardiac blood with paperwork marked in part "#2 Doe John". The name "Baltz, Neil" was supplied on 9-9-19.

Item # 01-A: One gray top tube with approximately 5 mL of cardiac blood collected at 2330 hours.

Service Request:

FP222B - Expanded Pnl (Confirm) - Blood



2019-003242-0001

**Drug Screen Results - ELISA**

<u>Drug Screen Classification</u>	<u>Result</u>	<u>Limit of Detection</u>
Amphetamine	Not Detected	20.0 ng/mL
Barbiturates	Not Detected	1.0 mcg/mL
Benzodiazepines	Not Detected	25.0 ng/mL
Buprenorphine	Not Detected	1.0 ng/mL
Carisoprodol	Not Detected	500.0 ng/mL
Cocaine Metabolite	Not Detected	50.0 ng/mL
Fentanyl	Not Detected	1.0 ng/mL
Marijuana Metabolite	Not Detected	10.0 ng/mL
Methadone	Not Detected	25.0 ng/mL
Methamphetamine	Not Detected	20.0 ng/mL
Opiates	Not Detected	10.0 ng/mL
Oxycodone \ Oxymorphone	Not Detected	5.0 ng/mL
PCP	Not Detected	5.0 ng/mL
Tramadol	Not Detected	50.0 ng/mL
Zolpidem	Not Detected	5.0 ng/mL

**Confirmation/Screen Results**

<u>Analyte Name</u>	<u>Concentration</u>	<u>Method</u>	<u>Sample Type</u>
Basic Drug Screen	None Detected	LC-MS-MS	Blood
Volatiles (EtOH, IPA, MeOH, Acetone)	Not Detected	GC-Headspace	Blood



2019-003242-0001

Respectfully,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Lauren J. Marinetti".

Lauren J. Marinetti, Ph.D., F-ABFT  
Laboratory Director

Date of Report: September 28, 2019

*Alera Forensics at Redwood Toxicology is accredited by The American Board of Forensic Toxicology (ABFT) and is recognized by the State of California as a Title 17 Forensic Alcohol Laboratory.*

All samples, including the sample packaging, will be retained at the laboratory for one year after the date of report. After one year, the samples and packaging will be destroyed unless the client requests that the samples be returned or an alternate retention policy has been set up with the laboratory. The laboratory cannot ship controlled substances.

**Comments**

EtOH - ethanol, IPA - isopropanol, MeOH - methanol