

**Coroner Report
Santa Barbara County Sheriff**



4434 Calle Real
Santa Barbara, CA 93110-1002
Report Type
CORONER

(805) 681-4100

19-11431

19-11431

Supplement No
ORIG

Reported Date
09/02/2019

Officer
BIEDINGER, C

Administrative Information						
Agency Santa Barbara County Sheriff	Report No 19-11431	Supplement No ORIG	Reported Date 09/02/2019	Reported Time 03:32	Status Incident	
Report Type Coroner's investigation	Location PLATTS HARBOR SANTA CRUZ ISLAND					
City Santa Barbara City	Rep Dist 101	Area 1	Beat 10	From Date 09/02/2019	From Time 03:32	
Officer 3144/BIEDINGER, C	Assignment CORONER BUREAU		Entered by 3144	Assignment CORONER BUREAU		
RMS Transfer Pending	Report Title Coroner Report	Approving Officer 3768	Approval Date 01/30/2020			
Approval Time 12:30:26						
Cause of death (COR only) SMOKE INHALATION	Due to (COR only) BOAT FIRE	Manner of death (COR only) Accident	Date/Time of death pronounced 09-02-19/0443 hours			
Determined by (COR only) Investigation	Dr. will sign N	Hospitalization N	Mortuary JOSEPH P REARDON FUN			
Removal Status Family request	Date/Time NOK notified 09-06-19/ 1330 hours	NOK notified by: Deputy Nunez	NOK notified via In person			
NOK relation to decedent [REDACTED]						
Person Summary						
Invl COR	Invl No 1	Type I	Name SALIKA, STEVEN JOHN	MNI 989379	Race W	Sex M
DOB [REDACTED]						
Summary Narrative						
On 09-02-19, at approximately 0443 hours, 55-year-old, Steven Salika died from smoke inhalation when the vessel he was on, for a diving expedition, caught fire.						

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Decedent - Coroner Investigation 1: SALIKA, STEVEN JOHN

Involvement Decedent - Coroner Investigation		Inv No 1	Type Individual			
Name SALIKA, STEVEN JOHN		MNI 989379	Race White	Sex Male	DOB [REDACTED]	Juvenile? No
Height 6' 04"	Weight 245#	Hair Color Blond or Strawberry		Eye Color Brown		
Type Home	Address [REDACTED]		City [REDACTED]	State [REDACTED]		
ZIP Code [REDACTED]	Date [REDACTED]					
Type Operator License	ID No [REDACTED]	OLS [REDACTED]				
Type Social Security Number	ID No [REDACTED]					
Relationship [REDACTED]	Name [REDACTED]	Race [REDACTED]	Sex [REDACTED]	DOB [REDACTED]	Phone Type [REDACTED]	
Phone No [REDACTED]						
Relationship [REDACTED]	Name [REDACTED]	Race [REDACTED]	Sex [REDACTED]	DOB [REDACTED]	[REDACTED]	
Address [REDACTED]						
Relationship [REDACTED]	Name [REDACTED]	Race [REDACTED]	Sex [REDACTED]	DOB [REDACTED]	[REDACTED]	
Address [REDACTED]						
Phone Type [REDACTED]	Phone No [REDACTED]	[REDACTED]				
Relationship [REDACTED]	Name [REDACTED]	Race [REDACTED]	Sex [REDACTED]	Phone Type Cell	[REDACTED]	
Phone No [REDACTED]						
Relationship [REDACTED]	Name [REDACTED]	Race [REDACTED]	Sex [REDACTED]	DOB [REDACTED]	[REDACTED]	
Address [REDACTED]						
ZIP Code [REDACTED]						

Medical

Citizenship US CITIZEN	Occupation ENGINEER	NOK Notified? Yes
NOK Name [REDACTED]	Mortuary Name JOSEPH P REARDON FUN	Family Request? Yes
Injury Place BOAT	Injury Date 09/02/2019	Injured At Work? No
Injury Premise PLATTS HARBOR SANTA CRUZ ISLAND SANTA BARBARA, CA 95060 (34.02858 N 119.44172 W)		
How Injured DECEDENT DIED FROM SMOKE INHALATION DURING A BOAT FIRE.		

Narrative

Continuations:
Steven Salika is the decedent.
[REDACTED]

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.

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Narrative

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 off shore of Platts Harbor on Santa Cruz Island. See Santa Barbara County Sheriff's Department case number 19-11415 for full details.

Sgt. Morris was notified of the incident by Sergeant Valencia. Sergeant Morris requested the response of Detective Henslin, Detective Carlson and myself 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 34 passengers and five crew members. Five of the crew members were rescued, but none of the 34 passengers had been found.

During the course of the morning four deceased passengers were 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 I 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 I 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. Henslin, Det. Carlson, Det. Baisa, Deputy Bruening and I, along with 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 0730 hours, Sgt. Morris, Det. Henslin, Det. Carlson, Det. Baisa, Deputy Bruening, myself, 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 were 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.

Physical evidence:

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

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Narrative

Identification of decedent:

The decedent was positively identified by a DNA comparison, with samples submitted by the decedent's mother, Shirley Salika. The DNA comparison was conducted via the Sacramento County Coroner's Office.

Additional identification for the decedent was confirmed via a latent print search performed by the Federal Bureau of Investigations, conducted on 09-06-19.

Examination of decedent:

On 09-02-19, at 2301 hours, an examination of the decedent was conducted at the Coroner's Bureau after the decedent was transported from Santa Barbara Harbor. A tag with his assigned case number was attached to the body bag.

The decedent was a well-developed, Caucasian appearing male whose appearance was commensurate with his later found age and had severe burns to most of his person.

He was received lying on his left side, wearing a burnt and tattered blue/gray in color, long sleeve, shirt, and a pair of grey in color burnt sweat pants, which were also fire damaged. All the clothing items were removed from the decedent during the examination.

Severe thermal burns were on his head, with skin splits present exposing his skull. Due to the severity of the thermal burns, his identity could not be confirmed via his physical characteristics and no hair was present on his head.

The forth and fifth degree burns extended down his neck, chest, and upper abdomen. Skin splits were under both of his armpits, on the sides of his upper chest. A portion of his upper abdomen was only singed and the skin visible was pink in color. Each side of his abdomen was burnt with his skin charred and black in color.

Both of the decedent legs were covered in forth degree burns from his pelvis down to the top of his right foot. His left lower leg, from mid-shin, was missing, with muscle tissue exposure. Blistering and skin sloughing were on his lower legs.

The decedent's arms both had severe fourth degree burns on them, especially on his upper arms. Blistering was noted on his forearms, with charring of his skin present. The decedent's hands were both charred black in color and he had a wedding ring on his left ring finger. The ring was later removed and held for safekeeping at the Coroner's Bureau to be provided to his family/next of kin at a later time.

The entirety of his back, from his shoulders to below his buttocks, was covered in forth degree burns, consisting of skin splits and muscle tissue exposure.

Post mortem lividity could not be detected due to his injuries and rigor mortis was present in all of his extremities. He did not have any tattoos.

Samples of bodily fluids were obtained from the decedent to include two tubes of femoral blood and one tube of vitreous humor.

One tube of femoral blood was submitted to Alere Forensics for toxicology analysis. The remaining fluid samples were 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/she was on becoming ignited, a post mortem examination was deferred.

Statements:

Detective Nunez made notification to the decedent's [REDACTED] at 1330 hours, confirming the decedent's identification, along with her [REDACTED] and the decedent's [REDACTED]. Detective Nunez also informed the decedent's [REDACTED] and his [REDACTED].

On 09-06-19, at 1800 hours, I made telephone contact with [REDACTED] who is [REDACTED] and executor

Port Officer
144/BIEDINGER, C

Printed At
01/30/2020 13:08

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of the estate for [REDACTED]. She had already spoken with Detective Nunez and knew about positive identification of Steven [REDACTED].

We continued talking and [REDACTED] told me she had contacted the Cremation Society of Santa Barbara for cremation arrangements for both the decedent and [REDACTED]. She had requested paperwork be sent to [REDACTED], the decedent's brother, to be filled out from the Cremation Society of Santa Barbara, as she did not have all of [REDACTED] personal

Consultation with primary care physician:

The decedent's primary care physician was unknown and no contact was made with any physician regarding medical history for the decedent.

Forensic toxicology:

On 09-15-19, a toxicology report was received from Alere Forensics regarding the decedent's carbon monoxide saturation. The report indicated the following:

Carbon monoxide 58 %

On 09-18-19, a toxicology report was received from Alere Forensics regarding the decedent's cyanide saturation. The report indicated the following:

Cyanide <1 mcg/ml

On 09-28-19, a toxicology report was received from Alere Forensics regarding the decedent. The report indicated the following:

Basic drug screen None detected

Copies of these reports was reviewed with Dr. Manny Montez and 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 a boat fire based on the circumstances of the decedent's death, along with toxicology results.

Review of the circumstances of this death:

On 09-02-19, at approximately 0443 hours, 55-year-old, Steven Salika died from smoke inhalation when the vessel he was on, for a diving expedition, caught fire.

Cause of Death:

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

SMOKE INHALATION (Minutes)

Due to:

BOAT FIRE (Minutes)

Manner of death:

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

Final Disposition:

The decedent and his property were released to representatives of Joseph P. Reardon Funeral Home and Cremation Service in Santa Barbara, Ca. No medication was collected.

Case closed

Report Officer
[Signature] /BIEDINGER, C

Printed At
01/30/2020 13:08

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Santa Barbara County Sheriff



4434 Calle Real
 Santa Barbara, CA 93110-1002
 Report Type
FORENSICS

(805) 681-4100

19-11431

Supplement No
 0001

Reported Date
 09/19/2019

Officer
AMEZOLA, V

Administrative Information							
Agency	Report No		Supplement No	Reported Date	Reported Time	Status	
Santa Barbara County Sheriff	19-11431		0001	09/19/2019	08:09	Incident	
Report Type	Location						
Forensics BOC	PLATTS HARBOR SANTA CRUZ ISLAND						
City	Rep Dist	Area	Beat	From Date	From Time		
Santa Barbara City	101	1	10	09/02/2019	03:32		
Officer	Assignment		Entered by	Assignment	RMS Transfer		
3949/AMEZOLA, V	FORENSICS		3949	FORENSICS	Pending		
Approving Officer	Approval Date	Approval Time					
2901	09/19/2019	10:31:46					

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 1904 hours, Forensics Supervisor Nancy Fabela advised that our assistance was requested by 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 the recovered bodies from the Conception boat fire, and if possible, rolling fingerprints for identification purposes. Coroners Sergeant Jarrett Morris was requesting we meet at the Coroners Office at 2100 hours.

At approximately 1955 hours, CSI Tech Melissa Sandoval and I left the North County Forensics Office, and arrived at the Coroner's Bureau at 2100 hours.

Upon our arrival we met with Patrol Sergeant Mike McCoy and several Los Angeles County Coroners Office personnel were also standing by in the parking lot.

At approximately 2140 hours, our Coroners Bureau detectives arrived with the bodies.

PHOTO DOCUMENTATION (Decedent #13, male):

On Monday, 09/02/19, at 2301 hours, I began overall photo documentation on a male decedent. His body was on a body bag with a Santa Barbara County Sheriff's Coroner tag hanging from the zipper. His body was badly burned. He was wearing a dark colored long sleeve sweater with "Canada God's Pocket Resort" written on the front and dark colored pants. He was wearing a gold-colored band on his left ring finger. The gold-colored band was removed by SBSO Coroner's detectives for safekeeping. Overall photo documentation of his unclothed body was also taken.

Photo documentation was completed at 2312 hours.

Supervisor Fabela, CSI Tech Sandoval and myself left the Coroner's Bureau at 0020 hours, on Tuesday, 09/03/19.

All digital photos were later uploaded into the South County Forensics digital imaging computer for future reference.

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0001

Narrative

~END OF REPORT~

Santa Barbara County Sheriff



4434 Calle Real

Santa Barbara, CA 93110-1002
Report Type
FORENSICS

(805) 681-4100

19-11431

Supplement No
0002

Reported Date
09/24/2019

Officer
SANDOVAL, M

Administrative Information												
Agency	Santa Barbara County Sheriff		Report No	19-11431	Supplement No	0002	Reported Date	09/24/2019	Reported Time	09:45	Status	Incident
Report Type	Forensics BOC		Location	66 S SAN ANTONIO RD								
City	ZIP Code	Rep Dist	Area	Beat	From Date	From Time						
Santa Barbara City	93110	137	1	40	09/02/2019	03:32						
Officer	3703/SANDOVAL, M		Assignment	Entered by	Assignment	RMS Transfer						
Approving Officer	Approval Date	Approval Time		FORENSICS	3703	FORENSICS	Pending					
2901	09/24/2019	11:58:10										

Summary Narrative

Additional photo-documentation of Decedent #13.

Narrative

E-FILE ATTACHMENTS:

None

CORONER'S EXTERNAL EXAMINATION AND PHOTO DOCUMENTATION :

At 1538 hours, on Tuesday 09/03/19, while at the Santa Barbara Coroner's Office, Doctor Manny Montez conducted an external exam on Decedent #13 and observed foam exiting his mouth. Per Doctor Montez's request, photographs were taken and later uploaded to the Santa Barbara Forensic Unit's digital storage under case 19-11431 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 # 19-11431

FORENSIC LABORATORY REPORT

AF # 2019-003252

To: Brice Bruening
Santa Barbara County Sheriff-Coroner

Sample Collection Date: September 2, 2019

Decedent: Steven Salika

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 blood with paperwork marked in part "#13 Doe John". The name "Salika, Steven" was supplied on 9-9-19.

Item # 01-A: One gray top tube with approximately 4 mL of peripheral 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



2019-003252-0003

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

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Agency # 19-11431

FORENSIC LABORATORY REPORT

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Item # 01-A: One gray top tube with approximately 4 mL of peripheral blood collected at 2330 hours.

Service Request:

FP760B - Carboxyhemoglobin/Carbon Monoxide - Blood

Confirmation/Screen Results

Analyte Name	Concentration	Method	Sample Type
Carbon Monoxide	58 %	AVOXimeter 4000	Blood



2019-003252-0002

Respectfully,

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

None



ALERE FORENSICS AT REDWOOD TOXICOLOGY LABORATORY

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

Agency # 19-11431

FORENSIC LABORATORY REPORT

AF # 2019-003252

To: Brice Bruening
Santa Barbara County Sheriff-Coroner

Sample Collection Date: September 2, 2019

Decedent: Steven Salika

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Submission 01: One tape sealed and initialed screw top metal canister containing a second screw top metal canister containing one tube of blood with paperwork marked in part "#13 Doe John". The name "Salika, Steven" was supplied on 9-9-19.

Item # 01-A: One gray top tube with approximately 4 mL of peripheral blood collected at 2330 hours.

Service Request:

FP222B - Expanded Pnl (Confirm) - Blood



2019-003252-0001

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



Respectfully,

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

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

Date of Report: September 28, 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

EtOH - ethanol, IPA - isopropanol, MeOH - methanol