

**Coroner Report
Santa Barbara County Sheriff**



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

(805) 681-4100

19-11437

19-11437

Supplement No
ORIG

Reported Date
09/02/2019

Officer
BAISA, R

Administrative Information							
Agency Santa Barbara County Sheriff		Report No 19-11437	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	ZIP Code 95060	Rep Dist 101	Area 1	Beat 10	From Date 09/02/2019	From Time 03:32	
Officer 3542/BAISA, R			Assignment CORONER BUREAU		Entered by 3542	Assignment CORONER BUREAU	
RMS Transfer Pending	Report Title Coroner Report	Approving Officer 3768		Approval Date 02/21/2020			
Approval Time 14:08:06							
Cause of death (COR only) Smoke inhalation		Due to (COR only) Boat fire		Manner of death (COR only) Accidental		Date/Time of death pronounced 09-02-2019/0443 hours	
Determined by (COR only) Investigation		Dr. will sign N	Hospitalization N		Mortuary Welch-Ryce-Haider		
Removal Status Family request		Date/Time NOK notified 09-04-2019/1550		NOK notified by: Detective Nunez		NOK notified via In person	
NOK relation to decedent							
Person Summary							
Invl	Invl No	Type	Name	MNI	Race	Sex	DOB
COR	1	I	STROM, TED STEPHEN	987650	W	M	
Summary Narrative							
On 09-02-19, at approximately 0443 hours, 62-year-old, Ted Strom died from smoke inhalation when the vessel he was on, for a diving expedition, caught fire.							

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Decedent - Coroner Investigation 1: STROM, TED STEPHEN

Involvement Decedent - Coroner Investigation		Inv No 1	Type Individual
Name STROM, TED STEPHEN		MNI 987650	Race White
Sex Male		DOB [REDACTED]	Age 62
Juvenile? No		Height 5'09"	
Weight 165#		Hair Color Brown	
Eye Color Green		Type Home	
Address [REDACTED]		City [REDACTED]	
State [REDACTED]		ZIP Code [REDACTED]	
Date [REDACTED]		Type Operator License	
ID No [REDACTED]		OLS [REDACTED]	
Relationship [REDACTED]	Name [REDACTED]	Race [REDACTED]	Sex [REDACTED]
DOB [REDACTED]		Address [REDACTED]	
City [REDACTED]		State [REDACTED]	
ZIP Code [REDACTED]	Phone Type [REDACTED]	Phone No [REDACTED]	
Medical			
Citizenship US		Place of Birth Washington	Occupation DOCTOR
Coroner Case No 19-11437		NOK Notified? Yes	
Premise Sealed? No	Property? Yes	NOK Name [REDACTED]	
Mortuary Name WELCH-RYCE-HAIDER		On Call? No	
Family Request? Yes	Other? No	Injury Place BOAT	
Injury Date 09/02/2019		Injured At Work? No	
Injury Premise PLATTS HARBOR SANTA CRUZ ISLAND SANTA BARBARA, CA 95060			
How Injured DECEDENT DIED FROM SMOKE INHALATION FROM BOAT FIRE.			
Narrative			
Continuations:			
Ted Strom 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, 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 9-11415 for full details.

Det. Morris was notified of the incident by Sergeant Valencia. Sergeant Morris requested the response of Detective Henslin, Detective Biedinger, and Detective Carlson to the Coroner's Bureau to assist in the incident at approximately 0525 hours.

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

When the vessel was later found, 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.

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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.

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.

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 where 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

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3542/BAISA, R

Printed At
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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 sons, Kestrel and Pfeiffer Strom. The DNA comparison was conducted via the Sacramento County Coroner's Office.

Also, 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 9-2-19, at approximately 2335 hours, an examination of the decedent was conducted at the Coroner's Bureau.

The decedent was received unclothed, on his right side, in a pugilistic posture within a black colored body bag. The decedent was a well developed male adult. Rigor mortis was present in the extremities. He had a digital watch around his left wrist and a gold colored metal ring on his left ring finger. A tag with case #19-11437 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 throughout. The face and neck were charred over and was unidentifiable. The top of the skull was charred to the bone. No hair remained.

The chest and abdomen displayed extensive 4th degree burns with charring through the skin and fatty tissue.

The legs and feet displayed extensive 3rd and 4th degree burns with charring to the skin and fatty tissue. The tops of the feet displayed red and blistered 3rd degree burns

The arms and hands displayed extensive 4th degree burns that charred through the skin, fatty tissue and muscle.

The rear of the body was examined. The posterior aspects of the body displayed extensive 4th degree burns with charring through the skin to the fatty tissue and muscle. The skin and tissue of the entire posterior was blackened. The occipital region of the skull was charred to the bone. 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 femoral blood (including one for DNA).

1 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 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 59%

On 9-16-19, a toxicology report was received from Alere Forensics regarding the decedent's cyanide saturation. The report indicated the following:

Cyanide < 2 mcg/mL

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

Meclizine	9.0 ng/mL
Cetirizine	45 ng/mL
Volatiles (EtOH, IPA, MeOH, Acetone)	Not 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, 62-year-old, Ted Strom 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 (STROM) 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 and his property were released to representatives of Welch-Ryce-Haider Funeral Chapels in Santa Barbara, Ca.

Case closed

Santa Barbara County Sheriff



4434 Calle Real

Santa Barbara, CA 93110-1002
Report Type
FORENSICS

(805) 681-4100

19-11437

Supplement No
0001

Reported Date
09/19/2019

Officer
FABELA, N

Administrative Information							
Agency	Report No	Supplement No	Reported Date	Reported Time	Status		
Santa Barbara County Sheriff	19-11437	0001	09/19/2019	10:05	Incident		
Report Type	Location						
Forensics BOC	FRYS HARBOR SANTA CRUZ ISLAND						
City	ZIP Code	Rep Dist	Area	Beat	From Date	From Time	
Santa Barbara City	95060	101	1	10	09/02/2019	03:32	
Officer	Assignment		Entered by	Assignment	RMS Transfer		
2901/FABELA, N	FORENSICS		2901	FORENSICS	Pending		
Approving Officer	Approval Date	Approval Time					
2901	09/19/2019	10:09:56					

Summary Narrative

This report contains information pertaining to the Forensics photo-documentation of unknown male decedent #19 on Monday, 09/02/19, in Case#: 19-11437.

Narrative

E-FILE ATTACHMENTS:
None

NARRATIVE:

On Monday, 09/02/19, 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 the recovered bodies from the Conception boat fire, and if possible, rolling fingerprints for identification purposes.

PHOTO DOCUMENTATION (Body #19, male):

On Monday, 09/02/19, the recovered bodies were transported to the Santa Barbara County Coroner's Bureau. The Forensics Unit assisted Coroner's Detectives with photo-documentation of the recovered bodies.

I began photo documentation on a body bag labeled #19. Its contents were that of a male body #19. The decedent's body was badly burned. The decedent was observed to be holding a rolled up unknown type garment (tan colored with blue leaves) at chest area, a black/silver colored Ironman triathlon wrist watch (on left wrist), an s-patterned gold colored wedding band (left ring finger), and burned remnants of an unknown red/blue cloth around both ankles. The unknown clothing described above remained inside the body bag with the body. The wedding band and wristwatch were collected by Coroner's detectives.

No visible scars or tattoos were noted and no fingerprints were obtained.

A total of 62 digital photographs were later uploaded into the Forensic Unit's digital imaging computer under Case#: 19-11437 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 # 19-11437

FORENSIC LABORATORY REPORT

AF # 2019-003250

To: Brice Bruening
Santa Barbara County Sheriff-Coroner

Sample Collection Date: September 2, 2019

Decedent: Ted Strom

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 "19 Doe John". The name "Strom, Ted" was supplied on 9-9-19.

Item # 01-A: One gray top tube with approximately 11 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	59 %	AVOXimeter 4000	Blood



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 16, 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

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Agency # 19-11437

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Item # 01-A: One gray top tube with approximately 11 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	< 2 mcg/mL	Color Screen	Blood



2019-003250-0003

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 16, 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.

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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 # 19-11437

FORENSIC LABORATORY REPORT

AF # 2019-003250

To: Brice Bruening
Santa Barbara County Sheriff-Coroner

Sample Collection Date: September 2, 2019

Decedent: Ted Strom

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Item # 01-A: One gray top tube with approximately 11 mL of peripheral blood collected at 2330 hours.

Service Request:

FP222B - Expanded Pnl (Confirm) - Blood



2019-003250-0002

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>
Meclizine	9.0 ng/mL	LC-MS-MS	Blood
Cetirizine	45 ng/mL	LC-MS-MS	Blood
Volatiles (EtOH, IPA, MeOH, Acetone)	Not Detected	GC-Headspace	Blood



2019-003250-0002

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 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