

Report of the

Coroner's Investigation

Case: 10-1017

**Office of the
Coroner of
Pulaski County,
Arkansas**

201 South Broadway
Suite 340 Little Rock,
Arkansas 72201

501-340-8355 Office

501-340-8358 Fax

Report of the

Coroner's Investigation

Case: 10-1017

Decedent: Harper, Pamela
DOB: 01/21/1958
Age: 52YR
Race: WHITE
Sex: F
Address: 12701 South Ridge
City: Little Rock
State: AR
Zip code:

Employer:
Occupation:
Address:
City:
State: AR
Zip code:

Type of Death: Suspicious
At Work: N
Notification By: POLICE
Means Weapon:

MVA:
Seat Belt:
Model:
Make:
Year:

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	Date	Time
Last Seen Alive	03/26/2010	0637
Injury/Illness	03/26/2010	Unknown
Death	03128/2010	1430
Police Notified	03/2612010	0635
Coroner Notified	03126/2010	0901
View of Body	03/2612010	0955
M.E. Notified	03128/2010	1607

	Location	City/County	Type/Premises
Injury/Onset	1322 Hunters Cv	Little Rock	Alley
Death	1322 Hunters Cv	Little Rock	Alley
View Body	1322 Hunters Cv	Little Rock	Alley



Physician / Diagnosis

Dr Eleanor Lipsmeyer	Elbow Surgery
Dr Ryan David	Pronounced
Dr Ryan David	

Witness/ Relation

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Next of Kin

Name: Tanny Harper
Relation: Husband
Address: Same
City:
State: AR
Zip code:
Phone: (501)912-3373

Toxicology

Toxicology Sent:
Blood:
Urine:
Other:
Blood Alcohol:
Carbon Monoxide:
Test by:
Autopsy: Y
Autopsy by: ASCL
Other Information: See ASCL Report

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Remains Transported by:

Remains Transported to: CRIME LAB

Released to: CRIME LAB

Investigation Date: 03/26/2010

Investigative Agency: Little Rock

Officer / Detective: Matt Thomas

County Investigator: Patrick McElroy

Incident # 10-30129

CASE # 10-1017

At 0901 Kerry Bratton received a call from the Little Rock Police Department advising this office of a death in an alleyway behind 1322 Hunters Cove. Dispatch advised to contact Detective Matt Nelson with the Little Rock Police Department. I contacted Detective Nelson who advised that he would have to call me back because the decedent is thought to be still breathing. Detective Nelson advised that he would have MEMS to return to the scene at the residence and then call back if necessary.

At 0930 hours I received a call from Detective Nelson advising the decedent received CPR by the Little Rock Fire Department and that MEMS arrived took over the resuscitative efforts, and Dr Janie Kennedy at Baptist Medical Center pronounced the death at 0929 hours. The Paramedic on scene was said to be a Brandi Johnson. I advised Chief Deputy Coroner Gerone Hobbs, who contacted Coroner Garland Camper of the incident and we responded to the scene.

Upon arrival at the scene I spoke with Detective Matt Nelson and was advised the decedent has had elbow surgery at some point in the past and was taking prescribed generic Darvocet for the pain of the injury. An empty prescription bottle was recovered, the prescription filled for Pamela K Harper on 3-15-10 at Kroger Pharmacy at 14000 Cantrell Rd for 60 of Propoxyphen-APAP 100-650 MG TB. Detective Matt Nelson also advised the decedent was seeing a Psychiatrist for unknown reasons. Detective Nelson stated the decedent called her brother-in-law, Jim Duckett (501-225-3714) who resides at the address of the scene approximately 0200 hours this morning. The decedent was said to have been thought to be intoxicated and stated that *she couldn't take it anymore*". Mr. Duckett stated he told the decedent to go to sleep. The decedent was witnessed by her husband in bed at her residence at around midnight.

The decedent was found face down on the pavement by Judy Mobarak (501-993-2474) a neighbor of Mr. Duckett (brother-in-law) and authorities were called. Detective Nelson advised initially MEMS arrived on scene no effort was made to resuscitate the decedent. After the MEMS unit left the scene, Detective Nelson and a female Little Rock Police Department Officer saw the decedent breathe while they were contacting the Coroner's office, to request a response to the scene. MEMS was again summoned and returned to the scene. LRFD also responded the scene and began CPR until MEMS arrived and took over. The decedent was then said to have been pronounced by the emergency room physician at Baptist Medical Center. Coroner Camper spoke with Mr. Duckett and advised him that we will photograph the body, conduct our investigation, and we would advise him of what we the next step in the process after the investigation.

As I was photographing the scene and the body, I noted the decedent to be lying supine on the pavement west of the residence. The area the decedent was laying was shaded and noted to be cool. The decedent was noted with her head facing east towards the residence and her feet towards the west. The decedent was covered with a white sheet. This sheet was removed and I observed a middle aged white female, who was identified by the Little Rock Police Department. The decedent was noted to be wearing a gray shirt

and white and blue panties with pink colored imprints. The decedent had fast patch stickers on her upper right chest and lower left chest. Present to the decedent's left shoulder were a couple of drops of what appeared to be blood, and to the left elbow area. The decedent's eyes were blue in color, were clear and dry. No petechial hemorrhages were noted. The pupils appeared to be fixed and dilated. The decedent was then noted to be cold to the touch and was checked for rigor mortis by opening the jaw. The jaw opened without resistance. Chief Deputy Hobbs and I then examined left and right sides of the decedent's head, and then I noticed the decedent move. Not being sure if I actually saw the decedent move, I then raised the shirt up above her breasts, so the abdomen could be exposed, and examined for a period of approximately 5-10 seconds. At that time I witnessed the decedent take a deep breath which caused her abdomen to rise and fall, along with her chest. The time was 1017 hours by my watch. Coroner Camper was then alerted and advised of the decedent breathing and he had LRPD officer Randall Robison to contact MEMS and have them to respond immediately again to the scene after several other respirations were noted. All the respirations at that point were noted to be deep, and were witnessed by this office, and LRPD Detective Matt Nelson, Officer Robinson prior to MEMS arriving on the scene. The decedent's carotid pulse was checked bilaterally by me, to which none was noted. I then, having no knowledge of trauma or injury, tilted the decedent's head back and opened her airway. After which, the decedent's respirations became deeper and gurgling was noted upon exhalation. The decedent was covered with a white sheet, up to her neck, and a red blanket was used to cover her up to her neck as well, as we waited for MEMS arrival for the third response.

MEMS arrived, Paramedic Josh Richmond and his female partner were advised by Coroner Camper and I, the decedent was having respirations. The MEMS employees then attached the fast patch stickers to their cardiac monitor and stated that the decedent was Asystolic. The decedent received no mechanical respirations or chest compressions for at least approximately 5 minutes after MEMS arrived on scene. Coroner Camper advised the MEMS crew that he had spoken to Dr. Kennedy at Baptist Medical Center emergency room and he advised her that upon arrival of the ambulance, to accept Mrs. Harper in the emergency room. He then advised the Crew to transport Mrs. Harper to the emergency room. Once inside the ambulance MEMS Supervisor Chris Marshall arrived and aided their resuscitation efforts. The decedent remained inside the ambulance on scene for approximately 10-15 more minutes prior to leaving. Upon arrival at the emergency room I was advised by the emergency room staff that the decedent did have a heartbeat. I then heard Dr. Kennedy say the decedent was cold and was being warmed, and CPR was being performed by staff.

Supplemental

March 28, 2010

Patrick McElroy, Deputy Coroner

On 3-28-10 at 1423 hours I received a call from Vicky Miller with Baptist Medical Center advising me that the decedent had been pronounced. The decedent was then viewed at the Baptist Morgue at 1531 hours on 3-28-10. The decedent was viewed and identified by

Vicky Miller. I observed the decedent to be lying supine on the Baptist morgue transport cart. The decedent was noted to be cool peripherally and warm centrally. The decedent was dressed in a gown and a pair of gray socks. The decedent had air splints braces on each shin as well as a hard splint on her right wrist and right hand. The decedent was noted to have both an Endotracheal Tube and a Nasogastric Tube protruding from her mouth. The decedent had EKG and fast patch stickers applied to her chest. The decedent was noted to have an IV to the left Clavicle area and the right neck. There were two more IVs noted; one to the right Antecubital Fossa, the other to the right wrist. The decedent had a Foley Catheter protruding from her Urethra. The decedent was noted to have abrasions to the left shoulder and the left elbow.

I contacted Chief Deputy Hobbs and after a conference with Coroner Camper. Coroner Camper advised to transport the decedent to the State Crime Lab for examination. Upon arrival at the State Crime Lab the decedent's body bag was secured in the morgue with PCCO lock #02299.

Supplemental

May 21,2010

Jeff Thrasher, Deputy Coroner

Garland L. Camper, Coroner

This office conducted multiple interviews of personnel from LRPD, LRFD, MEMS and private citizens who were either a witness in the death of Mrs. Harper or were directly involved with the incident as a first responder. During this investigation our office established that the first two attempts by responders failed to detect life signs of the decedent. The interview of lead veteran paramedic Pat Bajorke failed to find obvious signs of life of the patient upon his arrival. Cold weather, very little clothing and the patient being under the influence of narcotic being present were all related. This office found that Paramedic Bajorke failed to follow MEMS protocol for hypothermia. The last known alive time led him to overlook the potential signs of life and possibility of hypothermic emergency. After this office issued a subpoena for the protocol, and reviewed the protocol, we determined the treatment for hypothermia called for Mrs. Harper to be transported to the nearest and appropriate emergency facility. Mr. Bajorke stated weather did play a role in determining which protocol he used, but in his report he noted the outside temperature to be 40 degrees, and recorded rigor mortis to be present. Mr. Bajorke then vacated the scene thinking there were no signs of life, leaving Mrs. Harper. Upon leaving the scene of what they thought to be a death, MEMS failed to notify the Coroner according the State Statute 12-12-315. It is clearly stated that the responsibility of a person with knowledge of a death to notify the Coroner.

Interviewing Detective Matt Nelson with Attorney present, Detective Nelson stated he thought what he saw was the decedent breathing, then felt under her nose and detected warm air coming from her nostrils. He then summoned MEMS back to the scene. LRFD responded first and began CPR and MEMS arrived and took over the process.

In the interview with Brandi Johnson of MEMS, she acknowledged CPR was in progress along with the use of an AED. Ms. Johnson also acknowledged that while proceeding to the location she was informed by her dispatch of the previous response to the address, and that an officer at the scene noticed the decedent breathing. Ms. Johnson further stated she took over the CPR and contacted Dr. Alicia Kennedy about discontinuing the CPR. Ms. Johnson stated in her medical report the decedent was in asystole. This office discovered, through the portions of the medical records provided to the office from the cardiac monitor used in the second response, that the decedent wasn't in asystole, but a slow pulseless electrical activity (PEA), an Idioventricular rhythm, or Bradycardia not asystole. Johnson also stated the decedent had rigor mortis present.

Ms. Brandi Johnson failed to note that a student riding along with her had actually aided in the resuscitative efforts. This student was a minor and her identity is being withheld but she was under direct supervision of Ms. Johnson at the scene. In the initial process of requesting a list of the responding parties to the scenes, Coroner Camper was told there were students with the second unit that responded, but MEMS Directors weren't exactly forthcoming about the activity of one student and her active role in administering aid to Mrs. Harper. This information was revealed in an interview with LRFD personnel. Again it is believed that combined with the time that expired from the first 911 call, the unknown down time, and other prior information about the possible use of the narcotics, and along with the failure of the first responding ambulance to transport after determining no life signs, led Ms. Johnson to elect not to transport the patient again. But once again MEMS failed to report what they thought was a deceased person according to the State Statute.

The response of the third MEMS ambulance was led by Josh Richmond, paramedic. This office interviewed him and found inconsistencies in his statement and what was documented in his medical record. Multiple witnesses stated and agreed there was a reluctance to render aid upon the arrival of their crew. Coroner Camper had to insist that the crew transport the patient, informing them of his conversation with Dr. Kennedy prior to their arrival. The crew showed a disbelief that Mrs. Harper was viewed having life signs by members of all LRPD personnel and this office. They were informed of the activities that had taken place prior to their arrival. After the aid was finally rendered, and Mrs. Harper was placed in the rear of the ambulance for several minutes, the crew transported to the emergency room.

The first responders for MEMS failed to render aid because of the failure to use a heart monitor and misdiagnosed rigor mortis. The second MEMS ambulances failed in their attempt to render aid due to the lack of or improper reading of the heart monitor records. Both the first and second ambulances failed to follow the hypothermic protocol considering that Mrs. Harper had been found in 40 degree weather with minimal clothing.

Because of the combination of a large amount of narcotics and alcohol initially, consumed and the environmental hypothermia, the cause and manner of death has been ruled accordingly.

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Conclusions

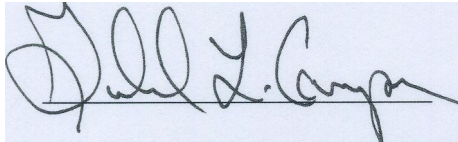
Cause of Death:

Ethanol, Propoxyphene, and
Acetaminophen Intoxication with
Complications
Environmental Hypothermia

Manner of Death:

SUICIDE

I hereby declare that after receiving notice of the death described herein I took charge of the body and made inquiries regarding the cause and manner of death in accordance with applicable state laws; and that the information contained herein is correct to the best of my knowledge and belief.



Garland L. Camper, F-ABMDI

Coroner of Pulaski County, Arkansas

