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AUTOPSY REPORT

Name of decedent: Celeste Watts

Case#: AW18-157

Investigation#: WCCO 18-437

Date and time of death: August 16, 2018 at 1540 hrs

Age: 3 YEARS

Date and time of autopsy: August 17, 2018 at 1730 hrs

Sex: Female

DIAGNOSES:

I. HISTORY OF BEING REPORTED MISSING AND SUBSEQUENTLY LOCATED IN AN OBVIOUS STATE OF DEATH WITHIN AN OIL TANK BATTERY:

A. ASPHYXIATION DUE TO SMOTHERING

B. MILD POSTMORTEM ARTIFACT

II. TOXICOLOGY:

A. POSTMORTEM - BASIC, SPLEEN BLOOD-----NONE DETECTED

B. HYDROCARBON AND OXYGENATED VOLATILES PANEL, SPLEEN BLOOD:

1. N-BUTANOL-----4.4 mcg/mL

2. ETHANOL-----31 mg/dL

3. N-PROPANOL-----PRESENT

4. ACETALDEHYDE-----PRESENT

C. ETHANOL, LIVER TISSUE-----SEE COMMENT

1. COMMENT: THE CONCENTRATION OF THE ETHANOL INCREASED FROM 99 MG/100 G TO 174 MG/100 G OVER THE COURSE OF MULTIPLE ANALYSES. THE NATURE OF THE SPECIMEN AND/OR THE CONTAINER TYPE WHICH MAY NOT CONTAIN PRESERVATIVE, MAY EXPLAIN THE VARIABLE QUANTITATIVE RESULTS.

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TOXICOLOGY:

Reference Lab: NMS Labs
3701 Welsh Road
Willow Grove, PA 19090

OPINION:

Based on the history provided and the autopsy findings, the likely cause of death is asphyxiation due to smothering. The toxicology results likely represent decomposition and an artifact of being submerged in an oil tank for several days. The manner of death is homicide.

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Signed: September 27, 2018

MB/NW AD: 08/17/2018 AT: 08/19/2018 MD: 09/01/2018 MT: 09/01/2018

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HISTORY: The decedent is a 3-year-old Caucasian female (DOB: 07/17/2015) who has a medical history significant for peanut allergies. Reportedly, the decedent was reported missing, along with her sister and mother, on the afternoon of August 13, 2018. She was unfortunately subsequently found unresponsive in an obvious state of death contained within an oil tank battery on rural property. The decedent was pronounced dead at the oil field at 1540 hours on August 16, 2018.

WITNESSES: Personnel present for the postmortem examination include Michael Burson, MD PhD, Pathologist and Joey Weiner, Autopsy Assistant. For a complete list of individuals present at the autopsy, please see the investigative report file held at the Weld County Coroner's Office.

District Attorney Disclaimer: At 1010 hours on August 17, 2018 the representative from the District Attorney's Office read a portion of an email which he received from the Public Defender's Office. In this email the Public Defender has requested that we swab the necks of the children for residual trace DNA. According to him and his expert DNA witness, they anticipate trace DNA being preserved on the neck structures of the children despite being confined in a container of oil, water and associated sludge matter over the course of four days.

IDENTIFICATION:

- By the Weld County Coroner, State of Colorado.

CLOTHING: The decedent is received in an unsealed body bag and clad in the following clothing items (the clothing is all covered in oil and debris):

- A pink and black t-shirt
- A diaper
- A pair of underwear

IDENTIFYING MARKS AND SCARS:

- None

EVIDENCE OF MEDICAL/SURGICAL INTERVENTION: Evidence of medical/surgical intervention consists of the following:

- None

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EVIDENCE OF INJURY

EXTERNAL EVIDENCE OF INJURY:

- No significant trauma is noted

INTERNAL EVIDENCE OF INJURY:

- None

GENERAL EXTERNAL EXAMINATION

The autopsy is commenced at 1730 hours, on August 17, 2018 on the body of Celeste Watts at the McKee Medical Center, Loveland, CO. This autopsy is performed at the request of the Weld County Coroner, State of Colorado. The body is that of a well-developed, well-nourished Caucasian female whose appearance is generally consistent with the reported age of 3 years. The body measures approximately 37 ½ inches long and weighs 37 pounds.

At the time of autopsy, rigor mortis is released in the major muscle groups and the muscles of mastication. Livor mortis is not readily apparent due to postmortem artifact.

The body exhibits mild postmortem artifact consisting of generalized bloating, areas of marbling, skin discoloration and skin slippage. During the washing procedure, the majority of the skin is sloughed from the surface.

HEAD: Head hair is red-brown, normally distributed and measures up to 15 cm long over the crown. EYES: The eyes are opacified (postmortem artifact). The irides appear brown; the pupils are equal at 0.3 cm. The sclerae are dull and there are no discernible scleral or conjunctival petechiae. NOSE: The nose is midline and does not grate upon palpation. ORAL CAVITY: The oral cavity contains natural dentition in good repair. There are no buccal mucosal petechiae.

NECK: The neck structures are midline and without palpable adenopathy.

CHEST: The breasts and nipples are normal female.

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ABDOMEN: The abdomen is mildly protuberant and tense (postmortem artifact). There is no detectable fluid wave.

GENITALIA: The external genitalia are normal female.

EXTREMITIES:

UPPER EXTREMITIES: The upper extremities are well-developed and symmetrical. The palmar surfaces of the hands were previously sloughed off during the body recovery process and are packaged separately. The palmar surfaces of the hands and digits and the accompanying fingernails are retained and transferred to the jurisdiction of the Colorado Bureau of Investigation. LOWER EXTREMITIES: The lower extremities are well-developed and symmetrical with all digits present. The toenails are short, slightly dirty and in good repair.

BACK AND SACRUM: The back and sacrum are unremarkable.

GENERAL INTERNAL EXAMINATION

The body is opened with a routine thoracoabdominal incision. The subcutaneous fat measures 1 cm in thickness at the level of the umbilicus.

BODY CAVITIES: There are no abnormal fluid accumulations or adhesions in any of the body cavities. The internal organs all exhibit marked discoloration and vacuolization due to postmortem artifact.

CARDIOVASCULAR SYSTEM: The heart weighs 80 grams. The epicardial surface is unremarkable. The coronary ostia are patent. The coronary arteries follow a right dominant distribution. Sectioning reveals no significant narrowing by atherosclerosis. There is no acute thrombosis. The endocardial surface and papillary muscles are unremarkable. The myocardium is red-brown, firm and without fibrosis. The valve leaflets are thin and pliant. AORTA: The aorta has a normal smooth yellow intimal surface. There is minimal atherosclerotic streaking noted. The major branches, including the celiac, superior and inferior mesenteric, and renal arteries are widely patent. The inferior vena cava is unremarkable.

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RESPIRATORY SYSTEM: The right and left lungs weigh 180 and 160 grams, respectively, and show normal septation. The lung parenchyma is dark pink-tan to purple and markedly atelectatic. There are no masses or gross areas of consolidation. The trachea and mainstem bronchi are unremarkable. There are no foreign bodies or masses. The pulmonary arteries are free of thromboemboli.

SPLEEN: The spleen is soft and weighs 40 grams. The capsule is intact, smooth and glistening. The parenchyma is firm, red-purple and smooth. There are no infarcts, nodules, scars or cysts present.

LIVER AND BILIARY SYSTEM:

LIVER: The liver weighs 320 grams. The capsule is intact. The parenchyma is firm and red-brown. No masses are detected. GALLBLADDER: A thin-walled gallbladder is empty.

GASTROINTESTINAL TRACT:

ESOPHAGUS: The esophagus has a uniform diameter and intact mucosa. STOMACH: The stomach is empty. The mucosa is smooth, glistening and arranged in normal rugal folds. There are no gastric or duodenal ulcers. SMALL AND LARGE INTESTINES: The small and large intestines have a uniform dimension and appear unremarkable. The vermiform appendix is present.

PANCREAS: The pancreas is tan-orange with lobular architecture. There is no evidence of hemorrhage or saponification.

ADRENAL GLANDS: The adrenal glands have a golden cortex and gray-brown medulla.

GENITOURINARY SYSTEM:

KIDNEYS: The right and left kidneys weigh 50 and 40 grams, respectively. The capsules strip with ease. The external cortical surface is red-purple and smooth. The cortices are well delineated from the medullary pyramids. The pelves and ureters are nondilated. URINARY BLADDER: The urinary bladder is empty. The mucosal surface is tan-pink, moist and smooth. FEMALE INTERNAL GENITALIA: The cervix, uterus, fallopian tubes and ovaries are unremarkable.

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NECK: The anterior musculature is smooth and glistening. The epiglottis and hypopharynx are unremarkable. The hyoid bone and thyroid cartilage are intact. The laryngeal mucosa is pink-purple, moist and smooth. There are no masses or aspirated material. The thyroid gland has symmetrical lobes and appears unremarkable.

SPINE: The spine has normal configuration.

SKULL AND BRAIN: Reflection of the scalp reveals no areas of laceration, contusion or hematoma. The skull is intact and without fracture. The dura is intact and without epidural or subdural hemorrhage. There is no subarachnoid hemorrhage. The brain markedly soft and edematous (postmortem artifact) and weighs 1280 grams. The cerebrovascular system has normal configuration. The cranial nerves are symmetrically intact. Serial coronal sections through the brain reveal no areas of hemorrhage, contusion or mass lesion within the cortex, white matter, brainstem or cerebellum. The atlanto-occipital joint is intact. The cervical spinal column has normal mobility.

SPECIMENS OBTAINED

SPECIMENS: Specimens retained at the time of autopsy include pooled blood from the iliac veins and heart, blood obtained from the spleen and liver tissue.

TOXICOLOGY: Pooled blood, spleen blood and liver tissue are submitted to NMS Labs for analysis.

HISTOLOGY: Sections of heart, lung, liver, kidney and brain are submitted for histology.

EVIDENCE:

- Swabs of face prior to washing
- Swabs of anterior neck prior to washing
- Swabs of face after washing
- Swabs of anterior neck after washing
- Swabs of bilateral hands (palmar surface)

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- Oral swabs
- Vaginal swabs
- Skin (palmar surfaces) and fingernails from the bilateral hands
- Deoxyribonucleic acid blood spot card (DNA)

Radiographs (X-rays):

- Full body X-rays are taken and submitted to the Weld County Coroner's Office

MICROSCOPIC EXAMINATION

HEART: Sections of the heart are without histopathologic abnormality.

LUNG: Sections of the lung are without histopathologic abnormality.

LIVER: Sections of the liver are without histopathologic abnormality.

KIDNEY: Sections of the kidney are without histopathologic abnormality.

BRAIN: Sections of the brain are without histopathologic abnormality.