

Deceased Lying on: N-back, N-bed frame, N-right side, N-left side, N-arms
Blood Coming From: N-nose, N-mouth, N-ears
Deceased was Found in:
N-bathroom, N-kitchen, N-workshop, Y-bed, N-vehicle N-near room

Any Electrical Wires or Fixtures Near Deceased: NO
Was Deceased Barefoot: NO Water on Floor or Ground:
Any Unusual Odor Present: NO
Weapon:
Narrative:

On November 9, 1994 I received a call requesting me to respond to Lot 9 Country Square Mobile Home Park. When I arrived I noticed that a Ms. Wendy Hill Fire Department was on the scene, they had just finished putting out a fire from a mobile home at Lot 9. A body was found at the end bedroom. Later, the one identified by the Medical University of Charleston as Jennifer Morgan. SLED investigator, Tom Davis, was called to the scene along with Florence County Sheriff's Office Arson Investigator. Investigator, Russell Cox, was present, ID Officer Keith Lumpkin, and Lt. Johnny Abraham. The patient was burned beyond recognition. Ms. Morgan was lying on her bed springs partially in an off position. Looks to be lying on her abdomen. Her bedroom has extensive damage to the walls in and outer walls are burned out. Photos were taken by the sheriff's office ID Officer, Keith Lumpkin. The mobile home was secured by a yellow law enforcement tape. Ms. Morgan's body was removed and taken to McLeod's morgue. Because of a nature of this death, an autopsy was ordered by myself. The patient's body was sent the next morning approximately 9:00 a.m. The same day, I received a call from the Medical University of Charleston advising me that Ms. Morgan's death had occurred prior to the fire. I then immediately called Lt. Abraham at the Florence County Sheriff's Office and advised him what the Medical University said saying that Ms. Morgan was dead prior to the fire. He also advised me that he would call SLED Investigator, Tom Davis, and tell him what the results were. I was informed at a later date by Sheriff's office investigator that gas had been used to set the fire. Samples had been taken from the mobile home and tested at SLED laboratory to confirm it was gas. I was advised by Joyce Rosboro, the next door neighbor, that she had saw the flames coming out of the mobile home to the rear at the end of the trailer where Ms. Morgan's bedroom was approximately 12:27 p.m. At 12:28 p.m. she called the Wendy Hill Fire Department. They responded to the fire within minutes. Talking with Ms. Morgan's roommate, Mandy White, she stated that she had left the residence early that morning at approximately 7:00 a.m. to go to work and Ms. Morgan was there at the time she left. She said the last time that she saw Ms. Morgan was the night before when she had come in at approximately 10:00 p.m. from visiting a friend. All of this information was given to the sheriff's investigator by Ms. Mandy White as to who this friend was. Records at the Francis Marion University show that Ms. Morgan did attend a 9:30 a.m. class and was out of class at 10:20 a.m. At the time, it is unknown at the time she left the university and arrived at her residence. As to the cause of this death at this time, it is still unknown because the Medical University of Charleston is still working on this case. This case will remain pending because of it being a homicide and to obtain further findings from the Medical University of Charleston.

Narrative Continued:

M.G. "Bubba" Matthews

Coroner

MGM:jrs

Updated on 12/19/94

FINAL AUTOPSY DIAGNOSIS Pulmonary vascular congestion. Marked postmortem burning with tissue destruction.

Case History: The decedent is a 23 year old white female resident of Florence County. According to Florence County Coroner, Bubba Matthews, the decedent was found lying face down on the remains of her bed in the bedroom of her mobile home at Country Squire Mobile Home Park in Florence, SC. On the morning of her death, she attended classes at Frances Marion College from 9:30 - 10:20 a.m. She was last seen by her room-mate at 10:20 a.m. The decedent's roommate reports that she did not smoke. The fire call came in at 12:28 p.m. (see file for further details)

Case Summary:

A complete autopsy was performed on the decedent identified by dental records in consultation with Dr. Edward Herschaft, as Jennifer Morgan at the Medical University Hospital autopsy facility on November 10, 1994. The autopsy began at 11:00 a.m. and was performed by Drs. Carico and Conradi with the assistance from forensic investigator Henry Middleton and autopsy technician W.C. Henryhand. The autopsy was authorized by the Florence County Coroner, Bubba Matthews.

Significant findings at autopsy included severe charring of the body surface with sparing of the medial anterior trunk and medial thighs. The trachea and bronchi contained no soot or ash. The tracheal mucosa and lung surfaces displayed a striking "cherry red" coloration which would suggest carbon monoxide inhalation during the fire. The hyoid bone was not fractured, nor was there hemorrhage within the muscles of the neck to suggest strangulation. Total body x-rays displayed no projectiles or foreign bodies.

Histological sections are taken from the brain, thyroid, heart, lungs, liver, spleen, pancreas, adrenals, and kidneys. Slides are also made from vaginal swabs. These slides were negative for spermatozoa. Sections taken from the lungs are significant for pulmonary vascular congestion and focal atelectasis. There is a suggestion of edema. No soot is noted in airways. The endometrium is proliferative. The pancreas shows focal autolysis.

Toxicological examination of blood and urin for drugs and alcohol showed an ethanol concentration of only 2 mg/dl. Blood co-oximetry showed 0.0% carboxyhemoglobin. Analysis of brain tissue for the presence of hydrocarbons was negative. Vaginal swabs were negative for the presence of significant amounts of prostatic acide phosphatase.

In the opinion of the prosectors, given the history, autopsy histologic, and toxicological information, it is evident that the decedent's death was not due to carbon monoxide inhalation. In the view of the prosectors, the manner and cause of death remain undetermined at this time.

Thomas Carico MD and Sandra E. Conradi.