



A2009-04340

GASTON MEMORIAL HOSPITAL

CaroMont Health
DEPARTMENT OF PATHOLOGY AND LABORATORY MEDICINE
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SEP 17 2009

6586

Autopsy Report

Patient Name:	BURRIS, PATRICK T.	Client:	Gaston Memorial Hosp	Accession #:	MEA09-56
Med. Rec. #:	841455	Location:	LAB	Autopsy Date:	7/7/2009
DOB/Age:	8/8/1967 (Age: 41)	Service:		Expiration Date:	7/6/2009
Gender:	M	Billing #:	80488372	Reported:	9/14/2009
Soc. Sec. #:		Copy To:	Bruce Flitt		
Physician(s):	Bruce Flitt				

Post Mortem Hours: 30

Authorized By: CAROL PINKARD, GASTON COUNTY ME

Reason for Autopsy: Medical Examiner Case

Medical Examiner: CAROL PINKARD, RN

Autopsy Restrictions: None

Final Pathologic Diagnosis

1. GUNSHOT WOUND TO LEFT OCCIPITAL SCALP WITH COMMINUTED FRACTURE OF OCCIPITAL BONE, DURAL TEAR, LACERATION OF LEFT OCCIPITAL LOBE WITH SKULL FRAGMENTS IN OCCIPITAL LOBE AND EXIT IN LEFT OCCIPITAL SCALP.
 - A. SUBARACHNOID EFFUSION OF BLOOD, SLIGHT.
2. GRAZE WOUND OF LEFT SHOULDER.
3. GUNSHOT WOUND OF CENTRAL CHEST WITH PERFORATIONS OF PERICARDIAL SAC, HEART, RIGHT HEMIDIAPHRAGM, LIVER, GRAZE OF RIGHT KIDNEY, PERFORATION OF RIGHT RIB #11 AND WITH RECOVERY OF FRAGMENTED PROJECTILE FROM RIGHT KIDNEY AND SOFT TISSUES OF RIGHT BACK.
 - A. HEMOTHORAX, RIGHT (1,000 CC).
 - B. HEMOPERICARDIUM (50 CC).
 - C. CONTUSION, RIGHT MIDDLE LOBE OF LUNG.
 - D. FRACTURES, LEFT RIBS 3 AND 4.
4. GRAZE WOUNDS OF RIGHT MEDIAL THIGH (2).
5. LACERATIONS, LEFT HAND.
6. CIRRHOSIS, MICRONODULAR, LIVER.
 - A. SPLENOMEGALY (540 GRAMS).
7. CARDIOMEGALY (HEART WEIGHT: 515 GRAMS).
8. GASTROESOPHAGITIS, CHRONIC, MILD TO MODERATE.
9. OBESITY, MILD (BODY WEIGHT: 265 LBS).

[Signature] 9/23/09
 OCME DATE

PROBABLE CAUSE OF DEATH: GUNSHOT WOUNDS.

TOXICOLOGY: BLOOD, AORTA:
ETHANOL: NONE DETECTED.

***Electronically Signed ***

BURRIS, PATRICK T.
DOB: 8/8/1967

LOC: LAB
PAT ID: 841455
ACCT#: 80488372

ldb/9/14/2009

Steven L Tracy, MD

Autopsy Descriptions

Autopsy authorized by Carol Pinkard, RN, Acting Gaston County Medical Examiner. The body is identified by body tags on the body bag and on the left great toe and accompanying papers.

EXTERNAL DESCRIPTION: The body is that of an adult white man, who is wearing blue jeans with a black braided belt and a white sweat sock on the right foot. There is another sweat sock in the body bag for the left foot. He is also wearing a black tee shirt which has been cut up the front with a "HOMER ROCKS" insignia on the front. There is a hole in the front of the shirt measuring 10 x 7 mm consistent with a bullet hole. There is a hole in the left side of the shirt just beneath the collar with irregular edges measuring 1.4 x 1.2 cm. He is also wearing blue plaid Hanes boxer underwear. There is an irregular metal fragment in the body bag measuring 8 x 6 x 5 mm in greatest dimensions. There is an EKG lead/Metatrace patch over the right upper chest and one over the left lower chest/left upper abdomen. There is a tattoo of "FTW" in capital letters over the dorsum of the left wrist measuring in aggregate 2.5 x 0.9 cm. There is a tattoo of a circular to oval "Burris Motor sports" over the left upper arm measuring 8 x 7 cm. Beneath this in capital letters are "CWB" measuring in aggregate 2.8 x 0.9 cm. Beneath this are two crossed flags measuring 7 x 3 cm. There is a tattoo of "Big Country" over the right upper arm measuring 8.5 x 9 cm and above this is a circular tattooed area measuring 1.3 x 1 cm. The scalp hair is dark brown to black with gray in the temple areas. The eyes are blue gray and the pupils measure approximately 2.5 mm in diameter each. He has a mustache and a goatee. The teeth are intact except that he is missing his left lower central incisor (tooth #24). The gingivae are slightly receded along the mandible. There are two holes in the right front pant leg with the larger more superior hole measuring approximately 1.5 x 0.5 cm and the smaller more inferior hole measuring 0.6 x 0.3 cm. There is a well healed scar over the left posterior back measuring 1.8 x 0.3 cm. Rigor mortis is 1+ in the legs. Livor mortis is 1+ posteriorly. The body is cool. There are two lacerations between the left thumb and index finger measuring 1.7 and 1.8 cm in length respectively. Each of the lacerations is approximately 1 cm in depth. The body weighs 265 lbs and measures 77 ½ inches in length. There is an extensive rash involving both sides of the groin, which is hyperpigmented relative to the surrounding skin. There is possible necrobiosis lipoidica diabetorum over both anterior lower legs. A taser lead is recovered from behind the body. There are two abrasions over the right lateral abdomen, each measuring approximately 3 mm. Inferior and more medial to this is a superficial abrasion measuring approximately 7 x 6 mm.

GUNSHOT WOUND DESCRIPTIONS: Gunshot wound #1 is in the left scalp approximately 3 inches below the crown of the head and 3 inches to the left of the midline. This measures 4.7 x 1.5 cm with a tag of scalp pointing superiorly measuring 3.5 cm. This gunshot wound is downwards striking the left side of the occipital bone resulting in a 2.3 x 1.5 cm hole in the outer table of the occipital bone, a tear in the dura measuring 2.5 x 2.5 cm and a beveled area on the inner surface of the occipital bone measuring 4.5 x 4 cm. The projectile does not enter the calvarium. There is a laceration in the lateral side of the left occipital lobe measuring 2 x 1.5 cm. There is an exit wound in the scalp centered approximately 5 ½ inches below the crown of the head and 3 inches to the left of the midline. This measures 1.5 x 1.3 cm. Both the entrance and exit wounds are surrounded by a contusion measuring 13 x 7 cm.

Gunshot wound #2 is a graze wound of the left superior shoulder, approximately 9 ½ inches from the crown of the head and 3 ½ inches to the left of the midline. This wound is from back to front, measures 1.5 x 0.25 inches and is surrounded by a 2 x 7/8 inch contusion. There are small skin tags pointing posteriorly indicating that this wound is from back to front.

Gunshot wound #3 is in the approximate center of the chest 16 ½ inches from the crown of the head and measures 1 x 1 cm. The surrounding contusion measures 2 x 1.7 cm. Gunshot wound #3 is from left to right, backwards and downwards. Gunshot wound #3 enters the chest at the left margin of the body of the sternum between left ribs 3 and 4. Both left ribs 3 and 4 are fractured medially. The gunshot wound perforates the pericardium. The hole in the pericardial sac measures 2 x 2 cm. This gunshot wound then perforates the right ventricle of the heart. The hole in the right side of the heart measures 4.5 x 2.5 cm in greatest dimensions. The gunshot wound then perforates the right hemidiaphragm and the liver with the entrance in the liver just to the left of the ligamentum teres and exits the posterior medial aspect of the right lobe of liver. Gunshot wound #3 then grazes along the super lateral aspect of the right kidney leaving a wound measuring 6 x 2 cm in greatest dimensions. Fragments of copper jacket and lead projectile are recovered on the surface of the kidney. The main portion of the projectile is recovered in the soft tissues of the right side of the back after perforating right rib #11. The recovered projectile is at a point approximately 24 and ¾ inches from the crown of the head and 4 inches to the right of the midline.

Gunshot wound #4 is actually two superficial graze wounds of the right medial thigh. The more superior of these is 45 inches from the crown of the head and measures 3 x 0.7 cm with a surrounding contusion measuring 6.5 x 3.5 cm. A second smaller abrasion inferior to this is 47 ¾ inches from the crown of the head, measures 1 x 0.8 cm and has a surrounding contusion measuring 1.6 x 1.4 cm. These abrasions do not have associated skin tags, as they are superficial and do not completely penetrate the skin.

BRAIN AND MENINGES: 1,260 grams. There is only a trace amount of blood around the laceration of the left occipital lobe. There is a very slight subarachnoid effusion of blood, which is generalized. The cranial nerves and vascular system at the base of the brain are intact. Sections through the brain reveal fragments of skull within the left occipital lobe.

BODY CAVITIES: The body is opened with a Y-shaped incision revealing 2 cm of subcutaneous fat over the chest and 4 cm of subcutaneous fat over the abdomen. There is approximately 1 liter of mostly liquid blood in the right pleural cavity. There are approximately 50 cc of liquid blood in the pericardial sac.

CARDIOVASCULAR SYSTEM: Heart: 515 grams. The epicardial surface is smooth. There is a moderate to marked amount of epicardial adipose tissue. The valves are normally formed and delicate. The coronary arteries are distributed in a right dominant system. There is only slight atherosclerosis with approximately 10% occlusion of the left anterior descending and right coronary arteries. The left circumflex artery is a small caliber vessel. Sections through the myocardium reveal no evidence of fibrosis or infarction.

The aorta and its branches are intact.

LUNGS: Right lung: 480 grams, left lung: 640 grams. The pleural surfaces are smooth. There is a contusion of the right middle lobe of lung measuring approximately 11 x 7.5 x 4 cm in greatest dimensions. The airways are clear. There are no emboli. There is a small amount of anthracotic pigment in the lungs. Sections through the lungs reveal no masses or areas of consolidation.

LIVER: 3,040 grams. The liver has micronodular cirrhosis. The parenchyma is pale tan. Sections through the liver reveal no other abnormalities. The gallbladder contains liquid bile. The extrahepatic biliary tree is patent and not dilated.

SPLEEN: 540 grams. The capsule is smooth. Sections through the spleen reveal that the white pulp is slightly prominent.

ADRENAL GLANDS: The adrenal glands are normal in size and configuration. Sections through the adrenals reveal no gross abnormalities.

KIDNEYS: Right kidney: 200 grams, left kidney: 190 grams. The capsules strip easily. Sections through the kidneys reveal no other gross abnormalities. The ureters are patent and not dilated. The bladder contains approximately 250 cc of dark yellow urine.

NECK ORGANS: The trachea and larynx are unobstructed. There is a small amount of gastric contents in the larynx and trachea. The thyroid gland is normal in size and configuration. Sections through the thyroid are grossly unremarkable. The thyroid cartilages and hyoid bone are intact.

GENITALIA: Adult male. The prostate gland is slightly enlarged and slightly nodular.

GASTROINTESTINAL TRACT: The stomach contains approximately 300 cc of partially digested food. The G.I. tract is intact and the appendix is present.

PANCREAS: The pancreas is normal in size and configuration. Sections through the pancreas reveal no gross abnormalities.

PERSONS PRESENT AT AUTOPSY: From the State Bureau of Investigation, Assistant Special Agent in Charge A.C. Bridges and special Agent T. L. Endicott. From South Carolina Law Enforcement Division S/A Melissa Skipper. From the Gaffney Police Department Michael Segina, Patrol Captain.

LABORATORY: Blood from the aorta, blood from the subclavian area and right pleural cavity, a portion of liver and a portion of urine are retained for toxicology.

DISPOSITION OF EVIDENCE: The clothing and projectile are collected by J.D. Costner of the Gaston County Police Department, who was also present at the autopsy. ID Technician Costner collected scalp, blood and pubic hair samples and the clothing. S/A Melissa Skipper and Patrol Captain Michael Segina collected fingerprints.

Microscopic Description

BRAIN (blocks 1 & 2): There is a slight subarachnoid effusion of blood. The section of left occipital lobe reveals a small amount of parenchymal hemorrhage.

HEART (block 3): No pathologic diagnosis.

LUNGS: (blocks 4 & 5): The section of right middle lobe of lung has marked hemorrhage. There is moderate atelectasis of the right lung. There is a small amount of anthracotic pigment beneath the pleural surfaces, within the interstitium of the lungs and within alveolar macrophages. The left lung is moderately congested.

LIVER (block 6): There is micronodular cirrhosis. There is mild to moderate acute and chronic portal inflammation.

KIDNEYS (block 7): There is moderate hemorrhage in the section from the right kidney. There is slight interstitial fibrosis in the medullae of the kidneys.

PANCREAS (block 8): There is slight autolysis.

GASTROESOPHAGEAL JUNCTION (block 8): There is mild to moderate chronic gastroesophagitis.

Case Discussion

This was a 41 year old white man, who was involved in a confrontation with Gaston County Police on July 6th, 2009. The decedent fired first, striking a police officer in the thigh. Four gunshots were returned by Gaston County Police and the decedent died at the scene. Subsequent investigation revealed that the decedent was determined to be the perpetrator of serial killings in Gaffney, South Carolina the previous week. Carol Pinkard, RN, Acting Gaston County Medical Examiner, assumed jurisdiction and authorized an autopsy.

The autopsy documented a gunshot wound of the left occipital scalp, resulting in a comminuted fracture of the occipital bone, a dural tear and laceration of the left occipital lobe of brain with skull fragments recovered from the left occipital lobe. The gunshot wound then exited the left occipital scalp. This gunshot wound resulted in a slight subarachnoid effusion of blood. There was a separate graze wound of the left shoulder. A third gunshot wound entered the central chest, was directed from left to right, backwards and downwards, perforating the pericardial sac, heart, right hemidiaphragm, liver, grazed the right kidney, perforated the right 11th rib and the fragmented projectile was recovered from the right kidney and soft tissues of the right back. This gunshot wound resulted in a right hemothorax of 1000 cc, a hemopericardium of 50 cc, a contusion of the right middle lobe of lung and fractured the left 3rd and 4th ribs medially. A fourth gunshot wound constituted two superficial graze wounds of the right medial thigh. There were lacerations of the left hand and one of the gunshots returned by Gaston County Police was determined to have hit the handgun held by the decedent. Significant additional anatomic findings included micronodular cirrhosis of the liver, cardiomegaly with a heart weight of 515 grams, mild to moderate chronic gastroesophagitis and mild obesity with a body weight of 265 lbs. Toxicology performed on aortic blood obtained at the time of autopsy was negative for ethanol.

In my opinion, this man died as a result of gunshot wounds.

ldb/7/7/2009

Steven L. Tracy, MD