



Lafourche Parish Coroner's Office

[REDACTED] M.D.

Coroner

123 Texas Street
P. O. Box 1562
Raceland, Louisiana 70394
Telephone: 985/537-7055
Fax: 985/537-3021

April 6, 2022

To Whom It May Concern:

As review with the Coast Guard, in a meeting by phone conference with Captain Tracy Philips, Lieutenant [REDACTED] Lieutenant Commander [REDACTED] and [REDACTED] on March 30, 2022. At this meeting, we discussed the autopsies and toxicologies of the six crew members of the Seacor Power Lift Ship. This vessel went down on April 13, 2021. Lafourche Parish Coroner's Office (LPCO) recovered and autopsied six of the nineteen crew members. They are as follows:

1. David Ledet/Date of Birth: [REDACTED] Date of Death: 04-14-2021*/Date of Autopsy: 04-14-2021**

Findings:

- A. Saltwater drowning-Bilateral watery drainage from both mainstem bronchi
- B. Occipital-subdural hematoma-Subdural Hematoma is 3.5cm
- C. Occipital scalp contusion-Severe bruising
- D. Sphenoid sinus saltwater flooding-5cc of watery serosanguineous fluid aspirated from the sphenoid sinus
- E. Left anterior rib fractures-Fracture of the left 11 and 12 anterior ribs
- F. Left anterior-lateral chest wall hematoma-Above the 11 and 12 rib fractures
- G. Cervical Fracture-Right C1 cervical pedicle fracture
- H. Multiple abrasions of the upper and lower extremities as well as the chest and abdomen
- I. Bilateral Pleural Effusion-Hydrothorax

2. Ernest Williams/Date of Birth: [REDACTED] Date of Death: 04-15-2021*/Date of Autopsy: 04-17-2021**

Findings:

- A. Unconsciousness due to probable hypothermia
- B. Probable postmortem destruction of right femoral artery
- C. 90% Atherosclerosis of the LAD
- D. Closed head injury

3. James Wallingsford/Date of Birth: [REDACTED] Date of Death: 04-16-2021*/Date of Autopsy: 04-17-2021**

Findings:

- A. Saltwater Drowning-Bilateral watery drainage from both mainstem bronchi
- B. Bilateral pleural effusion
- C. Sphenoid sinus saltwater flooding-3cc of watery serosanguineous fluid aspirated from the sphenoid sinus
- D. Bilateral lower extremity burns

4. Anthony Hartford/Date of Birth: [REDACTED] Date of Death: 04-16-2021*/Date of Autopsy: 04-17-2021**

Findings:

- A. Saltwater Drowning-Bilateral watery drainage from both mainstem bronchi
- B. Sphenoid sinus saltwater flooding iii. 5cc of watery serosanguineous fluid aspirated from the sphenoid sinus
- C. Facial and anterior chest wall burns

5. Lawrence Warren/Date of Birth: [REDACTED] Date of Death: 04-19-2021*/Date of Autopsy: 04-19-2021**

Findings:

- A. Asphyxia-Secondary to acute drowning by submersion in saltwater
- B. Mild close head injury as noted by the hematomas of the scalp
- C. 4cm x 2cm puncture/laceration on the right forehead

6. Quinon Pitre/Date of Birth: [REDACTED] Date of Death: 04-20-2021*/Date of Autopsy: 04-21-2021**

Findings:

- A. Asphyxia-Secondary to acute drowning
- B. Acute Drowning-Secondary to submerging in saltwater for 7 days

*Date of Death refers to the date the decedent's body was recovered.

**Date of Autopsy refers to the date the autopsy was performed at Lafourche Parish Coroner's Office.

The state of the bodies received were of various time frames of decompositions, as they were found either in the boat or in water. It was found that most of the individuals drowned or suffered hypothermia. With these autopsies, it was discovered that with the exception of Captain [REDACTED] who was negative, there was various alcohol levels discovered with toxicology. These levels varied from blood and vitreous fluid (gel-like fluid in the eye) due to advanced decompensation of the bodies. There was relatively no insect activity or wildlife involvement due to these individuals being in the Gulf of

Mexico. When insect and wildlife are involved in the decomposition of an animals or human bodies, the bacteria in those bodies are lessened due to the tissue being consumed. When bacteria are not impeded, then fermentation will happen sooner due to the number of bacteria increasing significantly and thus, fermentation is worsened in bodies after death, raising their endogenous alcohol levels more, which is seen in association with advance body decaying.

An example of these crew members is Captain [REDACTED] toxicology being completely negative since he was recovered relatively quickly in the wheel house, in the cool water. All the alcohols found on these toxicologies are decomposition (autolysis) related and not from external intake. Alcohols from decomposition (autolysis or decay) or endogenous production, can range from 70 mg per deciliter (dl) to 160 mg per deciliter and it has been seen to occur up to 1500 mg per deciliter. Other substances seen in these toxicologies from the Seacor Power victims are caffeine, Benzoyllecgonine (metabolite of cocaine or false positive due to Herbal Teas or any of the Over-the-counter (OTC) Pseudoephedrine), and Oxymorphone (a metabolite of Oxycontin or Codeine postmortem). Where a normal to safe level is less than 66 ng/dl for the oxymorphone metabolite. One individual had a level of 3.1 ng/dl which would not impair any individual, even if it were a false positive. Benzoyllecgonine can be a metabolite of cocaine or a false positive, as stated above. However, the level was very mildly elevated at 190 ng/dl and a safe level or not intoxicated level is less than 150 ng/dl.

In conclusion, none of the six men autopsied at Lafourche Parish Coroner's Office had any levels from toxicology that would have impaired their ability to perform even the most tedious of tasks or jobs aboard a functioning vessel. Most of the alcohols can be explained by normal decomposition of the bodies and the metabolites of oxymorphone and benzoyllecgonine could be explained since they were in such low levels by being a false positive or levels so low that no impairment would occur whatsoever.

Respectfully,

Dr.

Coroner of Lafourche Parish

MD