

County of Santa Clara

Medical Examiner-Coroner
850 Thornton Way
San Jose, CA 95128-4702
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MEDICAL EXAMINER - CORONER
COUNTY OF SANTA CLARA



November 2, 2021

Brian M. Welch
Assistant District Attorney
County of Santa Clara
Office of the District Attorney
County Government Building, West Wing
70 West Hedding Street
San Jose, CA 95110
(408) 299-7400

RE: Gregory Johnson, Jr
ME-C Case: 08-04438

Materials received and reviewed:

- 1.) Autopsy report and complete file including toxicology report
- 2.) Autopsy photographs
- 3.) Investigation report, San Jose State University Police reports
- 4.) Five (5) CD discs labeled as 08-02568

An additional scene investigation including scene re-enactment was performed on August 17, 2021 (please see *Supplemental Report-Scene Reenactment*).

Mr. Welch,

Based on my review of the autopsy and investigation, the cause of death is hanging, and the manner of death is suicide. This investigation along with the scene re-enactment confirms Mr. Johnson Jr. was capable of a suicidal hanging (as re-enacted) based on height and weight comparison, reconstruction of items, and measurements performed at the scene. The circumstances leading to his death also support the rendered manner in this case, specifically, adverse childhood events (ACEs) and financial difficulties based on the Investigative reports.

Suicide hangings can occur either as complete or incomplete suspension. In this case, the hanging occurred as an incomplete suspension based on the height of Mr. Johnson, scene measurements and initial Medical Examiner-Coroner investigative report in November 2008 which captured the original position of the body when found. Review of the autopsy report and photographs do not document evidence of head trauma or a neck fracture. Review of the funeral home photos show remnants of a ligature mark on the right side of the neck, although the photos display poor lighting. However, the autopsy photos do display distinct ligature marks. The concerns regarding the head trauma as documented by Mrs. Johnson in a letter dated 3/2/2010 to the United States Senate is not supported by the evidence [autopsy photos] and the "six inch long gagged crack on the back of his head" may represent changes from the autopsy exam and/or funeral home preparation. In Santa Clara County the autopsy examination by the Medical

Board of Supervisors: Mike Wasserman, Cindy Chavez, Otto Lee, Susan Ellenberg, Joe Simitian
County Executive: Jeffrey Smith

Examiner-Coroner includes examining the brain and includes incisions to the scalp and skull that can create an artifactual defect when visualized or felt. In addition, the autopsy photos and report also describe a raised nodular lesion at the midline of the lower occipital scalp and upper neck [page 2 of the autopsy report, lines 55-56].

Medical records were reviewed and confirms Mr. Johnson did not have a history of depression or other significant neuropsychiatric illness. However, this is not uncommon. Review of the scene did not reveal a suicide note but not all suicides have notes present at the scene.

This case was reviewed with the Assistant Medical Examiner-Coroners. The cause and manner of death remain unchanged.

Sincerely,



Michelle A. Jorden, MD
Chief Medical Examiner
Forensic Pathologist
Neuropathologist

County of Santa Clara
Medical Examiner-Coroner Office

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