

SOUTHWESTERN
INSTITUTE OF FORENSIC SCIENCES
AT DALLAS
5230 Medical Center Drive
Dallas, Texas 75235

Case No. 1625-83-0777

Name: Powell, Frieda Age: @15 years Race: White Sex: Female

Date of pronouncement: June 15, 1983 Date of examination: June 19-21, 1983
Time of pronouncement: 6:20 p.m. Time of examination: 10:00 a.m. (begin)

Pronounced at: 3900 Block Stemmons Freeway,
Denton, Texas, Denton County

AUTOPSY REPORT

EXTERNAL EXAMINATION

Clothing on body:
None

Accompanying body:

1. Order for autopsy from James Erwin, Justice of the Peace, Precinct 1, Denton County, Texas.
2. The following materials in sacks with numbered evidence tags:
 - a. First numbered 1: stapled brown bag with tag marked "two shoulder blades, seven arm bones, flesh" containing both humeri, radii, ulnae and scapulae; beetle larvae measuring from 1 to 3/4 inch in length, decomposed material resembling adipocere and fragments of denim cloth.
 - b. Second numbered 1: clear sack with tag marked "Part of brassiere" containing right half of bra with defects, consistent with deterioration of fabric
 - c. First numbered 2: black bag wired and taped shut containing white striped ticking cloth measuring 29 x 7 inches which is deteriorated and light blue terry cloth wash cloth 11 x 11 inches.
 - d. Second numbered 2: clear sack with tag marked "Charred wood" containing multiple fragments of dark gray to black material measuring up to 1/2 by 1/2 x 1/4 inch.
 - e. Third numbered 2: black plastic sack taped and wired shut with tag marked "Pelvic bone, vertebrae, tail, unidentified bone" containing the innominate bone, the sacrum, three vertebrae and the unfused iliac crest from the left innominate bone.

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- f. Numbered 3: black plastic sack taped and wired shut with tag marked "Legs, foot bones, unidentified bone" containing both femurs, tibiae, fibulae, tali, metatarsals and pedal phalanges.
- g. Numbered 4: clear sack with tag marked "one unidentified bone" containing the right calcaneous.
- h. Numbered 5: tag on bag marked "Four strands of rope" contains four sections of yellow, synthetic three inch rope of similar appearance measuring 21-1/2, 12-3/4, 54-1/2 and 28 inches the last with two knots.
- i. Numbered 6: black sack wired shut with tag marked "Human hair, rope with pillow case attached, vertebrae, skull and jaw bone," note description includes black sack and several brown paper sacks stapled shut also numbered six. Contents include pale blonde to medium brown hair in lengths from 4 to 12 inches, synthetic rope 3/8 inch in diameter extending 35 inches to knot with blonde hair tangled in rope and defect 2 to 8 inches; pillow case tied shut with knotted rope has 22 inch diameter opening adjacent to knot and the phrase "sleep my child and peace attend thee all through the night"; three vertebrae include one cervical and two lumbar; additional paper sacks reveal skull and mandible.
- j. Numbered 7: black plastic sack taped and wired shut with tag marked "Ribs, spinal sections, unidentified bones, pieces of cloth" containing clavicle, eight left ribs, nine right ribs, five thoracic vertebrae in one section, C7-T1 in one section, an additional cervical vertebra, sternum and manubrium, and a rock.
- k. Numbered 8: two black sacks tied together with tag marked "2 blankets"; one sack contains an orange net onion sack with white cotton batting, the other sack contains a white blanket with flower print and pink trim.

3. No jewelry.

The bones are examined and placed in anatomical order. The bones are that of a normally developed, normally nourished white female whose age may be estimated from the closure of the epiphyses at 15 to 17 years. The body is of average build with the height between 62 and 64 inches and estimated weight 110 to 140 lbs. The blonde scalp hair is associated with the skull as well as the separate recovery. The teeth where present are natural with maxillary prognathism and overbite, calculus and no third molars in the upper or lower jaw.

EVIDENCE OF INJURY:

1. Three right ribs have incised wounds with bending fracture of the margins. These are identified on three ribs of the group between 5 and 9. They measure 3/16, 1/8 and 1/16 of an inch and are in the inferior, superior, and inferior surfaces, 2 inches, 1-7/8, and 3-1/4 inches from the head of the ribs respectively. They extend right superior to left inferior.

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2. Additional cuts are present with less prominent bending of the bone on the transverse process of the left thoracic vertebrae 5 through 7 which are still adherent by the intervertebral disk. The cuts are $\frac{3}{8}$ of an inch in the upper and $\frac{1}{16}$ of an inch in the lower transverse process and are associated with a fracture in the neck of the associated left rib. A $\frac{1}{8}$ inch cut is present on the right 3rd rib near the tubercle. Multiple $\frac{1}{4}$ inch cuts with separation of bone fragments are identified on the 3rd lumbar vertebra which is brownish and weathered. Fine cuts are noted extending vertically on the sacrum, horizontally on the right ilium, horizontally on the femur, parallel to the head of the left femur, and horizontally at both tibiae and fibulae.

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FINDINGS:

1. Nearly complete skeleton of white female between 15 and 17 years.
2. Incised wounds of ribs of right back with bending fracture of incised wounds.
3. Superficial incised wounds of vertebrae, pelvis, and legs with minimal bending fractures.

CONCLUSION:

It is our opinion that the skeletonized remains recovered from the 3900 block of the Stemmons Freeway in Denton County are those of Frieda Powell on the basis of circumstantial identification. The remains are consistent in height, weight, and age. Attempted positive identification was not successful as the dental records were those of the deciduous teeth of the missing Frieda Powell and the victims teeth are permanent with no residual deciduous teeth. A facial sketch from the skull resembles a photograph of the missing girl. No other premortem records have been identified.

There is aftercoming history of a single stab wound of the anterior chest. This could not be identified on the skeleton. The injuries to the back would be lethal if made during life. The bending fractures noted indicate that the bone was soft at the time of injury. Bone retains the characteristics of live bone with respect to injury for several hours after death. The injuries are consistent with dismemberment at or near the time of death.

It is our opinion that Frieda Powell died as a result of homicidal violence and that her body was dismembered shortly after her death. The dismemberment injuries are also lethal injuries. The state of decomposition of the body and other material is consistent with a postmortem interval of ten months. It is consistent with the history of injury in late August 1982.

MANNER OF DEATH: Homicide.

M. G. F. Gilliland, M.D.
Medical Examiner

P. E. Besant-Matthews, M.D.
Deputy Chief Medical Examiner

Nina Hollander, M.D.
Medical Examiner

Charles S. Petty, M.D.
Chief Medical Examiner

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SUPPLEMENT: 7/26/83 two additional human vertebrae, a rib, pieces of multicolored fiber and human hair were received at the Dallas County Medical Examiners Office. These are of similar appearance to the bones already received at the Office. The vertebrae match with the vertebrae already present and fill in the gaps as does the rib.

M. G. F. Gilliland, M.D.

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Medical Examiner