

A U T O P S Y   R E P O R T

NAME: JASON GRAF

AUTOPSY NO. OP 86-28

AGE: 8                      SEX: Male

INSTITUTION:

ATTENDING PHYSICIAN (or person requesting autopsy): (JP) John Cabaniss

PLACE OF DEATH: his residence

PROSECTOR: Alan D. Northcutt, M.D.

DATE OF DEATH: August 26, 1986

LOCATION PERFORMED: Connally/Compton Funeral Home


HOUR OF DEATH (est.): 6:05 P.M.

FINAL DIAGNOSIS:

DATE OF AUTOPSY: August 27, 1986 at 10:00 A.M.

1. THIRD AND FOURTH DEGREE BURNS INVOLVING APPROXIMATELY 85% OF BODY SURFACE AREA.
2. SMOKE INHALATION INDICATED BY SOOT WITHIN THE BRONCHI AND A CARBON MONOXIDE HEMOGLOBIN LEVEL OF 78%.
3. NO OTHER INJURIES DETECTED.

CAUSE OF DEATH: SEVERE BURNS WITH SMOKE INHALATION.


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 Alan D. Northcutt, M.D.  
 September 12, 1986

F I N A L   S U M M A R Y

The presence of soot was in the bronchi and the markedly elevated carbon monoxide hemoglobin level indicated that the individual was alive at the time of the fire. The 3rd and 4th degree burns present involved approximately 85% of the body surface area.

The post mortem examination was performed by Alan D. Northcutt, M.D. beginning at 10:00 A.M. on August 27, 1986 at the Connally/Compton Funeral Home under the authorization of Justice of the Peace John Cabaniss. Detectives from Hewitt, Texas were present during portions of the examination.

#### GROSS DESCRIPTION

External Examination: The clothed body of an 8-year-old white child was submitted for examination. He was received in a crash bag. The clothing had not been disturbed. The body is extensively burned and charred and coated with ashes on its anterior aspect. The following clothing is present. A white T-shirt with blue trim is present and shows extensive areas of burning. Melted, hard, plastic-like material is attached to the shirt in some areas. Partially burned grey-blue shorts with a label indicating size 10 are present. White jockey type underwear with a designation "size 8" are also present. There is some sparing of burning underneath the underwear, on the buttocks, and on the back. It is estimated that there are 3rd and 4th degree burns over 85% of the body.

Examination of the head reveals extensive 3rd degree burns of the face involving the lips. The eyes are closed. The hair is present and has a reddish-brown color. A hard, plastic-like material is attached to the hair posteriorly. The arms are both flexed at the elbow in a pugilistic position. They are extensively burned with exposure of bones on both hands. Attached to the hands is a fragment of bedspread-like, off-white material with fringe on one edge which is partially burned. The right leg is flexed at the hip and knee joint with extensive charring and destruction of the right foot. No shoes are present on the victim. Extensive exposure of musculature is seen on the lower extremities. Posteriorly, 4th degree burns with exposure of musculature are seen on the legs.

The child measured 48 inches in length and had an estimated weight of 80 pounds. Based on information concerning the child's size and clothing obtained by the funeral home director it was determined that this individual was consistent with the 8-year-old Jason Graf.

There is no external evidence of any other form of trauma.

Internal Examination: The usual Y-shaped incision is performed. The thoracic and abdominal organs are in their proper locations. The thymus is present and in size consistent with the individual's age. Cherry red discoloration of the heart and lungs is noted. The larynx, trachea, and lungs are removed. Opening the airways reveals extensive deposition of soot extending from the larynx into the secondary bronchi within the lungs. The lungs show good aeration and no other gross abnormalities. The heart is sectioned revealing a bright red discoloration but no focal lesions. Its size is within normal limits. The stomach contains large fragments of undigested food which cannot be positively identified but some fragments are suggestive of fruit. The loops of bowel have a normal pattern and the appendix is present. The liver is of normal size and has a normal lobular architecture on cut surface. Kidneys are present bilaterally and are grossly normal. Similarly the spleen, pancreas, and bladder are grossly normal. The external genitalia are preserved and are those of a young male child. The skull is not opened.

A blood specimen obtained from the right atrium is submitted for carbon monoxide determination at the request of detectives from Hewitt, Texas. Blood is also sent for a drug screen.

## MICROSCOPIC DESCRIPTION

The laryngo-tracheal section shows a coating of granular black material consistent with carbon on the surface of the columnar respiratory epithelium. Also within the lumen of the esophagus in this section are admixed with similar black material consistent with carbon particles. No other histologic abnormalities are seen in this section. A more distal tracheal section also reveals black granular material consistent with carbon coating the respiratory epithelium and also numerous large fragments of this material are free within the lumen. There is no inflammatory reaction to this material in the underlying mucosa. The peribronchial lymph nodes present are histologically normal. Sections of the lung parenchyma reveal an intact architecture. There is prominent vascular congestion in the aveolar septi and proteinaceous fluid within some alveoli consistent with postural effects. Black granular material consistent with carbon particles coat medium sized and small bronchi and bronchioles. This material is occasionally seen in alveoli. No inflammatory infiltrates are seen.

Sections of the liver reveal a normal architecture with mild vascular congestion and no significant histologic abnormalities. Sections of the pancreas reveal a normal architecture, identifiable exocrine acini, and endocrine islets. There is mild autolysis and no significant histologic abnormalities.

The sections of kidney reveal an intact architecture with good tissue preservation. There is a marked capillary congestion and no other glomerular or tubulo-interstitial changes.

A drug abuse screen is performed on a post mortem blood specimen. The screen is negative for diazepam, chlordiazepoxide, phenytoin, phenobarbital, salicylate, meprobamate, secobarbital, butabarbital, amobarbital, butalbital, aprobarbital, methaqualone, glutethimide, acetaminophen, ethanol, methanol, isopropanol, and acetone.

A carbon monoxide hemoglobin determination performed post mortem serum yielded a value of 78%.