KENTUCKY JUSTICE &
PUBLIC SAFETY CABINET

OFFICE OF THE CHIEF MEDICAL EXAMINER
Bingham Building 1st Floor
10511 LaGrange Road
Louisville, KY 40223
502-489-5209 Phone
502-489-5213 (fax)

FINAL DIAGNOSIS

MCKINNEY, SERENITY ME22-0218

I. Homicide by undetermined means
   A. Fracture of the right radius
   B. Fracture of the right femur
   C. Per coroner report and police:
      i. 4-year-old female found partially skeletonized wrapped in plastic within a suitcase. The suitcase was filled with sand-like substance.
      ii. Decedent was last seen alive by her grandmother in December 2020. Decedent was subsequently reported missing in February 2022.
      iii. Per investigators, minimal history surrounding circumstances of death provided by parents.

II. No definite lethal trauma
III. Marked decomposition and partial skeletonization
IV. Identification via DNA analysis
V. Postmortem skeletal muscle toxicologic analysis negative for tested drugs of abuse and alcohols.

OPINION: The cause of death in this 4-year-old girl, Serenity McKinney is undetermined. However, the circumstances under which the body was found, along with the information provided by the coroner and investigating officers, indicate a homicidal manner of death. However, marked decomposition of the body precludes identification of the cause of death. (798.9)

Patrick Greenwell, MD

DATE PERFORMED: February 19, 2022
DATE COMPLETED: August 18, 2022
COUNTY OF JURISDICTION: Bullitt

Office of the Chief Medical Examiner
University of Louisville, Division of Forensic Pathology
Bingham Building 1st floor
10511 LaGrange Road
Louisville, KY 40223
502-489-5209

Date: August 18, 2022

Name: McKinney, Serenity

ME Case #: ME22-0218

To: Coroner	County	From:
Rick Robbins	Bullitt	Patrick Greenwell, MD

Recommended formulation for Parts I and II on Certification of Death:

25. TIME OF DEATH PRONOUNCED	26. DATE PRONOUNCED DEAD (*Month, Day, Year*)	27. WAS CASE REFERRED TO MEDICAL EXAMINER/CORONER? (*Yes or No*)

28. PART I Enter the diseases, injuries, or complications that caused death. Do not enter the mode of dying, such as cardiac or respiratory arrest, shock or heart failure. List only one cause on each line.

		Approximate interval between onset and death
IMMEDIATE CAUSE (Final disease or condition resulting in death)	a. Undetermined	
	DUE TO (OR AS A CONSEQUENCE OF)	
Sequentially list conditions if any leading to immediate cause. Enter UNDERLYING CAUSE (Disease or injury that initiated events resulting in death) LAST.	b.	
	DUE TO (OR AS A CONSEQUENCE OF)	
	c.	
	DUE TO (OR AS A CONSEQUENCE OF)	
	d.	
	DUE TO (OR AS A CONSEQUENCE OF)	

CAUSE OF DEATH

PART II Other significant conditions contributed to death but not resulting in the underlying cause given in Part I.	28a. WAS AUTOPSY PERFORMED?	28b. WERE AUTOPSY FINDINGS AVAILABLE PRIOR TO COMPLETION OF DEATH (Yes or No)

29 MANNER OF DEATH	30a DATE OF INJURY	30b TIME OF INJURY	30c. INJURY AT WORK (Yes or No)	30d. DESCRIBE HOW INJURY OCCURRED.
☐ Natural ☐ Pending Investigation ☐ Accident ☐ Suicide ☐ Undetermined ☒ Homicide ☐ Insufficient information provided				

30e. PLACE OF INJURY - At home, farm, street, factory, office building, etc. (Specify)	30f LOCATION (street and number or Rural Route number, City or Town)

POSTMORTEM EXAMINATION

OF THE BODY OF

MCKINNEY, SERENITY ME22-0218

A postmortem examination of the body submitted by the Bullitt County Coroner's Office as "Unknown skeletal remains" and subsequently identified by DNA analysis as "McKinney, Serenity" is performed at the Bingham Building on Saturday, February 19, 2022 at 7:30 a.m. by Dr. Patrick Greenwell. The attendant is Jason Ritter. Also in attendance are Mike Cook and Bo Hensley of the Kentucky State Police and Mark Moore of the Shelby County Sheriff's Office.

EXTERIOR OF THE BODY

Received within the body bag is a green suitcase. The suitcase contains a marked amount of dark brown to gray sand-like substance. Also present within the suitcase is a gray plastic bag. The plastic bag is opened to reveal a markedly decomposed body in the fetal position lying on its left side. The body is clothed in a brown-appearing t-shirt, pink-appearing shorts, and a purple diaper. There are no personal effects received with the body.

The body is that of a well-developed, well-nourished, white female child with the given age of 4 years. The body has a measured height of 34" inches and a remnant weight of 22 pounds. The body is cool to the touch. Rigor mortis is absent in the major muscle groups. Red-purple livor mortis is not discernible secondary to decompositional changes. The body demonstrates marked decompositional changes characterized by scalp slippage; skin slippage over all body surfaces; variable skeletonization of the head, face, neck, bilateral torso, right upper extremity, and back; and brown to green discoloration of all body surfaces. Insect deposition is present over the face and torso.

There is near-complete skeletonization of the head and face. The remnant scalp hair appears blonde to light brown, wavy and measures up to 8 1/2" in length. The globes are not discernible secondary to decomposition. The nasal cartilage is absent. There is separation of the nasal bones without identified injury. This is suggestive of a postmortem change. The lips, gingivae, and frenulae are absent secondary to decomposition. The upper jaw demonstrates absence of multiple anterior teeth. The natural anterior dentition of the lower jaw is in good condition. There is near-complete skeletonization of the neck. There is partial skeletonization of the chest, greater on the left side. The chest is of increased mobility. The abdomen is flat and demonstrates no remote surgical scars. There is partial absence of the soft tissue of the abdomen with exposure of the abdominal cavity. The external genitalia are prepubescent female and appear atraumatic. The upper and lower extremities are without edema. There is near-complete skeletonization of the right upper extremity. There is absence of the right fourth and fifth fingers. There is partial skeletonization of the left back. The back is well-developed. The anus is atraumatic.

IDENTIFYING MARKS, SCARS, AND TATTOOS

None identified.

EVIDENCE OF MEDICAL TREATMENT

None identified.

EVIDENCE OF INJURY

1. There is a fracture of the distal right radius.
2. There is a fracture of the right distal femur with extrusion of the femur through the soft tissue and remnant skin of the right thigh. There is apparent soft tissue hemorrhage associated with this fracture.

INTERIOR OF THE BODY

A "Y" incision is carried through a 1.0 cm, midline panniculus which displays greasy, partial liquefaction. The peritoneal and serosal surfaces display decompositional changes. The hollow intraperitoneal viscera contain a large amount of gas. Putrefactive emphysema is present within the vascular system. Decompositional changes are present on the intact capsular surfaces of the liver. Putrefactive emphysema of the solid intra-peritoneal and retroperitoneal structures is absent. Intra-abdominal and retroperitoneal traumatic injuries are not present.

The mediastinum is widened with putrefactive gases. The lungs are generally collapsed except for inflation with postmortem putrefactive emphysema. Each chest cavity contains fluid. Pleural adhesions are absent.

CARDIOVASCULAR

The heart weighs 20 grams and is of normal configuration. The cardiac silhouette displays marked decompositional changes. Putrefactive gases are contained within the vascular system as a whole. There is green discoloration of the intimal surfaces of the arterial system and the cardiac chambers. The cardiac valves display no abnormality. The myocardium displays uniform softening and intramural gas formation. Myocardial scars are absent. The coronary ostia are in their usual location and give rise to normally distributed arteries. Coronary atherosclerosis is absent.

There is no evidence of vascular trauma.

RESPIRATORY

The right lung weighs 20 grams and the left lung weighs 40 grams. The lungs are of the usual lobation and display bilateral decompositional change with putrefactive emphysema. The bronchial trees are of normal distribution and dimension. Its epithelial surface is green to black. Sectioning of the lungs reveals severe softening and decompositional changes only.

LIVER AND GALLBLADDER

The liver weighs 80 grams. The liver is of the usual lobation. Subcapsular and parenchymal gas is present. Focal abnormal markings are absent. The liver is uniformly softened and dark brown to black.

The gallbladder and billiary tree are free from trauma or obstructive stone. Decompositional gas fills the billiary tree.

PANCREAS

The pancreas is not identified.

ADRENALS

The right adrenal is autolyzed. The left adrenal is not identified.

GENITOURINARY

The kidneys are not identified.

The urinary bladder is intact and contains no urine. There is uniform softening of the wall as well as degeneration of its mucosa.

The cervix, uterus, bilateral fallopian tubes and ovaries are not identified.

SPLEEN AND LYMPH NODES

The spleen is not identified.

ALIMENTARY TRACT

The esophagus is lined by green mucosa with normal longitudinal folds. The gastroesophageal junction is easily identified and unremarkable. The gastric wall is intact and of usual thickness. The gastric lumen contains no residual contents. No pills or capsules are identified within the gastric lumen. The gastric mucosa is green and arranged in the usual rugal folds. The small and large intestines are unremarkable.

MUSCULOSKELETAL

Examination and palpation of the sternum, ribs, shoulder girdle, spine, and pelvis fail to reveal fracture.

NECK

The soft tissues of the neck are not identified.

THYROID

The thyroid is not identified.

HEAD

The scalp is generally absent. The calvarium is intact. The dura is of diminished tenseness. The brain is soft, gray to green in coloration. Intracranial hemorrhage is absent. The brain weighs 620 grams.

Examination of the base of the skull after removal of the dura fails to reveal fracture.

DISPOSITION OF EVIDENCE

The following items are maintained at the OCME:

1. Photographic documentation
2. Diagrammatic documentation
3. Tissue for stock
4. DNA standard card
5. Digital radiographs

The following items are collected by KSP:

1. Photographic documentation
2. DNA standard card
3. Suitcase
4. All clothing

Skeletal muscle is submitted in a sealed kit to NMS Laboratories for toxicologic analysis.