

HILLSBOROUGH COUNTY NEWS
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Billy Mays Final Autopsy Results and Cause of Death

On June 29th an autopsy was conducted by Associate Medical Examiner Dr. Leszek Chrostowski on the body of William Mays, who was found dead in Tampa on June 28th. Because of hip pain Mr. Mays had prescriptions for tramadol, and more recently, for hydrocodone. Both are narcotic analgesic drugs. He had a family history of heart disease.

At that time the autopsy findings were released but the cause-of-death had not been determined. All tests have now been completed and the cause of death has been determined.

The autopsy revealed hypertensive and arteriosclerotic disease of the heart.

Toxicological tests detected ethyl alcohol, three narcotic analgesic drugs, two benzodiazepine drugs, and a metabolite of cocaine.

The ethyl alcohol was at a low concentration consistent with social consumption of a few beverages.

The detected narcotic drugs were hydrocodone, oxycodone, and tramadol. All were in therapeutic or subtherapeutic concentrations.

The benzodiazepine drugs detected in blood were alprazolam and diazepam. Metabolites of both were detected in urine. Both drugs were in therapeutic or subtherapeutic concentrations.

The detected cocaine metabolites were benzoylecgonine and ecgonine methyl ester. A metabolite is a related compound that is the result of a drug being broken down or transformed into a different drug by the body. These test results were confirmed by an outside reference laboratory.

Mr. Mays was not intoxicated by any of these substances at the time he died. From the presence of metabolites of cocaine and the absence of cocaine itself, it was concluded

that Mr. Mays used cocaine in the few days prior to death but not immediately prior to death.

Cocaine can raise the arterial blood pressure, directly cause thickening of the wall of the left ventricle of the heart, and accelerate the formation of atherosclerosis in the coronary arteries.

Based on all the investigative information, including the known circumstances, autopsy findings, microscopic findings, and toxicology tests, Dr. Chrostowski concluded that Mr. Mays died from a lethal arrhythmia of the heart caused by hypertensive and arteriosclerotic heart disease. He further concluded that cocaine use caused or contributed to the development of his heart disease, and thereby contributed to his death.