

DR. ADELE LEWIS PATHOLOGIST INTERVIEW – MARCH 26, 2018

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Q: In reviewing the autopsy, does anything stand out?

Nothing has jumped out at me in reviewing the autopsy.

The shotgun had the safety off and one spent round in the chamber.

Q: Why did you change the results from contact wound to close range?

Mmm...why would I do such a thing as that? Let's see, huh, I can't remember, but maybe it had something to do with characteristics of the wound if you have contact range wound, and you're not wearing a hat, a smaller rim of abrasion, looking at it,

In looking at the autopsy photographs, you know, the wound, put it back together, it got irregularities, superficial line skin, maybe close but not contact range,

What a contact would be, it looks further away from, put it together, and then so if you know the ammunition and the gun, test fire of the gun, this is probably, it could be a wound that was one to two feet away, you'd really have to have gun in real close proximity.

I did see in the firearms report that it was discharged when it was dropped, look at page 2 of the lab report, where it says that the firearm discharged with the manual safety disengaged and dropped on the muzzle end of the barrel. A gun shouldn't fire when it dropped this was a defective weapon.

So the shotgun, it's in a plastic shell, and when you pull the trigger, and little level, strikes the gunpowder in the shell, out of the muzzle of the gun, I think this was a 12-gauge buckshot, and inside of the shell are shot pellets, that's what I recovered from his head, deformed shot pellets.

Q: How certain are you from the ballistic tests, that the pellets can be linked o his weapon.

That's not my particular bailiwick, but you can compare guns handguns and rifles, but when it's a shotgun, this plastic around it, you can't really match to particular, other than matching the ammunition, which we did to the cartridges he had in the truck.

Q: Wouldn't a shotgun blast have destroyed most of his head?

No, that's not the case. If it were a high-velocity rifle, then yes that would be true. But the velocity, the projectile from the end of his shotgun, would be less than a velocity rifle.

I definitely say I approached this autopsy as objectively as I can. But I still need information but if I had findings that were inconsistent with an accidental shotgun wound, then I would have said something.

Maybe if he had been shot 10 feet away, the individual pellet wounds would've been different.

What I would think, or thought, was that he's trying to show the officer trying to show the gun, and he trying to show him that he's not going to shoot him.

Q: Why would he do that?

Yeah, I know, it's not the smartest thing.

Or maybe he was going to shoot himself but from what I heard, he wasn't like that.

Q: How sure are you with your findings?

I'm pretty sure, I feel comfortable with that scenario. I think most convincing evidence of that is that the gun fired when it was dropped. That's why it went off.

Q: Why did you change it from contact wound?

I was down there in Mississippi, where I'm doing 5 to 8 autopsies a day, and that's why they say preliminary, then I go back and scrutinize the evidence then, so I can better characterize it.

If you look at the photos, the projectile went upward and slightly pointed more toward him than away from him, on the left side of his head.

Looking at the x-ray doesn't tell you much, but taking into account his ear is gone, the projectiles sort of ended up nearer to the top of his head, I only interpret what I see, but it is definitely higher than at the level of the eyebrow, and that's as good as gets (with shotguns), because there is so much tissue disruption, it's not clear wound path, all you can do is see where it went and look at the where the shot pellets are.

I can be certain of that he died of a single shotgun wound, there's no other reason because what I retrieved were the pellets.

Look at the path of the projectiles, if you were to look at pictures, and the entrance wound where it located, is lower than the projectile lodge in her brain and skull.

He had to have been shot within a foot or two feet if he was holding it by the muzzle, if you envision, it was at best two or three feet away from his head.

It's certainly possible that someone else could have shot the gun.

I think this was a stellar autopsy (joke). They did not chain custody on the gun, they did the other tests like gunshot residue on the police's hands, it's not really, they sent everything to the ballistic. I also checked for anabolic steroids, not sure why maybe because someone was concerned about roid rage or I just did it myself.

Q: Did you look for CTE?

We didn't even know about that then. But it's possible because he had been a football player for a long time. He may have been knocked out or concussed a lot. I guess that is one potential flaw. My job is to figure out cause and manner, now that we know of CTE, I could've looked at it from that angle.

But he was shot in the head.

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