

FORENSIC AUTOPSY REPORT

CASE NUMBER: 12

Name of the Decedent: Lila Marlowe

Age: 28

Sex: Female

Date and Time of Autopsy:

PMI: 1-2 days prior discovery

Performed By: R. Amisa, Medical Trainee under Supervision, Moncton Medical Center

Location of Autopsy: Forensic Pathologist Lab, University Medical Teaching Hospital

Authority Requesting Autopsy: Office of Medical Examiner

Summary of Case:

The victim was found lying supine on the living room floor. Tidy apartment; no sign of forced entry. Spilled herbal tea on table. Faint smell of bitter orange. No defensive wounds or overt signs of struggle.

Condition of Body upon Arrival:

The body was found lying on the living room floor near the kitchen, arms relaxed on side, legs extended. Corneas cloudy, eyes open, directed upwards. Slightly cool upon touch. No evidence of decomposition/ insect activity.

External Examination:

Apparent Sex: Female

Height: 5'6" feet/ 167 cm

Weight: 130 lbs/ 59 kg

Build: Well nourished and developed adult female; lean and muscular

Ethnicity: Caucasian

Head and Face:

- **Hair:** Dark brown, shoulder length, naturally wavy. Hair tied loosely in a low bun at time of examination.
- **Eyes:** No obvious xantropsia; corneal opacification present
- **Skin:** Light olive
- **Nails:** Clean and short; no defensive scraping; No fingernail subungual hemorrhages.
- **Dentition:** Intact, no recent dental work

Clothing:

- **Shirt:** Black blouse
- **Pant:** Fitted dark jeans
- **Undergarments:** Present
- **Feet:** Barefoot
- **Accessories:** Simple silver necklace with small treble-clef pendant (intact), single stud earring on right ear

NECK

- No ligature mark or abrasions
- No palpable hyoid fracture
- No defensive scratches or bruises
- No petechiae on remaining conjunctiva or facial skin

Limbs:

- Unremarkable

Postmortem changes:

- Rigor mortis is fully established in smaller muscles and partially in larger ones.
- livor mortis was fixed posteriorly.
- Algor mortis or body slightly cooler than ambient temperature (apartment around 22°C / 72°F)
- Corneal opacification present

Summary: Non-violent death. Suspicious chemical exposure or natural toxin.

Internal Examination:

- **Head and Brain:** 1,400 g, no trauma.
- **Neck:** No fractures of hyoid bone or thyroid cartilage
- **Lungs:** Right 450 g, Left 400 g , mild congestion
- **Cardiovascular System:** Heart slightly enlarged; 310 g (slightly above average adult female, normal 250–350 g)
- **Genitourinary System:** Unremarkable; no evidence of antemortem or perimortem sexual trauma
- **Stomach:** 150 g, stomach contents contained remnants of bitter-orange seed consistent with herbal tea ingestion
- **Liver:** 1,450 g (within normal limits, slight enlargement)
- **Spleen:** 150 g (normal)
- **Kidneys:** Right 130 g, Left 135 g (normal)
- **Bladder:** 50 mL urine residual

Toxicology Report:

- A lethal level of digitalis glycosides combined with bitter orange was found in her blood. This results in severe cardiovascular complications, including heart failure, stroke and cardiac arrest.
 - Urine contained metabolites of cardiac glycosides—possibly herbal tea taken 2-3 hours prior death.
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Discussion:

The deceased, Lila Marlowe, was found lying on her living room floor in her apartment. According to the toxicology report, the decedent was under the effects of digitalis and synephrine— a lethal combination. As a result the mismatch (Synephrine stimulates the heart faster while digoxin forces stronger but slower

contractions.) triggered fatal arrhythmias which became irreversible due to lack of immediate medical intervention.

Witnesses mentioned that the victim was fanatical about herbal remedies and got a package with herbal teas three days prior to her death. When the symptoms arose, she typed a message : *"If something happens to me, look in the..."* but collapsed before finishing it. This suggests that the ingestion of the teas was intentional, not the intake such fatal compound.

Cause of Death: Acute digitalis toxicity in combination with synephrine resulting in fatal cardiac arrhythmias

Mechanism of Death: Cardiogenic shock due to ventricular fibrillation

Manner of Death: Accidental

Evidence Supporting Accidental:

- No evidence of trauma or struggle
 - No evidence of injection, forced administrations, or unnatural delivery.
 - Decedent was a known herbal tea user with no cardiac risk
 - Her unfinished message reveals her paranoia about the onset of symptoms is consistent with her unawareness of risk.
 - Tea cup and scattered seeds suggest self preparation.
 - No sign of forced entry or foul play.
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Signature

Ruhi A.

Medical Trainee under Supervision

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All of the work above is fictional and any similarity with a real person/ event is purely coincidental.