

# Detective testifies about Joseph Santos autopsy, tests that found heroin 'metabolites'

Gamiz, Manuel, Jr . The Morning Call (Online) , Allentown: Tribune Interactive, LLC. Sep 20, 2018.

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## FULL TEXT

Before Joseph Santos ended up on Hamilton Boulevard reportedly harassing motorists on July 28, he climbed a Dorney Park fence where he lost his shoes, a Lehigh County homicide task force detective testified Thursday as he detailed parts of the investigation into Santos' death, including autopsy findings that revealed a heroin substance in his system.

Santos was at the amusement park on July 28 for a birthday party, but left the park for unknown reasons, his relatives had previously told The Morning Call.

Minutes after leaving the park, the 44-year-old New Jersey man was killed in a confrontation with rookie South Whitehall Township officer Jonathan Roselle.

Detective James Bruchak attended the Santos autopsy, performed three days after the shooting by medical examiner Barbara Bollinger.

The autopsy concluded Santos was shot five times, twice in the head and three times in the torso, he testified.

But besides determining the cause and manner of death, the autopsy report also detailed the postmortem toxicology findings, which showed Santos had five controlled substances in his system, Bruchak testified.

Blood tests found methadone, codeine, morphine and hydromorphone in Santos' system, he said.

A vitreous exam, which tests the fluid in the eyeball, also found the presence of 6-monoacetylmorphine, a metabolite of heroin, he said. The Mayo Clinic says the metabolite is a "definitive indication of heroin use" and "has a very short half-life."

Relatives of Santos had previously told the Morning Call that Santos had a history with drugs but had gained sobriety in recent years and helped others get off drugs. He had been on probation for a drug possession charge in New Jersey at the time of his death.

Gavin Holihan, Roselle's attorney, questioned Bruchak about the legality of the controlled substances and the detective responded that, other than heroin, they could either be obtained legally or illegally. The detective also testified he does not know how Santos obtained the drugs.

Bruchak also testified that the substances could be taken separately or mixed with heroin.

"That would have then made them illegal," Holihan asked.

Bruchak answered it would.

During his argument to have Roselle's charges dismissed, Holihan said the heroin substance showed that Santos was under the influence and could have possessed extraordinary strength along with a high threshold to pain. He said the drugs also could have caused Santos to ignore commands the Roselle gave him to get off his cruiser.

The judge sent the charge to county court where Roselle now faces trial.

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Credit: Manuel Gamiz Jr.

## DETAILS

<b>Subject:</b>	Drugs; Heroin
<b>Location:</b>	New Jersey
<b>Company / organization:</b>	Name: Morning Call; NAICS: 511110; Name: Twitter Inc; NAICS: 519130; Name: Mayo Clinic; NAICS: 622110
<b>Publication title:</b>	The Morning Call (Online); Allentown
<b>Publication year:</b>	2018
<b>Publication date:</b>	Sep 20, 2018
<b>Dateline:</b>	Allentown
<b>Section:</b>	News - Breaking
<b>Publisher:</b>	Tribune Interactive, LLC
<b>Place of publication:</b>	Allentown
<b>Country of publication:</b>	United States, Allentown
<b>Publication subject:</b>	General Interest Periodicals--United States
<b>Source type:</b>	Blogs, Podcasts, & Websites
<b>Language of publication:</b>	English
<b>Document type:</b>	News
<b>ProQuest document ID:</b>	2110253990
<b>Document URL:</b>	<a href="https://search.proquest.com/docview/2110253990?accountid=14026">https://search.proquest.com/docview/2110253990?accountid=14026</a>
<b>Copyright:</b>	Copyright Tribune Interactive, LLC Sep 20, 2018
<b>Last updated:</b>	2018-09-21
<b>Database:</b>	Global Newsstream

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