



Allen County Coroner

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Dr. Craig Nelson, DDS*
Allen County Coroner

PRESS RELEASE

March 28, 2019

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To: All Media Outlets
For Immediate Release

Reference the death of Taemon Blair, the Allen County Coroner's Office is releasing additional information regarding the investigation into his death. Due to the inaccurate information being spread across social media, additional factual information, determined during the course of the investigation will be provided to the media for release to the general public.

A press release dated March 21, 2019, was released by the Allen County Coroner's Office stating that the death of Taemon Blair, male black 21 years of age, from Huntersville, North Carolina, who was found deceased in the 9100 block of Bluffton Road, on March 14, 2019 has ruled the Manner of Death as Suicide and the Cause of Death as Asphyxia due to Hanging.

On March 13, 2019 at about 12:19 hours, CDT, the semi-tractor trailer, left Falls Creek, Pennsylvania, for a delivery to Ft. Wayne, Indiana. The route of travel was verified through the GPS unit on the semi-tractor trailer. The route of travel passed through cities in Ohio and arriving in Fort Wayne at about 18:57 hours on March 13, 2019. The semi-tractor trailer arrived at a business, located in the 9100 block of Bluffton Road at about 19:29 hours.

There is a video with a date stamp, but no time stamp, which shows the driver's side of the semi-tractor trailer. The video is from the business, and the camera is motion activated. Being a motion activated camera there is no continuous video showing the vehicle from the time it was parked until the body of Taemon Blair was discovered. The video does appear to operate properly when there is activity or motion in the range of the camera. A copy of this video has been collected and viewed by the Fort Wayne Police Department and Allen County Coroner's Office.

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Emergency services were dispatched to the location through the 911 call placed from the business. The Fort Wayne Fire Department, Fort Wayne Police Department, and TRAA Paramedics were dispatched to the scene. The Fort Wayne Fire Department and TRAA Paramedics arrived on scene prior to the arrival of first responding police officers. TRAA Paramedics arrived on scene and had patient contact at about 11:44 hours. Medics reported the decedent was cold to the touch and in rigor mortis, death was pronounced at that time.

Fort Wayne Fire Department reports and TRAA reports were obtained and reviewed by the Allen County Coroner's Office.

First responding officers arrived on scene and requested assistance from the Fort Wayne Police Detective Bureau, Crime Scene Section and the Allen County Coroner's Office. First responding officers spoke with the employee who found Taemon Blair and documented in their report that the semi-tractor trailer was parked in the driveway of the business, when he arrived at work at about 06:50 hours on March 14, 2019. The employee attempted to make contact with driver at about 07:45 hours with no response to his knocking on the door. At about 11:35 hours the employee again attempted to make contact with the driver, opened the driver's door and made noise in an attempt to awaken the driver. Getting no response he opened the curtain, between the cab and sleeper compartment, observing Taemon Blair, he checked for a pulse and not finding one, ran back to the business and requested assistance. The 911 call was placed at that time. First responding officers secured the scene and awaited the arrival of the detectives, crime scene and the coroner's office.

Detectives, Crime Scene Officers and a Deputy Coroner arrived on scene. The scene was photographed and additional interviews were conducted. Upon completion of the photo documentation the ligature was released and the body was lowered to a supine position in the sleeper compartment. A physical exam did not reveal any marks or injuries on the hands, wrist or face of Taemon Blair. No suspected blood or active bleeding was noted or reported. The ligature marks around the neck were of consistent size and shape of the ligature used.

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There were no signs of a struggle or fight inside the driver's compartment or sleeper compartment of the semi-tractor trailer.

The body was tagged according to protocol and past practice, and was released from the scene. The decedent was transported to the Northeast Indiana Forensic Center and held pending notification to the next of kin and funeral home selection.

There was no autopsy requested due to the circumstances of the scene investigation and physical examination, which is consistent with protocol and past practice of the Allen County Coroner's Office.

The Allen County Coroner's Office was advised of the funeral home the family wished to use, and Taemon Blair was released to a local funeral home per the family's direction. Two funeral directors completed physical examination of Taemon Blair listing injuries as abrasions mark on the front side of the neck with no other injuries listed. Taemon Blair was released to the funeral home in North Carolina for final wishes of the family.

There are numerous reports on social media, Facebook, twitter, reddit etc.... which should be addressed. It was reported that Taemon Blair's hands were tied or bound, there is no reported documentation or photographs which show the hands are tied or were bound. It was reported that Taemon Blair had defensive wounds present, there is no reported documentation or photographs which show any wounds other than the ligature marks on the body of Taemon Blair. There is a report that the dashboard of the truck was caved in from kicking and his leg was broken. In the same posting it is reported that his neck was severed from ear to ear from what looks like fish hooks. There is no reported documentation or photographs which show damage to the interior of the truck or the injuries described in the on line post. There is a report where it is stated that the coroner's office refused the family the opportunity for autopsy, once the body is released to the family they have the option to have an autopsy performed. In this investigation an autopsy was deemed not necessary to

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determine the cause and manner of death and one was not ordered through the coroner's office, which is consistent with the protocol and past practice of the office.

The Allen County Coroner's Office has made the determination that the Cause of Death is Asphyxia due to Hanging and the Manner of Death is Suicide.

Michael Burris
Chief Investigator
Allen County Coroner's Office

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