

**AUTHORIZED COPY** CASE: 2007-1014482  
**GBI - Open Records** STATE OF GEORGIA

**GEORGIA BUREAU OF INVESTIGATION**

**RECORD OF MEDICAL EXAMINER**

CITY FAYETTEVILLE		COUNTY FAYETTE			
NAME OF DECEASED CHRIS BENOIT					
RESIDENCE OF DECEASED 170 GREEN MEADOW LANE**FAYETTEVILLE, GA					
AGE/DOB 40 YEARS - 1967		SEX M		RACE W	
MANNER OF DEATH	NATURAL	HOMICIDE	SUICIDE	ACCIDENTAL	UNDETERMINED
			X		

CAUSE OF DEATH

HANGING

SIGNOUT 6/26/2007

PRONOUNCED DATE: 6/25/2007	HOUR: 15:42	PLACE: SCENE
NOTIFIED BY BEE HUDDLESTON	DATE 6/25/2007	HOUR 18:45
BODY IDENTIFIED BY PHOTO ID	PHOTOGRAPHS BY JIMMY BROWN	
INVEST. OFFICER E. HARPER		
EMPLOYED BY FAYETTE CO. SHERIFF'S DEPARTMENT - (#)		

<b>CASE AGENCIES:</b> Fayette Co. Coroner Fayette Co. District Attorney Fayette Co. Sheriff's Department GBI-Medical Examiner-HQ DOFS Griffin Judicial Circuit	   #(0705855) #(EISENSTAT)
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OTHER AGENCY			
DATE IN 6/26/2007	TIME IN 09:00		
BODY REMOVED FROM SCENE	REMOVED BY: CORONER'S OFFICE		
ME INV.: JERRIE GASS	FUNERAL HOME MOWELL F.H.		
PROC: AUTOPSY	DATE: 6/26/2007	TIME: 11:45	BY: JONATHAN EISENSTAT, MD

DATE \_\_\_\_\_

SIGNED \_\_\_\_\_

MEDICAL EXAMINER





**AUTHORIZED COPY**  
**GBI - Open Records**

**Official Report**

Division of Forensic Sciences  
Georgia Bureau of Investigation  
State of Georgia

Headquarters

DOFS Case #: 2007-1014482

Report Date: 8/27/2007

George Herrin  
Deputy Director

\* NAME Accredited \*



**Requested Service:** Autopsy  
**Agency:** Fayette Co. Coroner  
**Agency Ref#:**  
**Requested by:** B. HUDDLESTON

**Case Individuals:**  
**Victim:** CHRIS BENOIT

**Evidence:**  
001 DECEDENT

**Results and Conclusions:**

**Final Diagnosis:**

- I. Hanging, with:
  - A. Ligature furrow around neck.
  - B. Petechiae, bilateral conjunctivae.
  - C. Ligature recovered.
- II. See toxicology report.
- III. Cardiomegaly and dilatation (620 grams).
  - A. Congestive hepatomegaly (2620 grams and splenomegaly (300 grams).
- IV. Blunt impact of extremities, with:
  - A. Abrasions.
- V. Testicular atrophy.
- VI. Status post cervical spine fusion.

**Cause of Death:**

Hanging.

**Manner of Death:**

Suicide (hanged self).

I hereby certify that I, Jonathan Eisenstat, M.D., in accordance with the Georgia Death Investigation Act, have performed an autopsy on the body of Chris Benoit, on the 26th day of June, 2007, commencing at 11:45 a.m. in the morgue of the Georgia Bureau of Investigation, Division of Forensic Sciences.

**External Examination:**

The body is of a well-developed, well nourished, 5 foot 11 inch, 224 pound, white skinned man whose appearance is consistent with the given age of 40 years.

The scalp hair is fine, brown, and up to 3 inches, with frontal baldness. There is a 1/4 inch brown mustache and beard.

The eyes have blue irides and the corneas are clear. The conjunctivae are without edema or jaundice.



The oral cavity has natural teeth in good repair and an atraumatic mucosa.

The nose and facial bones are palpably intact.

The extremities show no scars overlying subcutaneous vessels. A 1/8 inch in diameter abrasion is on the lateral left arm and a 1/8 inch in diameter crusted abrasion is on the volar left arm. A 1/4 inch linear abrasion is on the dorsal left hand, a 1/8 inch abrasion is on the dorsal left second finger, and two 1/8 inch linear abrasions are on the dorsal right hand.

Multiple abrasions, ranging in size from 1/8 to 4 inches, are on both legs. A 1/2 inch linear abrasion is on the left lateral malleolus, a 1/4 inch in diameter abrasion is on the proximal left second toe, a 1/8 inch in diameter abrasion is on the proximal left third toe, and a 1/4 inch in diameter abrasion is on the proximal left fourth toe.

The torso is unremarkable.

The external genitalia are atraumatic and of a normal circumcised adult.

The following well healed scars are on the body:

- 1/2 inch in diameter on mid posterior neck.
- 2 inch vertical on medial left forearm.
- Multiple small scars on knuckles.
- 2 inch diagonal on right lower quadrant of abdomen.
- Multiple 1/8 to 4 inch on both legs.

There are no tattoos.

**Postmortem Changes:**

There is no rigor mortis. Lividity is fixed, purple, and on the chest, abdomen, and posterior aspects of the legs. The body is cold (refrigerated).

**Clothing and Personal Effects:**

On the body are one pair of red, white and blue swim trunks, two white socks, and two black athletic shoes; these are released with the body.

One yellow metal band is around the left ring finger; this is submitted as a personal effect and released with the body.

**Injuries, external and internal:**

A ligature furrow completely surrounds the neck. It ranges from 1/4 to 1/2 inch wide. At the front of the neck it goes horizontally and measures 1/2 inch in width. At the left and right sides of the neck it elevates towards the posterior ears and upper mid back. Posteriorly it is 1/4 inch wide. The skin within the furrow is most prominently dry, leathery and tan. There are three 1/4 inch in diameter dried abrasions on the anterior neck.

Around the neck is a tight single looped 70 inch long, 5/16 inch in diameter, black rope ligature which is slipped through a white metal carabiner. Adjacent to the carabiner is a black ball attached to the rope. The carabiner and ball are at the lateral aspect of the right side of the neck. Underneath the black rope ligature is a 3-1/2 inch wide, 24 inch long, white towel which is wrapped around the neck twice and taped to itself.

There are few scattered petechial hemorrhages of the palpebral and orbital conjunctivae of both eyes.

~~Internally there are no fractures of the hyoid bone or thyroid cartilage or hemorrhage in the soft tissues of the anterior or posterior neck. The soft tissues beneath the ligature furrow are dry.~~

The towel and rope are submitted as evidence.



These injuries, having been described above, will not be repeated.

**Internal examination:**

**Head:**

The scalp has no contusion. The skull has no fracture. There is no epidural, subdural, or subarachnoid hemorrhage. The brain weighs 1540 grams and has a normal distribution of unremarkable cranial nerves and cerebral vessels. The leptomeninges are thin and delicate. The brain is symmetrical with normal distributions of white and gray matter, deep nuclei and ventricles. There are no focal lesions. With the written consent of Michael Benoit, the father of the decedent, the brain is submitted to the "Sports Legacy Institute" for investigative studies.

**Neck:**

The cervical vertebrae, hyoid bone, and tracheal and laryngeal cartilages are without trauma. The upper airway is not obstructed. The tongue is unremarkable.

**Body Cavities:**

No abnormal fluid accumulation is in the pericardial, pleural, or peritoneal cavities. The organs are in their normal situs without fibrous adhesions.

**Cardiovascular System:**

The heart weighs 620 grams and has a normal distribution of widely patent right dominant coronary arteries. The myocardium is uniformly dark-red without pallor, hemorrhage, softening, or fibrosis. The left ventricle wall is 1.6 cm thick and the right is 0.2 cm thick. All four cardiac chambers are dilated. The endocardial surfaces and four valves are unremarkable. The aorta is without atherosclerosis. The venae cavae and pulmonary arteries are without thrombus or embolus.

**Respiratory System:**

The right lung weighs 720 grams and the left weighs 700 grams. The parenchyma is pink, fluffy, and without focal consolidation, hemorrhage, obstruction, or cavitory lesion. The bronchial distribution and vasculature are unremarkable. The bronchi are unremarkable.

**Liver, Gallbladder, Pancreas:**

The liver weighs 2620 grams, has an intact smooth capsule, and tan-brown parenchyma without slippery or nodular texture or masses. There is focal white fibrosis of the anterior capsule. The gallbladder contains approximately 5 ml of dark green bile without stones or sludge. The extrahepatic biliary system is unremarkable. The pancreas is without hemorrhage or mineralization.

**Hemic and Lymphatic System:**

The spleen weighs 300 grams, has an intact smooth capsule, and dark-purple parenchyma with slightly prominent white pulp. There are no major lymph node enlargements.

**Genitourinary System:**

The right kidney weighs 240 grams and the left weighs 250 grams. Each kidney has a smooth subcapsular surface and unremarkable architecture and vasculature. The ureters maintain uniform caliber into an unremarkable bladder, which contains approximately 75 ml of yellow urine. The prostate is not enlarged. The testes are unremarkable.

**Endocrine System:**

The pituitary, thyroid, and adrenal glands are normal color, size, and consistency.



**Gastrointestinal System:**

The esophagus and gastroesophageal junction are unremarkable. The stomach contains approximately 150 ml of dark brown watery fluid without recognizable fragments of pills, tablets or solid food. The gastric mucosa, small intestine, appendix, and large intestine are unremarkable.

**Musculoskeletal System:**

The cervical vertebrae are fused with metallic hardware. The clavicles, sternum, ribs, and pelvis are without fracture. The musculature is normally distributed and unremarkable.

**Toxicology:**

Submitted for toxicologic analysis are samples of femoral blood, urine, gastric contents, liver and vitreous humour; separate reports will be submitted.

**Histology:**

Submitted for histologic analysis are sections of:

Brain (2) - Unremarkable cerebral parenchyma.

Heart (2) - There is myocyte hypertrophy.

Lung (2) - There is moderate congestion and patchy slight interstitial fibrosis.

Liver (2) - Unremarkable.

Kidney (2) - There is medullary congestion.

Testis (1) - There is atrophy of the spermatogonia, thickened basement membrane and interstitial edema with arrest of germ cell maturation.

Adrenal gland (1) - There is slight autolytic change.

**Evidence:**

Submitted as evidence are the ligature, towel and a bloodstain card.

**Photography:**

Postmortem photographs are taken and retained.

**Opinion:**

This 40 year old man, Chris Benoit, died as a result of hanging himself. After review of scene photographs, discussions with investigators, and autopsy findings, the decedent hanged himself using a rope from his exercise machine. The ligature furrow around the neck, in conjunction with no other significant trauma, supports the manner of death as being suicidal. Postmortem toxicology revealed blood levels of alprazolam at 50 µg/L and hydrocodone at 45 µg/L, both of which fall within the therapeutic range. There was an elevated level of testosterone in his urine, with an elevated testosterone to epitestosterone ratio, signifying an exogenous source of testosterone.


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Only those items discussed in the results above were analyzed for this report. The above represents the interpretations/opinions of the undersigned analyst. Evidence analyzed in this report will be returned to the submitting agency. Biological evidence (body fluids and tissues) and fire debris extracts will be destroyed after one year. This report may not be reproduced except in full without written permission of the laboratory.

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This case may contain evidence that must be preserved in accordance with O.C.G.A. § 17-5-56.



Jonathan Eisenstat  
Associate Medical Examiner

CC:

**Related Agencies:**

Griffin Judicial Circuit  
Fayette Co. Sheriff's Department  
GBI-Medical Examiner-HQ DOFS  
Fayette Co. District Attorney

ACN: 0705855  
ACN: EISENSTAT

**End of Official Report**