



CORONER'S REPORT
INTO THE DEATH OF

WIENS

SURNAME

ISABELLA ANNE CONSTANCE MARIE

GIVEN NAMES

OF

BURNABY

MUNICIPALITY OF RESIDENCE

I, Adele Lambert, a Coroner in the Province of British Columbia, have investigated the death of the above named, which was reported to Coroner Bilal Waheed on the 16th day of March, 2013, and as a result of such investigation have determined the following facts and circumstances:

Gender: MALE FEMALE
 Age: 21 MONTHS
 Death Premise: PRIVATE RESIDENCE
 Place/Municipality of Death: BURNABY Date of Death: MARCH 16, 2013
 Municipality of Illness/Injury: BURNABY Time of Death: 1700

MEDICAL CAUSE OF DEATH

(1) Immediate Cause of Death: a) Undetermined

DUE TO OR AS A CONSEQUENCE OF

Antecedent Cause if any: b)

DUE TO OR AS A CONSEQUENCE OF

Giving rise to the immediate cause (a) above, stating underlying cause last: c)

(2) Other Significant Conditions Contributing to Death:

BY WHAT MEANS Unknown

CLASSIFICATION OF DEATH ACCIDENTAL HOMICIDE NATURAL SUICIDE UNDETERMINED

Date Signed: MAY 7, 2015

Adele Lambert, Coroner
Province of British Columbia

MB

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INVESTIGATIVE FINDINGS

Isabella Anne Constance Marie Wiens was born on June 11, 2011. She was placed in a foster home at 2 months of age. As she developed, an assessment determined that she was significantly delayed in every category. The first assessment was completed by the infant development program (IDP) worker when Isabella was 3 months of age. As Isabella neared her second birthday, she was able to sit up and turn over, but could not walk or stand unassisted. When Isabella walked with assistance (ie. Using a stool for support) she frequently stumbled and fell. She vocalized, but her language skills were comparable to a one year old.

Isabella moved to a different foster home on November 9, 2012 where she lived with her new foster parents and their two teenage children. This move occurred because her first foster family was retiring. Her new foster home had been in operation since 2006 and was designated a safe baby home. The foster parents received specialized training including a 53 hour education program in the Safe Babies Course as well as ongoing workshops. There were infants frequently placed in the home and there were 2 other infants in the home at the same time as Isabella.

Isabella was assessed for developmental screening on December 17, 2012, and her behavior and skills were noted to be untestable. This meant that Isabella did not exhibit any behavior that could be measured against the screening tool. She was described as being very withdrawn, would not mobilize on her own, did not make any vocalizations, and was refusing to eat. Referrals were made for specialized assessments to be completed; however, they did not occur because Isabella's condition improved. A case management team meeting was held in January, 2013, including Isabella's pediatrician, and it was concluded that the change in Isabella's environment from the move in foster homes had been difficult for her, but she was showing signs of improvement.

Isabella's last visit to a physician was on September 14, 2012. She was in frequent contact with medical professionals including the infant development program (IDP) and public health nurse. The IDP worker had been involved with Isabella since September, 2011. The visits took place in the foster home and occurred once a month. The IDP worker last saw Isabella on March 1, 2013. At this time, Isabella was interacting more and had developed an attachment to the foster mother.

During Isabella's stay in the foster home, she had regular supervised visits with her mother.

For approximately one week prior to March 16, 2013, Isabella was experiencing cold like symptoms including a runny nose, coughing and wheezing, and a loss of appetite. A number of other people in the home were also ill with similar symptoms and it was not considered a serious illness. Isabella was not taking any medication and did not have a fever.

On March 16, 2013, at approximately 1500 hours, Isabella was placed in her crib for a nap. A comforter was draped over the top of the crib to block out the light. At 1800 hours, attempts were made to rouse Isabella for dinner. She was found to be lying on her stomach with the comforter completely covering her body, including her head. Isabella was unresponsive and not breathing. Isabella was immediately removed from the crib so that the foster parent could start CPR.

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Emergency personnel, including fire fighters and paramedics, arrived at the home after 911 was called. They took over resuscitation efforts but this was ultimately unsuccessful. None of the first responders observed any signs of trauma or abuse when they examined Isabella. When the coroner arrived Isabella was found lying on her back in the living room. The lividity (blood pooling) demonstrated a supine (back lying) position which was consistent with Isabella being placed on her back shortly after death in order to perform CPR.

The police completed an investigation and concluded that there was nothing to indicate that Isabella's death was the result of a criminal act or omission. The two other infants that had been living in the foster home at the time of Isabella's death were examined by the Child Protection Service Unit at BC Children's Hospital and showed no signs of abuse or trauma.

The Ministry of Children and Family Development is in the process of completing a review of the circumstances of Isabella's death as well as the services that were provided.

POST MORTEM EXAMINATIONS

Autopsy revealed healing injuries including bruises on the chin, forehead and face, and arms and legs. The bruising was minor in nature, with the largest being 3.5 x 1.5 cm, and at various stages of healing. Isabella was witnessed to frequently fall when she attempted to walk, which could account for these injuries.

There were also two healing fractures in the bones of the left arm. It was estimated that the fractures of the left arm occurred weeks to months prior to Isabella's death. No one (foster family, social workers, medical professionals, biological mother) that was in contact with Isabella was aware that her arm was injured. The radiologist that examined the x-rays concluded that fractures of this type are not uncommon in children and not necessarily suggestive of abuse.

A physician with the Child Protection Service Unit at BC Children's Hospital was consulted regarding the circumstances of Isabella's injuries. It was concluded that this type of fracture could be caused accidentally but could also be a non-accidental injury particularly if no one could provide a reasonable explanation as to how the injury occurred. Where and how the fractures occurred could not be explained. None of the healing injuries contributed to Isabella's death.

Examination of the brain found cerebral swelling with congestion and edema. This was a non-specific finding and there was no definitive evidence of hypoxic-ischemic injury. A blanket was completely covering Isabella when she was found which could have impaired her ability to breathe, but an asphyxial type of death could not be conclusively established.

Routine toxicological analysis was negative for alcohol, prescription medication or illicit drugs.

In summary, no anatomical or toxicological cause of death was determined during the post mortem examinations.



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CONCLUSION

The cause of death of an infant is determined by an examination of the scene, obtaining medical history and completing postmortem examinations including the ruling out of a natural disease process. Where no anatomical or toxicological cause of death can be established the cause and manner of death shall be classified as undetermined.

I find that Isabella Anne Constance Marie Wiens died in Burnaby on March 16, 2013, of an undetermined cause. I classify this death as undetermined and make no recommendations.

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "Adele Lambert".

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Adele Lambert, Coroner
Province of British Columbia

Handwritten initials, possibly "ML", in the bottom right corner of the page.