

More testing under way on body found in tote

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By Lou Michel

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Additional testing has begun to double-check if a drug overdose killed a young Lewiston woman whose naked body was found frozen and stuffed upside down in a trash tote earlier this year, relatives said Monday.

Initial toxicology results determined that Amanda L. Wienckowski, 20, died from a lethal amount of opiates, according to an autopsy performed by the Erie County medical examiner's office.

Leslie L. Brill, Wienckowski's mother, said she has persuaded the medical examiner's office to take another look at her daughter's cause of death in the belief that her daughter might have lived if medical help had been summoned.

She also believes additional drugs may have been intentionally given to her daughter to knock her unconscious.

"If 911 or other medical assistance had been sought, Amanda could have been saved," Brill said of opinions she has received from outside medical experts. "They've told me if there is a drug overdose, you just don't die. There are signs. You start choking, experience respiratory failure, suffocation and possible positional asphyxia."

Brill said Dr. Lawrence Kobilinsky, head of forensic science at John Jay College in New York City, is one of the experts reviewing her daughter's autopsy.

The mother and stepfather Ken Fink suspect their daughter may have been intentionally given a "hot shot," which could have been a concoction of opiates and other drugs to enhance the effects of getting high.

"I called the medical examiner after speaking with Dr. Kobilinsky and told them there are too many drugs in a hot shot and you need to do a full scan of all date-rape drugs," Brill said.

The expanded toxicology test is expected to be completed by late next week, according to Brill, who said she made her case with Dr. Diane Vertes, who conducted the original autopsy.

Brill continues to raise the question that if there was nothing criminally involved in her daughter's death and it was indeed an accidental overdose, then why would her daughter's body have been dumped into a garbage can in Buffalo?

"If they had nothing to hide, they would not have done that to Amanda," Brill said. "I give you my word I will take this to my grave. I will find out what happened to my daughter."

Wienckowski's body was discovered Jan. 9 in a missing trash tote that had been placed in a church alcove on Spring Street, across from a house where a friend had dropped her off early in the evening of Dec. 5.

To date, no one has been charged in the case.

Wienckowski's family has said that she used drugs in the past and was in the process of trying to turn her life around.

Brill said she and her husband are to meet with a district attorney's representative.

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