

Expert to get data on Wienckowski

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By Matt
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The West Coast forensic pathologist hired by the family of Amanda L. Wienckowski will be getting crime scene and autopsy material on which to base a conclusion about what killed the young woman, the family's lawyer said Wednesday.

As a result, the family is "one step closer to justice for Amanda and one step closer to catching the killer," Steven M. Cohen said after the hourlong session that he and attorneys for the city and the county had with State Supreme Court Justice Gerald J. Whalen.

DNA documents, photos of the crime scene and the autopsy and related documents will be sent to Los Angeles forensic pathologist Silvia O. Comparini later this week, Cohen said. However, her conclusion on what killed Wienckowski remains weeks away.

Meanwhile, Cohen said, he remains "absolutely" confident someone will be prosecuted in the death.

The frozen and naked body of Wienckowski, 20, was found in a garbage tote outside a church on Buffalo's East Side on Jan. 9, 2009.

Whalen has imposed a "confidentiality" order on all sides in the continuing autopsy dispute, so as not to adversely affect any possible criminal prosecution in the case, Cohen said.

The criminal investigation was halted initially after the Erie County medical examiner's office declared the death accidental, caused by an opiate drug overdose.

Comparini came to Buffalo June 2 to complete a physical examination.

Attorneys for the city and the county declined to comment after leaving Whalen's chambers shortly after 3 p.m.

Whalen, meanwhile, ordered the attorneys to give him a progress report June 21.

Leslie Fink, Amanda's mother, who waited out the session in a courthouse hallway, said afterward that she still holds out hope for closure and that "the killer" will come forward and "just help us."

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