

Judge Denies Family of Slain Woman Access to Official Records in Case

 niagarafallsreporter.com/Stories/2015/NOV27/judg.html

By Mike Hudson

NOV 27, 2015



Amanda Wienckowski was a beautiful and vivacious young woman whose brutal sex slaying has been covered up for more than six years by Erie County law enforcement authorities.



A judge has denied Leslie Brill Meserole, mother of slain Amanda Wienckowski, access to important investigative documents relating to the case. The cover up in Amanda's murder is widely believed to be linked to her role as a paid police informant.

Although the Erie County Medical Examiner's office found that she had suffered a brain hemorrhage, torn labia, multiple neck bruises shaped like a fingerprints, blood seeping from her nose, a deep bite mark on her tongue, bruised arms, three male DNA profiles in her mouth and female DNA derived from hair found on her contorted, frozen body, they concluded that Amanda Wienckowski died of an accidental overdose.

The ME's office reached this conclusion before the toxicology reports were in. They showed that Amanda didn't have enough drugs in her system to kill her.

For the past six years, Amanda's mother, Leslie Brill-Meserole, has been fighting to discover the particulars of her daughter's death, as the ME's office, Buffalo city police and the Erie County District Attorney's office have fought to keep them secret.

Why?

Amanda was a paid police informant. Was she working for the police at the time of her murder? Was the fact that she was an informant the real motive behind her killing?

“This could be the most massive foul up I’ve ever seen on the part of law enforcement or the most massive cover up. But the more I know about it, the more I believe it’s a combination of both,” one law enforcement official told the Niagara Falls Reporter.

The basic facts in the case are widely known. Amanda, who graduated from Niagara-Wheatfield High School in 2006 with a Regents diploma, was tending bar at Cocktail Bob’s on Cuddaback Avenue late on the afternoon of Dec. 5, 2008, when she received a phone call from a man later identified as Adam Patterson, who lived with her on the Tuscarora Reservation in Lewiston and was also involved in the drug and prostitution rackets.

Patterson picked her up and drove her to Buffalo, where she was to have sex with a man named Antoine Garner in return for drugs. Garner, by all accounts including his own, was the last person to see Amanda alive and is thought by many to be her killer.

He has since been convicted of three counts of Rape in the Third Degree and three counts of Criminal Sexual Act in the Third Degree. Garner admitted that between December, 2008 and January 2009 – the exact time frame of Amanda’s disappearance and murder -- he raped and sodomized a 16-year-old-girl, impregnating her.

In a separate case, Garner was convicted following a jury trial of Strangulation in Second Degree and Assault in the Third Degree by an Erie County trial jury. These charges stemmed from a June 26, 2011 attack upon a woman in Buffalo. Garner had paid the woman for sex and began strangling her during the act.

Five weeks after she went missing, on the morning of Jan. 9, 2009, police discovered Amanda’s body, frozen and stuffed into a garbage tote that had been placed in an alcove at the New Covenant United Church of Christ, directly across Spring Street from Garner’s house. Police said an anonymous telephone tip led them to the scene.

Erie County law enforcement officials have continued to deny Amanda’s family access to records in the case and, last month, state Supreme Court Justice Deborah Chimes upheld the denial following an Article 78 filing by Peter A. Reese, the attorney for the family.

Clearly, someone with highly placed connections in the Erie County law enforcement and political worlds does not want the truth about Amanda’s death to come out. She has been repeatedly characterized in the Buffalo media as a junkie whore who pretty much got what was coming to her, a line that originated when the medical examiner’s office ruled she’d died of an accidental overdose before the results of her blood tests had even come back.

The official handling of the case, the botched autopsy, and the continued refusal by authorities to make details of the investigation public or even known to the family all point to a cover up of major proportions.

For the past six years, the ECME's office, the Buffalo City Police Department, the Erie County District Attorney's office and the Erie County Sheriff's Department have done everything in their power to prevent Amanda's family, and the public at large, from knowing the true facts of the case.

"When someone in government doesn't want to release information, there is always a reason," said one law enforcement source familiar with the case. "It could be to cover up an embarrassing mistake, or it could be something darker. And until you find out, you just can't know."

Looking at the same data, Dr. Michael Sikrica, a forensic pathologist from Albany, ruled that the amount of opiates found in the young girl's blood were "innocuous," and that she had died of strangulation. And Dr. Lawrence Kobilinsky of John Jay College, a consultant to attorneys in the areas of forensic biology, serology and DNA analysis for more than 20 years, also concluded that the substances in Amanda's blood were insufficient to cause her death. He did note, however, high levels of GHB, known as the "date rape" drug.

And Dr. Sylvia Comparini, a Los Angeles based pathologist who has performed over 6,300 autopsies and witnessed or supervised more than an additional 12,000 autopsies, conducted 1,000 homicide scene investigations and given expert witness testimony in over 650 criminal, civil and military trials, performed a second autopsy on Amanda's body and ruled there was no question but that the young woman had been beaten and strangled to death.

Amanda's work as a police informant, and particularly her association with disgraced Niagara Falls cop Ryan Warme bear scrutiny. Warme was convicted of a boatload of drug related charges that included allegations of the abuse of female informants and prostitutes.

Despite the inexplicable denials of Erie County officials, Amanda Wienckowski was murdered. Her murderer or murderers have yet to pay for the crime. If ever there was a case that cried out for justice, it is this one.