



MAGISTRATES COURT *of* TASMANIA

CORONIAL DIVISION



Record of Investigation into Death (Without Inquest)

Coroners Act 1995
Coroners Rules 2006
Rule 11

I, Simon Cooper, Coroner, having investigated the death of Andrew John Jarman

Find, pursuant to Section 28(1) of the *Coroners Act 1995*, that

- a) The identity of the deceased is Andrew John Jarman;
- b) Mr Jarman died as a result of hanging, an action undertaken by himself alone, voluntarily and with the express intention of ending his own life;
- c) Mr Jarman's cause of death was neck trauma;
- d) Mr Jarman died between 19 August 2012 and 22 October 2016 at Latrobe, Tasmania.

In making the above findings I have had regard to the evidence gained in the comprehensive investigation into Mr Jarman's death. The evidence comprises an opinion of the forensic pathologist who conducted the autopsy; opinions of both a forensic odontologist and a forensic anthropologist; relevant police and witness affidavits; medical records; and forensic and photographic evidence.

Background

Mr Jarman was born in Tasmania on 26 July 1977, the eldest son of Annette and Philip Jarman. Mr Jarman had three younger brothers, Jason, Ricky and Corey.

His mother says that he had a normal childhood being educated at Mayfield Primary and then later at Brooks High School. Like a lot of boys he apparently got into a bit of mischief but no real trouble. He enjoyed riding his motorbike and playing basketball. His mother reports he was a healthy child growing up.

Sadly, in his late 20s alcohol and cannabis became major problems for Mr Jarman. Drugs and alcohol led him into a life of crime including at least one period of imprisonment in Risdon Prison. He received treatment for his alcoholism and substance abuse. In addition to his alcohol and drug problems, Mr Jarman had a well-documented history of depression and anxiety. He received medication for depression and anxiety as well as medication to help lessen his cravings for alcohol. Mr Jarman was also an asthmatic who was required to use an asthma inhaler.

Reportedly, Mr Jarman spoke about suicide on occasions with his younger brother, Jason. Specifically, roughly 6 weeks before Mr Jarman was reported missing in August 2012, he made a comment to Jason about “getting a piece of rope and throwing it over a tree”.

In the immediate lead up to his disappearance, Mr Jarman was attending regular counselling sessions in both Devonport and Burnie to assist in relation to his alcohol and drug dependency.

At the time of his disappearance he was living at Nexus House, a detoxification centre run by the City Mission in Latrobe.

Disappearance

Mr Jarman was reported to police as missing on 19 August 2012 by a worker at Nexus House. He had left the house at roughly noon on his mountain bike. He told another worker at the house that he intended to ride to Shale Road in Latrobe. He was seen by a member of the public at about 3.00pm on Shale Road, not far from the entrance to the Warrawee Reserve. This sighting is the last verified occasion Mr Jarman was seen alive.

After he was reported missing, searches were conducted in and around the Township of Latrobe, including the Warrawee Reserve area. Those searches included using Tasmania Police search and rescue and SES personnel. The Westpac rescue helicopter was also deployed. His mobile telephone was seized and his room at Nexus House was examined by forensic officers. All enquiries in relation to Mr Jarman's disappearance were unsuccessful.

I am satisfied that the searches and enquiries undertaken by Tasmania Police to attempt to locate Mr Jarman in August 2012, after his disappearance was reported, were extensive.

The file in relation to Mr Jarman's disappearance continued to remain open and was the subject of regular review. Information was received from members of the public over the ensuing months but none of the information assisted in locating Mr Jarman.

Remains located

In the afternoon of 22 October 2016, two members of the public found human remains in the Warrawee Reserve. The two members of the public were carrying out a survey on behalf of the Latrobe Council in the reserve in relation to prospective mountain bike tracks in the area. The remains were located approximately 400 m south of a walking track.

The remains were located along with a mountain bike subsequently identified as belonging to Mr Jarman, items of personal property including clothing and a wallet, and a length of rope. The two members of the public, Mr Matthew Rose and Mr Phillip Milner, were careful not to disturb the scene. They took some pictures to pass onto the police and also recorded the GPS coordinates where they had found the remains and the bike.

Mr Rose then went directly to the Devonport Police Station and reported what he and Mr Milner had found.

A scene watch was conducted at the entrance to the reserve off Shale Road overnight and the next morning police officers attended the scene to commence an investigation. They observed a grey mountain bike tied to a tree. Tied to the same tree, but higher up, was a red rope which was more or less above the remains.

After the remains and the scene were photographed by forensic officers and the scene carefully examined, the remains were transported by mortuary ambulance to the Royal Hobart Hospital.

Nothing was located at the scene which suggests the involvement of any other person in Mr Jarman's death, nor that there was anything suspicious about it.

Identification

At the Royal Hobart Hospital the remains were examined by a forensic odontologist, a forensic anthropologist and a forensic pathologist. The forensic odontologist, Dr Patrick Oxbrough, compared the dental structures found in the remains with dental records of Mr Jarman provided by Oral Health Services Tasmania. Dr Oxbrough, as a result of that comparison, expressed the opinion that the remains were those of Mr Jarman. I accept Dr Oxbrough's opinion and am accordingly satisfied to the requisite legal standard that the remains located in the reserve near Latrobe on 22 October 2016 were those of Andrew John Jarman.

Cause and circumstances of death

As has already been noted, Mr Jarman's remains were examined carefully by an experienced forensic anthropologist and a highly qualified forensic pathologist at the mortuary in Hobart. The forensic anthropologist, Associate Professor Anne-Marie Williams, noted in a report subsequently provided to me that there was a break to the left transverse process of the second cervical vertebra. She expressed the opinion (which I accept) that that break had the appearance of a *peri mortem* fracture. In other words, the evidence is that Mr Jarman had suffered a broken neck prior to his death. Given the circumstances in which Mr Jarman's remains were found I am satisfied that the only logical explanation for Mr Jarman suffering a fracture of a bone in his neck prior to his death was that it resulted from hanging.

Dr Donald McGillivray Ritchey, forensic pathologist, examined Mr Jarman's remains. He noted they consisted of a nearly complete adult skeleton absent the right arm, three of the lower ribs, most of the left hand and part of the vertebrae. Forensic police officers who examined the scene identified the presence of Tasmanian Devil skat at the scene. I am satisfied that the absence of some parts of the skeleton is attributable to Tasmanian Devil (or other animal) activity rather than any other cause.

In all of the circumstances, I am satisfied that the most probable cause of Mr Jarman's death was, as Dr Ritchey suggested, that he had likely used his mountain bike as a platform from which to jump with a rope attached to his neck thereby causing death by hanging by reason of trauma to his neck, rather than asphyxia.

Conclusion

I have outlined already my findings in relation to identification, the cause and circumstances of Mr Jarman's death as well as when and where it occurred. In addition, I am satisfied to the requisite legal standard on the basis of all of the evidence obtained as part of the investigation including Mr Jarman's mental health history, his previous articulation to his brother of suicidal ideation, the circumstances in which his remains were found and the break to the left transverse process of his second cervical vertebra that Mr Jarman's death was suicide. In performing the acts which led to his death I am satisfied that Mr Jarman acted voluntarily, intentionally and with the express intention of taking his own life.

Comments and Recommendations

The circumstances of Mr Jarman's death are not such as to require me to make any comments or recommendations pursuant to Section 28 of the *Coroners Act 1995*.

I convey my sincere condolences to the family and loved ones of Mr Jarman.

Dated: 28 May 2018 at Hobart in Tasmania.

Simon Cooper

Coroner