

WARREN review report - Dr CALA

Product Type: TEXT DOCUMENTS:Statement

Completed Date: 19 Sep 2001

Brief Description: Dr CALA states that a deceased body when immersed in a large body of water will initially sink and the subsequent result depends on tides, currents, local environment, temperature of water and presence of marine mammals. The body may (but not always) rise to the surface due to decomposition - gas formation acts as a form of buoyancy. Clothing worn on the body may be stripped by action of waves and currents.

Summary:

Para 1: Statement prepared with concurrence of report by Dr Paull BOTTERILL created in relation to another matter.

Para 2: Deceased body immersed in a large body of water will initially sink and subsequent result depends on tides, currents, local environment, temperature of water and presence of marine mammals.

Para 3: After sinking the body may (but not always) rise due to the buoyancy effects of gas created during the decomposition process.

Para 4: Clothing which was on the body may be stripped by forceful wave action/currents.

Det. Sgt. S.Page
 Rose Bay L.A.C.
 Rose Bay Police,
 New South head Rd,
 ROSE BAY NSW



19 September 2001

Dear Detective Page,

Re: Ross Bradley WARREN

Further to our conversation, and a document from you dated 3 September 2001, I am providing you with a written submission in relation to bodies immersed in large bodies of water. I note you have already received a written opinion from my colleague, Dr Paul Botterill, which I have read and with which I agree.

When a deceased body is immersed in a large body of water such as the ocean, the body will initially sink. What happens after this depends very greatly on tides and flow rates, currents, the local environment (eg, whether there are rocks, waves, depth of the water and so on), temperature of the water and presence of marine creatures in the vicinity of the body.

After sinking, the body may, but not always, rise to the surface after some period of time, due to the effects of decomposition. This occurs due to gas formation in the body, which provides a degree of buoyancy to the body. This is variable, but may occur after several days. This is associated with skin slippage, some bloating of the body, marbling, wrinkling of the skin especially hands and feet, and some associated marine predatory activity. Bodies do not always rise, and as you would be aware, there are instances of persons entering the ocean whose bodies are never recovered.

Clothing which was on the body at the time the person entered the water may have been stripped off by the forceful action of waves and currents. This does not always occur but does explain why some bodies are recovered without clothing.

I hope this brief report answers your questions. Please contact me should further details be required.

Yours,

Allan D.Cala
 FRCPA
 Staff Forensic Pathologist



University of Sydney



This laboratory is accredited under the accreditation scheme of the National Association of Testing Authorities, Australia and The Royal College of Pathologists of Australasia.

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