

IN THE CORONERS COURT
OF VICTORIA
AT MELBOURNE

Court Reference: COR 2012 1564

FINDING INTO DEATH WITH INQUEST

Form 37 Rule 60(1)

Section 67 of the Coroners Act 2008

Inquest into the Death of: MIHAIL ANDRINOPOULOS

Delivered On:	30 January 2014
Delivered At:	Coroners Court of Victoria, 222 Exhibition Street, Melbourne
Hearing Dates:	20 November 2013
Findings of:	HEATHER SPOONER, CORONER
Police Coronial Support Unit	Leading Senior Constable Tania Cristiano

I, HEATHER SPOONER, Coroner having investigated the death of MIHAIL ANDRINOPOULOS

AND having held an inquest in relation to this death on 20 November 2013

at Coroners Court of Victoria, 222 Exhibition Street, Melbourne

find that the identity of the deceased was MIHAIL ANDRINOPOULOS

born on 20 June 1939

and the death occurred on 3 May 2012

at Parkdale Beach, Approximately 100 metres North of Parkdale Yacht Club, Parkdale 3195

from:

1 (a) UNASCERTAINED

in the following circumstances:

1. Mihail Andrinopoulos was 73 years of age when he died. Mr Andrinopoulos resided at 11 William Street, Oakleigh with his wife and son.
2. Mr Andrinopoulos had a significant medical history including hypertension, bronchitis, renal failure, gout, stress and depression.
3. A police investigation was conducted into the circumstances of Mr Andrinopoulos' death.
4. An inquest was convened on 20 November 2013. Leading Senior Constable Stuart Beulke provided a summary of the material he had obtained from the police investigation that included the following information:

“Mr Mihail (known as Michael) Andrinopoulos was a 73 year old married man who resided with his wife of 46 years, Tasia Andrinopoulos and 41 year old son Sotiri (Sam) Andrinopoulos. Another son, Bill Andrinopoulos no longer resides in the family home.

Sam Andrinopoulos suffers cerebral palsy. Michael and Tasia Andrinopoulos were his primary carers.

Bill Andrinopoulos states that this put pressure on the whole family...

Mr Andrinopoulos had a significant medical history. His General Practitioner, Dr Steven Kalfas notes since 1992 that he suffered at different times, hypertension, wheezy bronchitis, chronic renal failure, gout and stress, related with night shift work and also social isolation of his son Sam.

It is also noted that in 1996 Mr Andrinopoulos attended for a blood pressure check. Subsequently he showed poor compliance with blood pressure medication and was advised repeatedly the importance of blood pressure control to prevent further deterioration of his kidney disease. It is also noted by Dr Kalfas around this time that Mr Andrinopoulos avoided seeing a renal physician and presented with some depression apparently relating to the strain of having to continue in the work force owing to financial pressure...

Deteriorating kidney function was noted in 2003, with renal biopsy showing focal segmental glomerulosclerosis for which there is no cure. Progressive decline in kidney function was expected.

In June 2010 Mr Andrinopoulos was referred by Dr Kalfas to Psychologist, Mina Kobatsiari. The referral stated 'Michael is tense all the time, brooding, gets upset easily and also worries about his son. His situation is compounded by the fatigue of chronic renal failure and the prospect of imminent dialysis (past analgesic overuse damaging kidneys)...

Ms Kobatsiari noted that Mr Andrinopoulos presented as a quiet reserved man who always appeared overly preoccupied and worried at the prospect of having to undergo dialysis. He often explained during sessions that the idea of undergoing dialysis was horrifying. He reported that leaving Sam on his own or in another's care for five hours a day whilst he was having dialysis caused him grave concern. The severity of his constant pain was causing him extreme exhaustion. This was further compounded by arthritis, which he suffered in both knees and his left wrist.

Ms Kobatsiari stated that Mr Andrinopoulos' presentation indicated that he was suffering from a chronic major depressive disorder. He experienced a range of psychological symptoms including initial and middle insomnia, flat mood, irritability, worrisome thoughts, lethargy, helplessness and loss of motivation. He reported that once he ceased working, his sleep was often disrupted as he frequently experienced nightmares. Mr Andrinopoulos' depressive symptomatology was further aggravated by feelings of helplessness and constant worry over his son's future. In addition, his constant physical pain and disability, as well as family conflicts contributed to his psychological maladjustment.

During sessions, suicidal ideation was explored with Mr Andrinopoulos and he was

often directly asked questions relating to suicidal thoughts and his recorded response was 'no, I am not thinking of taking my life. What will become of Sotiri (Sam)? I worry about leaving him for five-hours when I need to have the dialysis, let alone taking my own life.' Mr Andrinopoulos respected and upheld his traditional patriarchal views, and in turn felt an extreme responsibility towards his family, especially his children.

Psychological treatment focused on alleviating Mr Andrinopoulos' depressive symptomatology. Cognitive Behaviour Therapy (CBT) was the primary intervention used to address the cognitive component of his depression; concentrating on cognitive restructuring. Mr Andrinopoulos was assisted to identify his negative thoughts and challenge his beliefs that developed in response to his circumstance.

Ms Kobatsiari states in her opinion that Mr Andrinopoulos made some significant psychological gains with the assistance of intervention considering the adversity he faced in terms of his extreme levels of pain and deteriorating physical capacity.

In April 2012, Mr Andrinopoulos commenced dialysis at Monash Medical Centre. Prior to his death Mr Andrinopoulos had dialysis on four occasions for five hour periods.

On Thursday the 3 May 2012 according to Mrs Tasia Andrinopoulos, Mr Andrinopoulos woke up at about 7.30am. Mrs Andrinopoulos went back to sleep and awoke at about 9.00am. She noted that Mr Andrinopoulos was not home.

At about 11.30am on the same date Mr Wally Rizzo parked his van in a car park off Beach Road, Parkdale, opposite Antibes Street. Mr Rizzo was parked facing Port Phillip Bay. Mr Rizzo observed what he thought was a body in the water. Mr Rizzo walked down to the beach and located a deceased, naked male on the waters edge. Mr Rizzo contacted police.

Police attended the scene at approximately 11.55am. The scene was processed and a number of photographs taken. A thorough search was conducted of the foreshore area including the sand, scrub area and rubbish bins. No clothes or other items associated with Mr Andrinopoulos were located. A search of the car park area located a white Holden Commodore Sedan, registration number, NFY 275. As a result of this Mr Andrinopoulos was ultimately identified. This vehicle was collected later by Mr Bill Andrinopoulos. He searched the car and no clothing or suicide note

was located.

No suicide note has been located at the home address or any other location.

Extensive bruising was noted on Mr Andrinopoulos' left arm. It was believed it was a result of dialysis.

Enquiries made by the investigating Police member indicated that the air temperature in Melbourne on Thursday the 3 May 012, between 7.30am and 12.00pm midday was between 10 and 12 degrees Celsius. Wind direction and speed in Port Phillip Bay according to the Fawkner Beacon was approximately 30 knots from the South East at around 12.00pm midday."

The Search

5. Leading Senior Constable Stuart Beulke expanded on his evidence at the inquest in relation to the extensive search of Parkdale beach and surrounds following the discovery of Mr Andrinopoulos' body. In all, ten police members were involved in searching 1km north and 1km south of Parkdale beach surrounds for evidence in relation to the circumstances surrounding the death of Mr Andrinopoulos. Nothing was located during the search that was of any relevance to the investigation.

Post Mortem Examination

6. A post mortem examination was conducted by Forensic Pathologist, Dr Heinrich Bouwer at the Victorian Institute of Forensic Medicine on 8 May 2012 where the cause of death was formulated and the following comments made:

"Post mortem examination was consistent with the circumstances and showed the body covered in beach sand, as well as large amounts of beach sand in the mouth, left pharynx and respiratory tract. The post mortem examination showed a mildly enlarged heart (580 grams). The lungs appeared mildly hyperinflated and the right pleural surface was markedly fibrosed.

The post mortem examination showed a circumferential bruise to the left arm, a bruised abrasion to the right lateral chest wall as well as deep bruise to the left upper back. The bruise in the arm appears to be a few days old and may have been sustained prior to being found on the beach. The abrasion to the left chest wall and the bruise on the left upper back may have been sustained while being in the water

however the possibility that it may have been sustained by any other means cannot be excluded with confidence.

The possibility that the cause of death is due to drowning cannot be ascertained with certainty.

Post mortem toxicology analysis did not detect alcohol, common drugs or poisons.

Post mortem biochemistry showed severe chronic renal impairment, consistent with the reported medical history."

Finding

After a full medical and police investigation the exact cause of Mr Andrinopoulos' death remains unascertained. However, whilst the circumstances surrounding his entry into the water and his subsequent death may never be known, there does not appear to have been anything sinister in the demise of this elderly man who had become both physically and emotionally depleted and frail.

I direct that a copy of this finding be provided to the following:

Mrs Tasia Andrinopoulos

Leading Senior Constable Stuart Beulke, Investigating Member, Victoria Police

Signature:



HEATHER SPOONER

CORONER

Date: 30 January 2014

