

Coroner's investigation report

Act of the causes and circumstances of death

to for families, relatives and
agencies FOR THE protecting human LIFE

on the death of

Christiane Vadnais

2016-00495

Dr Ethan Lichtblau

CORONER'S OFFICE

2016-06-08

Date of notice

2016-00495

NOT. of the folder

IDENTITY

Christiane

First name at birth

Vadnais

Birth name

1961-02-22

Birth date

Female

Sex

Montreal

Municipality of residence

Quebec

Province

Canada

Country

Joyal

Name of the mother

Rejeanne

First name of the mother

Vadnais

Name of the Father

Paul-Émile

Father's first name

DEATH

2016-06-08

Date of death

Determined

Place of death

Home

Location Name

Montreal

death of Municipality

IDENTIFICATION OF THE DECEASED**M^{me} Christiane Vadnais is visually identified at the scene of death.****CIRCUMSTANCES OF DEATH**

An investigation report of the police department of the City of Montreal shows that on 8 June 2016 to 16 h 48, a neighbor noticed movement behind the fence in the back yard of his home. After a few seconds, he realizes that a dog eats the leg of a woman. The neighbor dials 9-1-1 immediately. At 17 h 4, police respond to a call for a woman's body, lifeless, in the process of getting eaten by a dog in the back yard of his neighbor. Other police officers arrived on the scene at 17 h 10. They see a dog breed "pitbull" brown and white. The dog wears a harness and muzzle hanging from his neck. A policeman entered the courtyard by forcing the gate. He noted that there are shreds of bloodied clothing. He sees the dog go after something that is hidden by the bush. When entering, the dog looks at him and rushes toward him, mouth open. The officer noted that there are residues of flesh on the edge of his mouth, he shows his teeth, he was agitated and he does not listen to orders. The agent gives a blow with the dog bar in the mouth. The dog barks and back aggressively. The officer leaves the court.

Then the officers entered the neighbor's house (the man who called 9-1-1) for a better view from his court. There they saw the body of a woman of about 50 naked and lifeless, lying on the grass. Major injuries are visible on the legs. There are no signs of breathing and skin tone is very pale. The dog runs around the body and drove on the fence exposing his teeth.

The front door of the home of the woman attacked is unlocked. The police come and find that everything is in place. It does not seem to have been any conflict. The patio door is ajar with closed net. Again, a policeman with the dog tries to bar to capture the animal without success. An agent finally take a position on the fence separating the two properties and is the dog with his gun. He asks, his sergeant, permission to shoot because there's nobody around. Sergeant authorizes intervention. Policeman shoots and reaches the animal.

Once mastered dog, agents enter the court and establish a security corridor. At 17 h 32, Urgences-santé happens. It is noted that the woman (identified as M^{me} Vadnais) has no pulse, not breathing and does not respond to stimulation; it is asystole the monitor. It is noticed that M^{me} Vadnais present large open wounds at his left arm and both legs. resuscitation maneuvers are started, but the death is found by the doctor at 18 h 12.

The investigation by the police shows that the event would likely started near the patio, down the steps. A large amount of blood is on the tiles and droplets are visible on the fence north and on the steps. Bits of human flesh lying around on the tiles and pieces of torn clothes were on the floor. There is blood that goes to the body of M^{me} Vadnais, as if it had been dragged. Shoes and clothes are near the patio.

EXTERNAL EXAMINATION, AUTOPSY AND TOXICOLOGICAL ANALYZES

An autopsy was made June 9, 2016 at the Laboratory of Forensic Science and Forensic Medicine (LSJML) in Montreal.

The pathologist found the presence of moderate rigor mortis. The livid are identified on the posterior surfaces of the body.

In the upper left limb and both lower limbs, there are many major abrasions and lacerations, some of which are gaping and deep. Several erosions and lacerations match the teeth of a dog. The left upper limb, mid-arm wrist is completely lacerated to the bone, muscles are mostly absent, and there is complete transection of the veins and brachial arteries. In the left lower limb, there is a transection of the artery and the posterior tibial vein and a fracture of the fibula. Most injuries to both legs are bleeding.

As for the rest of the autopsy, there is no obvious intracerebral or intracranial injury. There is a focally severe coronary atherosclerosis with stenosis of 75%, 60-70% and 60-70% in the anterior interventricular arteries (in its origin), circumflex and right coronary. It shows no congenital heart defect or abnormality in heart valves in the aorta or inferior vena cava

For histological examination (that is to say, microscopic) the heart demonstrates coronary atherosclerosis with stenosis of 75-85% and 60-70% in the anterior interventricular artery and right coronary (technical problems do not assess the stenosis in the circumflex). The lungs have multiple fat embolism and emphysema significant changes.

Toxicology tests are performed in LSJML. BAC is negative. No other substance, drug or drug is detected.

According to the pathologist, hemorrhagic aspect of most wounds and the presence of fat embolism in the lungs indicates that **M_{me} Vadnais is alive at the time of undergoing his injuries. The autopsy, however, revealed severe coronary disease that could lower the M tolerance_{me} Vadnais to hemorrhage, physical effort and pain, and thus lead to earlier death.**

According to the pathologist, the cause of death was multiple trauma compatible with dog bites.

An autopsy is performed on the dog at the Faculty of Veterinary Medicine in Saint-Hyacinthe. The dog is a male weighing 33.8 kilograms, died of injuries caused by gun shots. The result of a rabies test is negative.

The DNA of the animal involved in the attack is submitted for analysis to DNA test Mars Veterinary Wisdom Panel (Vancouver, WA, USA). The result shows that this dog is 87.5% of the breed "American Staffordshire Terrier". (NB: "Wisdom Panel® is not intended for use by regulators or animal control to determine whether a particular breed is banned in a country or a particular province Panel® The Wisdom should not. not be used in court proceedings. Rather, it is intended to be used as a tool or a resource in determining the genetic history of a dog, "according to Director of Corporate Affairs, Mars Veterinary Wisdom Panel.)

Dog of samples and a blood specimen M_{me} Vadnais are sent for analysis to the biology section / DNA LSJML. Expertise is required on forensic odontologist to compare the bite marks on the body of M_{me}

Vadnais to the dog's jaw. All results indicate that the hammer down on the scene is the one who attacked Ms. Vadnais.

ANALYSIS

The investigation establishes that the cause of death of M_{me} Vadnais is attack by the dog shot dead at the scene.

A nearby claims to have spoken with M_{me} Vadnais telephone to 14 30 pm June 8, 2016. At that time, M_{me} Vadnais is at work. She would have left work around 15 am and would arrive home around 16 pm. According to this person, M_{me} Vadnais usually comes out than to take out the waste; she does not smoke outside.

Another neighbor of M_{me} Vadnais (not the one who called 9-1-1) said that 15 to 30 pm, she heard someone in a neutral tone "with using" followed by a voice woman saying "shhh, shhh." Later, she heard grunts, but did not link.

It is likely that M_{me} Vadnais arrives home between 15 pm and 16 pm 30. She goes into the backyard, perhaps out waste, and is attacked by the dog. It is impossible, from the information gathered, to say how long the attack lasted. However, it is likely that by the time the police arrived at 17 pm 4 M_{me} Vadnais is already dead. During the attack, M_{me} Vadnais loses a considerable amount of blood, leading to hypovolemic shock and ultimately to cardiac arrest and death. However, it is possible that heart disease M_{me} Vadnais contributed to rapid death.

The investigation made by the police the same evening demonstrates that the dog belongs to the neighboring remaining behind the scene. When the police arrive at the address in question, there is nothing to report in front of the home: the main door and the two garage doors are closed, and no individual is present on the premises. There is a wooden fence that circles the field and a shed. Behind it, the wooden fence is damaged and there is a big hole. An old iron gallery ramp was placed against the wooden fence, possibly to block the opening. The iron fence was moved giving access to the hole **in the fence and residence of M_{me} Vadnais. plastic bottles chewed and dog feces are on turf. To the south, at the edge of the garage, there is a small metal dog cage with the door open; which served as a door is only a metal panel. A policeman noticed that behind the house door is not closed; there is a lock, but the lock is unlocked.**

Through this door, the officers entered the house. Once inside, a few stairs lead to the basement of the house, where there is a small kitchen. On the ground are scattered pieces of waste, apparently caused by a dog. The kitchen opens into a living room with a TV and a sofa. In the end of the room, a door leads to a room. In it, a blanket on the ground seems to have been eaten by a dog. There is also a big bowl full of dog food. The police then go up to the ground floor and complete the search of the residence. There is no one and no dog. Looking at various papers on the spot, the police can understand that many people remain in the residence. The police are waiting outside the arrival of a local resident.

Around 19 pm, a person arrives on foot and into the courtyard. The man was arrested. He confirms that he lives in the residence and that he owns a "pitbull" brown. The police are trying to explain what happened with his dog, but the man is in shock; he has difficulty paying attention and understand. Finally, after a few minutes, he seems to understand and is willing to discuss the situation with the police. It says he lives in the house with his brother and his parents. His brother went to work for the day and his parents are currently traveling out of the country. This is itself who left last residence this morning. He reportedly left around 7 am. He said that before leaving, he put the muzzle to his dog and he closed the doors. He adds that he puts a muzzle on his same dog in the house since he knows that his dog can be aggressive and he will not take any chances. He ensures that his dog does not break anything in the house. However, he confirmed that the waste found on the basement floor are made by his dog; they are not supposed to meet there.

He further states that he took this baby dog and he now has 7 years. Depending on the version of the man, the dog was attacked 3 times by other dogs, there are about 6 years. Since then, the dog does not trust the people he does not know. According to him, a few years ago, the dog would have ripped the cloak of an individual who allegedly tried to steal it.

(# 46-151026-010 According to police report, 26 October 2015, this same dog attack two friends of the owner while the owner is away from home. One of them has significant injuries to the front -arm, maybe even a fracture, and it is transported to the Hospital of Santa Cabrini. the second person is bitten on the thigh, but the injury is minor. According to the police report, the owner is notified that the file would subject to monitoring by the municipality involved. It seems that the municipality has never performed the required follow-up.)

The man says the dog is extremely anxious and agitated in the presence of strangers. According to him, the dog is territorial home. When he sees the neighbors, he starts barking. The man says he immediately entered the dog inside to calm and, shortly after, he can stand as is once again peaceful. He added that his dog is well fed, and he takes care of well. It takes regular walks with him and made him do exercises. By cons, he mentions that his dog is often left in the cage outside the home during periods of eight hours. (NB: Many neighbors say they have never seen this dog be a walk in the neighborhood.)

The man says that a few weeks ago, an estimator came on the scene for a quote for the repair of the fence. He said he **had an agreement with M^{me} Vadnais to the costs of repair are paid half and half. He added that he had no problem with M^{me} Vadnais.** He said it was a "nice lady".

The statement of the owner where he presents himself as someone who takes good care of his dog is contradicted by the information gathered at the scene and by his own statement to the police. Among others, the dog is left alone in the house for long periods of time, pieces of waste are strewn floor of housing, plastic bottles chewed and dog excrement on the lawn, the dog is often left in his cage outside the house for eight hours, incidents of aggression have occurred previously and neighbors say they have never seen the dog walking with its owner in the neighborhood. All these facts suggest that this was an abused dog. In fact, it is likely that this dog is poorly socialized long, frequently left alone for extended periods, it is under-stimulated, it lacks canine companions and that lack of exercise. These factors probably produces an extremely frustrated dog, aggressive and violent.

In terms of the breed of dog involved in the attack, even experts often can not agree on the specific breed of dog. Despite the results of the dog's DNA analysis, it is unable, from photos of the dog supplied to positively identify the dog as a "pit bull." In addition, there is that originally, when the dog was listed at the Anjou in 2011, the owner has registered as a "boxer".

In summary, it appears that a tragic combination of events led M^{me} Vadnais to simply be in the wrong place at the wrong time. Among others, a prolonged absence of the dog's owner, a dog already known very aggressive, with a poorly attached muzzle, the door of the housing is not closed properly, a hole in the fence and a time of day where no neighbor n is around to assist. One may wonder if this attack could have been avoided if, in 2015, the municipality involved had performed the required monitoring and taken appropriate measures.

The attack was the subject of extensive media coverage. Meanwhile, the public and politicians asked that legislative action be laid to prevent future attacks. It is naturally expected that the coroner takes into account the recommendations in this area.

Before addressing the recommendations, the public should be aware of the scope of the problem so it can be informed participants in any legislative discussion. The review of the scientific literature shows the following facts about dog bites and attacks:

- 1) Approximately 50% of cases of dog bites occur in children.
- 2) Non-sterilized male dogs are involved in about 75% of dog bites reported.
- 3) Deaths due to bites or dog attacks, while disturbing the public, are extremely rare. Across Canada, there is usually one to two human deaths per year due to bites or dog attacks, while the United States, the number is ten to twenty deaths annually. In Quebec, there were five human deaths from dog bites since 1995.
- 4) Although fatal dog bites are rare, nonfatal dog bites are not and they are a real public health problem, with estimates in the United States approximately 4.5 million dog bites year. About 350 000 people per year in the United States consult a doctor in due to a dog bite hospital.
- 5) The tendency of a dog to bite or show aggressive behavior depends much more on its genetic or race. Other factors such as experience, socialization and training, the dog's health, reproductive status, the behavior of the victim and the specific context, also play a key role.
- 6) All dogs can bite. Dogs of all breeds can be dangerous.
- 7) It is shown that the visual identification of dogs, even by trained professionals care for animals, is unreliable.
- 8) Although different types of laws on animal control have been adopted in many jurisdictions, the effectiveness of these measures in reducing the incidence of dog bite or severity of dog bite n ' is not well established.

There are historically at least two legislative approaches to reduce the occurrence of bites by dogs. One approach is "specific breed ban" ("Breed specific ban" or "BSB" in English), where certain types or breeds of dogs are prohibited. The BSB legislation does not base the determination of the dog's dangerousness on past conduct. All dogs of a targeted breed are rather subject to regulation based only on

belonging to this breed. A BSB usually issued following a media attack dog. In addition, BSB is usually suggested by the legislature in response to public protest and fear. Jurisdictions such as Aurora (Colorado), the County of Miami-Dade (Florida), Winnipeg and Ontario have enacted legislation BSB (Ontario since 2005).

Another legislative approach is the "neutral race" rather to empower owners ("Responsible pet ownership" or "RPO" in English). This approach is more the dog owner the dog itself. Calgary (Alberta) is a jurisdiction that has adopted such legislation.

A review of the literature shows that few facts support the BSB approach. An article in the Toronto Sun (June 21, 2016) even noted that in Ontario, the province is not known if the law is effective because no provincial Data collected in the field. In fact, a thorough review of the scientific literature shows that the BSB legislation is an ineffective way to fight against dog bites. No academic or scientific report peer reviewed and supporting the BSB is found.

In Quebec, two recent reports containing recommendations (requested after the death of M^{me} Vadnais) are already deposited with the Minister of Public Safety. The College of Veterinary Surgeons of Quebec (OMVQ) filed its report in July 2016. The Working Committee on the regulation of dangerous dogs ("the Committee") filed his in August 2016.

In the report OMVQ, the following points of interest are highlighted:

- 1) It is imperative to ensure the financial and operational feasibility of the measures and regulations to be adopted.
- 2) The Quebec government, cities and municipalities must have sufficient financial resources to enforce their regulations and guidelines.
- 3) It is clear that the application of regulations, already in place, often a serious gap. Admittedly, this situation unfortunately contributes to a significant portion bites events (vacated animal, faulty closing, permanently attached dog known previous events, etc.). It is also involved in increasing the level of frustration with the authorities, knowing that the rules exist and are neglected.
- 4) The definition of dangerous dog could be: a dog that tries to bite or attack, biting or attack, commits an act likely to prejudice the safety of a person or animal is considered " dangerous "and should be evaluated by an expert. The review of the literature also recognizes that it may be possible to expand the type of definition, according to the findings to be made. We thought including the definitions of "nuisance", "potentially dangerous dogs" and "vicious dogs."
- 5) Many unfortunate events could have been avoided or mitigated through better knowledge and understanding from the people at the time, but especially in prevention.
- 6) It is of utmost importance that the Government of Quebec and the different cities and municipalities shall ensure that the measures adopted in leadership dangerous dogs take into account all the risk factors listed. We must act on the animal, the owner of the animal and the environment. We need to raise awareness, children and the pet owners.
- 7) It is very important to develop methods to identify all cases of bites, especially those that require medical attention. It is important that the government and cities acquire the means to collect the data on the owners and dogs on their territory as well as incidents and bites. It is also important to develop a standardized and mandatory reporting mechanism for cases of bites. The statement bites should be mandatory and the evaluation of the dog involved by a veterinarian trained in behavior. The creation of a register of biting dogs with rigorous monitoring of cases would be ideal to avoid tragic situations.

The report OMVQ seems to be well made and conclusions seem supported by factual information developed in the body of the report. One can only agree with his conclusions.

As for the Committee, the following points of interest are highlighted:

- 1) The City of Calgary uses, within its regulations, accountability dog owners, hence the requirement for a license for each pet. Heavy fines are levied for breaches of these regulations so that they are dissuasive. As a result, about 90% of dogs were recorded from 2010, which far surpasses most cities in North America.
- 2) In Calgary, revenue from licenses and fines fund the animal services department and extensive canine safety, awareness and education.
- 3) In Calgary, the Regulation provides that dogs can be designated as dangerous based on a proven behavior, not because of their race or a designated crossing.
- 4) In Calgary, through the gradual introduction of various dog control measures and measures of education and public awareness, the number of incidents involving dogs gradually decreased by 78% between 1985 and 2008.
- 5) Throughout the work within the terms of reference, the difficulty in obtaining information and comprehensive and reliable data was a major issue. Adequate information and scientific data have certainly helped to further document the problem and facilitate the selection of the most efficient measures to reduce the number of bites. However, no centralized registration procedure for all dogs or mandatory reporting of dog bites are in Quebec. The census of such data would reveal the frequency, circumstances and severity of incidents and to collect all relevant information to better act upstream, target interventions and prevent more.

At the end of the Committee's report, three legislative scenarios are described and their advantages and disadvantages are exposed. The three scenarios are:

- 1) Prohibition of certain dog breeds and establishment of a procedure declaration of dangerous or potentially dangerous dog.
- 2) Identification of the specific characteristics of dogs deemed dangerous or potentially dangerous that would be to coach, including type dogs "pitbull" and establishment of a procedure declaration of dangerous or potentially dangerous dog.
- 3) Establishment of a dangerous dog declaration procedure or potentially dangerous without specifying race or particular characteristic.

For reasons that are not well explained or supported by logic, the Committee suggests the adoption of the second legislative scenario. It is disappointing that the Committee reached this conclusion with little or no supporting evidence in the body of the report.

Following these reports, Bill No. 128 was recently proposed to the National Assembly.

The following points of interest are highlighted:

- 1) The bill identifies dogs that are deemed potentially dangerous and allows the government to modify the list of dogs identified as such.
- 2) The bill gives the government the power to prohibit any dog that is deemed potentially dangerous and forbids anyone to possess, acquire, keep or raise a dog prohibited, subject to certain exceptions.
- 3) (Article 6) The veterinarian is required to report immediately to the local municipality concerned that a dog has inflicted an injury to a person or a pet.
- 4) (Article 17) A dog whose breed type or crossover is referred to in Annex I (see below) is deemed potentially dangerous (the government may amend Schedule I).
- 5) (Article 19) The government can ban any dog that is deemed potentially hazardous under Article 17.
- 6) (Article 12) The local municipality has reasonable grounds to believe that a dog is a risk to human health or public safety may require it to be submitted for examination by a veterinary surgeon she chooses so its condition and dangerousness are assessed.

APPENDIX I (*Article*

17)

DOGS DEEMED TO POTENTIALLY HAZARDOUS

1 pitbulls, including American pitbulls terriers, American Staffordshire terriers and Staffordshire bull terriers; 2. Rottweilers;

3 dogs from the cross between a dog referred to in paragraphs 1 or 2 and another dog;

4 ° hybrid dogs from the cross between a dog and another dog a canine; 5. The trained dogs for protection, guard, combat or attacks.

A careful reading of this proposed legislation demonstrates that much of it raises questions. For example, what dog is "unsafe"? This term is not defined in law and in fact, the definition could be applied in a very arbitrary. Moreover, despite **the lack of support by scientific evidence, the law provides that certain dog breeds are *a priori* declared "unsafe"**. In addition, the law allows to ban these dogs when the evidence found in the literature show that the ban does nothing to decrease the amount or severity of dog bites. It is also disappointing that the law provides mandatory reporting of dog bites, but only to the municipality. The local report will not be useful to the province. A central registry is required. Finally, there is concern that the law does not mention the mandatory registration of dogs and education programs to the public or to prevent bites.

In summary, this bill is disappointing for the following reasons:

- 1) This bill is essentially a law "BSB".
- 2) Mandatory reporting of dog bites only the municipality is a wasted opportunity. A central registry is required.
- 3) It does not mention the need for public education.
- 4) It does not mention the mandatory registration of dogs with their municipality.

A strict reading of the scientific literature and the two recently filed in Quebec reports the following conclusions:

- 1) Dog bites are a serious public health problem and, especially, a problem that affects the health and safety of our children. The majority of dog bites are preventable.
- 2) Reducing the incidence of dog bites requires the cooperation of various "partners", including animal control teams, the medical community and veterinary educators, public health departments, charitable organizations, local municipal authorities and the public.
- 3) A bill must focus on the responsibility of the pet owner in preventing dog bites and encourage the public to work with (not against) the animal control teams who apply the law.
- 4) Any legislation should encourage any kind of "BSB" since the "BSB" results in unnecessary costs and has never proven to be effective in preventing dog bites or attacks.
- 5) Any bill should stimulate intensive and ongoing public education measures and a mandatory reporting, centralized and standardized dog bites.

CONCLUSION

The death of M^{me} Christiane Vadnais is due to an attack by a dog that caused trauma resulting arterial bleeding
large, shock
hypovolemic.

This is a violent death.

RECOMMENDATIONS

I recommend to the Ministry of Public Security to integrate Bill o 128 provisions to centralize reports of injuries inflicted by a dog in a Quebec registry whose data would be accessible for research and prevention.

I recommend to the Ministry of Public Security to integrate Bill o 128 provisions to require annual registration of all dogs with their respective municipality and to provide means to pay the data reflecting the recordings in the Québec register of dog bites in order to maximize the utility purposes research and prevention.

I recommend to the Ministry of Public Security to integrate Bill o 128 provisions to encourage sterilization of dogs, regardless of breed.

I recommend to the Ministry of Public Security to integrate Bill 128 provisions to encourage municipalities to train animal control teams, especially in order to raise awareness of canine security and improve compliance applicable laws and regulations.

I recommend to the Ministry of Public Security to integrate Bill 128 provisions to set goals and equitable ways to declare a dog or dog owner (or a combination) as "dangerous," "unsafe" or "harmful", as discussed in the report of 'OMVQ, and the development of enforceable measures these dogs or their owner.

I recommend to the Minister of Public Safety to take the measures required for the adoption of any law to the supervision of dangerous dogs is accompanied by the development of programs to raise awareness of canine safety and the prevention of bites dog.

I, coroner, acknowledge that the indicated date and place, the causes, the circumstances described above have been prepared to the best of my knowledge, and that, following my investigation, in witness whereof I signed in Montreal this September 28, 2017.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Ethan Lichtblau".

Dr Ethan Lichtblau, coroner