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Cops rule out foul play in death of Tranquility Bay student

Jamaica Observer

August 16, 2001

WESTERN BUREAU -- The police have ruled out foul play in the death of American teenager, Valerie Ann Heron, who jumped 35 feet to her death at the controversial Tranquility Bay boarding school in St Elizabeth last Friday.

Constabulary Communication Network (CCN) officer for St Elizabeth, Corporal Angella Williams, told the Observer on Tuesday that the post mortem had found that Heron had died from head injuries received from her fall. Her skull, the CCN officer said, was fractured in two places.

The post mortem was done by government pathologist, Murari Sarangie, at the Black River Hospital between 1:00 pm and 2:00 pm on Tuesday in the presence of Tranquility Bay's director, Jay Kay, and investigating officer, Detective Constable G Walters.

Despite the findings of the post mortem, however, the decision as to whether someone should be held criminally responsible for Heron's death will be dependent on the findings of a coroner's inquest, which will be held at a later date, the police said.

Last Friday at about 6:00 pm, Heron, who had arrived in the island the previous day, asked to be excused from her class in order to dispose of a piece of paper. She then reportedly ran through the door and jumped off a balcony to her death.

She was taken to the Black River Hospital, about 15 miles away, where she was pronounced dead.

In the meanwhile, the school's principal, Eugenia Collins has expressed regret at Heron's passing. "Well, it's very difficult for us at this time," she said. "Our prayers are with her parents."

The institution, which is registered as the Caribbean Centre for Change Ltd, caters to 275 students and offers 18-month programmes of "remedial behavioural training and development".



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