



Chicago Medical Examiner Won't Release Autopsy of Victim of Botched Abortion

What is the Chicago medical examiner's office trying to hide with regard to the death of a young woman following a botched abortion? Pro-life group Operation Rescue, with the assistance of the Life Legal Defense Foundation (LLDF), is attempting to find out.

As [The New American](#) reported, on July 20 Tonya Reaves, 24, bled to death after undergoing an abortion at Planned Parenthood's Loop Health Center in Chicago. Planned Parenthood expressed its regrets over Reaves' passing but has otherwise remained mum on the incident. Pro-life groups, meanwhile, have been trying to get to the bottom of what happened.



They discovered that, first of all, Planned Parenthood kept the bleeding Reaves at the clinic for five-and-a-half hours before calling for a fire department ambulance. On top of that, while Reaves was hemorrhaging, the clinic called 911 — though indirectly through 311, the city's non-emergency number — to report that a patient's mother had assaulted her in the clinic but did not bother to report Reaves' emergency. In fact, the clinic [never called 911 about Reaves](#), perhaps preferring some less public way of getting her to a hospital.

Planned Parenthood also [did not inform the emergency room staff about the cause and extent of Reaves' injuries](#), forcing them to waste precious time trying to determine those things for themselves. About an hour after Reaves arrived at the hospital an ultrasound revealed that her abortion was incomplete. The hospital performed another abortion, but Reaves' pain continued unabated. Another ultrasound then showed that her uterus had been perforated. She was taken to the operating room for more surgery, at which time her uncontrollable hemorrhaging was discovered. Just over an hour later — and 12 hours after her first, botched abortion — she was pronounced dead.

"Planned Parenthood butchered Tonya Reaves, delayed her access to emergency care, then left the emergency room doctors to figure out what happened to her. By the time they discovered the true extent of her injuries, it was too late to save her life," said Troy Newman, president of Operation Rescue and Pro-Life Nation.

"Planned Parenthood is trying to minimize their responsibility for Reaves' completely avoidable death that appears to have resulted from a combination of their negligence, delay — possibly for the purpose of cover-up — and lack of communication with emergency providers," he added.

Newman has good reason to suspect a cover-up. On July 23 Operation Rescue staffer Cheryl Sullenger submitted a formal request to the Chicago medical examiner's office for Reaves' autopsy report. The office denied the request via telephone on July 31 on the basis that Sullenger did not have family



Written by [Michael Tennant](#) on August 10, 2012

authorization or a subpoena.

California-based LLDF has since taken up Sullenger's case and is threatening the medical examiner's office with legal action if it does not comply with her request. Noting that the office "has already failed to comply with Illinois law" by denying the request over the phone instead of in writing, LLDF senior staff counsel Allison K. Aranda [wrote](#):

Illinois law specifically states that all records in the custody or possession of a public body are presumed to be open to inspection or copying.... Further, the state of Illinois has not exempted "autopsy reports" from the public access requirement. To the contrary, in 2010 the Illinois Public Access Counselor reviewed a Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) request for autopsy reports in the files of the medical examiner and concluded that, "the reports are public records and should be released."... In fact, the FOIA Guide for Law Enforcement published July 12, 2012, by the Attorney General's Office also specifically states that autopsy reports are public records and should be released.

Since the office has no legal basis to deny Sullenger's request and has already violated the law by denying it over the phone, Aranda demanded that the office "immediately comply with" Sullenger's request. "If you office does not comply," she added, "we will be forced to take legal action."

Why is the medical examiner's office refusing to release Reaves' autopsy report? Could it be that the report would embarrass Planned Parenthood or even implicate the abortion profiteer in Reaves' death? Illinois is "one of a handful of states that allow abortion providers to function with little or no oversight," according to [LifeSiteNews](#), so it stands to reason that Planned Parenthood has some serious clout in the Prairie State, and particularly in Rahm Emanuel's Chicago.

Pro-lifers may have a real fight on their hands to find out just what happened to Tonya Reaves on that fateful day.



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