

STATE OF WISCONSIN)
) SS.
 MILWAUKEE COUNTY)

An inquest held in the City and County of Milwaukee on the 19th day of May, 1978, and on the 26th day of September, 1978, into the death of WALTER OLYN SPENCE, there dead, by the Medical Examiner whose name is hereunto subscribed, who being duly sworn to inquire on behalf of the people of the State of Wisconsin, when, in what manner, and by what means the said WALTER OLYN SPENCE came to his death, does say that the said WALTER OLYN SPENCE, date of birth August 28, 1958, formerly of Room 1204, McCormick Hall, 716 North 16th Street, City and County of Milwaukee, came to his death on the 26th day of April, 1978, at 1:30 a.m., at Milwaukee County General Hospital, following a fall from his room in McCormick Hall to a grassy area situated on the west side of the building. The deceased's room, Room 1204, is located on the 12th floor of McCormick Hall. The body was found positioned approximately 12 feet from the base of the building. An examination of the deceased prior to death at Milwaukee County General Hospital, and an examination of the body by the Medical Examiner's Office, revealed the cause of death to be hemothorax, left, with multiple other bony and soft tissue injuries.

Based upon evidence adduced, it appears that the deceased, a Marquette University student, on the date of death, at approximately 12:45 a.m., positioned himself on the window ledge

in his room, with his back to the window opening. He was observed to position himself away from the vertical window divider, and to push himself backward through the window. A protective window screen had been partially dislodged from the window a short time before the incident by the deceased with a punch. Two witnesses in the room at the time of the incident, Brian Gosizk and Timothy McMullen, testified that no one was making physical contact with the deceased at the time of the incident, and that the deceased's action was totally unassisted. According to Gosizk's testimony, he observed the deceased to place his hands on the window ledge surface, and to propel himself backward through the window opening.

According to testimony, the deceased had been drinking beer at a local tavern over a period of several hours prior to the incident. (An analysis of the deceased's blood revealed an ethyl alcohol level of 0.12 gram per cent by weight.) While in the tavern, the deceased, according to Gosizk, spoke in a depressed manner, and indicated several times that he would take his life. During their conversation, the deceased also gave a note to Gosizk. The note is now in the possession of the Medical Examiner's Office. According to Gosizk, he had assumed the note was intended for the deceased's father, since it was directed to "Dear father."

The note reads, "Dear father, You have been very helpful to me but and I appreciate it but I'm still don't seem follow the right way, so before someone hurts me I'm gonna do it myself. Love Wally." On the reverse side of the note, the name "father landyermer" appears. In this Examiner's opinion, the note was meant for Father Landwermer, the deceased's academic advisor at Marquette University. According to Gosizk, he gave the note back to the deceased, however police indicated that they took the note from Gosizk, and subsequently turned it over to Medical Examiner's Investigator E. Himmelreich.

After leaving the tavern, the deceased, according to Gosizk, continued to speak, and act, in a depressed manner, and at one point sat down on a grassy area in front of an attorney's office, across the street from McCormick Hall. While seated, the deceased pointed up to the window of his 12th floor room, and stated to Gosizk, "Look up, I'm going to jump out of that window." Shortly after this statement by the deceased, Gosizk and WALTER SPENCE proceeded up to SPENCE'S room.

While in his room, SPENCE made a brief phone call. A check of phone company records, by the District Attorney's Office, revealed that a telephone call to the deceased's home in Mystic, Connecticut, was made from the deceased's room at 12:32 a.m., on the date of death. The deceased also

played a record entitled "Leader of the Pack" several times. Upon playing the record the last time, the deceased stated, "This is the last time I'll hear this record." A short time later, the deceased propelled himself backward through the open window of his room. SPENCE'S roommate, McMullen, was lying on his bed, watching TV, while Gosizk was positioned on SPENCE'S bed, at the time of the incident. McMullen testified that the deceased's actions took him completely by surprise, and that he had no opportunity to prevent the fall. Gosizk testified that he jumped from the deceased's bed towards the deceased, upon observing the deceased's action, but could not reach the deceased in time to prevent the fall.

Based upon testimony, it appears that the deceased had entered Marquette University with the intention of entering the Marquette Law School, upon successful completion of his undergraduate studies. It is apparent that his parent, especially his father, expected him, and encouraged him, to succeed in his academic endeavors, and to become an attorney. It is also apparent that the deceased was not being successful in his academic pursuits, and that his below average undergraduate grade level would have prevented his admission to law school.

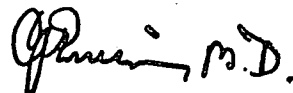
Because of his academic troubles, it appears that the deceased was planning to terminate his pursuit of a law

career; an act which he obviously felt would displease his father, in view of his father's expectations. On April 25, 1978, at about 6:30 to 7:00 p.m., or approximately 6 hours before WALTER SPENCE propelled himself through the 12th floor window, he met with his academic advisor, Father Francis M. Landwermeyer, and advised the Father of his intentions of giving up his pursuit of a law career, and his planned transfer from Marquette University to the University of Rhode Island. The deceased advised the Father that he had a telephone conversation with the wrestling coach at the University of Rhode Island in regard to the transfer. According to the Father, it was apparent that WALTER was of the opinion that the University of Rhode Island would accept him as a student. Father Landwermeyer testified that "At that point I--it was my judgment that it was time to get Wally to face some facts, which he apparently was not facing, so I confronted him with the fact that he couldn't transfer to the University of Rhode Island with his grade point, which is significantly below a 2.0, and a good university isn't going to let you transfer below a 2.0." The Father further testified that he also told WALTER that with his low grade point average he would not be eligible to wrestle at Rhode Island. (WALTER SPENCE was apparently an excellent wrestler, with a strong desire, and the ability, according to testimony, to win a

national collegiate championship.) Father Landwermyer also testified that WALTER "...brought up the subject that he was going to switch to something like business, so I proceeded to tell him, 'That's not going to work either, you don't have the mathematical background. If you are going to do something like that, you're going to have to spend your whole summer studying mathematics.'" Upon termination of the deceased's meeting with Father Landwermyer, the deceased did not appear to be depressed, or upset, according to the Father.

In summation, it appears that WALTER SPENCE did intentionally take his own life, and that he did so unassisted. It appears that WALTER SPENCE was depressed over his inability to live up to his father's expectations, and over what he felt was his apparent inability to successfully remove himself from an undesirable situation at Marquette University and into a more desirable situation at the University of Rhode Island. It is evident to this Examiner that the deceased, with his inhibitions partially removed by alcohol, and in an effort to escape the above-indicated situations, and other situations that may have troubled him, did take his own life, and that no person, or persons, unlawfully took, or conspired to take, his life.

MEDICAL EXAMINER FOR MILWAUKEE COUNTY

 M.D.

Medical Examiner



Deputy Medical Examiner