



**MARICOPA COUNTY
OFFICE OF THE MEDICAL EXAMINER
701 W. Jefferson Street
Phoenix, AZ 85007**

MEDICAL EXAMINER REPORT

DECEDENT: Christopher Ryan Scholtes

CASE: 25-12026

DATE OF EXAMINATION: 11/06/2025

TIME: 0800 Hours

CAUSE OF DEATH:

Carbon monoxide toxicity

MANNER OF DEATH:

Suicide

HOW INJURY OCCURRED:

Exhaust inhalation in poorly ventilated environment

12/5/2025

Date Signed

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Daniel Casa".

**DANIEL CASA, MD
MEDICAL EXAMINER**

FINDINGS

- I. Carbon monoxide toxicity
 - A. Elevated postmortem blood carboxyhemoglobin level (80% saturation)
 - B. Found in poorly ventilated environment

SUMMARY AND OPINION

Per investigative report and available medical records, the decedent is a 38-year-old male with a history of depression, anxiety, post-traumatic stress disorder, attention-deficit hyperactivity disorder, remote cocaine, alcohol, and cannabis use, and degenerative joint disease, who was found by his wife and live-in nanny unresponsive in a running car in his garage with a hose connected from the car's exhaust to the driver's window. Next of kin turned off the car, left the keys in the ignition, rolled the windows down, and opened the garage door before calling 911. Emergency medical personnel and law enforcement arrived on scene, and death was pronounced on November 5, 2025. A note that was suicidal in nature was found in the residence, and the decedent's living will was found on the top of the car. Also found in the garage was an open ladder and a rope secured around a ceiling beam with a hanging looped end tied with knots. He reportedly made suicidal statements after the death of his daughter, and he had recently exhibited a depressed mood. He reportedly was under stress due to a recent trial regarding his daughter's death and was expected to voluntarily surrender himself to law enforcement for a prison sentence on November 5, 2025. There were no concerns for suspicious circumstances.

Postmortem examination showed an adult male with the findings outlined above.

Toxicologic analysis of postmortem iliac blood detected diphenhydramine. Caffeine and cannabinoids were presumptively positive. The carboxyhemoglobin level was 80% saturation consistent with carbon monoxide inhalation and toxicity. See separate toxicology report for details.

Based on the above findings, reported circumstances of death, and all other investigative information received to date and as available to me, it is my opinion that the cause of death is carbon monoxide toxicity.

The manner of death is suicide.

As with all death investigations, opinions expressed herein are amenable to change should new, reliable, and pertinent information come to light.

The Maricopa County Medical Examiner's Office is required by statute (A.R.S. § 11-594(A) (2) and (4)) to certify the cause and manner of death following completion of the death investigation of each case over which it assumes jurisdiction, and to promptly execute a death certificate, on a form provided by the state registrar of vital statistics, indicating the cause and manner of death. The form provided by the state registrar of vital statistics includes five manners of death: homicide, suicide, accident, natural, and undetermined. The determination of manner of death is a forensic determination by the pathologist