

# When did Wyman die?

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Dan Coyro/Sentinel

Deputy coroners Dan Alexander and John Strimaitis load Wyman's body into station wagon.

## Sheriff is appreciative of ending

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SANTA CRUZ — Investigators are awaiting autopsy results to determine when fugitive Leslie Wyman, suspected of shooting two law officers a week ago today, committed suicide.

Wyman's body was found at 7:45 a.m. Sunday at the base of a clump of redwood trees near the Rincon area of Henry Cowell State Park, about three miles south of where Sheriff's Deputy Mike Gray and Highway Patrolman Jeff Lee were shot.

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## No-new-t unveiled

SACRAMENTO (AP) — Gov. George Deukmejian unveiled a \$25.7 billion no-new-taxes state budget today to help solve the state's \$1.5 billion deficit in half by June 30, 1984, by spreading the deficit into the 1983-84 fiscal year.

"Rather than raising taxes, I propose California to solvency over an 18-month period," said in remarks prepared for his first address today. "This is a balanced budget that increases."

Described by Finance Director Mike Frazer as a "balanced spending plan."

## Authorities await autopsy results

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Gray was shot twice in the abdomen after stopping a hitchhiker in Felton last Monday. Lee, after responding to Gray's radio call for help, was shot in the wrist and leg.

Authorities later identified the hitchhiker-gunner as Wyman, 44, who Sheriff Al Noren characterized as a "survivalist."

Dominican Hospital spokesman Frank McGovern said this morning Gray still is "in very critical condition, although this last weekend he made improvement. Certainly the fact he has improved is heartening," but he still is fighting for his life.

Lee was released from Santa Cruz Community Hospital Thursday.

Wyman died of a single gunshot wound to the temple, according to Sheriff Noren, who said he was "appreciative" of the way the manhunt ended. Wyman's suicide, Noren said, prevented the possibility of further injury to lawmen or of an officer having to kill Wyman "and have to live with that." The county also was spared "a half-million dollars" in court costs because of a "bizarre act by a deranged individual," Noren said.

Sheriff's Lt. Lloyd Gray, who headed the manhunt, said Sunday morning that he had expected from the start there would have been a "firefight" if deputies would have had to try to arrest the suspect. Wyman, described as a survivalist, "would have had the advantage" in the woods, said Gray, as coroner's deputies hauled Wyman's body out of the park.

Concern for safety was a primary consideration in a decision to wait until daybreak Sunday before going into the area where a Santa Cruz fisherman had reported seeing a man either sleeping or dead near a trail shortly before dark

Saturday, said Noren.

Jack Harrell, construction crew leader at Municipal Wharf, told The Sentinel he was returning up a path to Highway 9 with a 12-pound steelhead he had caught in the "four rock" area San Lorenzo River when he spotted a man "lying in the fetal position" about 150 feet ahead.

Harrell said he couldn't tell if the man, whose back was to him, was dead or sleeping. Because of publicity about the shootings and manhunt, Harrell said he didn't approach closer. "I didn't want to take any chances," said Harrell, who deviated from the path around the body and went home to notify the sheriff's office.

Gray said deputies "contained" the area overnight and sent men down to check the area when Harrell arrived about 7 a.m. to point out the location, about 120 yards down from Highway 9.

Deputies found Wyman lying on his side, clutching a bedroll. A 9mm semi-automatic handgun was found alongside. Noren said the gun "appears to be the same one" used in the shootings of Deputy Gray and CHP Officer Lee, but confirmation is needed from ballistics examination.

Noren said deputies did not immediately check the area of the fisherman's report because "it was just another sighting" among hundreds. The location, Noren explained, was down in the woods and it was dark. "If he were (alive and) gone, it would be almost impossible to track him in the dark." And, said Sgt. Carl Keubler, it's not uncommon to leave a body in a remote location until daylight

for recovery.

"There was no reason to believe what I had reported was any different than any other," said Harrell. "I have nothing but praise for the way deputies handled the situation," he said.

Noren said this morning coroner's deputies had reported finding no other gunshot wounds on Wyman's body. There had been a question if any of the three shots the wounded Lee had managed to get off had hit the suspect.

During the massive search, investigators described Wyman as a self-styled survivalist who had lived in the woods for the past 10 years, possibly living in hollowed-out trees or burrows in hill-sides.

There was no evidence of any permanence in the area where Wyman's body was found. "From all reports, he had camps all over the place," said Lt. Gray.

Autopsy reports, including certain chemical tests, will help investigators approximate the time of Wyman's death to aid them in understanding how the suspect had eluded them for nearly a week in the park.

Establishing time of death, said Noren, will be more difficult than usual in this case because of the cold weather in the area which may have refrigerated the body and slowed down the decomposition process.

Without establishing time of death, investigators can only speculate on the suspect's actions after the shootings. Because law officers had immediately surrounded the park, Noren said he believes Wyman never got out. He said "it doesn't seem possible" that Wyman would have

left the park, gone somewhere and contemplated suicide and then returned to the park to shoot himself.

If Wyman had committed suicide the same day as the shootings, his body could have gone undetected, Noren and Lt. Gray said. Dog teams primarily searched deeper in the park, down along the banks of the river, said Gray. "They would not automatically have searched this high unless they had a scent."

Noren said searchers often come very close without spotting a missing person "and that person wants to be found."

Noren said the infrared detection device on a helicopter brought to the search from San Bernardino County senses body heat. If Wyman had been dead when the helicopter was flying over, it would not have detected the body, which, Noren theorized, "would have been approximately the same temperature as the ground."

Noren said he is led to believe that Wyman took his life out of fear of being confined if captured. "That (loss of freedom) apparently was his bugaboo."

According to court documents from San Mateo County, Wyman was arrested in 1972 and charged with assaulting three watershed officers who had stopped him for illegally camping at the Crystal Springs Reservoir. Wyman was found mentally incompetent to stand trial. Court-appointed psychiatrists diagnosed Wyman as a chronic schizophrenic and said he was at that time "potentially dangerous if experiencing thoughts and feelings which caused him to believe he was in danger of losing his physical or psychic freedom."

## 17 prison awards held hostage

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