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## Solicitor's death ruled 'unusual' suicide

### Body was found near hiking trail

By Kathy Scruggs  
STAFF WRITER

An Atlanta Traffic Court solicitor whose body was found earlier this month near a rugged North Georgia hiking trail committed suicide, officials said Tuesday.

Walter "Ken" London, 55, of Marietta died of hyperthermia and cocaine intoxication, Deputy Chief Fulton County Medical Examiner Gerald Gowitt ruled.

"It's an unusual cause of death for a suicide, nonetheless," Dr. Gowitt said. "The bottom line is, I think he went up there intending Walter to die. Whether London it was falling off a cliff, freeing to death, taking cocaine or shooting himself — it doesn't matter."

Mr. London's body was found April 6 in White County below a treacherous stretch of Whiskey Gap Trail off the Richard B. Russell Scenic Highway about a week after he disappeared.

**He knew of investigation**

Federal and state law enforcement officials said that an investigation had recently been launched to check allegations that Mr. London was removing drunk driving offenses from defendants' records in exchange for payments. Officials said evidence indicated he knew of the investigation.

Mr. London disappeared March 30 after leaving for work and kissing his wife goodbye. In the days leading up to that, he had given away "treasured belongings," Dr. Gowitt said.


"He leaves a note," Dr. Gowitt said. "That says a lot to me."

The note read, "I'm sorry, but I'm more valuable to you this way," Dr. Gowitt said. It contained instructions about money in his pension fund and vacation time owed.

Dr. Gowitt said toxicology tests could not determine how much cocaine Mr. London ingested but "he had been taking cocaine most of the day."

Mr. London also had partially undressed when his body was found, Dr. Gowitt said.

"It was very cold," he said. "Once he takes his clothes off in weather that is about freezing, it doesn't take too awfully long to die — a few hours."



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