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Autopsy: Covington man drowned

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CALIFORNIA, Ky. – The man who went missing from a Halloween party in unincorporated Campbell County early Saturday morning and was found dead in a nearby lake Sunday died from drowning, police said.

An autopsy performed Monday morning showed water in the lungs of Isaac Ripberger, 28, of Covington, said Lt. Col. Todd Straman, assistant Campbell County police chief.

Police haven't determined why or how Ripberger ended up in a lake near the home on Reis Lane, where he attended a Halloween party Friday night.

There aren't any signs of foul play, police said.

"Our preliminary investigation shows that he most likely drowned," said Officer Steve Kush, with the Campbell County Police Department. "We haven't ruled out anything for sure. Things are looking toward an accidental drowning. We are following a couple of leads."

Friends last saw Ripberger alive on the front step of the house at about 3:30 a.m. Saturday morning, said Kush.

Police interviews with party-goers indicate Ripberger was intoxicated, but police are awaiting toxicology reports, Kush said.

The friends were attempting to get their vehicle unstuck from the mud.

"It was cold and raining," Kush said. "What few people were left at the party were trying to get the vehicle unstuck. He was waiting on the porch. Once they got the vehicle unstuck, no one could find him."

They had thought he went back into the house to spend the night, he said. Friends reported him missing Saturday morning when they realized he wasn't there, Kush said.

Boone County Water Rescue Sunday afternoon found Ripberger's body in a nearby lake within sight of the house where the party was held. He was still wearing his costume, a 1920s style pinstripe suit, but the jacket and tie were missing, Kush said. The party had a Roaring '20s theme, Kush said.
