

## Rx drug cocktail 'accident' killed Heath Ledger; feds launch probe into death

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Federal agents launched a probe into Heath Ledger's death Wednesday after authorities ruled he died of a prescription drug cocktail - including an addictive painkiller called hillbilly heroin.

In all, six meds were found in the "Brokeback Mountain" actor's body, and the DEA wants to know how he got them.

"We're trying to identify if these were legitimate prescriptions that he had, or if they were illegally obtained or dispensed and by whom," a source told the Daily News. The Drug Enforcement Administration subpoenaed the city medical examiner's findings.

Sleeping pills and anti-anxiety drugs were seized in Ledger's SoHo loft on Jan. 22, when his lifeless body was found in a bedroom.

Wednesday's toxicology report also revealed Ledger's use of painkillers hydrocodone and oxycodone, the ingredient in OxyContin, a man-made opiate so popular in rural areas that it's often called hillbilly heroin.

Three of the drugs found had been prescribed in Europe, and the others locally, sources told The News.

Doctors said it was unlikely any one physician would prescribe all six drugs at once.

"I've wracked my head trying to think of it, and I haven't been able to think of any reasonable clinical scenario where it would be appropriate," said Dr. Vatsal Thakkar, a psychiatry professor at NYU Medical Center.

Medical examiner spokeswoman Ellen Borakove said the levels of drugs found in him were not high - but it was the combination that killed him.

"We have concluded that the manner of death is an accident, resulting from the abuse of prescription medications," she said.

"He did not have any drugs like cocaine," she added.

Ledger's father, Kim, said in a statement that the results "put an end to speculation."

"We learned today the combination of doctor-prescribed drugs proved lethal for our boy. Heath's accidental death serves as a caution to the hidden dangers of combining prescription medication, even at low dosage," he said.

The sad findings behind the demise of the Oscar-nominated Australian star came as his family prepares to finally lay him to rest.

Ex-fiancée Michelle Williams arrived in Perth, Australia, yesterday with the couple's 2-year-old daughter Matilda, who was clutching a stuffed white rabbit. A private funeral is expected in days.

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