Identifying Manner, Cause, and Mechanism of Death

For each of the following cases, determine possible manner, cause, and mechanism of death.

1. The decedent was found in a home destroyed by fire. Investigators determined that the fire started near a wood stove that was used to heat the home. The home did not have smoke detectors. Soot was present in the respiratory system of the deceased man. There were no signs of other injuries or foul play.
   Manner:
   Cause:
   Mechanism:

2. The decedent had terminal brain cancer. She had no other health conditions.
   Manner:
   Cause:
   Mechanism:

3. A man was stabbed during the course of a robbery. His injuries caused extensive bleeding and eventually death.
   Manner:
   Cause:
   Mechanism:

4. The decedent jumped from a cliff into a river. He did not resurface after going under the water. During autopsy, the medical examiner discovered that he had hit his head on a rock, which likely rendered him unconscious but did not lead to his death. His lungs were filled with water.
   Manner:
   Cause:
   Mechanism:
The Body Farm Video Clip

"Nearly everything known about the science of human decomposition comes from one place—forensic anthropologist William Bass' Body Farm." — CNN.com

1. Name two animals that feed on decaying bodies at night.

2. Dr. Bass uses what analogy to explain how the epidermal layer of skin "slips" off of the underlying dermal layer of skin?

3. True or False
   It is possible to re-hydrate the epidermal layer of skin and obtain fingerprints from it.

4. In the Patterson case, facial reconstruction was not enough for a positive identification. How did they eventually get a positive identification?