

Inquest Scenarios

Hon. Mark Russo, Justice of the Peace, Rockwall County Pct. 3

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Resources

- Chapter 49, Code of Criminal Procedure (handout included)
- Transportation Code Sec. 547.752
- American Forensics (Dr. Gruszecki) – (214)221-2700
- Health & Safety Code, Ch. 711
- Inquests Deskbook (updated November 2023!)
- Texas Admin Code Title 25, Part 1, Chapter 103, Rule 103.6
- Texas Lawyers Assistance Program (TLAP) – tlaphelps.org
- <https://www.dshs.texas.gov/injury-prevention/ems-trauma-registries/justice-the-peace>

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Scenario 1

- Bill, a military veteran, wrecks his car on the highway in a head-on collision with another vehicle on the wrong side of the highway. Traffic has backed up on both sides of the highway and the highway is completely shut down. Law enforcement received reports to dispatch that his vehicle was swerving. Upon investigation, you find his spine is broken in half. The family is requesting a cremation.

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Scenario 2

- Nadia, a foreign national, falls out of a boat on Lake Tawakoni. The ME, following an autopsy, rules the death a drowning, and also determines that she was pregnant at the time of death. The next of kin cannot be determined.

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Scenario 3

- Lucy is taken to the hospital ER unresponsive, where she dies. Some bruising was found and ligature marks around the neck. Police notify you that her husband, Barry, currently has an EPO against him, protecting Lucy, set to expire in two days. They have three children: Josh who is 19 and currently in college at the University of Oklahoma, Lisa (12) who found her mom and called 911, and a third child that is 7 months old named Max. Lucy's parents demand to see the body. Barry says he wants to Lucy cremated.

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Scenario 4

- A plane carrying six people crashes in a field right on the county line. Three bodies are found in your county. Two are found in the other county, and parts of another body are found in both counties.

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Scenario 5

- The deceased is Joe, a United States citizen, 45 years old, 5' 3" and weighs 300 pounds. Joe's religious beliefs do not allow the cutting of the body. The ER doctor saw signs of a cardiac event and believes the death is natural, but will not sign the death certificate. He was complaining of chest pains and called 911 and was alive when he was brought to the ER.

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Scenario 6

- You are called to an apartment for a possible drug overdose. The driver license states the decedent is a male named Terry. However, friends and family arriving on scene call them a female named Sunshine. There is also a cat and dog on the premises.

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Scenario 7

- A hospice calls to report a death.

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Scenario 8

- Mildred, an 80-year-old woman, overdoses on medication. The fire department finds a suicide note next to her. She is transported to the ER and the family authorizes termination of treatment. Life support is removed and she lives for 5 more days.

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