



VERDICT AT CORONERS INQUEST

FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS AS A RESULT OF THE CORONER'S INQUEST PURSUANT TO SECTION 38 OF THE CORONERS ACT, [SBC 2007] C 15, INTO THE DEATH OF

Ford

SURNAME

Craig, Andrew

GIVEN NAMES

An Inquest was held at Coast Bastion Hotel, in the municipality of Nanaimo

in the Province of British Columbia, on the following dates: March 14, 2022 to March 17, 2022

before: Lyn Blenkinsop, Presiding Coroner.

into the death of Ford (Last Name) Craig (First Name) Andrew (Middle Name) (Age) Male Female

The following findings were made:

Date and Time of Death: June 14, 2016 (Date) 10:45 AM (time)

Place of Death: 1600 Block Country Club Drive (Location) Nanaimo, BC (Municipality/Province)

Medical Cause of Death:

(1) Immediate Cause of Death: a) Gunshot wounds of right chest and back

Due to or as a consequence of

Antecedent Cause if any: b)

Due to or as a consequence of

Giving rise to the immediate cause (a) above, stating underlying cause last. c)

(2) Other Significant Conditions Contributing to Death:

Classification of Death: Accidental Homicide Natural Suicide Undetermined

The above verdict certified by the Jury on the 17th day of March AD, 2022

L. Blenkinsop
Presiding Coroner's Printed Name

[Signature]
Presiding Coroner's Signature



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PARTIES INVOLVED IN THE INQUEST:

Presiding Coroner:	Lyn Blenkinsop
Inquest Counsel:	Christopher Godwin
Court Reporting/Recording Agency:	Verbatim Words West Ltd.
Participants/Counsel:	Robert L. Gibson and David Kwan, counsel for the Attorney General of Canada, representing the interests of the RCMP.

The Sheriff took charge of the jury and recorded 10 exhibits. 17 witnesses were duly sworn and testified.

PRESIDING CORONER'S COMMENTS:

The following is a brief summary of the circumstances of the death as set out in the evidence presented to the jury at the inquest. This is to assist in understanding, but does not replace, the jury verdict and recommendations. This summary is not evidence.

This inquest dealt with the death of Craig Andrew Ford who died in the 1600 Block of Country Club Drive in Nanaimo, of gunshot wounds to his right chest and back.

The jury heard testimony about the events leading up to Mr. Ford's death, and the police response and viewed cell phone video of part of the incident.

Mr. Ford was described by family and friends as friendly and helpful, and a talented craftsman.

Mr. Ford's Probation Officer testified that he was on probation at the time of his death and reported him to be a model probation client who also had exhibited exemplary behaviour while incarcerated. She testified that Mr. Ford was arrested on drug related charges, breaching his probation, on June 12, 2016, and released the next day while the charges were pending.

Mr. Ford had been involved with Mental Health and Substance Use Services since 2011, when he sought assistance for methamphetamine use. He attended counselling and residential programs and displayed no evidence of relapse up until the time of the drug related charges.

Mr. Ford was seen twice prior to the incident by one of his tenants on June 14, 2016. At about 0500 hours, he was sitting cross-legged on his driveway. He stated that he was waiting for someone. His tenant saw him again before 0700 hours, on his patio, wrapped in a blanket.

On the morning of June 14, 2016, at approximately 1040 hours, staff at a local Dairy Queen restaurant called 911 to report that a distraught, confused man was in the parking lot holding a knife. The man, Craig Ford, was not threatening anyone and the manager of the restaurant approached him and tried to talk to him.



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When Mr. Ford ran away, the manager followed him, staying in contact with 911. When he tried to approach him again, Mr. Ford reiterated that he wanted to be left alone and he ran towards the street.

The jury heard that a uniformed officer arrived in a marked unit, left her vehicle, drew her weapon, and attempted to engage him. She believed the situation was de-escalating as Mr. Ford responded to her and, although still holding the knife, did not move away or towards her.

A second uniformed officer in a marked police car arrived, stationed himself behind the open door of his vehicle, and took over trying to make contact with Mr. Ford because he believed the first officer's attempts were not succeeding. He yelled at Mr. Ford to stop and drop the knife, attracting his attention. Mr. Ford turned toward the second officer, who then stated that Mr. Ford was moving towards him and the second officer fired twice from a distance of about two metres.

A third officer arrived as this was taking place and all three officers approached Mr. Ford, disarmed him, started resuscitative efforts and called for an ambulance.

All three officers testified that they were trained in de-escalation techniques but none of them carried non-lethal weapons other than pepper spray and batons. All three were wearing stab vests.

Many of the witnesses, including the involved police officers, had differing recollections of the events on June 14, 2016, and the descriptions of the knife itself and how it was being held, and of how Mr. Ford was presenting and moving, varied widely.

An ambulance arrived within minutes of the officer's call, at approximately 1053 hours, and took over cardio-pulmonary resuscitation from two of the officers, transporting Mr. Ford to the Emergency Department of Nanaimo Regional General Hospital. Mr. Ford had no vital signs upon arrival at the scene or at the hospital.

A pathologist reviewed the autopsy report, that had been prepared by another pathologist, and testified that Mr. Ford had two entrance gunshot wounds and two exit gunshot wounds. One entered his anterior right chest and exited posteriorly on a front to back, level trajectory. The other entrance wound was on Mr. Ford's right upper back and exited anteriorly just under the right collar bone. The trajectory was from back to front and slightly upwards. These wounds would have caused significant injuries and no other abnormalities were noted. The pathologist stated that either injury could have been fatal on its own.



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A toxicologist testified that methamphetamine concentrations indicative of recreational use were found in Mr. Ford's samples and would not be considered unexpected in a regular user. He also stated that the drugs could potentially cause aggression, psychosis and paranoia in higher doses and could cause anger at recreational levels.

The jury heard from additional witnesses who addressed policing procedures and training. An expert explained the Use of Force model used by the RCMP in training situations and on-going practice.

A representative of the Independent Investigations Office testified about their role in investigating police involved deaths.



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Pursuant to Section 38 of the Coroners Act, the following recommendations are forwarded to the Chief Coroner of the Province of British Columbia for distribution to the appropriate agency:

JURY RECOMMENDATIONS:

To: RCMP E Division

1. That consideration be given to providing body and/or dash cameras to all police officers/units in the Province of British Columbia.

Presiding Coroner Comment: *The jury heard evidence of events from multiple witnesses that was inconsistent and conflicting.*

To: RCMP E Division

**BC Ministry of Public Safety and Solicitor General-Community Corrections
BC Ministry of Mental Health and Addictions**

2. Develop a plan to promote more timely communication between agencies on release of detained persons with mental health and/or addiction issues, in order to conduct assessments and/or referrals prior to release.

Presiding Coroner Comment: *The jury heard evidence that Mr. Ford was arrested for breach of probation related to drug use on June 12, 2016, and was detained then released on his own recognizance on June 13, 2016. The jury also heard that he had methamphetamine in his system at the time of his death on June 14, 2016.*