



CHIEF CORONER

GUIDANCE No.10

WARNINGS TO JURIES

These or similar warnings must be given to every jury at the beginning of the inquest, after they are sworn in. The warnings may be repeated, usually in shorter form, at the end of each day, if required, and particularly towards the close of a long inquest.

In accordance with Guidance No. 27 'Jury Irregularities' each juror should be given a copy of the notice 'Your legal responsibilities as a juror' that have been distributed to all coroners in England & Wales. The warnings below feature in that notice but reinforce them.

1. Members of the jury, you will decide the questions that arise in this inquest on the evidence which you see and hear in court, and on nothing else.
2. Do not discuss the evidence except amongst yourselves when you are all together in private. Do not discuss the inquest with family or friends when you go home, tempting though that may be, because it will be you and not they who hear the evidence in court, and you and not they who will come to conclusions in due course.
3. Do not communicate with anyone about the inquest in any way at any time; that includes by phone or text, chat lines, twitter or blogs.
4. During the case, if you happen to travel to court with a fellow juror, or you happen to bump into one another away from court, please do not discuss the evidence you have heard. Any discussions you have about this inquest should be whilst in the privacy of the jury room.
5. Do not be tempted to do your own research; just listen to the evidence. Do not go to the scene or make your own inquiries. Do not look anything up on the internet or on social networking sites such as Facebook. None of that is evidence. Why is this rule so important? Because our whole system of justice relies on open justice. All of those involved in this inquest and the public are entitled to know and hear all the evidence on which you have reached your conclusions. If you were to introduce into the jury room the fruits of your own investigations be they on the Internet, Facebook or Twitter then they would not have been tested in open court for all to see and hear. We all know how wonderful the Internet is and how useful search engines such as Google can be. We also all know how unreliable they can sometimes be. Seemingly authoritative pages on the Internet can turn out to be completely false. The simple rule is: do not make your own investigations. Of course this does not mean you cannot use the Internet for your personal affairs. It simply means do not use it to investigate this inquest.

6. These are important directions, given by me the coroner, and you must follow them. If you disobey them, any of them, it may amount to contempt of court or even a criminal offence, both of which can be punished by a fine or imprisonment.
7. That is why I must warn you about these things. And if any of it does happen it may bring the inquest grinding to a halt. That might mean having to start all over again with another jury, which would not be good.
8. Do not let anybody talk to you about the inquest. If anyone tries to, tell the coroner's officer, who will tell me.
9. If you have any serious concerns about anything which takes place outside the jury room, or even inside it, do not hesitate to tell the coroner's officer straightaway, so that I get to know about it.
10. [*In an inquest likely to attract publicity.* It is possible that there will be some publicity about this inquest and reporting of it in the press. The press are entitled to publish reports of legal proceedings that are held in public. There are rules governing those reports. It is possible you may see, or hear some of those reports. However good the press reports are, they are unlikely to report all of the evidence that is given in court. Publicity or press reporting is not evidence. Each of you has taken an oath or affirmation to consider the issues and your conclusion in the inquest on the evidence, and it is on the evidence that you hear in court that you will make your decisions. To ensure fairness to all can I ask each of you makes sure that your focus is on what is said in court in your presence and that you ignore any publicity or press reporting the inquest may attract.]
11. At the end of the evidence I will give you directions on the law and provide you with a summary of the evidence that has been given in court. Please keep an open mind. The evidence will be presented to you over the coming hours/days/weeks. Do not jump to conclusions. The time to come to any conclusions is once you have heard all of the evidence and the directions I will give to you and you are in the privacy of your jury room.

**HH JUDGE MARK LUCRAFT QC
CHIEF CORONER**

**23 October 2013
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