



**CORONER'S REPORT**  
INTO THE DEATH OF

[REDACTED] Surname	[REDACTED] Given Names
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Of  
Vancouver, BC  
(Municipality of Residence)

I, Bilal Waheed, a Coroner in the Province of British Columbia, have investigated the death of the above named, which was reported to me on the 1st day of February, 2010, and as a result of such investigation have determined the following facts and circumstances:

Gender:  Male  Female      Date of Death: 01 February, 2010  
 Age: 54 years      Time of Death: 1951 hours  
 Place/Municipality of Death: Highway, Richmond  
 Municipality of Illness/Injury: Richmond

**MEDICAL CAUSE OF DEATH**

(1) *Immediate Cause of Death:* a) Consistent with smoke inhalation

*Antecedent Cause if any:* Due to or as a consequence of  
b) Motor vehicle fire

*Giving rise to the immediate cause (a) above, stating underlying cause last.* c) Due to or as a consequence of

(2) *Other Significant Conditions Contributing to Death:*

By What Means      Motor Vehicle Incident

Classification of death       Accidental       Homicide       Natural       Suicide       Undetermined

Date Signed: 30 June 2010

Bilal Waheed, Coroner, Province of British Columbia





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[REDACTED]

SURNAME

[REDACTED]

GIVEN NAMES

**INVESTIGATIVE FINDINGS**

On February 1, 2010 the Deas Island RCMP reported the death of an unidentified male following a motor vehicle incident. The decedent was later identified by forensic dental examination to be Mr. [REDACTED]

Mr. [REDACTED] was the driver of a motor vehicle travelling northbound on Highway 99 and approaching the George Massey Tunnel. According to witnesses the vehicle was in the right lane and appeared to be travelling within the speed limit. It suddenly accelerated and veered onto the left lane and at this time flames appeared to be coming out of the engine compartment. It struck the west wall of the tunnel, veered to the east wall, striking it and then swerved back to the west wall striking it and coming to a stop approximately 100 metres inside the tunnel where it was completely engulfed by flames. Passersby attempted to open the door of the vehicle to rescue any occupants but were unable because of the fire. Nothing could be seen inside the vehicle because of the smoke. Richmond Fire Department personnel arrived and extinguished the fire. The driver was the single occupant of the vehicle and was deceased. The vehicle was registered to Mr. [REDACTED]

The George Massey Tunnel consists of two northbound and two southbound lanes. It has an asphalt surface which at the time of the incident was free of defects. The road at the time of the incident was wet due to rain. The posted speed limit on Highway 99 at the place of the incident is 80 kilometres per hour. According to the RCMP Collision Analyst's report road and weather conditions were not considered to have contributed to the incident.

The motor vehicle involved in the incident was a 1981 model Volkswagen Rabbit. According to the vehicle inspection report there were burnt deposits of engine oil on the rear exhaust manifold. The most likely cause of the fire identified by the vehicle inspector was leaking engine oil that ignited on coming in contact with the hot exhaust manifold.

The probable causes of the vehicle suddenly veering and striking the walls of the George Massey Tunnel are that Mr. [REDACTED] the driver, may have lost control due to loss of consciousness caused by smoke inhalation or panicking on seeing his vehicle on fire.

**POST MORTEM EXAMINATION AND TOXICOLOGICAL ANALYSIS**

The autopsy revealed no disease process that could have caused a sudden natural death.

The pathologist identified smoke inhalation as the cause of death

Blood: Carboxyhemoglobin 63 %

Carboxyhemoglobin in blood results from inhalation of carbon monoxide and is evidence of smoke inhalation. Levels greater than 60% are considered fatal.



BRITISH  
COLUMBIA

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[Redacted] \_\_\_\_\_

SURNAME

[Redacted] \_\_\_\_\_

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**CONCLUSION**

Investigations have revealed that Mr. [Redacted] died on February 1, 2010 of smoke inhalation as a result of a fire in the motor vehicle that he was driving.

I classify this death as accidental.

Pursuant to Section 16 of the Coroners Act, the following recommendation is forwarded to the Chief Coroner of the Province of British Columbia for distribution to the appropriate agency:



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[Redacted]

SURNAME

[Redacted]

GIVEN NAMES

**RECOMMENDATION**

To: Gord Couling  
Regional Coordinator  
ICBC Lower Mainland Road Safety  
100 Blue Mountain Street  
Coquitlam BC V3K 1A2

1. Consider issuing a reminder to motor vehicle owners that leaking oil on a hot engine can result in a fire while driving. While it is not common for a motor vehicle to catch fire in this manner the consequences could be catastrophic should the driver lose control of his vehicle.

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Bilal Waheed, Coroner, Province of British Columbia

