ATTORNEY GENERAL OF TEXAS
GREG ABBOTT

September 26, 2006

Ms. Pamela Smith
Assistant General Counsel
Texas Department of Public Safety
5805 North Lamar Boulevard, Box 4087
Austin, Texas 78773-0001

OR2006-11180

Dear Ms. Smith:

You ask whether certain information is subject to required public disclosure under the Public Information Act (the "Act"), chapter 552 of the Government Code. Your request was assigned ID# 260921.

The Department of Public Safety (the "department") received a request for information related to the Texas Rangers' investigation of the death of a named individual. You state that the department has released some information, including basic information,[1] arrest warrants, probable cause affidavits, and an autopsy report. You claim that the remainder of the requested information is excepted from disclosure under section 552.108 of the Government Code. We have considered the exception you claim and reviewed the submitted information.

Section 552.108(a)(2) of the Government Code excepts from disclosure information concerning a criminal investigation that concluded in a result other than conviction or deferred adjudication. Gov't Code § 552.108(a)(2). A governmental body claiming section 552.108(a)(2) must demonstrate that the requested information relates to a criminal investigation that has concluded in a final result other than a conviction or deferred adjudication. You state that the submitted information pertains to a criminal investigation that the department considers closed. You further state that no criminal prosecution is pending or anticipated. Based on your representations and our review, we find that

[1]*See* Gov't Code § 552.108(c); *see also* Open Records Decision No. 127 (1976) (summarizing types of basic information).

section 552.108(a)(2) is applicable in this instance. Therefore, with the exception of basic information, which you state has been released, the department may withhold the submitted information pursuant to section 552.108 of the Government Code.

This letter ruling is limited to the particular records at issue in this request and limited to the facts as presented to us; therefore, this ruling must not be relied upon as a previous determination regarding any other records or any other circumstances.

This ruling triggers important deadlines regarding the rights and responsibilities of the governmental body and of the requestor. For example, governmental bodies are prohibited from asking the attorney general to reconsider this ruling. *Id.* § 552.301(f). If the governmental body wants to challenge this ruling, the governmental body must appeal by filing suit in Travis County within 30 calendar days. *Id.* § 552.324(b). In order to get the full benefit of such an appeal, the governmental body must file suit within 10 calendar days. *Id.* § 552.353(b)(3), (c). If the governmental body does not appeal this ruling and the governmental body does not comply with it, then both the requestor and the attorney general have the right to file suit against the governmental body to enforce this ruling. *Id.* § 552.321(a).

If this ruling requires the governmental body to release all or part of the requested information, the governmental body is responsible for taking the next step. Based on the statute, the attorney general expects that, upon receiving this ruling, the governmental body will either release the public records promptly pursuant to section 552.221(a) of the Government Code or file a lawsuit challenging this ruling pursuant to section 552.324 of the Government Code. If the governmental body fails to do one of these things, then the requestor should report that failure to the attorney general's Open Government Hotline, toll free, at (877) 673-6839. The requestor may also file a complaint with the district or county attorney. *Id.* § 552.3215(e).

If this ruling requires or permits the governmental body to withhold all or some of the requested information, the requestor can appeal that decision by suing the governmental body. *Id.* § 552.321(a); *Texas Dep't of Pub. Safety v. Gilbreath*, 842 S.W.2d 408, 411 (Tex. App.—Austin 1992, no writ).

Please remember that under the Act the release of information triggers certain procedures for costs and charges to the requestor. If records are released in compliance with this ruling, be sure that all charges for the information are at or below the legal amounts. Questions or complaints about over-charging must be directed to Hadassah Schloss at the Office of the Attorney General at (512) 475-2497.

If the governmental body, the requestor, or any other person has questions or comments about this ruling, they may contact our office. Although there is no statutory deadline for

contacting us, the attorney general prefers to receive any comments within 10 calendar days of the date of this ruling.

Sincerely,

James A. Person III
Assistant Attorney General
Open Records Division

JAP/dh

Ref: ID# 260921

Enc. Submitted documents

c: Ms. Katie Humphrey
Williamson County Bureau
Austin American-Statesman
203 East Main Street
Round Rock, Texas 78664
(w/o enclosures)