



KEN PAXTON

ATTORNEY GENERAL *of* TEXAS

CUSTODIAL DEATH REPORT

Agency Information

CDR Number: 16-95-UF

Version Type: ORIGINAL
VERSION

Report Date: 10/5/2026 10:56
AM

Status: Submitted

Agency/Facility Information

Agency Name: La Grange Police
Dept.

Agency Address: 243 South College
St.

Agency City: La Grange

Agency State: TX

Agency Zip: 78945

Director Information

Director Salutation: Chief

Director First Name: Charles

Director Middle Name: D.

Director Last Name: Gilbreath

Reporter Name: Charles Gilbreath

Reporter Email: chief@cityoflg.com

Decedent Information

Identity of Deceased

First Name: DANNY

Middle Name:

Last Name: RUCKERT

Suffix:

Date of Birth: 9/9/1982

Sex: Male

Race: Anglo or White

Age At Time Of Death: 34

Date/Time of Custody (arrest, incarceration) (mm/dd/yyyy hh:mm AM/PM):

Date/Time of Custody or
Incident: 9/9/2016 7:25 PM

Date/Time of Death (mm/dd/yyyy hh:mm AM/PM):

Death Date and Time: 9/9/2016 7:45 PM

Manner / Cause of Death

Has a medical examiner or coroner conducted an evaluation to determine a cause of death?

Medical Examiner/Coroner Yes, results
Evaluation?: pending

What was the manner of death? (select only one)

Manner of Death: Homicide (includes
Justifiable

Homicide)

Medical Cause of Death:

Medical Cause of Death:

PENDING AUTOPSY RESULTS

Had the decedent been receiving treatment for the medical condition that caused the death after admission to your jail's jurisdiction?

Medical Treatment: No

If death was an accident, homicide or suicide, who caused the death?

Who caused the death?: Law
enforcement/correctional
personnel

If a weapon caused the death, what type of weapon caused the death? (Hold CTRL to select all that apply)

Type of weapon that caused
death?: Handgun

Was the cause of death the result of a pre-existing medical condition or did the decedent develop the condition after admission?

Pre existing medical
condition?: Not Applicable;
cause of death was
accidental injury,
intoxication, suicide
or homicide

If death was an accident, homicide or suicide, what was the means of death?

Means of Death: Firearm

Location / Custody Information

Where did the event causing the death occur?

Street Address: 412 S
WASHINGTON
STREET

City: La Grange

County: Fayette

Zip: 78945

What location category best describes where the event causing the death occurred?

Location Category: Residence/Home

What type of custody/facility was the Decedent in at the time of death:

Type of Custody: Pre-Custodial Use
of Force

Specific type of custody/facility:

Specific Type of Custody/Facility:

Custody of Law Enforcement Personnel subsequent to arrest

What was the time and date of the deceased's entry into the law enforcement facility where the death occurred (mm/dd/yyyy hh:mm AM/PM):

Entry Date Time:

Entry Date Time N/A: ☒

Where did the death occur?

Death Location: Scene of incident

General Information

Did any other law enforcement agencies respond to calls for service related to this incident?

Other Agencies Respond?: Yes

What were the most serious offense(s) with which the deceased was (or would have been) charged with at the time of death?

Offense 1:

FAMILY VIOLENCE

Offense 2:

Offense 3:

Were the Charges:: Not filed at time of death

What were the types of charges or reason for contact? (Hold CTRL to select all that apply)

Type of Offense: Alcohol / drug offense

At any time during the incident and/or entry into the law enforcement facility, did the decedent display or use a weapon?

Decedent display/use of weapons: Yes, mark all that apply

Decedent Display or Use Weapon Details: Discharged firearm

At any time during the incident and/or entry into the law enforcement facility, did the decedent:

Attempt to Injure Others?: Yes (select all that apply)

Ways Decedent Attempted To Injure Others: Attempted to injure law enforcement personnel

At any time during the incident and/or entry into the law enforcement facility, did the decedent:

Appear intoxicated (alcohol or drugs):	Yes	Make suicidal statements?:	No
Exhibit any mental health problems?:	Unknown	Exhibit any medical problems?:	No

At any time during the incident and/or entry into the law enforcement facility, did the decedent:

Barricade self or initiate standoff?:	No	Resist being handcuffed or arrested?:	No
Physically attempt/assault officer(s):	Yes	Gain possession of officer's weapon:	No
Verbally threaten other(s) including law:	No	Escape or attempt to escape/flee custody:	No
Attempt gain possession officer's weapon:	No		

Was the deceased under restraint in the time leading up to the death or the events causing the death?

Under Restraint: No

Summary of Incident

Summary of How the Death Occurred: (max. 30,000 characters)

Summary:

On Wednesday, September 9th, 2026, at approximately 7:30PM. I, Officer Bret Meinardus, with the La Grange Police Department was dispatched to 412 S Washington Street on La Grange regarding a verbal disturbance between a woman and her adult son. Dispatch stated that the caller informed them that he (the adult son) had been drinking beer. I was on duty and dressed in the uniform of a La Grange Police Officer and driving a marked patrol car. I was the only City Officer on duty.

I went to the location and parked along the curb on South Washington Street and exited my patrol car, I

observed a white male standing in the yard area with a chain link fence around it and a elderly woman standing in the doorway who I believed to be the caller. I approached the front door to speak to the caller when the male in the yard area asked me why I was there and I believe I said I don't know or I'm not sure. I walked to the front door where the elderly woman, who was later identified as Mr. Ruckert's mother (Ruckert, Hattie). She was standing at the front door and I began speaking with her in the doorway. Mr. Ruckert's mother indicated she was the caller and she was having issues with her son. Through the doorway I observed a dimly lit living room with a cased opening towards the back left that appeared to lead further into the residence.

The opening was dark and did not appear to be lighted and due to the angle from where I was standing, whatever was beyond the opening was obscured from my view by the wall. It was around sunset but it was still light outside when I arrived at the location. I asked the elderly lady what was going on, and she stated her son was being mean to her and slamming doors around the house. She said that he had been drinking beer that he bought with the money she had given him and that he had been mean all day. Mrs. Ruckert repeatedly stated the "he scares me". At this point Mr. Ruckert entered the living room from the opening in the back left of the residence and began almost immediately arguing with his mother and at one point accidentally stepped on her toe.

While arguing with her, his mother stated that he shoved her into a room earlier and slammed the door, Mr. Ruckert denied shoving her and stated she has Alzheimer's, while Mrs. Ruckert stated she did not. During this argument Mrs. Ruckert repeatedly told her son that he scared her. Mr. Ruckert seemed to grow continually more agitated and aggressive as this argument went on. I asked Mr. Ruckert to come outside and talk to me. He stated no but that he would talk to me from the fenced area. Mr. Ruckert then handed me his driver's license without me asking for it. Mr. Ruckert was identified as Ruckert, Danny (W/M 09/09/1982) by Texas Driver's License #10401844.

Mr. Ruckert then stated "look at the numbers" which I didn't understand but took his driver's license anyway. When I reached up to key my microphone to run a license check, he stated that he didn't give me the license to run. I told him that I had to identify everyone at the scene of the incident, and he said, "Fuck This" and walked out of the living room using the back left opening towards the room I couldn't see into. I thought he was perhaps returning to the backyard (fenced area) so we could speak as he suggested. Mrs. Ruckert then stated that Mr. Ruckert has threatened suicide in the past.

I then stepped through the doorway, slightly into the living room and hollered out to Mr. Ruckert. I heard his footsteps coming from the back room. I walked back to the doorway and stood beside his mother in the doorway. Mr. Ruckert, at that point entered the living room from the back left, holding some type of long gun. When I saw the firearm I was in fear for my life and his mother's life. I believe I told him to stop and to drop the weapon while drawing my service pistol from the holster, but at that point things were happening so fast, I'm unsure of what I said exactly.

Mr. Ruckert fired the weapon from the hip towards the right wall/floor then began manipulating the action on the gun and it appeared he was making the gun ready to fire again. During this time I was still standing next to his mother in the doorway, his mother was slightly in front of me to my left and Mr. Ruckert was approximately 10 feet in front of me slightly to my right in the living room. At the speed that events were occurring, I did not have time to find cover or get Mr. Ruckert's elderly mother and myself to a safe location. I yelled again at which point I saw his shoulders begin to turn in such a way that I believe he was moving to point the gun towards me and his mother who was on my left side and slightly in front of me.

Mr. Ruckert had the gun at his hip pointing outwards and was turning towards us. I believe from his earlier demeanor the argument with his mother and his mother's statement about him threatening suicide that he was going to kill his mother and me at which point I fired. I believe I fired 4 or 5 rounds from my service pistol at Mr. Ruckert, as he was turning towards me and his mother, with the weapon in his hands pointing in our direction.

Mr. Ruckert collapsed back onto the couch in a seated position with the firearm falling onto the ground beside him. I immediately entered and attempted to render aid to Mr. Ruckert. I notified dispatch that shots had been fired, the suspect was down, to send Fayette County EMS, and notify Chief of Police David Gilbreath of the shooting. I then continued to give aid to Mr. Ruckert. I looked for bullet holes to apply pressure to in an attempt to stop the bleeding.

Mr. Ruckert was not speaking and began to gurgling. I got up to see if his mother was injured and she had fallen outside of the residence doorway and was lying on the front porch. I did not see blood on her and advised her EMS was on the way. Fayette County Sheriff's Deputy Sergeant Duanne Meagher arrived and started to pull Mr. Ruckert off of the couch onto the floor so chest compressions could be administered. I pulled Mr. Ruckert off the couch and Sergeant Meagher advised me to secure the weapons as Sergeant Meagher began administering chest compressions. I ran the weapon out to my vehicle and then returned to where Mr. Ruckert's mother had fallen and assisted her up onto her feet. EMS then arrived and began treating Mr. Ruckert.

