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Jury selection starts in Sinclair manslaughter trail

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Corsicana Daily Sun

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Jury selection began Monday morning in the manslaughter trial of Thomas "Tommy" Sinclair, who waged a four-year battle for possession of Mustang.

The charges stem from an Oct. 1, 2008, bar fight in which Fernando Ramirez, 35, was forcibly evicted from the Mustang strip club Wispers by Sinclair and the disc jockey/bouncer Jeff Ballew.

Ramirez received a head injury in the process and while his co-workers were driving him towards Buffalo Ramirez lost consciousness. He was declared dead at the Fairfield hospital on Oct. 2.

Sinclair was originally indicted for manslaughter and aggravated assault in April 2009, but the manslaughter charge was quashed on March 8, 2010, when Lagomarsino ruled that the law doesn't require someone to be proactive. In other words, just because Sinclair didn't call an ambulance didn't make him liable for manslaughter.

However, last week Sinclair was re-indicted on the same charges of manslaughter and aggravated assault, although the wording was changed slightly. His defense lawyer in the criminal case is Toby Shook of Dallas.

"We look forward to the criminal trial so we can get these facts before an objective jury," Shook said. "My client did not commit any criminal offense."

Shook said his client would not talk to the press just before the trial, but he promised an interesting trial.

On Friday, the pre-trial hearing was short and fairly amicable between the Navarro County District Attorney's office and Shook. Lagomarsino ordered the D.A.'s office to turn over copies of the photos of the crime scene, as well as results of a DNA test. Shook requested copies of the transcripts of interviews with Ballew, as well, but Will Thompson, the assistant district attorney prosecuting the case, said there was only one interview which he could provide, which was one with Ballew in the D.A.'s office.

The case is being heard in Navarro County's 13th District Court by District Judge James Lagomarsino.



Daily Sun photo/Janet Jacobs Tommy Sinclair meets with his defense attorney, Toby Shook, Friday at the Navarro County Courthouse following a pre-trial hearing. Sinclair has been charged in with manslaughter and aggravated assault stemming from a bar fight in 2008 in which a Houston man died.