

## **WRITTEN INSTRUCTIONS TO THE SEVEN SELECTED JURORS**

### Members of the Jury

You have been chosen to serve on this jury. Because of the oath you have taken and your selection of the jury, you became officials of this court and active participants in your justice system.

You have each received a set of written instructions. I am going to read them with you now. Some of them you have heard before and some are new.

1. **Turn off your electronic devices that you are not using for the Zoom App during the trial.** That means **no taking phone calls, looking at text messages during this trial, or using social media (like Facebook, Instagram, or Snapchat).** Do not look at websites, emails, or any other materials other than the Zoom App during the trial. **Do not be distracted during this trial.** It is the expectation of the Court and the litigants that you give your full attention to this trial. Do not close the video or audio of the Zoom App unless instructed by the Court. **Do not move away from your camera; jurors must take breaks at the same time and it not permitted for a juror to leave the view of the camera, even for a quick second, unless the Court give you permission.**

**You are to view this trial alone on your electronic device. No other individuals are allowed to sit next to or be in the same room with you during any time the Court is in session.** You are to remain secluded while court is in session as you are an active participant and observer during the trial, and as such, should protect yourself from any distractions.

**Do not post information about the case on the Internet before these court proceedings end and you are released from jury duty.** Do not record or photograph any part of these court proceedings, because it is prohibited by law.

2. Avoid looking like you are friendly with one side of the case, do not mingle or talk with the lawyers, witnesses, parties, or anyone else involved in the case. You may exchange casual greetings like “hello” and good “morning”. Other than that, do not talk with them at all. They have to follow these instructions too, so you should not be offended when they follow the instructions.

3. Do not accept any favors from the lawyers, witnesses, parties, or anyone else involved in the case, and do not do any favors for them. This includes favors such as giving rides and food.

4. **Do not discuss this case with anyone, even your spouse or a friend, either in person or by any other means including by phone, text message, email message, chat room, blog, or social networking website such as Facebook, twitter, or Myspace.** Do not allow anyone to discuss the case with you or in your hearing. If anyone tries to discuss the case with you or in your hearing, tell me

immediately. We do not want you to be influenced by something other than the evidence submitted in court.

5. **Do not talk about the case with anyone during the trial, not even with the other jurors, until the end of the trial.** You should not discuss the case with your fellow jurors until the end of the trial so that you do not form opinions about the case before you have heard everything. After you have heard all the evidence, received all of my instructions, and heard all the lawyers' arguments, you will then go to the jury room to discuss the case with the other jurors and reach a verdict.

6. **Do not investigate this case on your own.** For example:

- a. Do not try to get information about the case, lawyers, witnesses, or issues from outside this courtroom.
- b. Do not go to places mentioned in the case to inspect the places.
- c. Do not inspect items mentioned in this case unless they are presented as evidence in court.
- d. Do not look anything up in a law book, dictionary, or public record to try to learn more about the case.
- e. Do not look anything up on the Internet to try to learn more about the case.
- f. And do not let anyone else do any of these things for you.

**This rule is very important because we want a trial based only on evidence presented in open court.** Your conclusions about this case must be based only on what you see and hear in this courtroom because the law does not permit you to base your conclusions on information that has not been presented to you in open court. All information must be presented in open court so the parties and their lawyers can test it and object to it. Information from other sources, like the Internet, will not go through this important process in the courtroom. In addition, information from other sources could be completely unreliable. As a result, if you investigate this case on your own, you could compromise the fairness to all parties in this case and jeopardize the results of this trial.

7. Do not tell other jurors your own experiences or other people's experiences. For example, you may have special knowledge of something in the case, such as business, technical, or professional information. You may even have expert knowledge or opinions, or may know what happened in this case or another similar case. Do not tell other jurors about it. Telling other jurors about it is wrong because it means the jury will be considering things that were not presented in court.

8. Do not consider attorney fees until I tell you to. Do not guess about attorneys fees.

9. Do not consider or guess whether any party is covered by insurance unless I tell you to.

10. **During the trial, if taking notes will help focus your attention on the evidence, you may take notes on paper. Do not use any personal electronic**

**devices to take notes.** If taking notes will distract your attention from the evidence, you should not take notes. Your notes are for your own personal use. They are not evidence. Do not show or read your notes to anyone, including other jurors. You may take your notes and consult them during deliberations. But keep in mind that your notes are not evidence. When you deliberate, each of you should rely on your independent recollection of the evidence and not be influenced by the fact that another juror has not taken notes. After you complete your deliberations, like in a jury trial that is conducted in-person, your notes should be destroyed after you have completed your jury duty.

11. It is your duty to listen to and consider the evidence and to determine the issues that I may submit to you at the end of the trial. After you have heard all the evidence, I will give you instructions to follow as you make your decision. The instructions also will have questions for you to answer. You will not be asked and you should not consider which side will win. Instead, you will need to answer specific questions I give you. Every juror must obey my instructions. If you do not follow these instructions, you will be guilty of juror misconduct, and I may have to order a new trial and start this process over again. This would waste your time and the parties' money and would require the taxpayers of this county to pay for another trial.

12. **Jurors are not permitted to ask questions to a witness or an attorney during the trial.**

13. Justice Courts are not a court of record, meaning there is no official court reporter taking down what is said in this trial in an official capacity. Because of this, **a transcript or audio/visual recording of cannot be played back to you to aid your memory of something that said during the trial.**

Do you understand these instructions? If you do not, please tell me now.

Please keep these instructions and review them as we go through this case. If anyone does not follow these instructions, tell me.

Judge Nicholas Chu  
Justice of the Peace, Pct. 5  
Travis County, Texas