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**Inquest to reveal circumstances of death  
Father, woman's family battle for custody of her 16-month-old son**

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IOWA CITY - Authorities investigating the death of Laura Van Wyhe plan to reveal all the evidence they've collected during an inquest today in Quincy, Ill. An inquest is a proceeding, conducted before a jury, to determine the circumstances surrounding a death.

A trucker found Van Wyhe, 21, formerly of 1026 E. Washington St., along Highway 136 near Kahoka, Mo., in the early morning hours of Oct. 26. She died later in a Quincy, Ill., hospital.

Adams County, Ill., Coroner Chris Boyer ruled Van Wyhe died of multiple injuries consistent with being struck by a car, and other investigators have said Van Wyhe was not struck at the location where she was found.

Van Wyhe and her son, Samson, had gone to Bonaparte to visit the family of Donald Knight, Samson's father and Van Wyhe's ex-boyfriend, the night before she was found in Missouri.

A hearing to determine custody of 16-month-old Samson was held Thursday in Johnson County District Court. Van Wyhe's mother, Lee Ann Thomas of 1026 E. Washington St., is challenging Knight for custody. Knight now lives in Bonaparte.

Judge David Remley may make a ruling in the next two weeks.

Remley denied requests from the media to observe the hearing. Evelyn Nikell of Pella, Van Wyhe's aunt, said testimony was to center not on Van Wyhe's death but the comparative parenting skills of Thomas and Knight.

Members of Knight's family, who have been caring for Samson, declined comment about the hearing. Nikell said the families have an adversarial relationship.

Margaret Hearst of Iowa City, a woman for whom Van Wyhe had baby-sat, declined to say what she'd said at the custody hearing but said she had volunteered to testify. She said she did not get an opportunity to say much.

**Illustration: PHOTO**

Laura Van Wyhe Apparently struck by car