

CORONER'S REPORT – CASE SUMMARY
E.G. PRIETO, Sheriff-Coroner

Investigator: Laurel Weeks

Case #: 5722-177-1985

Decedent: Donald Frank Ward (A.K.A. John Doe #2-85)

1 The remains were located on 11/10/1985 in West Sacramento. Cause of death was determined to
2 be acute gastrointestinal hemorrhage due to cirrhosis of the liver, as determined by forensic
3 autopsy. Other significant conditions included acromegaly. Toxicological analysis revealed at
4 blood alcohol level of 0.24%. No identification was located on the decedent. Attempts to
5 identify the decedent included submission of fingerprints to the Department of Justice for and
6 multiple checks against missing person cases. No identification was established and the remains
7 were transported by Russ Monroe, Co. to the Sacramento Memorial Crematory on 12/06/1985.
8 Various possible matches were investigated over the years but did not result in identification.

9
10 On 11/15/2006, an updated Unidentified Deceased Reporting Form, along with copies of
11 fingerprints, dental charting and the coroner's report were submitted to DOJ in an effort to
12 update all Yolo County Coroner "John/Jane Doe" cases. On 11/30/2006, I received an e-mail
13 from Elaine Low with the DOJ MUPS unit advising a "hit" had been made on the submitted
14 fingerprints and that the DOJ would be confirming the match. On 01/10/2007, this office was
15 contacted with the positive identification of John Doe #2-85 as Donald Frank Ward.

16
17 On 01/10/2007, a criminal history was obtained on Donald Frank Ward, which revealed arrests
18 out of San Francisco, Berkeley, Monterey, Salinas and Alameda. Arrests were for various drug
19 related offenses and the last arrest was noted in 1984 out of San Francisco. All agencies were
20 contacted in an attempt to locate next of kin information from arrest records. Next of kin was
21 not listed, and several of the records had been purged due to the length of time since the arrest.
22 Booking photos were obtained from San Francisco PD.

23
24 On 02/06/2007, I made contact with the local Social Security Administration in order to
25 determine if benefits were paid out to any survivors. SSA had old address in Buffalo, New York,
26 and advised that the decedent had been in the military. On 02/07/2007, I made contact with the
27 Veterans Administration Medical Center in Buffalo, New York and inquired about old medical

CORONER'S REPORT – CASE SUMMARY
E.G. PRIETO, Sheriff-Coroner

Investigator: Laurel Weeks

Case #: 5722-177-1985

Decedent: Donald Frank Ward (A.K.A. John Doe #2-85)

1 records or records indicating next of kin. On 03/07/2007, I received a facsimile from the VA
2 Healthcare Network of Upstate New York. The facsimile was of a patient inquiry printout
3 showing the decedent address and last admission date of 08/31/1985 through 09/02/1985. Next
4 of kin was listed as the decedent's sister, Shirley Castle, located in West Seneca, New York. A
5 search was completed on Shirley Castle and revealed a current address in Buffalo, New York,
6 which matched the address listed for the decedent on the patient inquiry form. The West Seneca
7 Police Department was contacted and request made for notification of Shirley Castle.
8 Notification was completed at 1311 hours and I subsequently made contact with Castle.

9

10 Castle advised me that she had not seen her brother in over 25 years. He had previously
11 travelled to California and come back to New York, where he was hospitalized at the VA
12 Hospital. Upon discharge, he left New York and his last known location was San Diego, CA.
13 She had attempted to locate him over the years without success and had never filed a missing
14 person report. Assistance was provided with returning the cremains to family and included
15 referral to the Public Administrators office and the Yolo County Veterans Coalition.

16