



MAGISTRATES COURT *of* TASMANIA

CORONIAL DIVISION

Record of Investigation into Death (Without Inquest)

*Coroners Act 1995
Coroners Rules 2006
Rule 11*

I, Olivia McTaggart, Coroner, having investigated the death of David Basil Marshall

Find, pursuant to Section 28(1) of the Coroners Act 1995, that

- a) The identity of the deceased is David Basil Marshall.
- b) Mr Marshall was born in Hobart on 22 March 1954. At the time of his death, he was aged 66 years, was receiving an aged pension, and living alone in a rented unit at Penguin, Tasmania. He has five children from two previous marriages. Mr Marshall had been a member of the Australian Army and subsequently worked predominantly in the security business. He was not employed at the time of his death.

Mr Marshall suffered an abnormal blood clotting condition known as Factor V Leiden for which he received treatment with blood thinning medication. Mr Marshall had been a very heavy drinker for most of his life and the medical evidence strongly suggests that he suffered alcohol related liver disease.

Mr Marshall had been renting his unit in Penguin since May 2020. On 12 August 2020, the property agent conducted a routine inspection of the unit and spoke to Mr Marshall. She did not notice anything untoward in that inspection. The following month, on 20 September 2020, Mr Marshall delivered his lease renewal for the unit to the property agent's office in Ulverstone. There is no evidence that he was seen by or had contact with any person until he was found deceased.

On 16 December 2020, the property agent attended Mr Marshall's unit to conduct an inspection of several units in the complex. There was no response to knocking on the door and the agent therefore unlocked it with the master key. Upon opening the door, she saw a decomposed body lying on the floor and immediately called police.

Police officers attended, including a Forensic Services officer, and investigated the circumstances of the death. They observed that the house was secure and made careful observations and photographs of the scene. The scene examination revealed no suspicious circumstances. From the appearance of the body, the mail in the letterbox and food in the fridge, it appeared that death occurred in about September 2020. The scene did not reveal that he had been using drugs or alcohol immediately before his death. There was nothing to indicate suicide.

The body was subsequently identified as David Basil Marshall by fingerprint comparison. The Forensic Pathologist conducting the autopsy, Dr Andrew Reid, could not determine the cause of death due to the examination being limited by advanced decomposition. Dr Reid did not consider that Mr Marshall died of unnatural causes. He said that his death was consistent with undetermined natural causes and speculated that Mr Marshall may have suffered pulmonary embolism or coronary artery thrombosis as a result of his abnormal blood clotting, or physiological complications of alcoholism. Toxicological analysis was also unable to shed any light upon any substances in his system.

- c) I am unable to determine the cause of Mr Marshall's death, although I am satisfied that he died of natural causes.
- d) Mr Marshall died between 20 September 2020 and 16 December 2020 at Penguin, Tasmania.

In making the above findings I have had regard to the evidence gained in the comprehensive investigation into Mr Marshall's death. The evidence includes:

- The Police Report of Death for the Coroner;
- An opinion of the Forensic Pathologist who conducted the autopsy;
- The results of toxicological analysis of samples taken at autopsy;
- Affidavits confirming identification and life extinct;
- Affidavit of Leslie Marshall, brother of Mr Marshall;
- Affidavit of Melanie Guy, daughter of Mr Marshall;
- Affidavit of Kate Chisholm, realtor for the unit occupied by Mr Marshall;
- Affidavits of attending and investigating police officers;
- Records from Smartclinics Family Medical Centre; and
- Records from Tasmanian Health Service.

Comments and Recommendations

The circumstances of Mr Marshall's death are not such as to require me to make any comments or recommendations pursuant to Section 28 of the *Coroners Act 1995*.

I convey my sincere condolences to the family and loved ones of David Basil Marshall.

Dated: 26 May 2021 at Hobart Coroners Court in the State of Tasmania.

Olivia McTaggart
Coroner