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Medical Report of Death

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Below is a report written by Dr. Arnyce Pock regarding the medical cause of Frank's death. Frank would likely not have approved. Nevertheless, some of his family and friends thought the information would be of use to those who traveled with him.

Dear Friends & Family,

After extensive evaluation, it appears that our beloved Frank died as a result of an advanced case of Neurocysticercosis, a parasitic infection that penetrated his brain and resulted in the formation of multiple cystic lesions. A physician-friend of our family forwarded some useful web links that I've included at the bottom of this message for those who might like to read more, but here's a short synopsis of the disease & its key features:

Neurocysticercosis is a form of Cysticercosis, which is an infection caused by contact with a tapeworm, specifically the pork tapeworm, *Taenia Solium*. Cysticercosis is especially common in parts of Mexico, Central & South America, Africa, Asia & India--all of which were areas that Frank has spent considerable amount of time. When the infection involves the brain, the disease is called neurocysticercosis.

Now those of you who knew Frank will know that he was a strict vegan, so how could he have become infected with a pork related tapeworm? Well, the answer relates to the fact that infection can also occur as a result of eating or drinking contaminated food or water--especially if the food or water was either contaminated at the onset or was prepared by individuals who themselves had the infection, but who may not have ready access to soap & water or other means of sanitation.

Cysticercosis can present in a variety of ways, but cysts can develop in the brain, eyes, skeletal muscles and other tissues. What symptoms develop--and when, is largely dependent on the number, location & stage of the cysts themselves. Infection in the brain can cause symptoms ranging from severe headaches, to fever, nausea, vomiting, seizures, confusion, and in severe cases (such as Frank's), swelling of the brain & death. In fact some people may not develop symptoms until YEARS after the initial infection!

The important thing to know, however, is that if diagnosed early, both cysticercosis & neurocysticercosis are treatable conditions. The type & timing of treatment may differ from patient to patient, so if any of you have travelled to areas where food may have been prepared in exceptionally austere settings--or used/consumed water that may not

have been fully purified, please be sure to let your conventional (western trained) doctors know where you've been & what kind of conditions you've lived in--particularly if you yourself should develop any new and/or unexplained symptoms.

For those who might like to read more about this particular disease, here are some useful references:

-- CDC Fact Sheet on Cysticercosis:

http://www.cdc.gov/ncidod/dpd/parasites/cysticercosis/factsht_cysticercosis.htm -- Also from the CDC: [http://wwwnc.cdc.gov/travel/yellowbook/2010/chapter-](http://wwwnc.cdc.gov/travel/yellowbook/2010/chapter-5/cysticercosis.aspx)

[5/cysticercosis.aspx](http://wwwnc.cdc.gov/travel/yellowbook/2010/chapter-5/cysticercosis.aspx) -- Lastly, the American Academy of Family Physicians published a good review article on Cysticercosis in Volume 76, Number 1, of their July 1, 2007 journal, called the "American Family Physician." (The latter can be accessed via the AFP website at <http://www.aafp.org/afp>)