

United Nations Office at Vienna
Centre for Social Development and Humanitarian Affairs

**MANUAL ON THE
EFFECTIVE PREVENTION
AND INVESTIGATION OF
EXTRA-LEGAL, ARBITRARY
AND SUMMARY EXECUTIONS**



United Nations
New York, 1991

Symbols of United Nations documents are composed of capital letters combined with figures. Mention of such a symbol indicates a reference to a United Nations document.

Material in this publication may be freely quoted or reprinted, but acknowledgement is requested, together with a copy of the publication containing the quotation or reprint.

ST/CSDHA/12

UNITED NATIONS PUBLICATION

Sales No.: E.91.IV.1

ISBN 92-1-130142-4

01500P

Annex I

PRINCIPLES ON THE EFFECTIVE PREVENTION AND INVESTIGATION
OF EXTRA-LEGAL, ARBITRARY AND SUMMARY EXECUTIONS

Effective prevention and investigation of extra-legal,
arbitrary and summary executions

The Economic and Social Council,*

Recalling that article 3 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights a/ [108] proclaims that everyone has the right to life, liberty and security of person,

Bearing in mind that paragraph 1 of article 6 of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights b/ [114] states that every human being has an inherent right to life, that that right shall be protected by law and that no one shall be arbitrarily deprived of his or her life,

Also bearing in mind the general comments of the Human Rights Committee on the right to life as enunciated in article 6 of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights,

Stressing that extra-legal, arbitrary and summary executions contravene the human rights and fundamental freedoms proclaimed in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights,

Mindful that the Seventh United Nations Congress on the Prevention of Crime and the Treatment of Offenders, in resolution 11 on extra-legal, arbitrary and summary executions, c/ [93] called upon all Governments to take urgent and incisive action to investigate such acts, wherever they may occur, to punish those found guilty and to take all other measures necessary to prevent those practices,

Mindful also that the Economic and Social Council, in section VI of its resolution 1986/10 of 21 May 1986, requested the Committee on Crime Prevention and Control to consider at its tenth session the question of extra-legal, arbitrary and summary executions with a view to elaborating principles on the effective prevention and investigation of such practices,

Recalling that the General Assembly in its resolution 33/173 of 20 December 1978 expressed its deep concern at reports from various parts of the world relating to enforced or involuntary disappearances and called upon Governments, in the event of such reports, to take appropriate measures to searching for such persons and to undertake speedy and impartial investigations,

Noting with appreciation the efforts of non-governmental organizations to develop standards for investigations, d/ [115]

Note: References are numbered a/, b/ etc., with the original numbering from the resolution given in square brackets immediately following the footnote indicators.

*Resolution 1989/65 of 24 May 1989.

Emphasizing that the General Assembly in its resolution 42/141 of 7 December 1987 strongly condemned once again the large number of summary or arbitrary executions, including extra-legal executions, that continued to take place in various parts of the world,

Noting that in the same resolution the General Assembly recognized the need for closer co-operation between the Centre for Human Rights, the Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice Branch of the Centre for Social Development and Humanitarian Affairs and the Committee on Crime Prevention and Control in an effort to bring to an end summary or arbitrary executions,

Aware that effective prevention and investigation of extra-legal, arbitrary and summary executions requires the provision of adequate financial and technical resources,

1. Recommends that the Principles on the Effective Prevention and Investigation of Extra-legal, Arbitrary and Summary Executions annexed to the present resolution shall be taken into account and respected by Governments within the framework of their national legislation and practices, and shall be brought to the attention of law enforcement and criminal justice officials, military personnel, lawyers, members of the executive and legislative bodies of the Government and the public in general;

2. Requests the Committee on Crime Prevention and Control to keep the above recommendations under constant review, including implementation of the Principles, taking into account the various socio-economic, political and cultural circumstances in which extra-legal, arbitrary and summary executions occur;

3. Invites Member States that have not yet ratified or acceded to international instruments that prohibit extra-legal, arbitrary and summary executions, including the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, b/ [114] the Optional Protocol to the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights and the Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment, e/ [116] to become parties to these instruments;

4. Requests the Secretary-General to include the Principles in the United Nations publication entitled Human Rights: A Compilation of International Instruments;

5. Requests the United Nations regional and interregional institutes for the prevention of crime and the treatment of offenders to give special attention in their research and training programmes to the Principles, and to the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, b/ [114] the provisions of the Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment, e/ [116] the Code of Conduct for Law Enforcement Officials, f/ [104] the Declaration of Basic Principles of Justice for Victims of Crime and Abuse of Power g/ [102] and other international instruments relevant to the question of extra-legal, arbitrary and summary executions.

Annex to the Economic and Social Council resolution 1989/65

PRINCIPLES ON THE EFFECTIVE PREVENTION AND INVESTIGATION
OF EXTRA-LEGAL, ARBITRARY AND SUMMARY EXECUTIONS

Prevention

1. Governments shall prohibit by law all extra-legal, arbitrary and summary executions and shall ensure that any such executions are recognized as offences under their criminal laws, and are punishable by appropriate penalties which take into account the seriousness of such offences. Exceptional circumstances, including a state of war or threat of war, internal political instability or any other public emergency may not be invoked as a justification of such executions. Such executions shall not be carried out under any circumstances including, but not limited to, situations of internal armed conflict, excessive or illegal use of force by a public official or other person acting in an official capacity or a person acting at the instigation, or with the consent or acquiescence of such person, and situations in which deaths occur in custody. This prohibition shall prevail over decrees issued by governmental authority.
2. In order to prevent extra-legal, arbitrary and summary executions, Governments shall ensure strict control, including a clear chain of command over all officials responsible for the apprehension, arrest, detention, custody and imprisonment as well as those officials authorized by law to use force and firearms.
3. Governments shall prohibit orders from superior officers or public authorities authorizing or inciting other persons to carry out any such extra-legal, arbitrary or summary executions. All persons shall have the right and the duty to defy such orders. Training of law enforcement officials shall emphasize the above provisions.
4. Effective protection through judicial or other means shall be guaranteed to individuals and groups who are in danger of extra-legal, arbitrary or summary executions, including those who receive death threats.
5. No one shall be involuntarily returned or extradited to a country where there are substantial grounds for believing that he or she may become a victim of extra-legal, arbitrary or summary execution in that country.
6. Governments shall ensure that persons deprived of their liberty are held in officially recognized places of custody, and that accurate information on their custody and whereabouts, including transfers, is made promptly available to their relatives and lawyer or other persons of confidence.
7. Qualified inspectors, including medical personnel, or an equivalent independent authority, shall conduct inspections in places of custody on a regular basis, and be empowered to undertake unannounced inspections on their own initiative, with full guarantees of independence in the exercise of this function. The inspectors shall have unrestricted access to all persons in such places of custody, as well as to all their records.
8. Governments shall make every effort to prevent extra-legal, arbitrary and summary executions through measures such as diplomatic intercession, improved access of complainants to intergovernmental and judicial bodies, and public denunciation. Intergovernmental mechanisms shall be used to investigate reports of any such executions and to take effective action against such

practices. Governments, including those of countries where extra-legal, arbitrary and summary executions are reasonably suspected to occur, shall co-operate fully in international investigations on the subject.

Investigation

9. There shall be a thorough, prompt and impartial investigation of all suspected cases of extra-legal, arbitrary and summary executions, including cases where complaints by relatives or other reliable reports suggest unnatural death in the above circumstances. Governments shall maintain investigative offices and procedures to undertake such inquiries. The purpose of the investigation shall be to determine the cause, manner and time of death, the person responsible, and any adequate autopsy, collection and analysis of all physical and documentary evidence, and statements from witnesses. The investigation shall distinguish between natural death, accidental death, suicide and homicide.

10. The investigative authority shall have the power to obtain all the information necessary to the inquiry. Those persons conducting the investigation shall have at their disposal all the necessary budgetary and technical resources for effective investigation. They shall also have the authority to oblige officials allegedly involved in any such executions to appear and testify. The same shall apply to any witness. To this end, they shall be entitled to issue summons to witnesses, including the officials allegedly involved, and to demand the production of evidence.

11. In cases in which the established investigative procedures are inadequate because of lack of expertise or impartiality, because of the importance of the matter or because of the apparent existence of a pattern of abuse, and in cases where there are complaints from the family of the victim about these inadequacies or other substantial reasons, Governments shall pursue investigations through an independent commission of inquiry or similar procedure. Members of such a commission shall be chosen for their recognized impartiality, competence and independence as individuals. In particular, they shall be independent of any institution, agency or person that may be the subject of the inquiry. The commission shall have the authority to obtain all information necessary to the inquiry and shall conduct the inquiry as provided for under these Principles.

12. The body of the deceased person shall not be disposed of until an adequate autopsy is conducted by a physician, who shall, if possible, be an expert in forensic pathology. Those conducting the autopsy shall have the right of access to all investigative data, to the place where the body was discovered, and to the place where the death is thought to have occurred. If the body has been buried and it later appears that an investigation is required, the body shall be promptly and competently exhumed for an autopsy. If skeletal remains are discovered, they should be carefully exhumed and studied according to systematic anthropological techniques.

13. The body of the deceased shall be available to those conducting the autopsy for a sufficient amount of time to enable a thorough investigation to be carried out. The autopsy shall, at a minimum, attempt to establish the identity of the deceased and the cause and manner of death. The time and place of death shall also be determined to the extent possible. Detailed colour photographs of the deceased shall be included in the autopsy report in order to document and support the findings of the investigation. The autopsy report must describe any and all injuries to the deceased including any evidence of torture.

14. In order to ensure objective results, those conducting the autopsy must be able to function impartially and independently of any potentially implicated persons or organizations or entities.

15. Complainants, witnesses, those conducting the investigation and their families shall be protected from violence, threats of violence or any other form of intimidation. Those potentially implicated in extra-legal, arbitrary or summary executions shall be removed from any position of control or power, whether direct or indirect, over complainants, witnesses and their families, as well as over those conducting investigations.

16. Families of the deceased and their legal representatives shall be informed of, and have access to, any hearing as well as to all information relevant to the investigation, and shall be entitled to present other evidence. The family of the deceased shall have the right to insist that a medical or other qualified representative be present at the autopsy. When the identity of a deceased person has been determined, a notification of death shall be posted, and the family or relatives of the deceased immediately informed. The body of the deceased shall be returned to them upon completion of the investigation.

17. A written report shall be made within a reasonable period of time on the methods and findings of such investigations. The report shall be made public immediately and shall include the scope of the inquiry, procedures and methods used to evaluate evidence as well as conclusions and recommendations based on findings of fact and on applicable law. The report shall also describe in detail specific events that were found to have occurred, and the evidence upon which such findings were based, and list the names of witnesses who testified, with the exception of those whose identities have been withheld for their own protection. The Government shall, within a reasonable period of time, either reply to the report of the investigation, or indicate the steps to be taken in response to it.

Legal proceedings

18. Governments shall ensure that persons identified by the investigation as having participated in extra-legal, arbitrary and summary executions in any territory under their jurisdiction are brought to justice. Governments shall either bring such persons to justice or co-operate to extradite any such persons to other countries wishing to exercise jurisdiction. This principle shall apply irrespective of who and where the perpetrators or the victims are, their nationalities or where the offence was committed.

19. Without prejudice to Principle 3 above, an order from a superior officer or a public authority may not be invoked as a justification for extra-legal, arbitrary or summary executions. Superiors, officers or other public officials may be held responsible for acts committed by officials under their hierarchical authority if they had a reasonable opportunity to prevent such acts. In no circumstances, including a state of war, siege or other public emergency, shall blanket immunity from prosecution be granted to any person allegedly involved in extra-legal, arbitrary or summary executions.

20. The families and dependents of victims of extra-legal, arbitrary and summary executions shall be entitled to fair and adequate compensation within a reasonable period of time.

Notes

- a/ General Assembly resolution 217 A (III).
- b/ See General Assembly resolution 2200 A (XXI), annex.
- c/ See Seventh United Nations Congress on the Prevention of Crime and the Treatment of Offenders, Milan, 26 August-6 September 1985: report prepared by the Secretariat (United Nations publication, Sales No. E.86.IV.1), chap. I, sect. E.
- d/ See E/AC.57/1988/NGO.4.
- e/ General Assembly resolution 39/46, annex.
- f/ General Assembly resolution 34/169, annex.
- g/ General Assembly resolution 40/34, annex.

Annex II

POSTMORTEM DETECTION OF TORTURE

Torture technique

Physical findings

Beating

- | | |
|--|--|
| <p>1. General</p> <p>2. To the soles of the feet ("falanga", "falaka", "bastinado"), or fractures of the bones of the feet.</p> <p>3. With the palms on both ears simultaneously ("el telefono").</p> <p>4. On the abdomen, while lying on a table with the upper half of the body unsupported ("operating table", "el quirofono").</p> <p>5. To the head.</p> | <p>Scars. Bruises. Lacerations. Multiple fractures at different stages of healing, especially in unusual locations, which have not been medically treated.</p> <p>Haemorrhage in the soft tissues of the soles of the feet and ankles. Aseptic necrosis.</p> <p>Ruptured or scarred tympanic membranes. Injuries to external ear.</p> <p>Bruises on the abdomen. Back injuries. Ruptured abdominal viscera.</p> <p>Cerebral cortical atrophy. Scars. Skull fractures. Bruises. Haematomas.</p> |
|--|--|

Suspension

- | | |
|---|---|
| <p>6. By the wrists ("la bandera").</p> <p>7. By the arms or neck.</p> <p>8. By the ankles ("murcielago").</p> <p>9. Head down, from a horizontal pole placed under the knees with the wrists bound to the ankles ("parrot's perch", "Jack", "pau de arara").</p> | <p>Bruises or scars about the wrists. Joint injuries.</p> <p>Bruises or scars at the site of binding. Prominent lividity in the lower extremities.</p> <p>Bruises or scars about the ankles. Joint injuries.</p> <p>Bruises or scars on the anterior forearms and backs of the knees. Marks on the wrists and ankles.</p> |
|---|---|

Near suffocation

10. Forced immersion of head in water, often contaminated "wet submarine", "pileta", "Latina").

Faecal material or other debris in the mouth, pharynx, trachea, esophagus or lungs.
Intrathoracic petechiae.
Intra-thoracic petechiae.

11. Tying of a plastic bag over the head ("dry submarine").

Intro-thoracic petechiae.

Sexual abuse

12. Sexual abuse

Sexually transmitted diseases. Pregnancy. Injuries to breasts, external genitalia, vagina, anus or rectum.

Forced posture

13. Prolonged standing ("el planton").

Dependent edema. Petechiae in lower extremities.

14. Forced straddling of a bar ("saw horse", "el cabellete").

Perineal or scrotal haematomas.

Electric shock

15. Cattle prod ("la picana").

Burns: appearance depends on the age of the injury. Immediately: red spots, vesicles, and/or black exudate. Within a few weeks: circular, reddish, macular scars. At several months: small, white, reddish or brown spots resembling telangiectasias.

16. Wires connected to a source of electricity.

17. Heated metal skewer inserted into the anus ("black slave").

Peri-anal or rectal burns.

Miscellaneous

18. Dehydration

Vitreous humor electrolyte abnormalities.

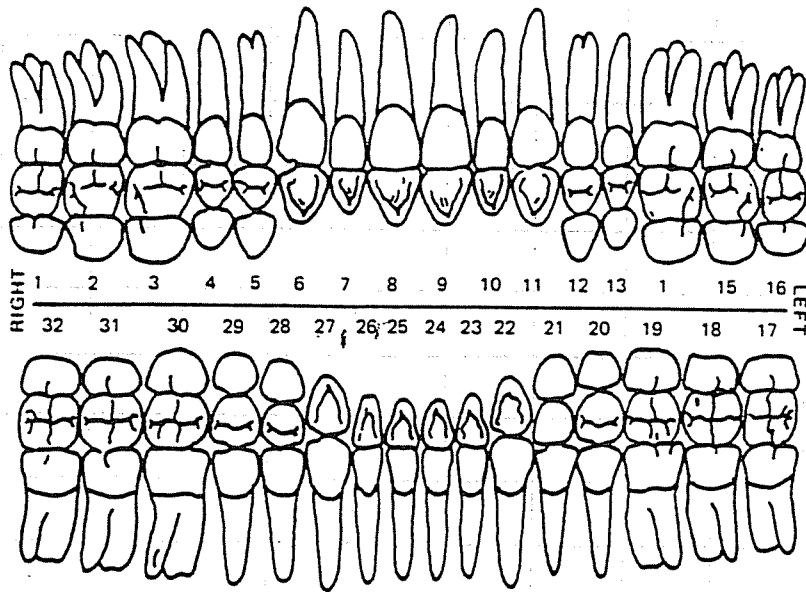
Animal bites
(spiders, insects, rats,
mice, dogs)

Bite marks.

Annex III

DRAWINGS OF PARTS OF HUMAN BODY FOR IDENTIFICATION OF TORTURE

MARK ALL EXISTING RESTORATIONS AND MISSING TEETH ON THIS CHART



Estimated Age _____
 Sex _____
 Race _____

Circle descriptive term
 Prosthetic Appliances Present:
 Maxilla
 Full Denture
 Partial Denture
 Fixed Bridge

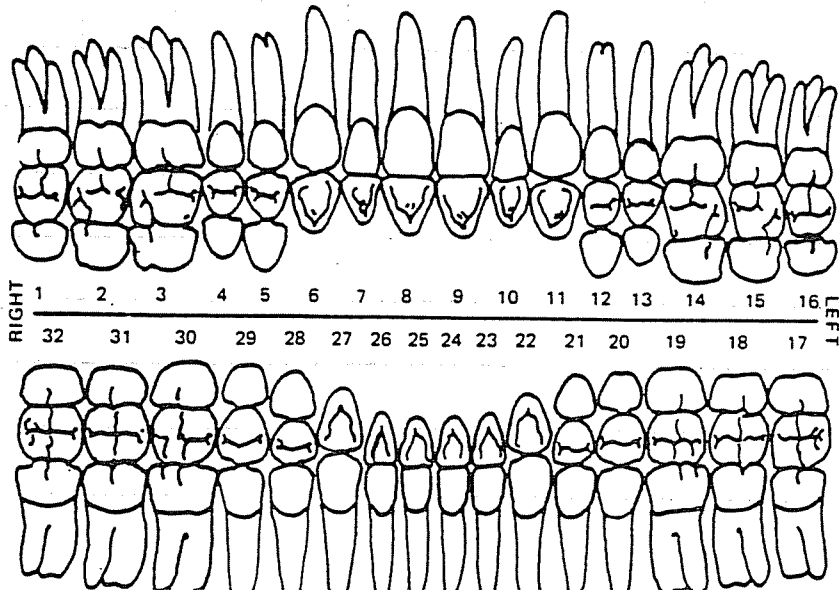
Mandible
 Full Denture
 Partial Denture
 Fixed Bridge

Describe completely all Prosthetic Appliances or Fixed Bridges _____

Stains on teeth
 Slight
 Moderate
 Severe

MARK ALL CARIES ON THIS CHART

Outline all caries and 'X' out all missing teeth

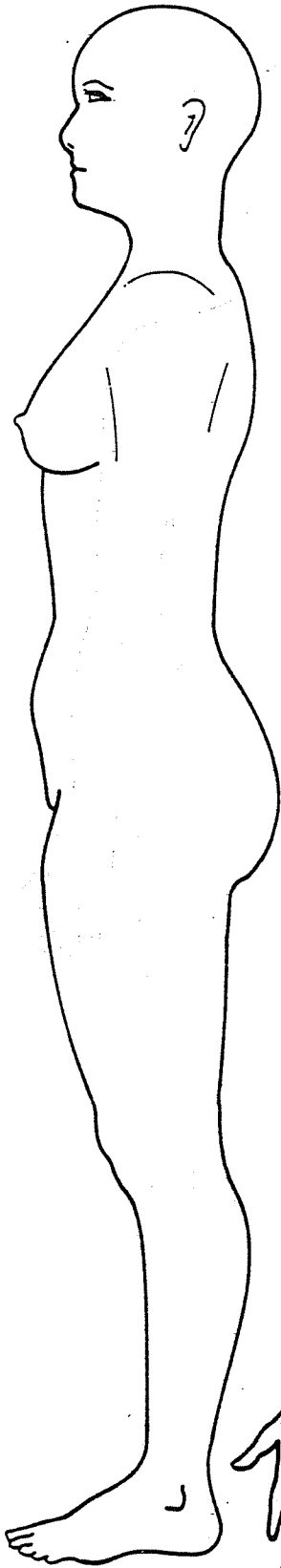


Circle descriptive term
 Relationship
 Normal
 Undershot
 Overbite

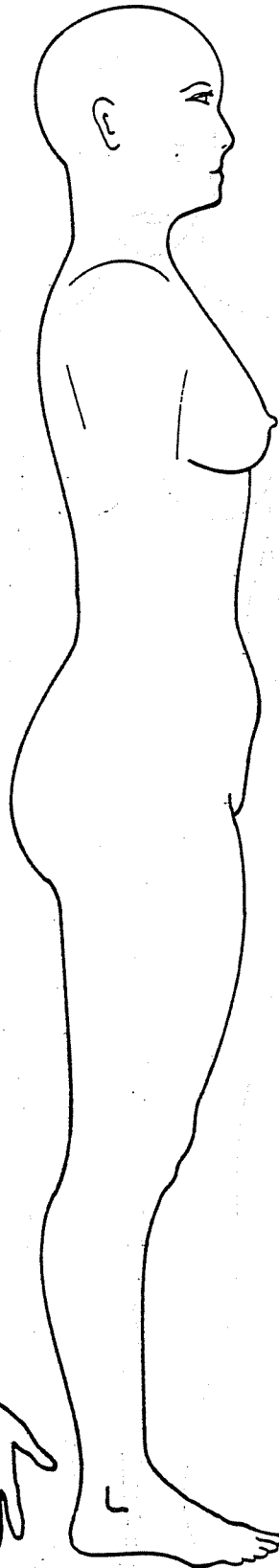
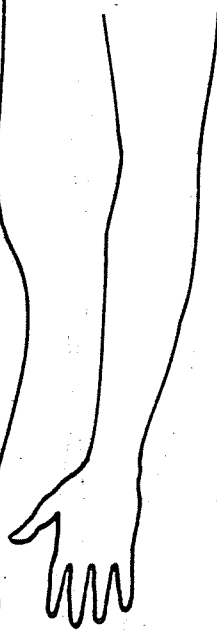
Periodontal Condition
 Excellent
 Average
 Poor

Calculus
 Slight
 Moderate
 Severe

FULL BODY, FEMALE - LATERAL VIEW



L. ARM



R. ARM

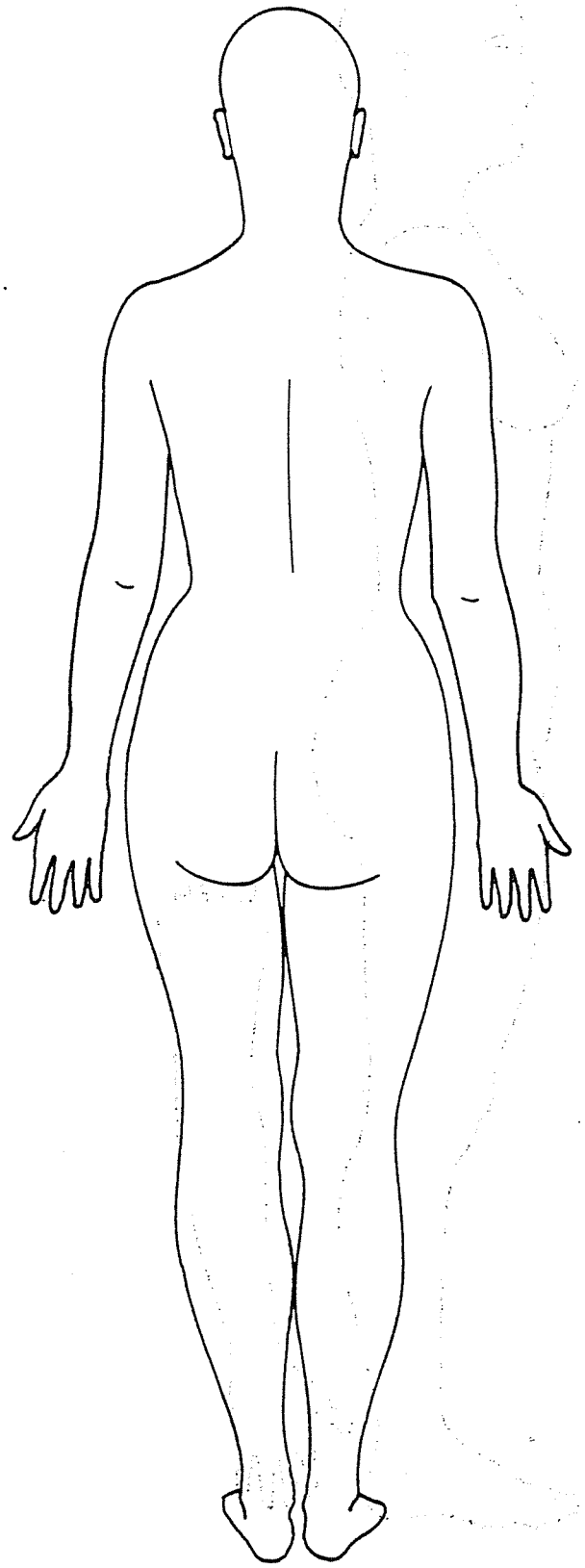
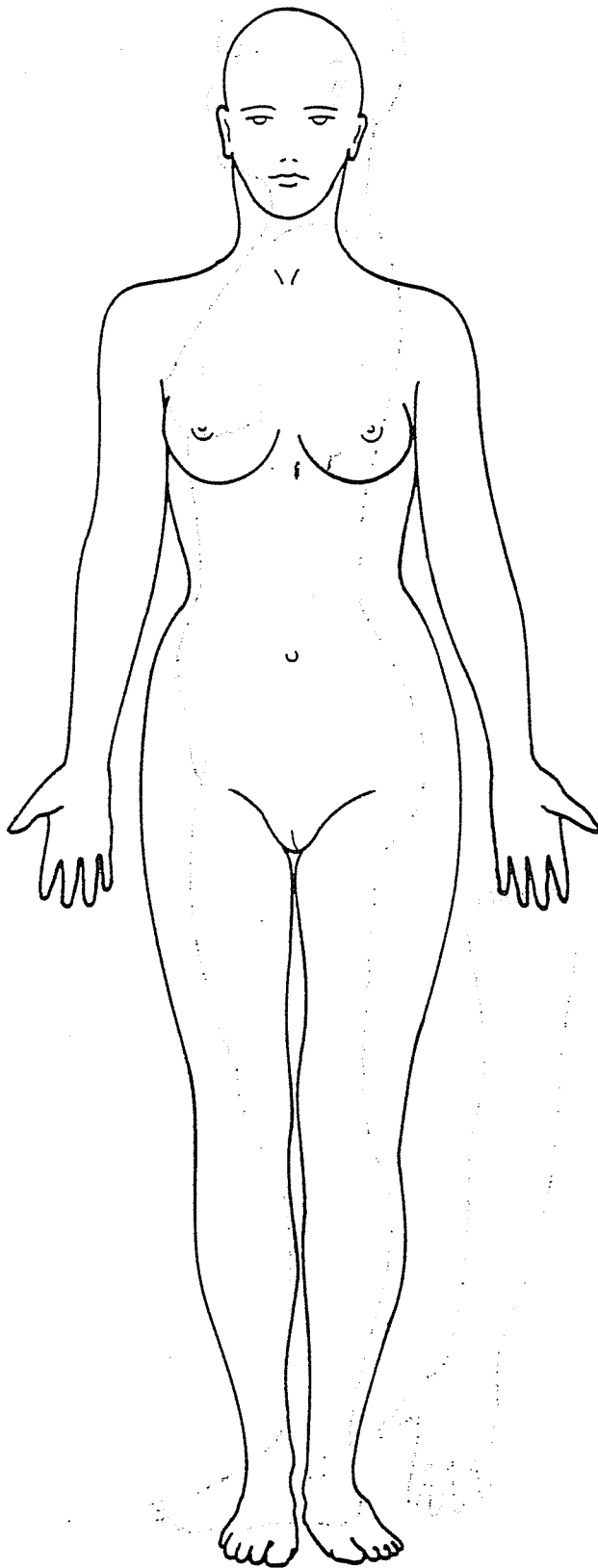


Name _____

Case No. _____

Date _____

FULL BODY, FEMALE - ANTERIOR AND POSTERIOR VIEWS

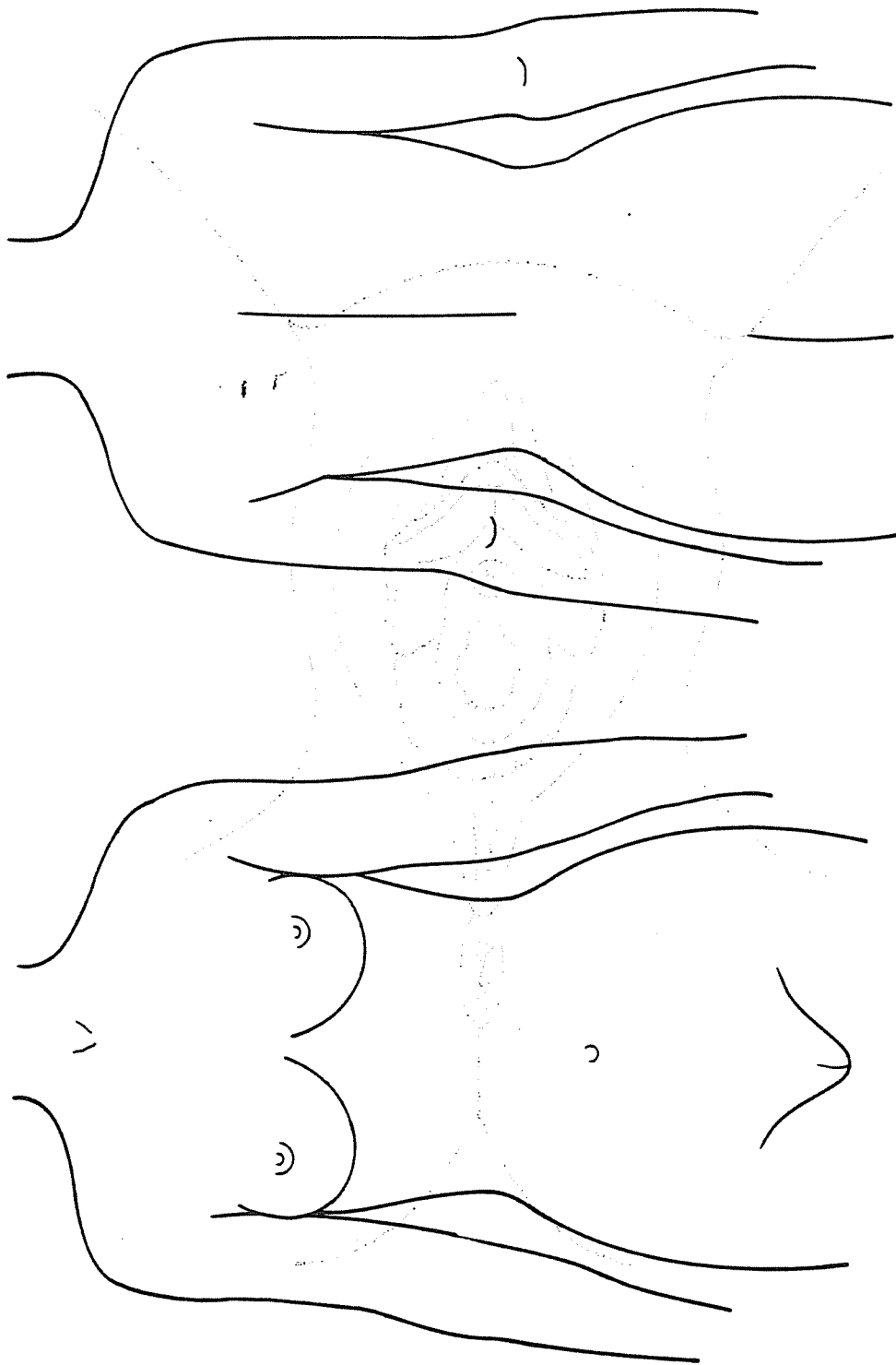


Name _____

Case No. _____

Date _____

THORACIC ABDOMINAL, FEMALE - ANTERIOR AND POSTERIOR VIEWS

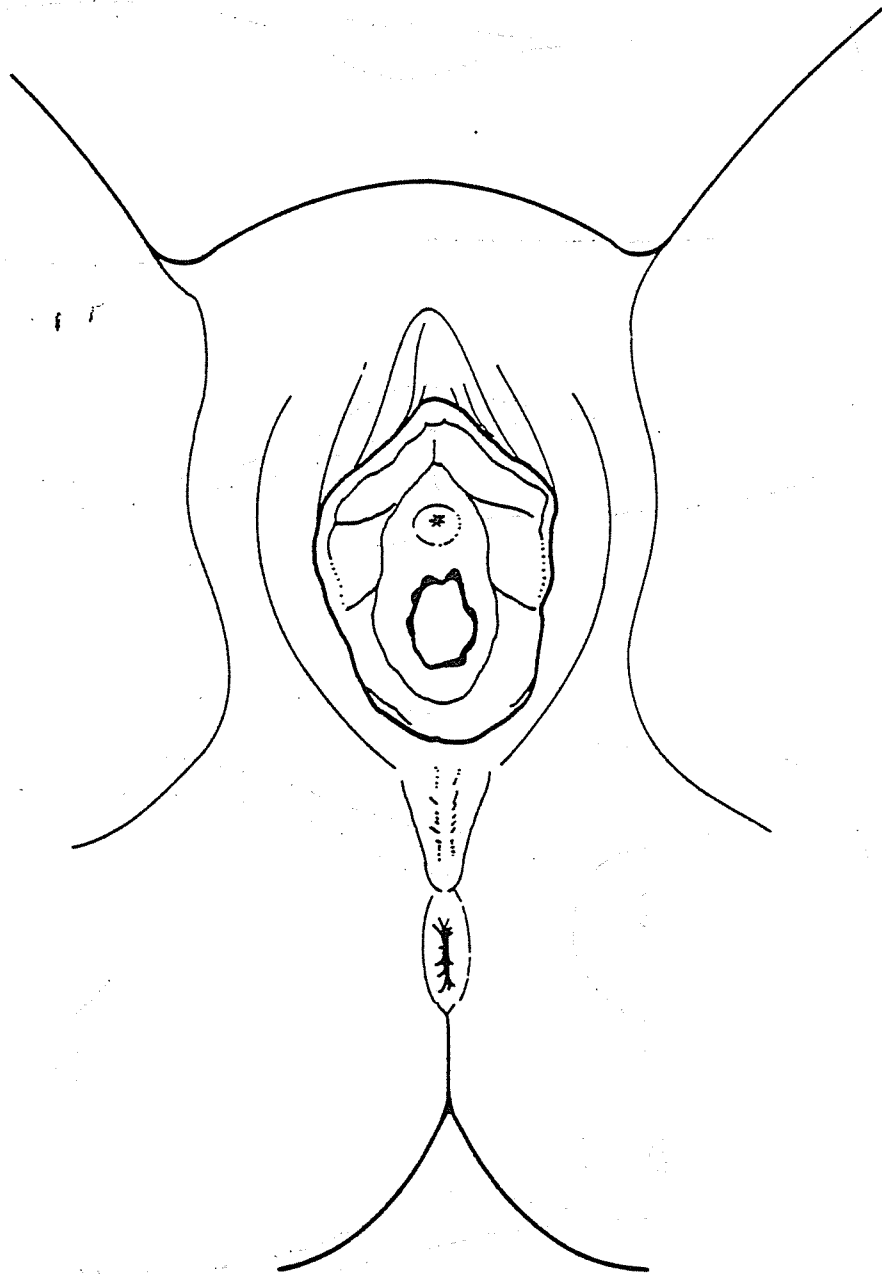


Name _____

Case No. _____

Date _____

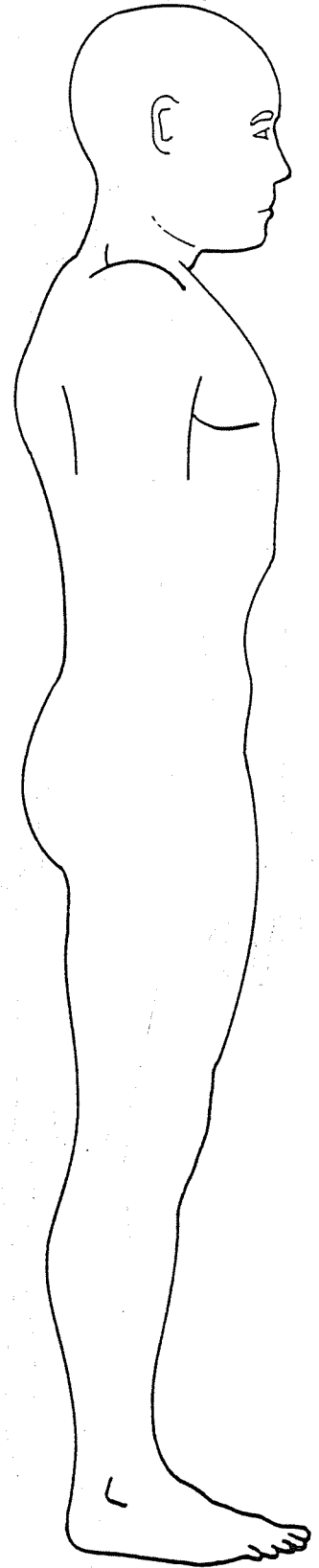
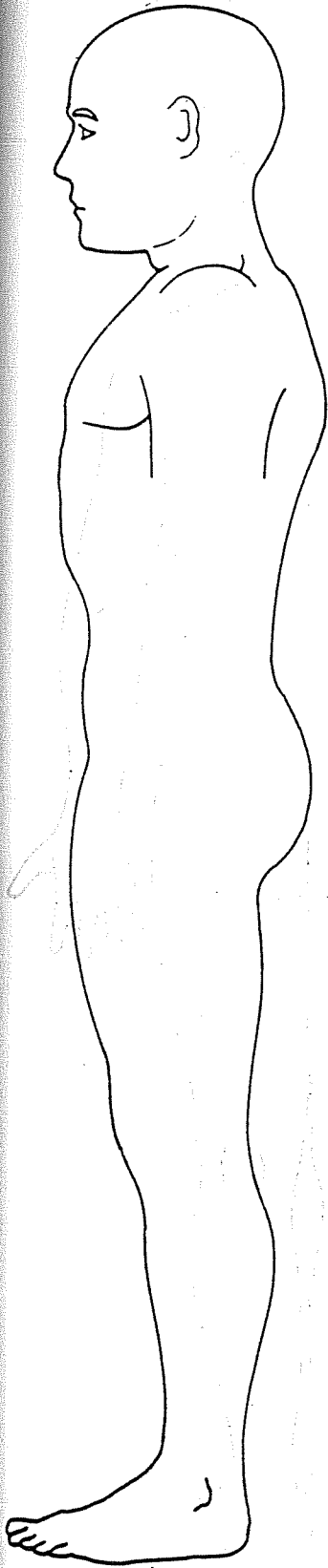
- 54 -
PERINEUM - FEMALE



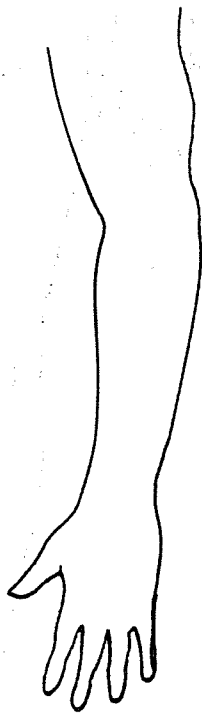
Name _____ Case No. _____

Date _____

FULL BODY, MALE - LATERAL VIEW



L. ARM



R. ARM

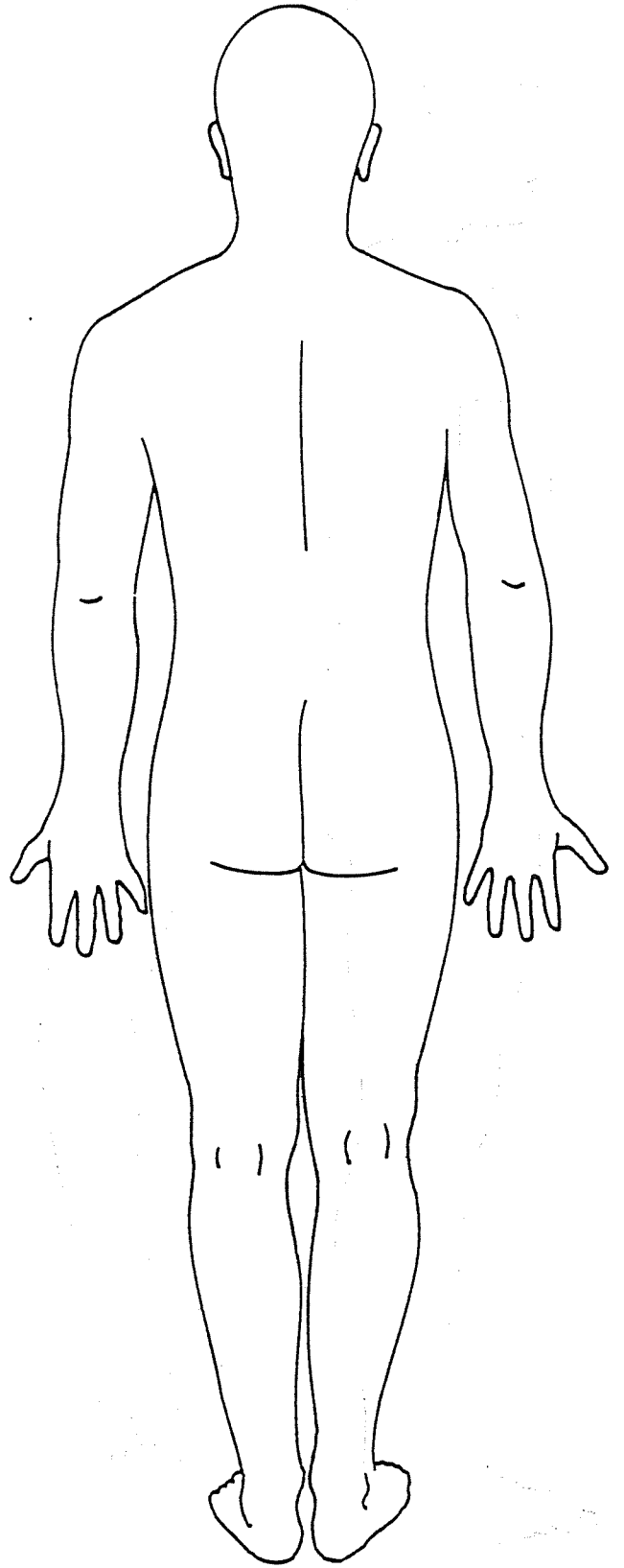
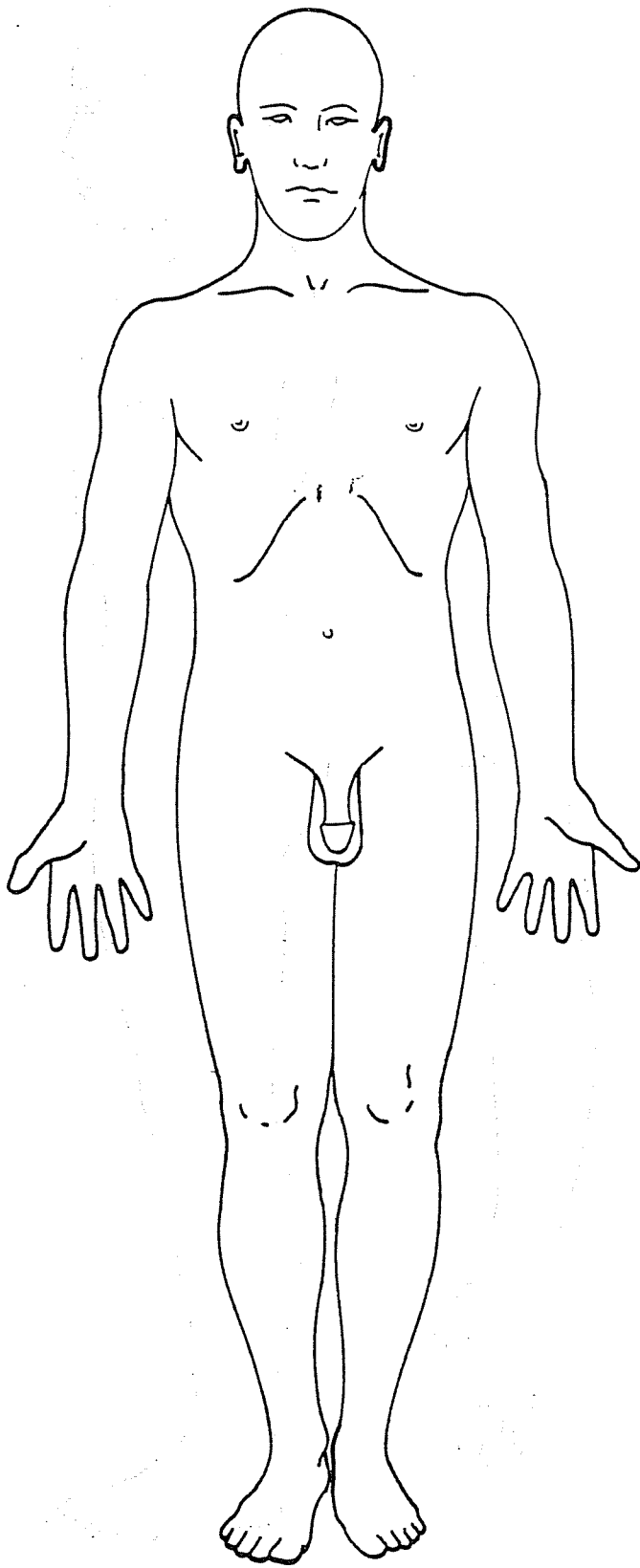


Name _____

Case No. _____

Date _____

FULL BODY, MALE - ANTERIOR AND POSTERIOR VIEWS (VENTRAL AND DORSAL)

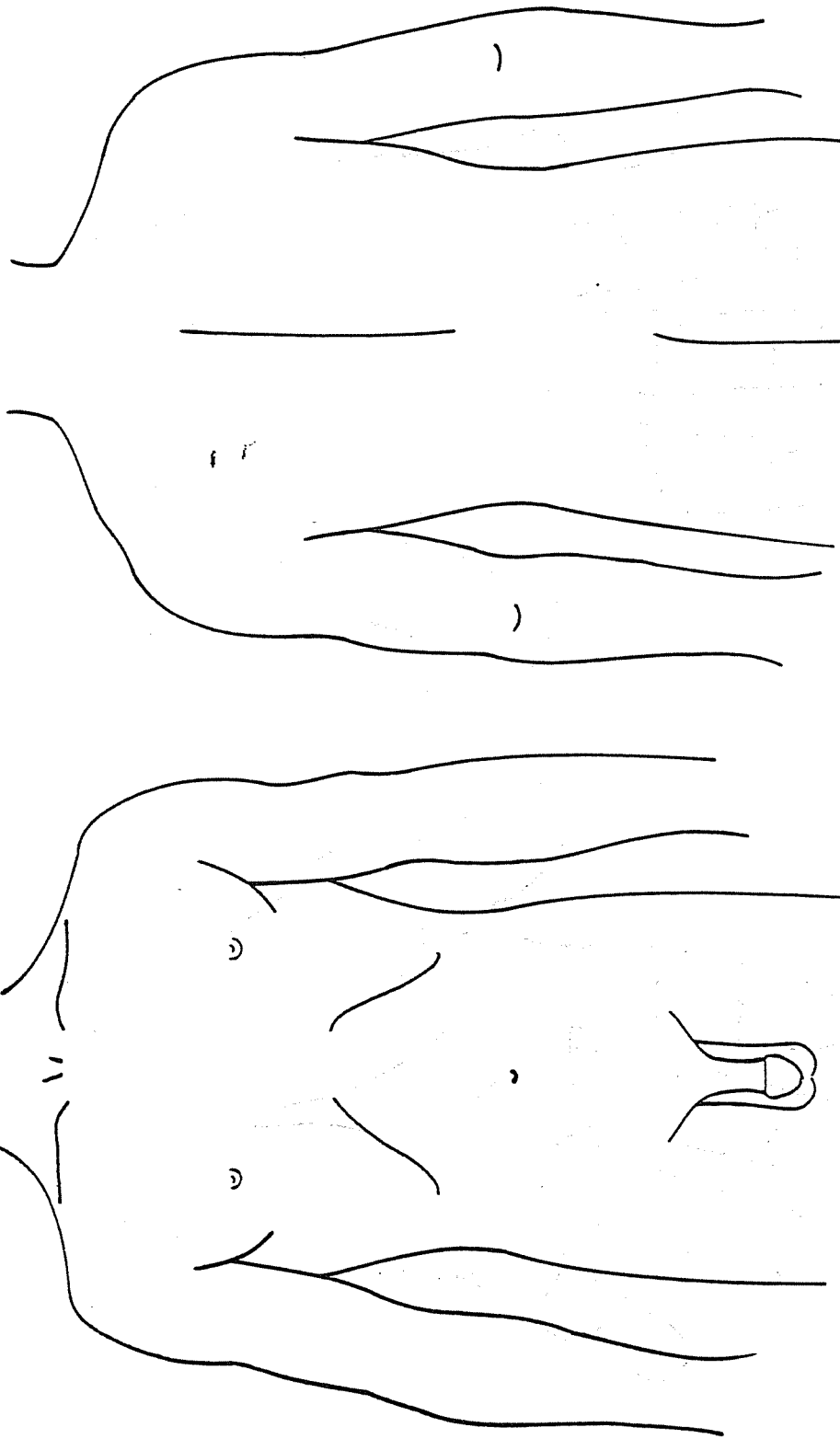


Name _____

Case No. _____

Date _____

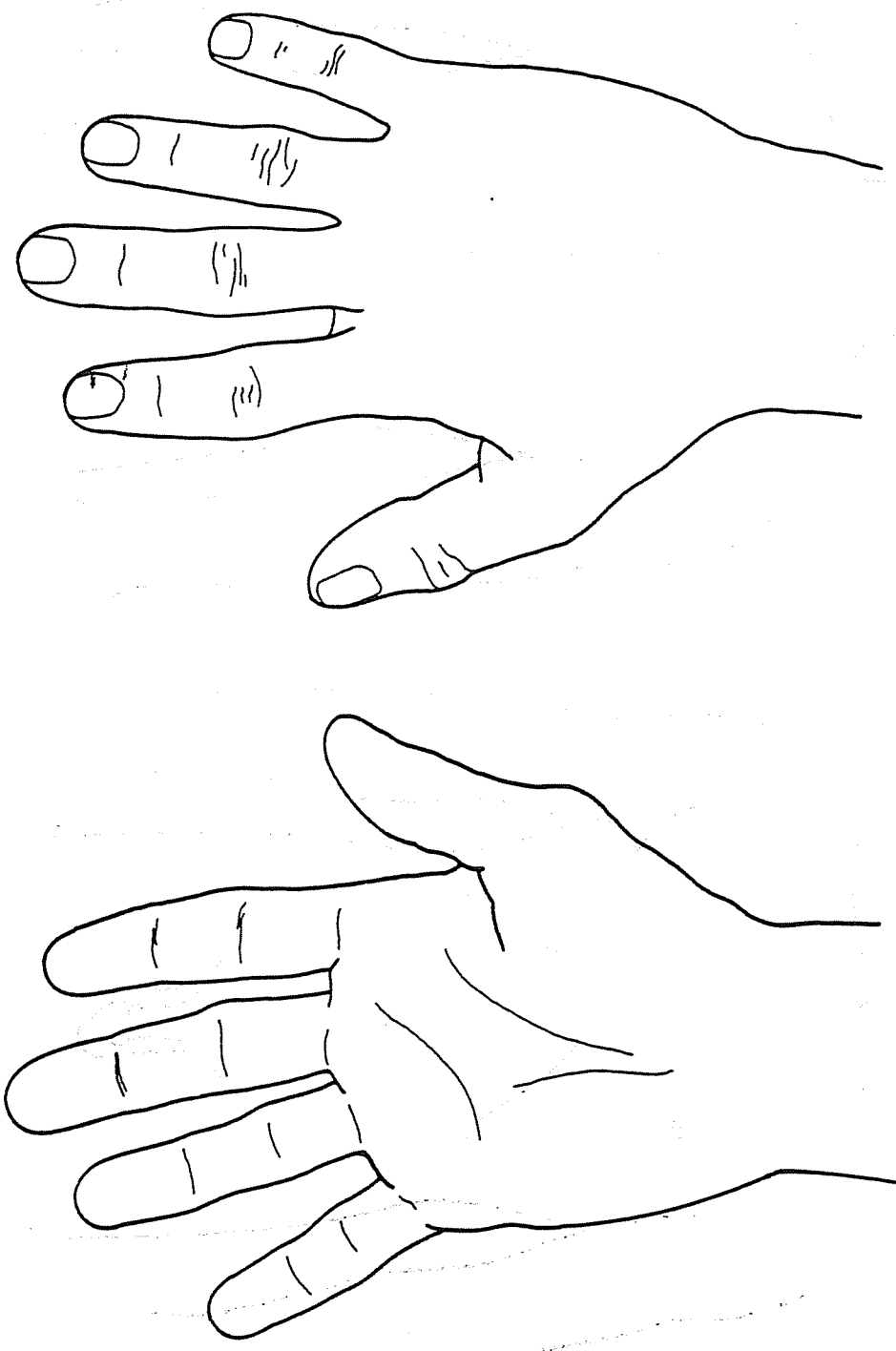
THORACIC ABDOMINAL, MALE - ANTERIOR AND POSTERIOR VIEWS



Name _____ Case No. _____

Date _____

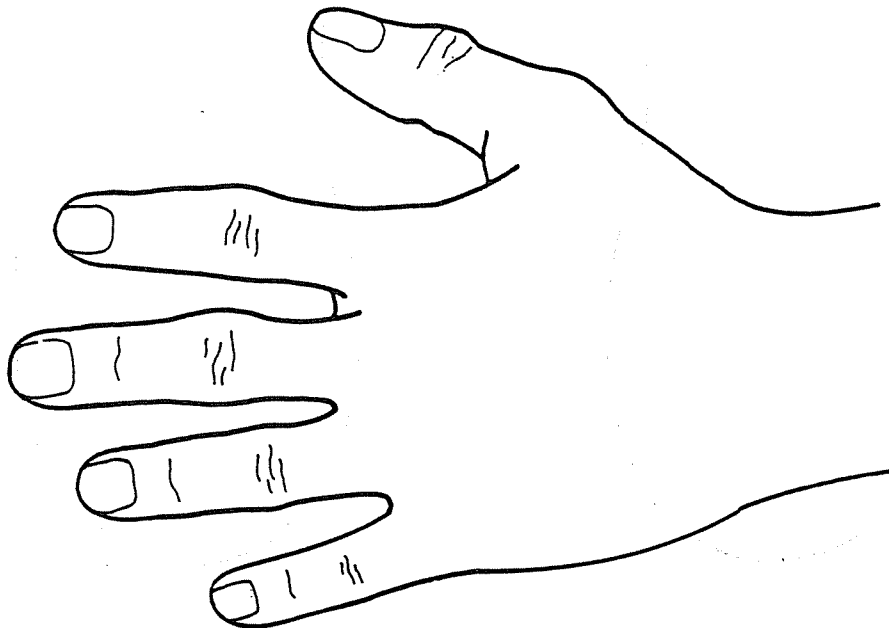
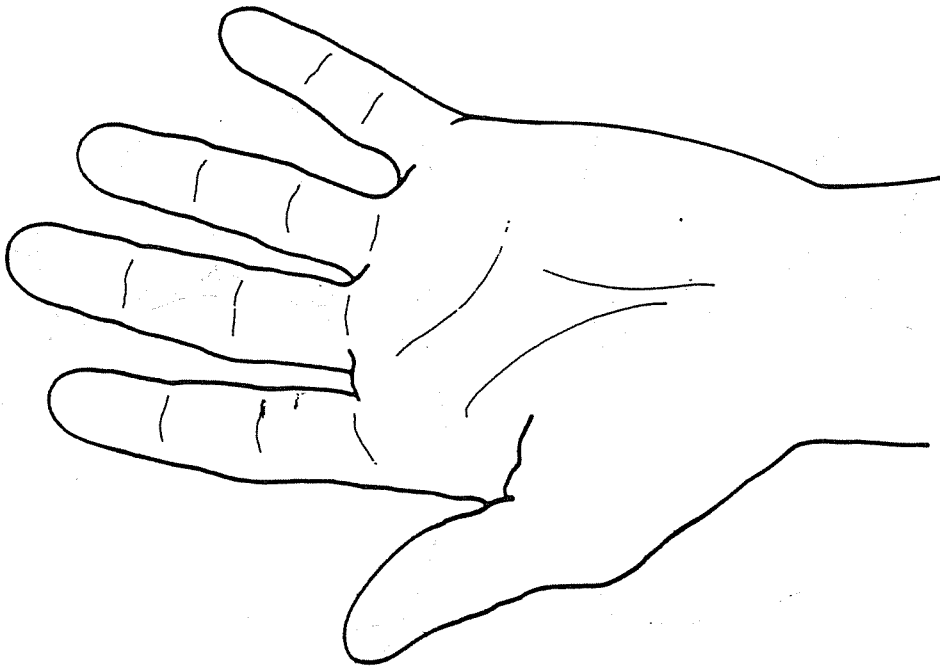
RIGHT HAND - PALMAR AND DORSAL



Name _____ Case No. _____

Date _____

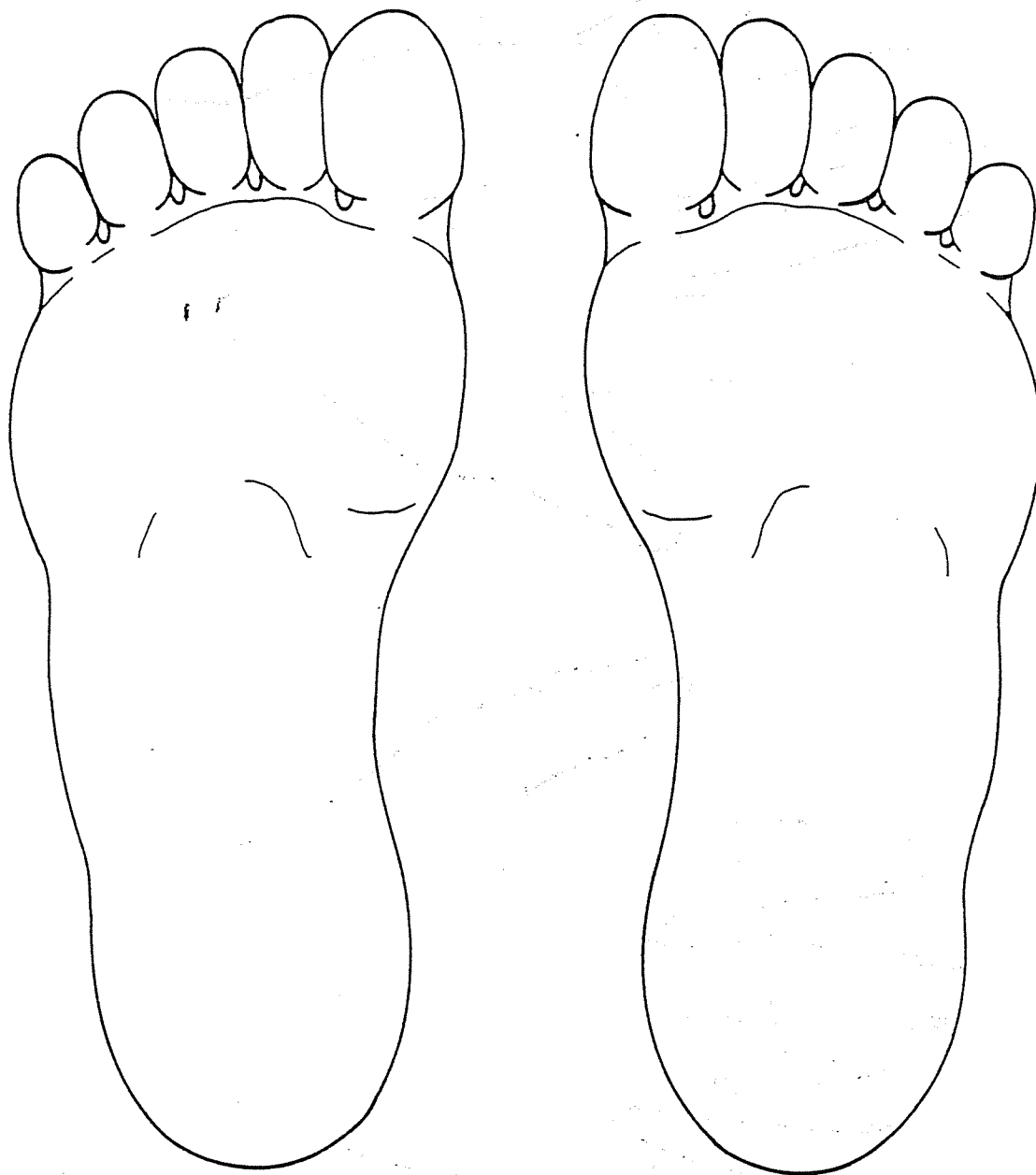
LEFT HAND - PALMAR AND DORSAL



Name _____ Case No. _____

Date _____

FEET - LEFT AND RIGHT PLANTAR SURFACES

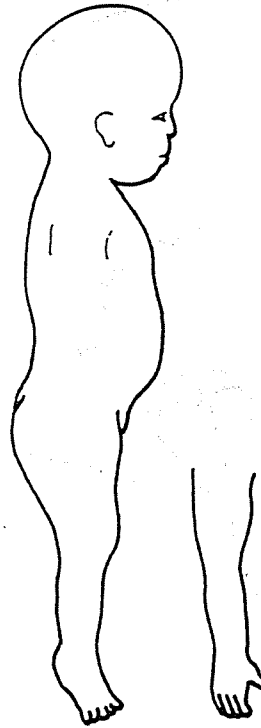
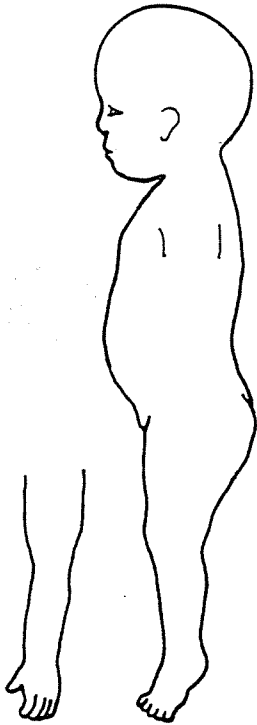
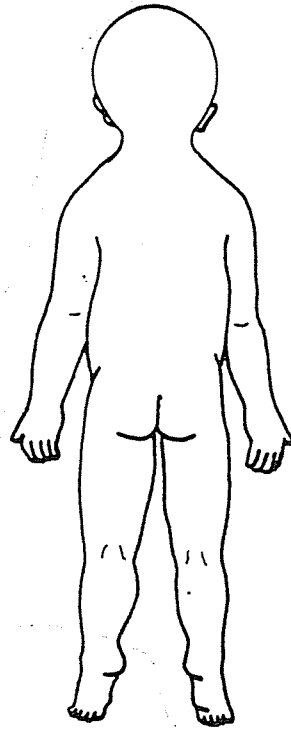
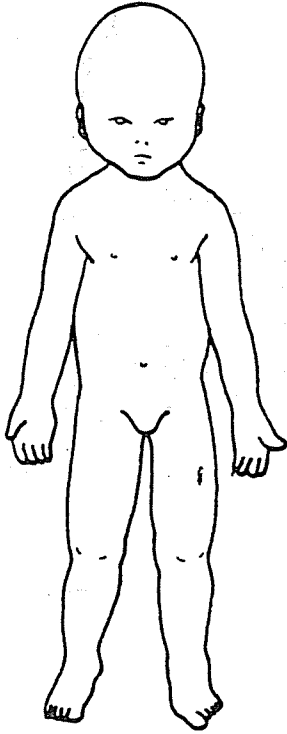


Name _____

Case No. _____

Date _____

INFANT - VENTRAL, DORSAL, AND LEFT AND RIGHT LATERAL VIEWS

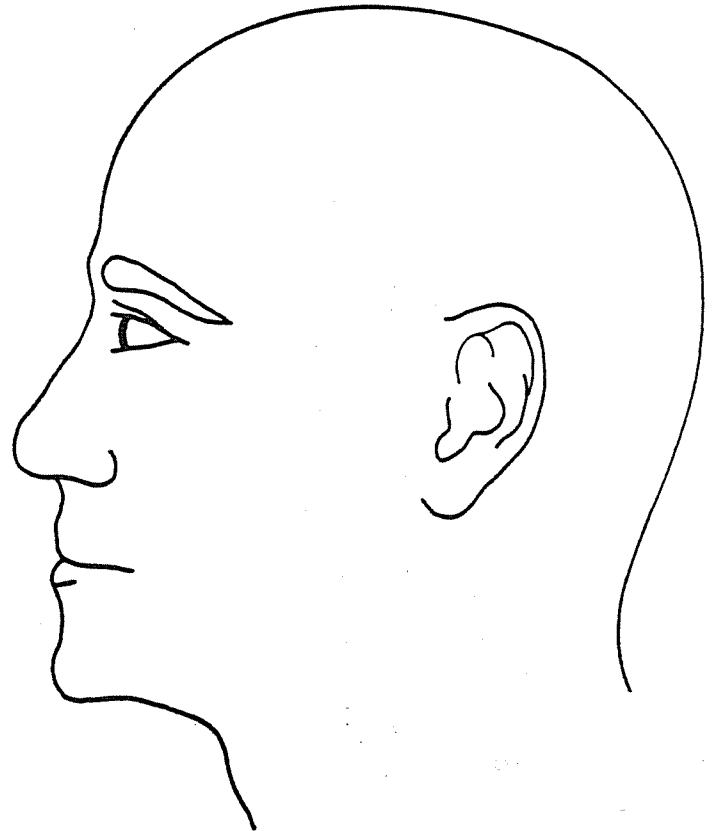
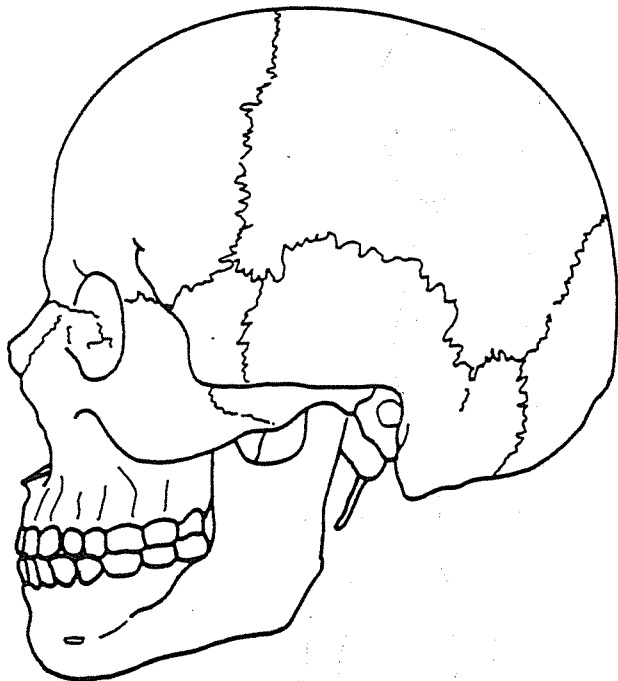
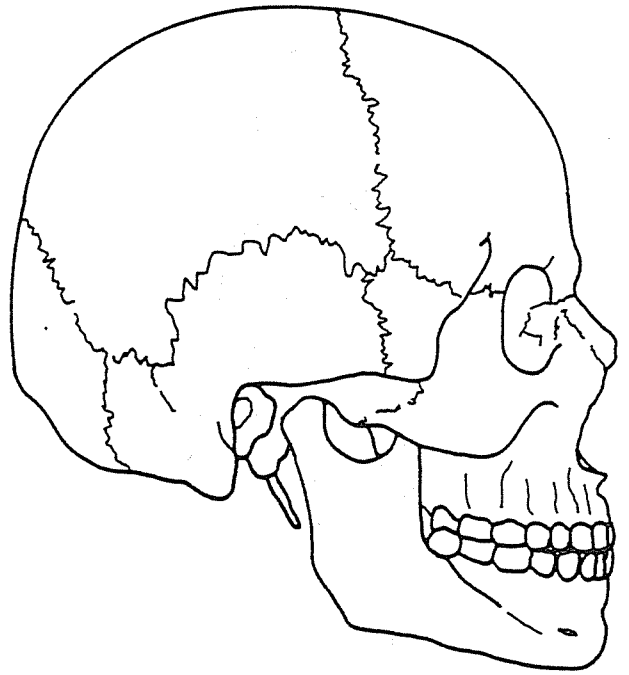
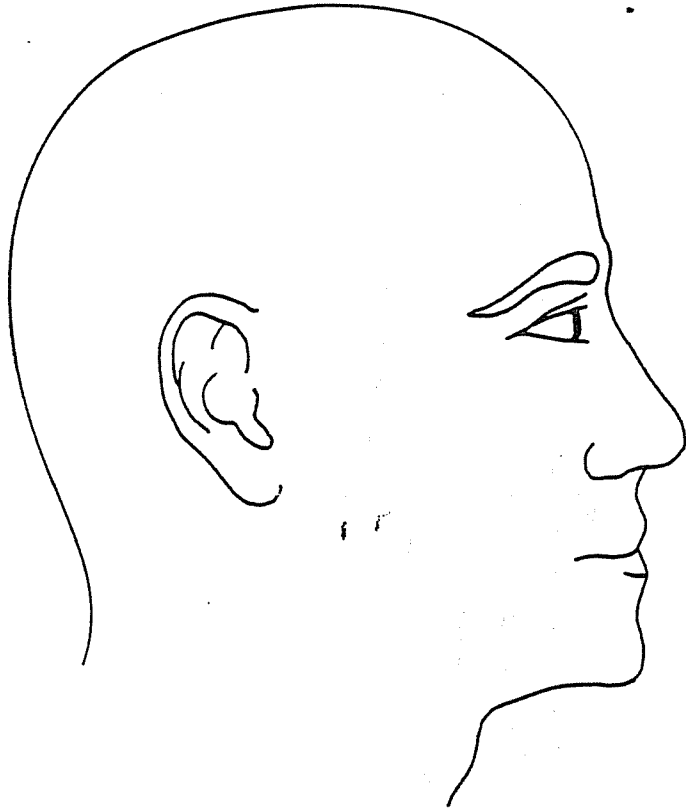


Name _____

Case No. _____

Date _____

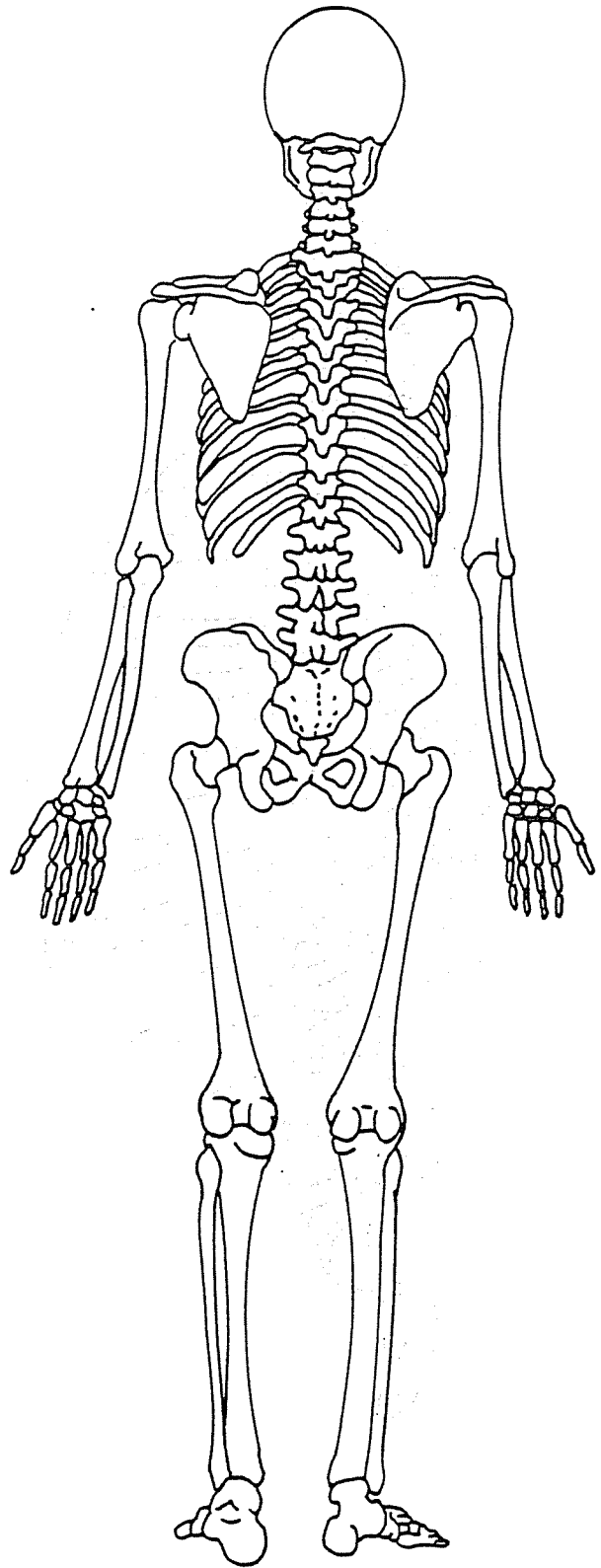
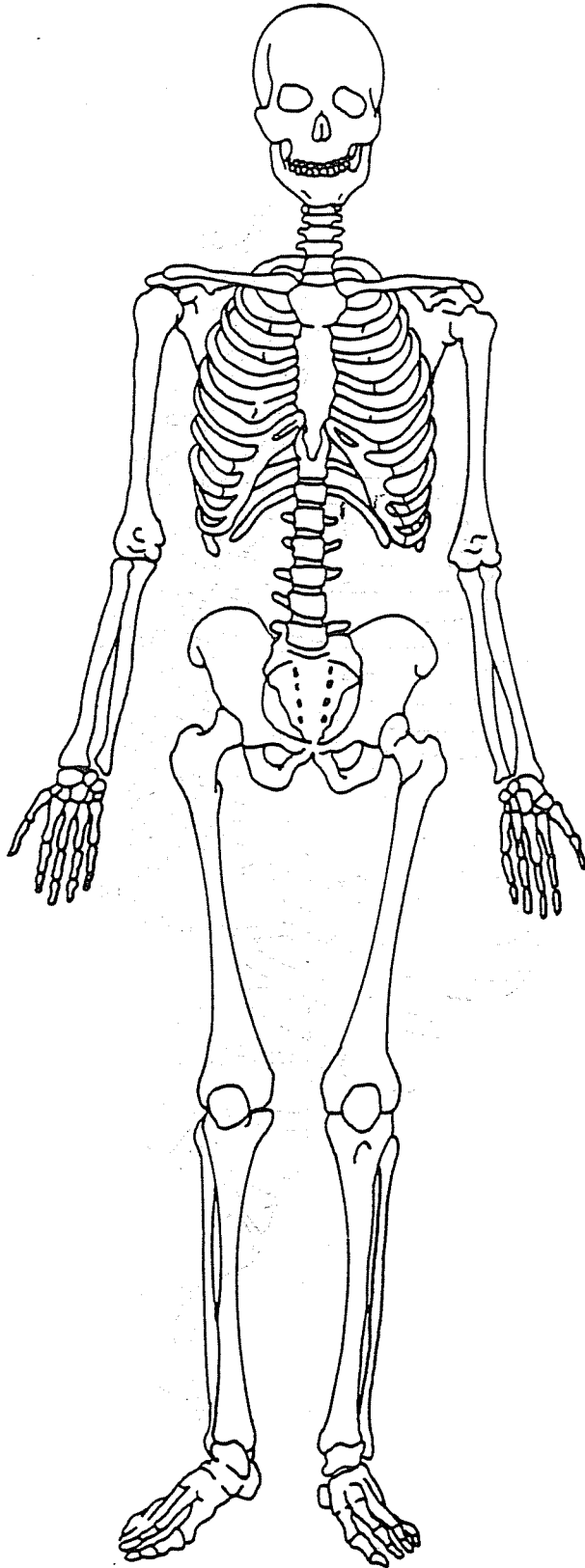
HEAD - SURFACE AND SKELETAL ANATOMY, LATERAL VIEW



Name _____ Case No. _____

Date _____

SKELETON - ANTERIOR AND POSTERIOR VIEWS

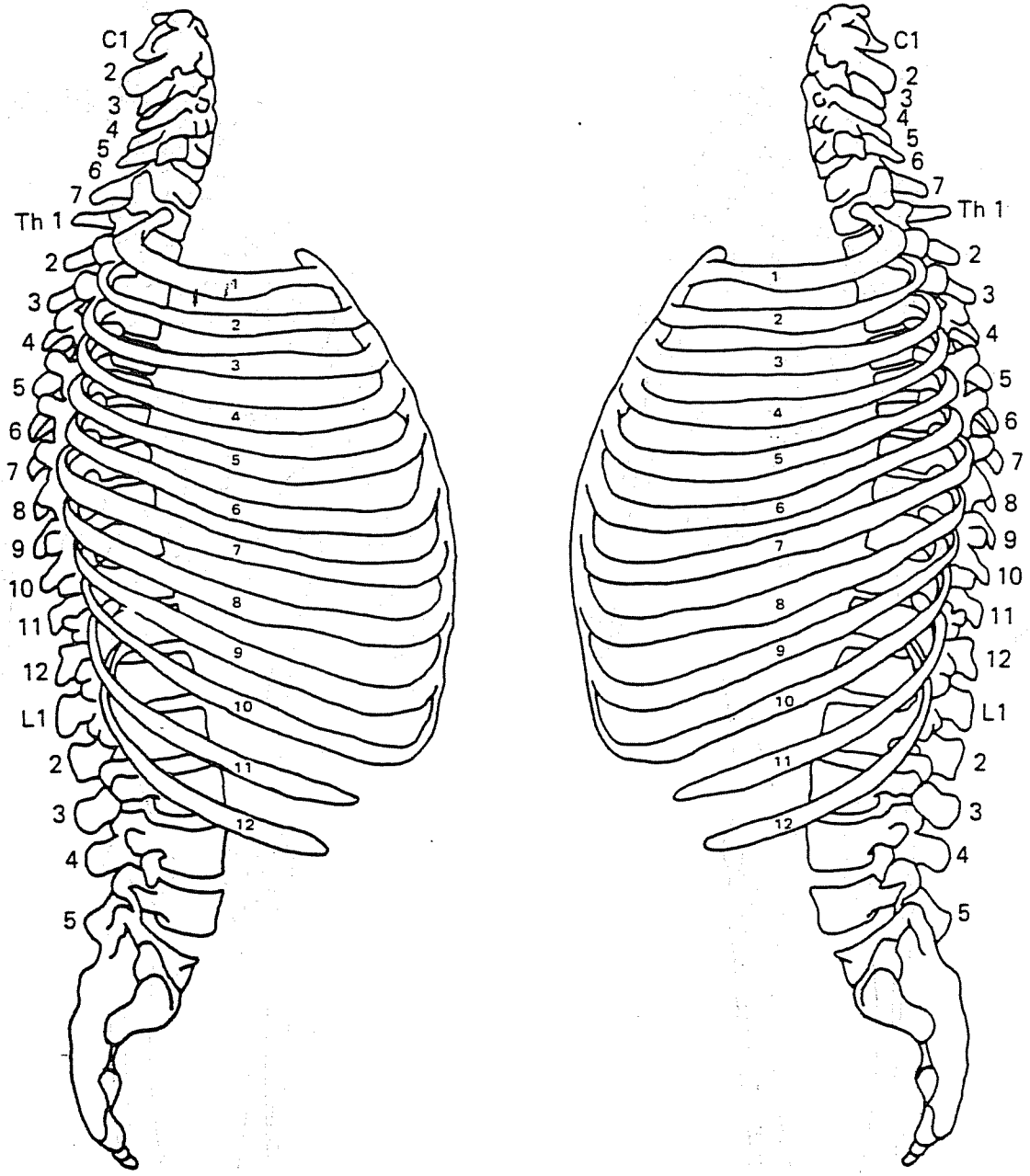


Name _____

Case No. _____

Date _____

VERTEBRAL COLUMN AND RIB CAGE - LEFT AND RIGHT LATERAL VIEWS

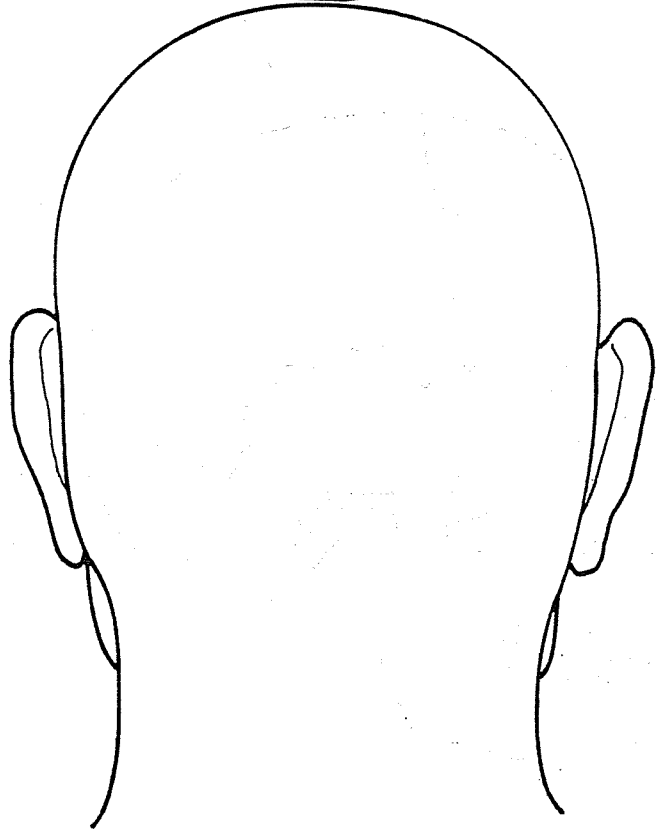
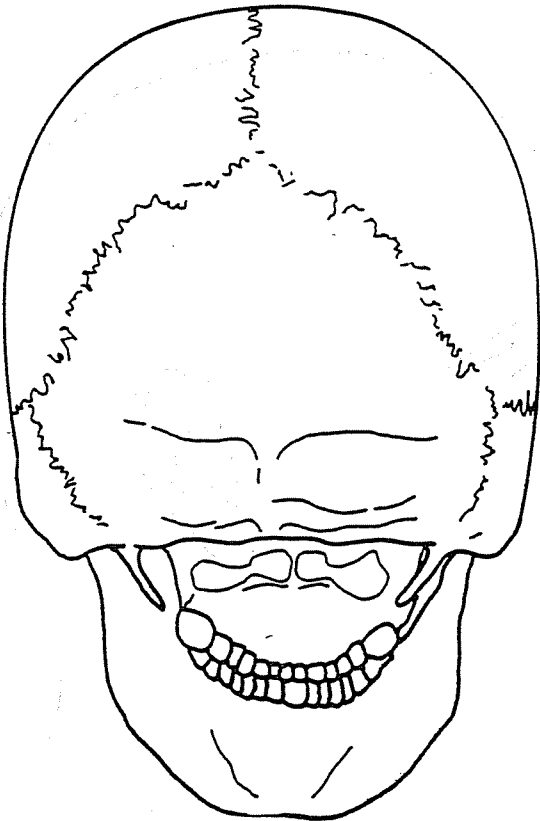
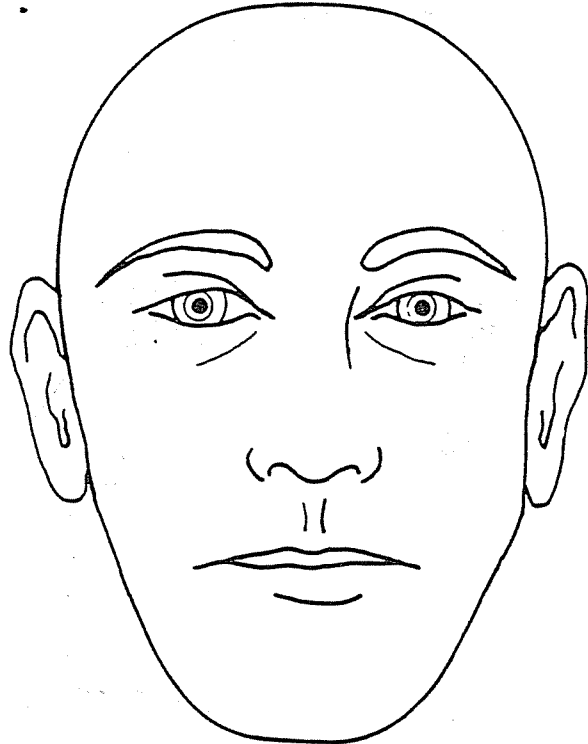
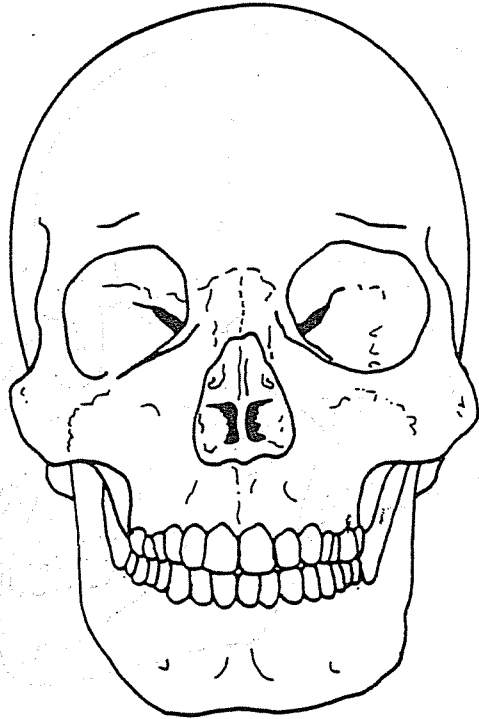


Name _____

Case No. _____

Date _____

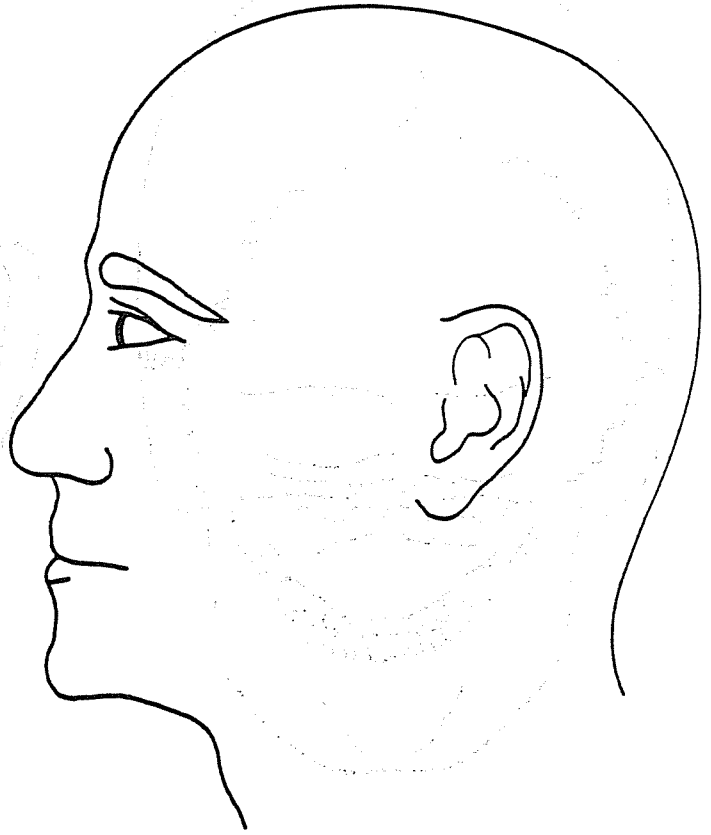
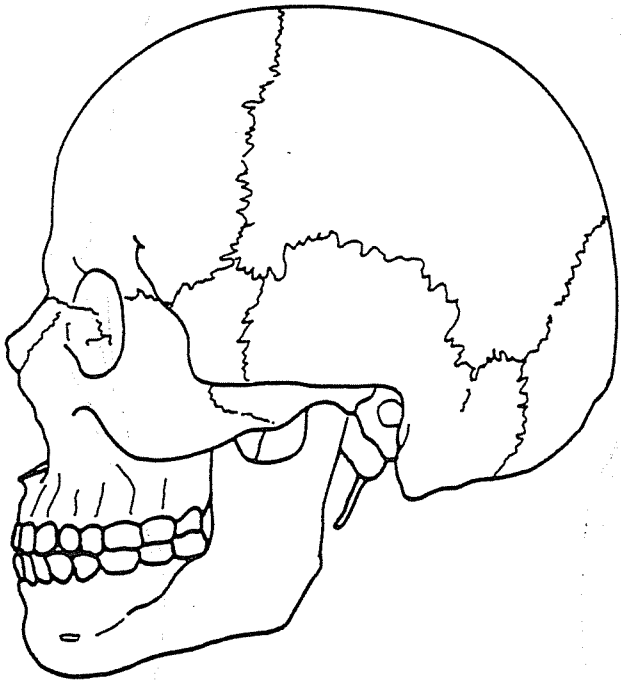
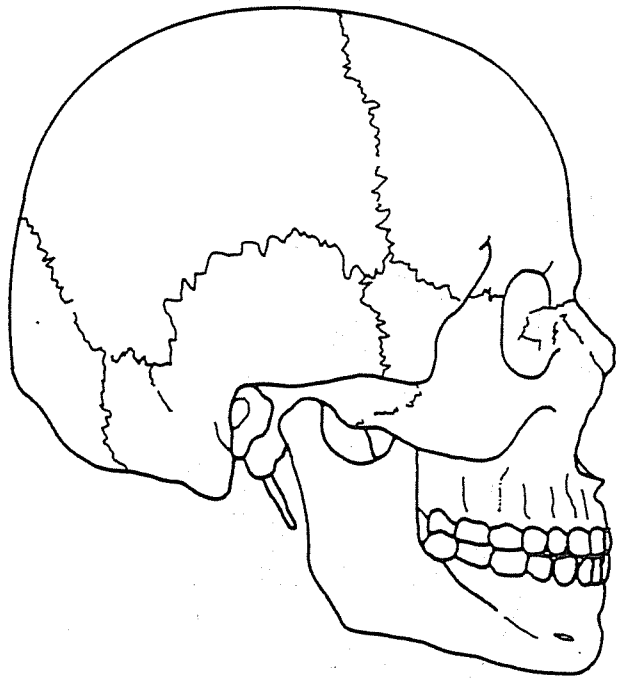
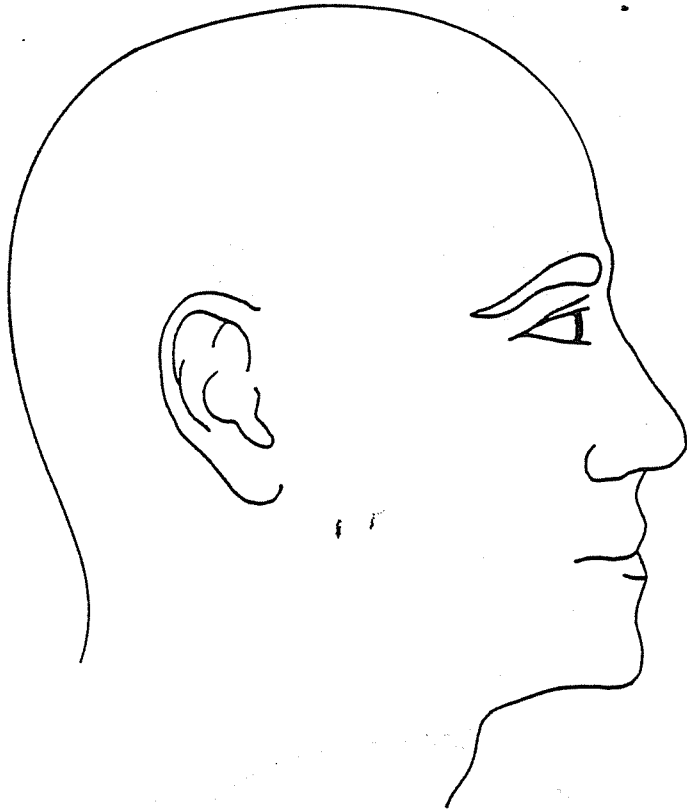
HEAD - SURFACE AND SKELETAL ANATOMY, ANTERIOR AND POSTERIOR VIEWS



Name _____ Case No. _____

Date _____

HEAD - SURFACE AND SKELETAL ANATOMY, LATERAL VIEW

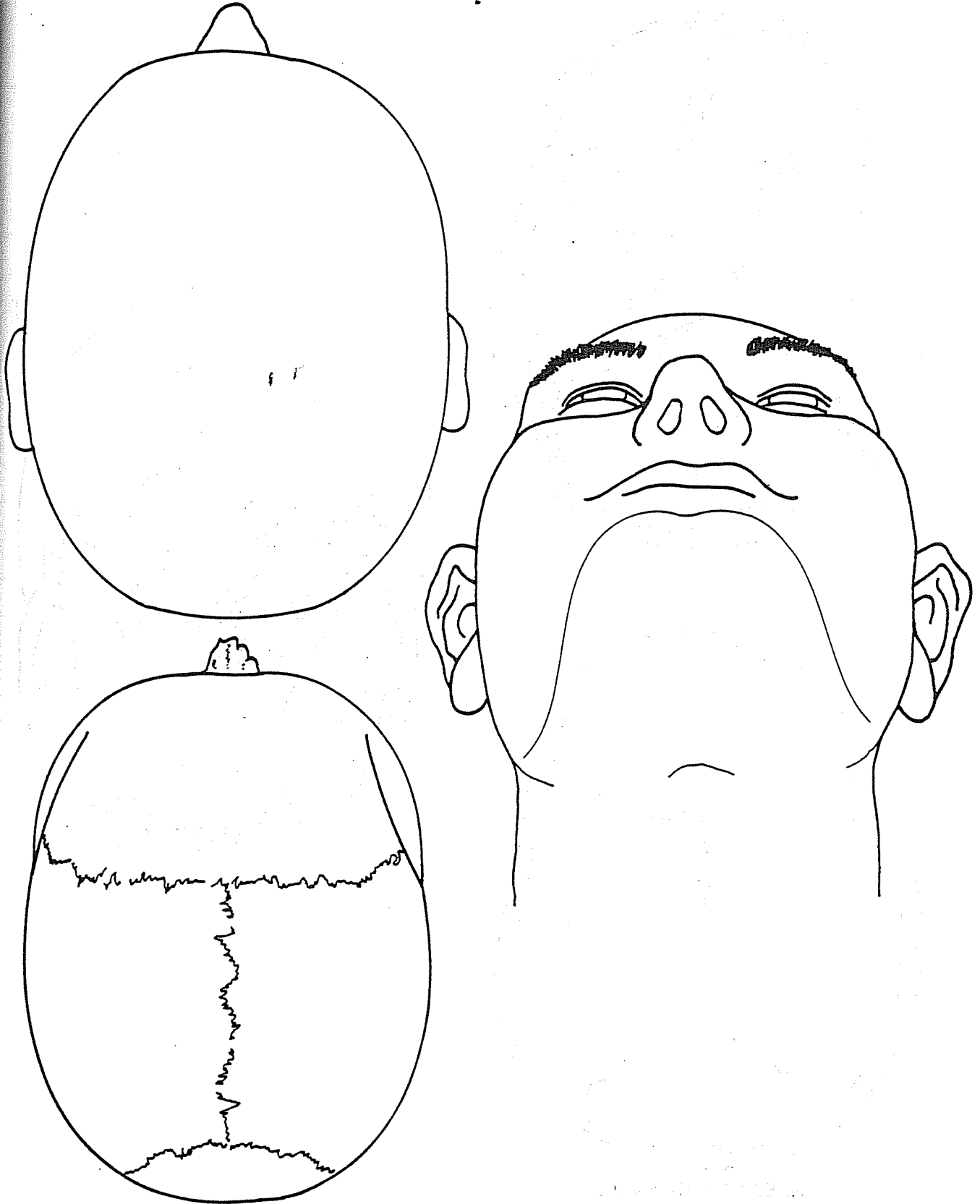


Name _____

Case No. _____

Date _____

HEAD - SURFACE AND SKELETAL ANATOMY, SUPERIOR VIEW - INFERIOR VIEW OF NECK

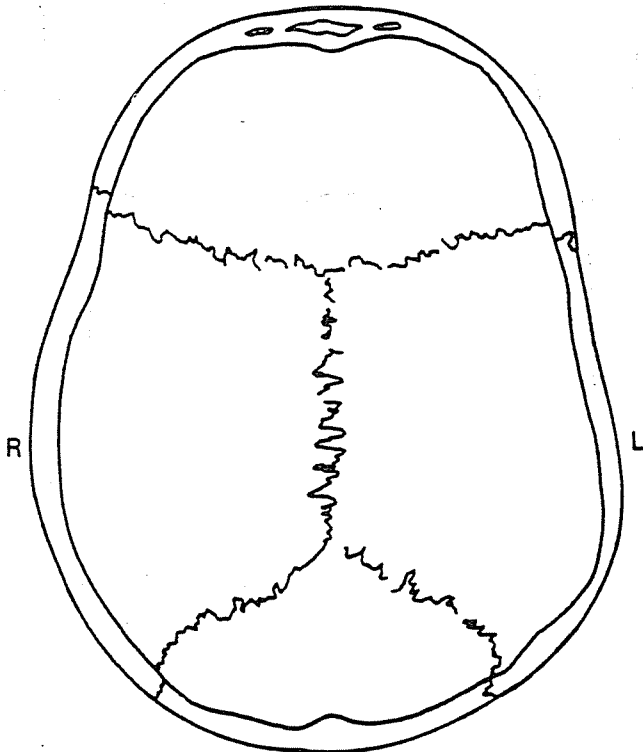
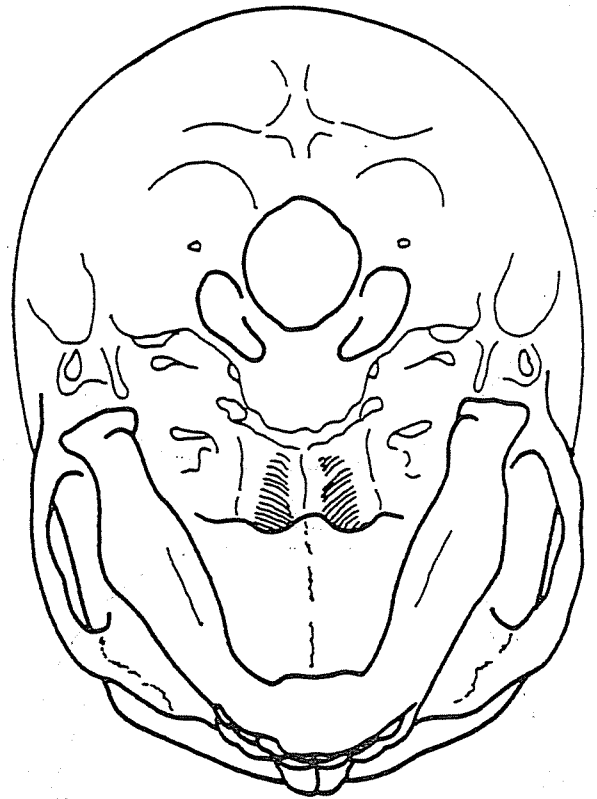
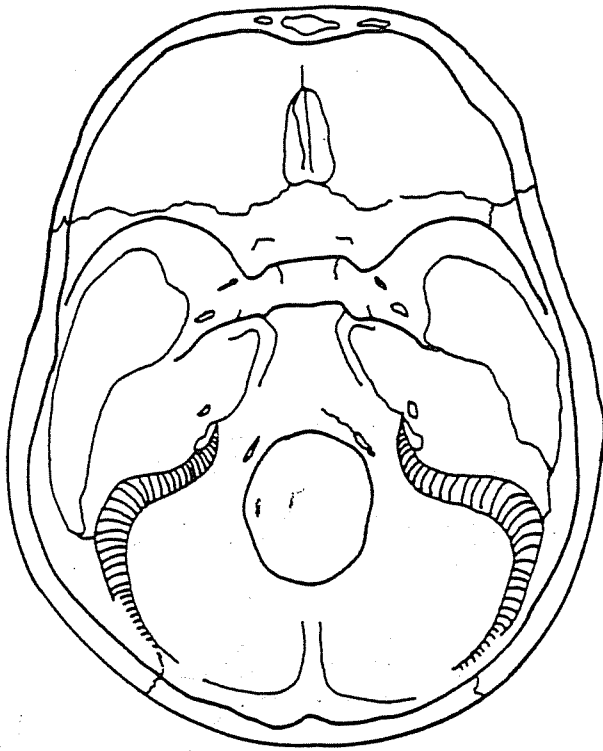


Name _____

Case No. _____

Date _____

SKULL - BASE, INFERIOR AND SUPERIOR VIEWS (PLUS CALVARIUM)

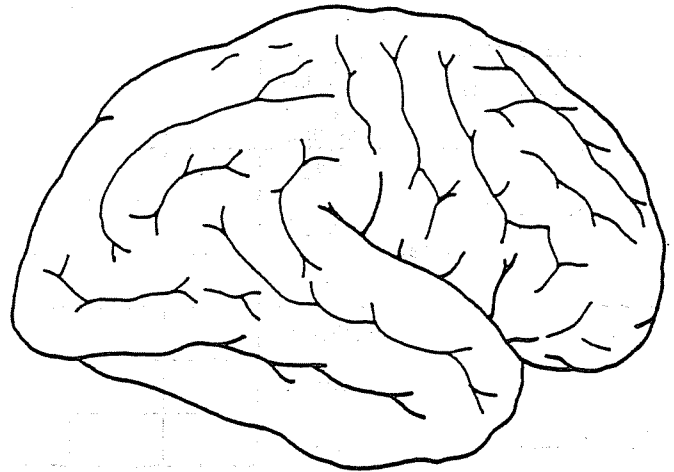
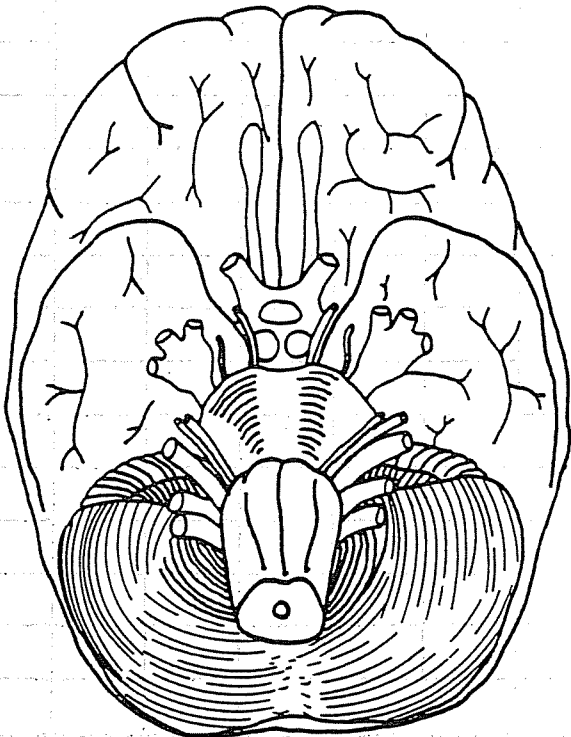
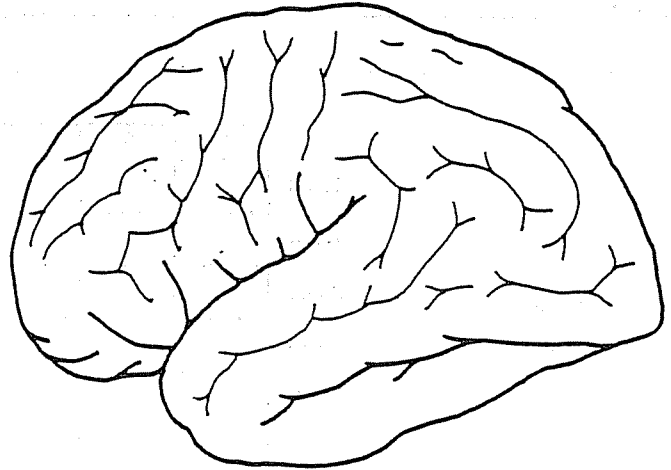
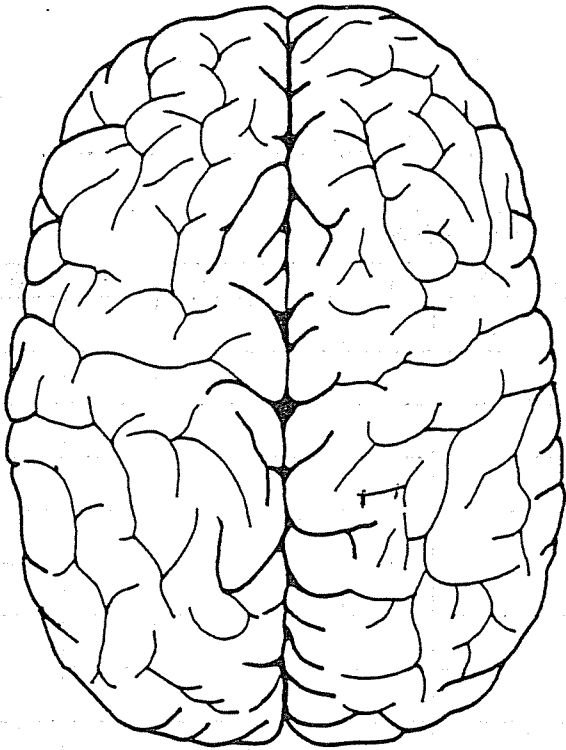


INNER VIEW OF SKULL

Name _____ Case No. _____

Date _____

BRAIN - SUPERIOR, INFERIOR, AND LATERAL VIEWS



Name _____ Case No. _____

Date _____

STAB WOUND CHART

NAME _____ City or County _____

		WOUND NO.										
		1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	
1. Location of wound:	Head											
	Neck											
	Chest											
	Abdomen											
	Back											
	Arm <	Right										
		Left										
	Leg <	Right										
		Left										
	2. The skin wound is:	Horiz.										
Vert.												
Oblique												
3. Centimetres from wound to:	Top of head											
	Right of midline											
	Left of midline											
4. Wound size in millimetres	Width											
	Length											
	Diam.											
5. Direction of wound:	Backward											
	Forward											
	Upward											
	Downward											
	Medially											
	Laterally											

Photographs made: Yes _____ No _____

REMARKS:

Examined by: _____ Date: _____

FIREARM-WOUND CHART

NAME _____ CASE NO. _____

		WOUND NO.											
		1		2		3		4		5		6	
		Ent.	Ex.	Ent.	Ex.	Ent.	Ex.	Ent.	Ex.	Ent.	Ex.	Ent.	Ex.
1. Location of wound:	Head												
	Neck												
	Chest												
	Abdomen												
	Back												
	Right Arm <												
	Left Arm <												
	Right Leg <												
Left Leg <													
2. Size of wound: (Centimetres)	Diam.												
	Width												
	Length												
3. Centimetres from wound to:	Top of head												
	Right of midline												
	Left of midline												
4. Firearm Residue:	On skin												
	Clothing												
	Absent												
5. Direction of missile through body:	Backward												
	Forward												
	Downward												
	Upward												
	To right												
	To left												
6. Missile Recovered:	Probable Calibre												
	Shotgun												

Photographs: _____ X-rays: _____

REMARKS:

Examiner: _____

Date: _____