

Federal Bureau of Investigation Special Agent Charles L. “Chuck” Reed E.O.W. 3/22/1996

Special Agent Reed made his ultimate sacrifice March 22nd, 1996 at forty-five years of age. Special Agent Reed was working a drug operation when he was shot and killed during an undercover drug purchase outside the Comfort Inn parking lot at Penn’s Landing in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania. Reed, a former certified public accountant, was described as a “dogged agent”, an individual who pursued cases with grim persistence.

On the day of his sacrifice, Reed, acting in an undercover capacity, met ex-bank employee and reputed Center City Philadelphia drug dealer, Johnathan M. Cramer, inside a car with an informant where Reed was attempting to purchase cocaine from him. Cramer became nervous during the conversation, saying he feared Reed had a gun in a briefcase. Cramer pulled out a gun and pointed towards the back seat, striking Reed in the chest and abdomen. Despite being wounded, Reed returned fire, fatally wounding Cramer in the chest and head. The incident was recorded by a body wire that Special Agent Reed was wearing as part of the operation. Agents in a nearby car overheard the altercation and rushed to the area 150 yards away but arrived to find both Reed and Cramer seriously wounded. Both men died in the hospital as a result of the injuries they sustained. Special Agent Reed served with the bureau for sixteen years before the time of his sacrifice. He is survived by his wife Susan and three sons, Joshua, Todd and Kelley.

Special Agent Reed, of Harleysville Township in Montgomery County, worked at the Lansdale office for the Federal Bureau of Investigation. He was the first FBI Agent to be killed in the line of duty in Philadelphia and the second throughout Pennsylvania. Reed won high praise for his investigation of Philadelphia Drug kingpin Larry Lavin, a dentist who supplied the Main Line stockbrokers, lawyers and other professionals with cocaine during the 1980s. One of the thirty defendants indicted in the multimillion-dollar drug ring, William Motto, allegedly tried to buy silence of a witness against him and put out a murder contract on Reed. In addition to his role in the Larry Lavin trial, Reed played a significant part in bringing down Ronald L. Tabas, a Chester County harness-racing enthusiast who financed a multimillion-dollar lifestyle by importing tons of illegal drugs into Pennsylvania. In addition to sacrificing his life for the citizens of Philadelphia, Special Agent Reed remained a prominent law enforcement professional throughout his career, enduring death threats and dangerous obstacles. As District Attorney Ferman explained, “Special Agent Reed made many contributions to the well-being of Pennsylvania and its citizens, contributions that continue to keep us safe today. These kinds of losses, those involving individuals who put their lives on the line to protect others, carry tremendous weight. We are here to remember and honor their memory and continue to thank and honor those officers who continue to protect us every day.”