



AS IT IS

Frenchwoman Officially Considered Dead Fights to be 'Alive' Again

September 02, 2021

Declared dead by a French court in 2017, Jeanne Pouchain has spent the past four years trying to prove she is alive. French officials, however, disagree.

"My name was Jeanne. It still is Jeanne, after I've been declared dead in 2017," said the 59-year old.

She cries at times when explaining her story and what she plans for when she will officially be "alive" again.

It all started, Pouchain said, when the family received a letter four years ago from a court saying mistakenly that she was dead. The letter also said she owed money that her husband had to pay.

The letter was part of a legal process launched by a former employee of Pouchain's cleaning business.

It has not been easy or quick to fix the mistake.

Pouchain is unable to work and afraid to leave her house because she does not have an identification card or social security number. She lives as a **recluse**.

Some of the family's belongings were taken by the courts and all their saved money has gone to trying to get things back to normal.

"My life, well, it's nothing. I feel I'm of no use. I'm nothing and I'm of no use. And this is hard," Pouchain said.

She spoke to Reuters in the house she shares with her husband Pierre-Jean in a small village near Lyon, in south-east France.

Now, the courts are looking at her case again. Pouchain and her husband have begun to have some hope. But it will still take months. The courts must overturn their decision, and a judge must recognize officially that she is not dead and never was.

She has great dreams for that day.

"I know exactly what I will do...I will get a health check, because I know some things are wrong with my body," she said.

She said that she could not see a doctor because she does not have a social security number. She has several health problems, including having lost most of her teeth.

"I would so love to be able to bite into an apple...I would love to have teeth. I would be so happy, even if they were to give me two **dentures**, I would be happy to have teeth."

Her other dream is simply to be able to enjoy life again, at home, with her husband, Pierre-Jean. He is sure things will be put right.

"Hope is what makes us carry on," he said. "**Eventually**, the outcome will necessarily be in our favor."

I'm Anna Matteo.

Reuters reported this story. Susan Shand adapted it for Learning English. Mario Ritter, Jr. was the editor.

Words in This Story

recluse – *n.* a person who lives alone and avoids other people

dentures – *n. (pl.)* a set of manufactured teeth to replace lost natural ones

eventually –*adv.* at some later time

We want to hear from you. Write to us in the Comments Section, and [visit our Facebook page](#).
