

**RESTRICTED**

Form MG11(T)

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**WITNESS STATEMENT**

(CJ Act 1967, s.9; MC Act 1980, ss.5A(3) (a) and 5B; MC Rules 1981, r.70)

Statement of: PACKMAN, BETTY

Age if under 18: 018 (if over 18 insert 'over 18') Occupation: RETIRED

This statement (consisting of 8 page(s) each signed by me) is true to the best of my knowledge and belief and I make it knowing that, if it is tendered in evidence, I shall be liable to prosecution if I have wilfully stated anything which I know to be false or do not believe to be true.

Signed: B. Packman

Date: 17/01/2006

I am Betty PACKMAN and I am the widow of Geoffrey Michael John PACKMAN, who I called Michael and everyone else knew as Mick.

In August 1999 Michael was admitted to the Gosport War Memorial Hospital, Bury Road, Gosport, Hampshire. On Friday 3rd September 1999 (03/09/1999) he died there. This statement is about what happened to him.

Michael was born in Shirebrook in Derbyshire on Code A His parents were George and Ethel PACKMAN. Michael had three sisters who are still alive, his parents are both dead. I know that his father died from a stroke, I don't know the reason for his mother's death, but she was in her eighties when she died. The family were all well built, by this I mean that they all enjoyed eating their mother's cooking and as a result were all on the plump side.

Michael always worked in what I would describe as office jobs. We met when we both worked in local government in Derbyshire.

Michael carried out his National Service when he was 18 years old and got a job in insurance in Nottingham when he finished at the age of 20.

We were married in July 1956 in Chesterfield and stayed in the area until Michael got a job working in Zurich Insurance in London.

In 1964 we adopted our son, Mark, and in 1967 we adopted our daughter, Victoria, who is

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known as "Vicky".

In 1969, Michael moved to work in the Portsmouth Branch of Zurich Insurance and the family moved from London to live in Emsworth.

At this point Michael was fit and healthy, he played table tennis, and he enjoyed walking. He was a sideman in the local church and he was heavily involved in the Nautical Training School in Emsworth. This was like the naval cadets and was run for the local children. They had a band and both of our children played in it. Michael would take the troop away to camp and it was whilst on one of these camps that he fell and twisted his knee and as a result became less mobile.

Around 1983 Michael had a falling out at work and left the company. He became a taxi driver working for a local taxi firm. He had to have a medical in order to do so and at this stage was found to have high blood pressure and I think he weighed 17/18 stone. When he became a taxi driver his weight began to pile on.

In 1985 he set up his own taxi firm with a friend. After 2 or 3 years the business collapsed. I think this would be around 1988/89 and Michael decided to retire, he was 57 years old. He continued to put weight on and his legs would swell up, his feet would swell to the point where he couldn't get his shoes on and he would have to visit the Doctor in his socks. I would drive him to the front of the surgery and he would walk the short distance inside in his stocking feet.

Around this time Michael had a very severe nose bleed and was taken to the A & E Department at the Queen Alexandra Hospital, Cosham (Q.A.). They had to pack his nose in order to stop it bleeding. I know that he was warned about his weight and they were going to refer him to a dietician.

Michael continued to put on weight, his legs were a constant problem to him. They would weep fluid and were never dry. It used to make the bottom of his trousers wet through.

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It reached the stage where he couldn't walk properly so he didn't go out. He used to lean on the furniture and walls in order to get around the house. He spent most of his time just sitting down. He didn't drink alcohol very often but would drink huge amounts of sweet, fizzy drinks.

For the last two to three years of his life he had the district nurse come in two or three times a week to change the dressings on his legs.

Despite his condition he never complained or moaned about his health and as far as I am aware, he never had to take any medication for pain relief.

Michael never discussed his health with me, he never told me why he was going to the Doctors, of what treatment he was receiving. Our relationship was such that we didn't communicate particularly well.

During the summer of 1999 I was diagnosed with breast cancer and I had to undergo treatment for it.

On 5th August 1999 (05/08/1999) I had to go into Q.A. Hospital for a lumpectomy. I was due to be admitted for an overnight stay and I needed to get ready to go. I needed to have a shower but Michael was in the bathroom. I kept asking him when he would be coming out and he kept telling me that it would be 'soon' and that he was 'alright'.

Eventually I had to use the shower whilst he was still in the bathroom.

When I left for hospital he was still in there, still assuring me that he was alright and that he would be out shortly. He was alone in the house at this point as Mark had left home many years previously and Vicky was out at work.

On 6th August 1999 (06/08/1999) I was collected from the hospital by Vicky. She told me that Michael had just been admitted to the same hospital and that he was in the Accident &

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Emergency Department.

We went straight to see him and I now know that he had a rash on his groin. I'm not sure that I was aware of this at the time. I remember that I thought something had happened to him whilst he was in the toilet. Michael was taken to ANN Ward in the Q.A. Hospital where he was treated with penicillin for his legs. I remember that he had injections in his stomach. He was initially given tablets but they made him sick and gave him diarrhoea.

Michael made a really good recovery whilst in the Q.A. His legs stopped weeping and dried up, his feet improved, he was eating and drinking properly. He was cheerful and he looked so much better than he had in recent years. I visited him daily and Vicky visited when she wasn't working.

We were told that the Social Services would be coming to assess our home in order to arrange some hand rails to help Michael get around the house more easily. We were also told that Michael was to be transferred to the Gosport War Memorial Hospital (GWMH) for recuperation and rehabilitation. They wanted to get Michael walking again. We didn't know when he would be moved, I think that they were waiting for a bed to become available.

Michael was in the Q.A. for around two to three weeks before he was taken to the GWMH. He was admitted onto Dryad and was put in a room by himself. The room was three to four doors away from the nurses' station.

I visited him daily and initially he was fine. He was eating and drinking well and didn't need any assistance in order to do so. He had his own supply of drinks next to his bed and could help himself.

As I said, I would visit him daily and I always seemed to arrive just as he was having his dressings changed. He never complained of being in any pain whilst this was happening. In fact he never complained of any pain at any point nor did he seem to be in any pain.

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A couple of days after Michael was admitted to GWMH, I visited him with   
 our closest friends.

We were stood in Michael's room chatting to him and he was laughing and joking in his normal fashion when a lady doctor came into the room and said to me, "I'd like a word with you" and she turned and walked out.

I followed her and we went into a little office nearby. As I walked into the room, I could see that there were a couple of nurses already in there.

I stood waiting for the doctor to speak to me, I wasn't asked to sit down and I was not prepared in any way for what happened next.

The doctor said in a very abrupt manner, "Your husband is going to die and you have to look after yourself now". She didn't explain why or when this would happen, she just told me that she 'liked my coat' and that was the end of the conversation.

I was stunned. I had no idea that Michael was so ill, he looked so well. I walked back into his room in a daze. He said to me, "What did she want?"

He clearly had no idea of what his prognosis was. I didn't know what to say to him, I couldn't tell him what the doctor had actually said to me, so I told him that she had told me about his treatment and that she liked my coat. I did a little twirl to show my coat off.

At some point around this period I received a telephone call from the hospital telling me that Michael had suffered a heart attack. I went in to visit him and he seemed fine. He told me that he hadn't had a heart attack, he was suffering from indigestion. Michael had always suffered from this, he never took pain killers, just Rennie indigestion tablets by the bucket full.

Within two or three days Michael became progressively worse. He looked 'spaced out'. His eyes were glazed over and he spent long periods asleep. When he was awake he could still talk

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to us but became unable to feed himself or to hold a cup. Either I or Vicky had to hold a cup with a straw for him to drink. We would feed him grapes and he would suck the juice from them, he seemed very thirsty.

He was catheterised and I believe that a nurse told me that he was put on diamorphine. There was something behind the head of his bed that the diamorphine was in.

I didn't understand why he was put on diamorphine and no one explained the reasons to me.

I last saw Michael on Wednesday 1st September 1999 (01/09/1999). He was asleep and 'out of it'. He didn't wake for the whole time I stayed with him. I believe that he was dying just as the doctor had told me.

The following day I was admitted to hospital for a major operation in relation to my cancer and I was unable to visit him.

On Friday 3rd September 1999 (03/09/1999) in the early afternoon, I was visited by **Code A** **Code A** who was the Curate at our local church. She told me that she had visited Michael that day and I believe that she was with him when he died.

I could not get in contact with Vicky as she was working so I left a message with our neighbour to tell her. I remained in hospital for the next four or five days and my brother, **Code A** **Code A** came with my son, Mark, to help Vicky with arrangements.

I have been asked if I know what Michael died from. I have seen his death certificate and his cause of death is given as a heart attack. I know that the certificate was signed by Dr BARTON and I believe that this was the name of the doctor who told me that Michael was dying.

My recollection of this time is somewhat vague as I was under a great deal of stress due to my own ill health.

I have been asked if I told anyone about my conversation with the doctor. Apart from my

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friends, I [Code A] and [Code A], who were with me at the time, I did not tell anyone at first as I did not want to upset my children.

I subsequently told Vicky about it as I was upset by her tone and the insensitive manner in which she told me of my husband's forthcoming death.

Statement taken by [Code A]

Signed: [Code A]  
2004(1)

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