

**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: BRENNAN, MARGARET

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

This statement (consisting of 4 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: M BRENNAN

Date: 04/08/2003

I live at the address supplied to the police.

I am retired now but from 1963 until approx 1995 I worked as a nursing auxiliary at the Gosport War Memorial Hospital .

I initially worked at the Northcote Annex which was an offsite geriatric ward and when that closed I moved to the Redcliff Annex, which was also an off site geriatric ward.

I worked full time covering the day shift. I don't think that syringe drivers were used when I was at Northcote. I don't think that they were around then.

When I moved to Redcliffe Annex when Northcote Annex closed and I cannot remember syringe drivers being used. The sister in charge at the time was Sister GREEN .

When Sister GREEN left, Gill HAMBLIN took over and I found her to be very kind to the patients but I noticed that she seemed to put patients onto syringe drivers very early on in their treatment. It seemed to me that other types of pain relief were not tried first. They would go from Asprin to diamorphine with nothing in between.

At this time I was working with Joan FULLFAR , Joyce TEE and Sonia TAYLOR . We were all auxiliaries and Gill HAMBLIN and Lyn BARRETT who were trained staff.

I remember that Joan, Joyce, Sonia and myself would comment on the fact that syringe drivers

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were used so quickly. I thought that syringe drivers should have been used as a last resort, I consider them to be death machines when used on elderly patients. I know that syringe drivers can be used to control pain and the patients recover but with the elderly they go into a deep sleep and then they die.

I have been asked if I can recall any patients who I had concerns about. I recall an elderly, frail lady at Redcliffe Annex. I left work on one day and the following day upon my return she was on a syringe driver. I asked why she had been put on one and was told that she was 'poorly'. I know that she had the beginnings of a cold but she wasn't ill or in pain when I left her. I can remember that there were a lot of mutterings amongst the auxiliaries about syringe drivers but I felt that I wasn't trained and therefore wasn't in a position to question what was going on. I recall that not all patients who were put on syringe drivers gave me cause for concern only some.

I have been asked if I can recall any of the GP's names who visited the wards.

I remember Dr BARTON because she came everyday. I always found her to be a very nice lady, she appeared to be very friendly. I know that she wrote the patients up for diamorphine and syringe drivers.

Prior to Redcliffe Annex closing I moved up to the main hospital to work nights on Daedalus Ward. I had to nurse my elderly parents.

When I started working nights my concerns about the use of syringe drivers grew steadily less. I didn't have the same amount of contact with the patients so I wasn't aware of their conditions. Working nights also meant that syringe drivers would tend to be set up prior to my coming on duty.

Around the latter part of 1996 my mother, Irene Louise BRENNAN, b Code A became increasing more frail. She had suffered a number of strokes and was prone to falling. She began a rota to allow me respite. She would spend four weeks at home and then two weeks on

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Daedalus Ward. I was no longer nursing at this time having retired to take care of her.

My mother was admitted to Daedalus Ward with a bedsore some time in June 1997, she suffered from arthritis and had suffered strokes but she was admitted on this occasion to treat a bedsore. I was awaiting a special ripple bed and my mother was due to come home.

Once in hospital my mothers condition deteriorated. I visited daily and took her food, she had difficulty swallowing.

I was telephoned at home by Phillip BEAD , he asked me if I would give permission for him to set up a syringe driver for my mothers use. I told him that in my opinion she wasn't in need of diamorphine and I refused. I visited my mum daily so I knew the state of her illness and her pain. The following day Phillip BEAD rang me again and said that he would set up a syringe driver but would not put diamorphine in it, he would use it for other drugs, so I agreed.

On Monday 30<sup>th</sup> July 1997 (30/07/1997) when I visited my mother I could see that she was in pain so I spoke to Dr LORD who was carrying out her ward round.

She examined my mother and suggested morphine to release my mothers pain. I agreed and morphine was given through the syringe driver. My mother fell into a deep sleep and died on Wednesday 1<sup>st</sup> July 1997 (07/07/1997).

She was buried at Anns Hill Cemetery.

When I heard of the police investigation into the use of syringe drivers at the hospital I was not surprised. I felt that they wanted to put my mother on as and the diamorphine as a pain relief before she needed it and I resisted it.

Signed: M BRENNAN  
2004(1)

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