

RESTRICTED

WITNESS STATEMENT

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

Statement of: RIPLEY, PAULE

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

This statement (consisting of 5 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: P RIPLEY

Date: 19/11/2002

I am the above named person and I live with my husband James RIPLEY . We have been married for ten years and we have always lived together in the Gosport area. I have three girls from a former marriage and Jim also has a daughter.

In April 2000 Jim became unwell, he had a case of arthritis and gout which meant he was unable to get out of bed. This was also causing Jim a lot of pain and for four mornings on the trot I had the doctor out to see Jim. There was not much they could do except give Jim pain killers. Due to the fact that I am disabled I was unable to look after Jim properly and on the 04/04/2000 Jim was taken by ambulance to Haslar Hospital A&E.

There was nothing that could be done for Jim at Haslar Hospital and he was sent to Sultan Ward at the GWMH for complete bed rest. I was told that Jim would be in there for up to 14 days. Apart from the pain from the gout Jim was able to talk, eat and drink. He had never suffered from any sort of dementia and was really a fit and healthy man for a 76 year old man.

I was asked to let Jim rest for a couple of days prior to visiting him which I did. However on about the sixth or seventh of April 2000 (06/04/2000), (07/04/2000) I was phoned by the GWMH asking me to bring Jim's medication for his gout and pain relief.

This made me very angry, Jim was in hospital but had not been given any medication. The staff told me that there was no one to prescribe it. I got to the hospital late at night. I passed over his medication and quickly saw Jim. He was asleep so I left him.

Signed: P RIPLEY
2004(1)

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I returned to the hospital the following morning. I spoke with Jim and he seemed dozy. It was hard work talking to Jim he just seemed like he wanted to go to sleep. I returned later in the afternoon and Jim was beginning to see things that were not there. He told me he could see a friend of ours called Dot walking by. Dot died several years prior to this. I was starting to worry about why Jim was being like this.

The following morning Jim started to say that the decorators were coming into the ward. Again I knew this wasn't true but Jim said he could see the paint pots. I was visiting Jim twice a day but after this he was always asleep. If he did wake up he would be very drowsy.

On the 09/04/2000 I saw Jim and it was clear to me that Jim was now unconscious. I was asked by staff if Jim was a heavy sleeper which he was not. They told me that they had been unable to wake him and asked if I could try. I shouted at Jim and shook him quite hard but Jim did not respond. I asked if they really wanted him awake and was told "Yes". I hit Jim on his bad knees where he would feel his gout but he did not flinch. Normally this would have caused Jim extreme pain and woken him.

I said to the staff "He is not asleep he is unconscious, where is the doctor?"

One of the staff said "We have sent for him". I waited with a friend for about 4 ½ hours for the doctor to arrive. The doctor who saw Jim was a Dr WILLIAMS . He saw Jim and then told me that Jim had had a "catastrophic mid stem brain stroke". I was told that Jim would probably not recover. I asked Dr WILLIAMS what happened next and was told Jim would be moved to Haslar Hospital. I was pleased to hear this.

I went home and the following morning I phoned Haslar Hospital and asked when Jim would have a brain scan. The person I spoke to said that there would be no brain scan because as far as they knew there had been no stroke. I was told that Jim was in an analgesic coma. I went straight down to Haslar Hospital.

I went and saw Jim who is normally a ruddy man but he looked pale with big black rings under

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2004(1)

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his eyes. Jim was shouting and waving his arms he was shouting "The IRA have been here". He seemed to have lost his mind.

I was told by staff that Jim was better than he had been. I asked to be phoned as soon as a doctor arrived on the ward. This the hospital did and later that day I spoke with a female doctor on the phone. She confirmed that Jim had been given an analgesic overdose. I was told that Jim couldn't stay at Haslar because they were trying to close the wards. The doctor said he could go to the QA or back to the GWMH.

Jim came home for me to care for him via the GWMH. I looked after him at home but it took about 18 months for him to be back to normal. He still suffers from arthritis but on the whole is fit and well.

I do not know who prescribed the Diamorphine to Jim in the first place or why while he was at the GWMH. I have no doubt that if Jim had remained at the GWMH for any longer whilst on Diamorphine he would have died.

As a result of what happened to Jim I made an official complaint to the Portsmouth Health Authority. I have never received a satisfactory answer.

Signed: P RIPLEY
2004(1)

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