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RECORD OF INTERVIEW

Number: Y19A

Enter type: **ROTI**

(SDN, ROTI, Contemporaneous Notes, Full Transcript)

Person interviewed: GIFFIN, SYLVIA ROBERTA

Place of interview: PARK GATE POLICE STATION

Date of interview: 19/06/2000

Time commenced: 1207 Time concluded: 1241

Duration of interview: **34 MINS** Tape reference nos.

(♦) 44/00/029044

Interviewing Officer(s)

Code A

DC Code A DC Code A

Other persons present:

Mr GRAHAM - Saulet & Co Solicitors,

Portsmouth

Police Exhibit No: LMC/SRG/4 Number of Pages: 28

Signature of interviewing officer producing exhibit

Tape Person Text

counter speaking

times(♦)

0.11 DC Code A This is commencement the interview of Sylvia

> GIFFIN and I'm DC Code A the time is 12.07. The first thing I'll do is remind you that you are still under caution, okay. You do not

> have to say anything but it may harm your

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defence if you don't mention when questioned something which you later rely on in court, anything you do say may be given in evidence, okay. We've obviously taken a short break, can you just confirm for the tape that I've not asked you any questions regarding this incident with Mrs RICHARDS during the time the tape recorders been switched off?

GIFFIN

No, (inaudible)

1.01 DC Code A

Thanks, right, okay just prior to the tapes finishing we were discussing obviously Mrs RICHARDS. We discussed the drugs that were loaded into the syringe driver and the fact that the driver was already loaded when you were on duty and you had no input, or you didn't load the drugs for Mrs RICHARDS at any time, and your perception of Mrs RICHARDS condition and the drugs that she was on as someone who was dying and it was a way of just making her death as pain free and as comfortable as possible, is that right? Is that sort of fair assessment?

GIFFIN

Yes

DC Code A

Okay. We've discussed the, sort of being given drinks and food and that she wouldn't, you wouldn't feel happy about doing that.

GIFFIN

No.

DC Code A

a. By mouth because she could probably choke

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and b. Because of the fact she was dying and the chances are you say she wouldn't be able to

absorb water.

GIFFIN Volumes is greater than the syringe drivers

small amounts of volume but the subcutaneous

fluid is greater for absorption probably and you

want her to absorb the drugs that you've given

her, that are keeping her comfortable rather than

fluid which is a small perhaps cosmetic thing.

Right, okay so are you saying there that if you

were to hydrate with a needle it would affect

the, her capacity to absorb the drugs?

GIFFIN Could do not necessarily...

DC Code A ... Not necessarily but could do in individual

cases?

GIFFIN Yeah.

DC Code A

DC Code A Okay, right if we go to I'll just refer back to the

> record of Mrs RICHARDS and particularly her care, showing you now her clinical notes. Have

you had chance to read these clinical notes?

GIFFIN Well as far as one is able.

DC Code A Right, what do you mean by that?

GIFFIN Interpreting the writing is sometimes...

DC Code A ...Right, okay.

GIFFIN ...a bit difficult.

DC Code A In your role at the hospital would you have

ready access to these notes?

GIFFIN Yeah.

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DC Code A Whereabouts would these be kept, these clinical

notes?

3.57 GIFFIN Kept in the office and on the trolley.

DC Code A Right, okay. Can you just generally talk us

through if you can?

GIFFIN I don't know if I want to be first. How far do

you....

DC Code A ... Yeah I mean

GIFFIN ...I mean that just says transfer.

DC Code A July the 14th, sorry I've gone too far back.

GIFFIN Re-admitted...

DC Code A ...This is the 17th.

GIFFIN ... from Haslar erm the reduction of the what that

says, I'm not sure, reduction obviously of the hip, dislocation and under IV sedation, remained unresponsive for some hours now appears peaceful. Erm continue on haloperidol which

will keep her from throwing herself about and

dislocating hip again.

DC Code A Right.

GIFFIN Erm only to have oramorph if in severe pain,

then that says see daughter again then the following day it said that she'd been comfortable, says here still in great pain, there

appears to be a gap doesn't there erm.

DC Code A Yeah from the 17th to the 18th.

5.56 GIFFIN Mmm, but the nurses might fill that in does it

not...

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DC Code A Maybe we'll come to those.

GIFFIN I can't, I can't make that line out erm Doctor

> **BARTON** erm suggests syringe driver, diamorphine, haloperidol and midazolam, it says she received on the fifth day, please make

comfortable.

And that's on the 18th isn't it? DC Code A

Mmm, so that presumably is when the decision **GIFFIN**

was made about...

...Mmm DC Code A

GIFFIN ...and er on the 21st, she was much more

peaceful now needs hyoscine for her something

chest erm rattly I think that says.

DC Code A Right that's the medicine to her chest ...

GIFFIN ...I mean I didn't hear her, any particular chesty

that I can report.

DC Code A ...no.

GIFFIN Something that I can remember, I mean that's

me.

DC Code A Okay. Can you just sort of go through that then

and what that's all about?

GIFFIN It seems strange (inaudible) very often.

Condition very poor that's my perception.

Yeah. DC Code A

7.32 **GIFFIN** Er she was pronounced dead 21.20 hours by me,

> the relatives were present in brackets (2 daughters), she was for cremation, which is a

> question I hate to have to ask at this time but I

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have to ask because they have to have 2 doctors signatures as against one if its for burial.

DC Code A

Right, okay.

GIFFIN

I wish they'd take that, ask that when they're first admitted I really whether they're likely to die or not it would save us having to ask that at that...

DC Code A

Answer at the time, cremation, yeah.

DC Code A

Question, yeah, okay. Can you remember Mrs RICHARDS dying and you pronouncing death?

GIFFIN

Yeah.

DC Code A

Okay. What was the circumstances for it, can you just describe what happened? Just the whole sort of what you recall about it.

GIFFIN

Well, obviously I hadn't been there all day, I was there the previous night but checked on her frequently. Daughter was there all the time and she was reluctant to leave the room so that we could do anything for Mrs RICHARDS, she seemed to be intent on watching everything erm she was very nice to know but she never complained to me about anything apart from telling me erm about this incident with the ambulance, she never complained about anything or anyone else. She was obviously not happy...

9.13

DC Code A

What's the incident in the ambulance?

GIFFIN

Well there was some query about the method of

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transferring her in the ambulance which I didn't know anything about, hadn't been mentioned to me specifically but I obviously found out about it since and, but that's all she was saying. She was waiting on that, that first night for her other sister to come from away and she arrived I think it was possibly that's confused me on time, erm she arrived in the early hours of the morning or whenever it was erm and then we'd get together. Mrs LACK did complain about her sister's erm lack of help over the years...

DC Code A

GIFFIN

Right.

...I think she felt she'd been left to do it all on her own er then she was fine. She really was, didn't want us to disturb Mrs RICHARDS for what we see as the routine things we have to do, check that they're clean and ecetera, or a mouth care which is something we do automatically but she didn't seem to want us to do anything like that she more or less, the implication was that if it was necessary she'd do it herself, she

10.55 DC Code A

GIFFIN

I think you mention in your statement don't you that Mrs LACK wanted to prepare her herself? Yeah, with two daughters and the, I don't know whether it was a granddaughter or a niece or somebody who works at Haslar erm she arrived just after she'd died, I think they'd found her

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obviously was a nurse.

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and they wanted to lay her out and prepare her for the mortuary and er so they did. Did all the usual things, put a nice pretty nightie on, put a crucifix round her neck and there was a particular white rose in the room which I believe had some significance for Mrs RICHARDS...

DC Code A

GIFFIN

...Right.

...that they particularly wanted to go down to the mortuary with her and when they said they'd, they'd done their thing the body has to be wrapped up in a sheet to go, for transfer to the mortuary and to health care support workers was waiting to do that and when they rolled her over to put a sheet under, they found that her bottom needed washing which we thought Mrs RICHARDS...

12.15 DC Code A

GIFFIN

...Had done.

...Mrs LACK would have noticed and if she didn't want to do that herself would have told us so we had to do that and then she was wrapped and her daughters both wanted to go down to the mortuary with her which they did, but they didn't actually go into the mortuary itself but just waited at the door, removed the crucifix before she went in.

DC Code A

Okay, right can you just go over the procedure then, you've obviously gone in there and she's died, can you recall who brought that to your

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attention or was she just found or discovered?

GIFFIN Well in the last hour or so I was in there frequently but given the fact that the daughter was there I didn't stay in the room all the time,

we do stay with them if there's no relatives there but erm I got...the daughter called me in several

times to check before the last time when, when

she had died.

DC Code A Right, okay so it was just a, at first she slipped

away?

GIFFIN Yeah, basically stopped breathing.

Okay so what procedure, now you've obviously

described the preparing for the mortuary and what would normally happen, in terms of notifying people and paperwork to fill out what

are your responsibilities there?

GIFFIN Erm notifying people, well Doctor BARTON, I

hold a certificate that says I can pronounce somebody is dead but this doesn't mean I'm

saying why...

DC Code A ...No it just (inaudible)

GIFFIN ...it just means I can say whether somebody's

alive or dead erm so I do this, write up my notes

and I would inform whoever was in charge of the hospital erm because there was relatives

present they would let the rest of the family

know, normally I would have to ring and erm

Doctor BARTON would be informed when she

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visited the ward in the morning, she would go down to the mortuary if she wanted to see her and I would have to get somebody else, another doctor because of it being for cremation.

DC Code A

Yes, as I understand for cremation it's two

doctors.

GIFFIN

Two doctors.

DC Code A

Where you aware of the criteria required for the

second doctor?

15.07 **GIFFIN**

No, I don't have anything to do with it basically it's only where the patients affairs of us and

Doctor BARTON will ask somebody else to...

DC Code A

...But you in this case you had to establish that she was being cremated so Doctor BARTON

was aware in order to comply with...?

GIFFIN

...Yeah because erm if somebody's for cremation, well all the erm undertakers know anyway and they won't release the death certificate until they've got two because it's the

law.

DC Code A

Yeah, okay, alright so that's endorsed on her clinical notes, now there are some other notes

aren't there?

GIFFIN

Nursing notes.

DC Code A

Which I just want to go through generally really,

which I think relate to her sort of general

hygeine?

GIFFIN

Yeah.

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DC Code A Right we have the contact records?

GIFFIN Yeah that's nursing.

DC Code A And what is this actually used for, the contact

record?

GIFFIN Oh sometimes it feels like your doing things in

> triplicate but this one is kept in the office, as against at the end of the bed, which is a care

plan.

16.33 DC Code A Right.

> **GIFFIN** This one is for, it isn't filled in everyday it's

> > filled in for specific incidents that come up.

Code A So if anything is worth noting it should be

recorded?

GIFFIN Yeah, perhaps specifically...

DC Code A ...but its not like a....

GIFFIN ... out of the ordinary

DC Code A ...you don't do like a half hourly visit and say no

> change, no change, you know all the way down, you know every half hour or anything like that, it's only written in if there's something to say.

GIFFIN

No, no that's erm that's on the care plan which is probably just the recent care plans, these are

kept at the end of the bed...

Yeah. Code A

GIFFIN ..and for each erm thing you need to do like you

> have to have one for the bowels, one for hygeine, one for whatever you know (laughs)

one for night, we have one for nights, if there's

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any spe...dressings or sort of you know things

like that...

DC Code A

..Yeah.

17.40 GIFFIN

And they're supposed to be done every time anythings done to the patient. I have to say they don't always get filled in erm due to a time thing you know, you're rushing from one to another...

DC Code A

...Yeah

GIFFIN

...erm and you don't always stop and fill it in, we know we should but it's...it's a bit chaotic you know you always try and go back and check that they have all been done before I leave the ward but sods law that I'll forget one.

DC Code A

There are occasions then that they're missed?

GIFFIN

Yeah.

DC Code A

So the care plan relates to sort of a...

GIFFIN

...General every day care.

DC Code A

...being washed and fed and...

GIFFIN

...You know TLC bit (laughs).

DC Code A

Yeah basically and the contract record is in

relation to a...

GIFFIN

...Specific incident.

DC Code A

...specific incident so I'll draw your attention to

the final entry on the contract record, which is

on the 21st of August again.

18.43

GIFFIN

Mmm, that's me again.

DC Code A

That's you again and you've timed it at twenty

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one twenty (21.20)

GIFFIN

Yeah

DC Code A

On the twenty first (21st) that you pronounced

death....

GIFFIN

...Yeah.

DC Code A

...of Mrs RICHARDS. Okay. Would you

ordinarily be completing the care plan?

GIFFIN

Erm, mmm, most of them we just do the night one but if there's...if asked they had to renew a dressing because it's come detached or something specifically needs doing I might do one of those but...and sometimes the urinary one, if the blood is...if the erm if they've got a catheter and the catheter was blocked and I had to do a wash out and I'd have to record it.

DC Code A

Okay. So again on the final page of this nursing care plan, so should there be a separate one for nights is there like a 2

nights, is there like a...?

GIFFIN

Should be it's usually the last one, not always, usually. but it doesn't appear to be there, no.

DC Code A

Okay so this one here obviously the nineteenth (19th) is the last entry and obviously another two days but that would basically...this would basically cover things like being washed, being fed, teeth cleaned, dressings changed?

20.27

GIFFIN

Mmm, er yeah er well, on specific sheets...

DC Code A

...Right.

GIFFIN

...possibly what we would say was all nursing

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care which means that we've done all the things

that were necessary.

DC Code A

Right, okay so you'd summarise it in a....

GIFFIN

...Mmm

DC Code A

...right this one here is....that obviously relates to

the eleventh (11th)?

GIFFIN

Yeah when she first came in.

DC Code A

This evaluation, can you describe...explain what

this refers to?

GIFFIN

Well it just says no food taken so obviously she, but the twenty first (21st) she was on the driver wasn't she it was an issue, that she would, would or wouldn't have done somebody's just.

DC Code A

Okay. Do you know whose signatures these are

in relation to thriteenth (13th)?

GIFFIN

I think, oh know I really can't be sure but I think

it looks very much like it might be Code A

Code A I don't know.

21.36

DC Code A

Okay what's the middle one there on the

fourteenth (14th)?

GIFFIN

Right, Code A she's a health care support.

DC Code A

And the final one on the twenty first (21^{st}) ?

GIFFIN

That look's like the same one.

DC Code A

Yeah so possibly Code A

GIFFIN

Possibly.

DC Code A

Okay so in relation to the care plan, ideally they

should be completed but there are occasions

when they're not?

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GIFFIN This particular night we had two.

DC Code A Two...

GIFFIN Two deaths.

DC Code A Two deaths, right, okay. Can you remember at

the time how...the capacity of the ward? How

many patients you had in the ward?

GIFFIN No.

DC Code A Okay, what is the size of it? You've got eight...

GIFFIN ...Twenty four (24).

DC Code A ... you've got twenty four (24) beds, okay.

22.22 GIFFIN There not all full up very often, we, we average

around about eighteen (18) or nineteen (19).

DC Code A Okay.

GIFFIN But I can't remember.

DC Code A Right so and on that night you had Anita

TUBBRITT overseeing it, would she have been

notified about the deaths?

GIFFIN Yeah.

DC Code A Would that be soemthing just to make her

aware?

GIFFIN Yeah, yeah she also erm held the key to the safe

if there's any valuable to put away.

DC Code A Right, okay...

GIFFIN ...she records it in the book down in the office.

DC Code A Would she ordinarily come down to the ward

just to oversee everything?

GIFFIN Not normally, no erm only if I wanted her to, if I

asked her to 'cause well she just happened to be

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there at the time, you know.

DC Code A But the responsibility on that side of it would

Mmm.

tend to fall to yourself?

GIFFIN

23.24 DC Code A Okay, right. So just. I'll just sort of recap then

and summarise what we've discussed so far so it was in the middle of the second night the twenty first (21st) that Mrs RICHARDS died, so you'd

seen her a night and a half effectively.

GIFFIN Nine twenty (9.20).

DC Code A Okay. You didn't have any discussions with

Doctor BARTON?

GIFFIN No.

DC Code A Or Philip BEED? Did you have any discussion

with Philip BEED regarding Mrs RICHARDS?

GIFFIN No.

DC Code A Or any problems?

GIFFIN No, I don't think so.

DC Code A Okay.

GIFFIN I don't think that..it or depends on what duty

he's on, I don't always see him every week.

DC Code A Okay. Your first contact with Mrs RICHARDS,

she was already on the syringe driver?

GIFFIN Yeah.

DC Code A And had been for a couple of days previously?

GIFFIN Yeah.

24.21 DC Code A Excuse me and your perception of the drugs she

was on in her..her general level of health gave

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you the impression that she was dying and this was a path to take to assist her, not to assist her but to make it pain free as possible and as comfortable as possible. What you said you didn't recall the sisters making any representations to you about...

GIFFIN

...Nothing specific, no.

DC Code A

...about the treatment she was receiving at that

time?

GIFFIN

No.

DC Code A

But you are aware which you've learnt since about the, a problem with the transfer from

Haslar?

GIFFIN

Yes. I knew it, I..it was something that was spoken about erm by the daughter, I can't, who the nursing staff had mentioned it.

DC Code A

Okay. Now we've described your sort of role on the ward and basically you were responsible overnight, and I think it's fair to say that you had no concerns over what Mrs RICHARDS was being prescribed?

GIFFIN

No.

25.40

DC Code A

There was no concerns at all over the level of

drugs or her reaction to them?

GIFFIN

No.

DC Code A

Okay. I think you've mentioned this before in your statement, you're not able to comment on

the actual effects of the drugs because you

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didn't see her...

GIFFIN ...No, I didn't see her before she had them.

DC Code A ...beforehand so you can't say, okay. We've

described the drugs and what they're intended to

do and the levels we're talking about you say

that's sort of ...

GIFFIN ...Reasonable.

DC Code A ...perfectly reasonable amounts. No concerns

over the level of drugs. We've discussed the scenario if you had a problem with the treatment, what procedure you'd follow in order to do that and we've obviously discussed the syringe driver operation. There's one thing, do

you know the make of the syringe driver?

GIFFIN Golly, I've no idea.

DC Code A Okay.

GIFFIN You wouldn't believe it would you (laughs).

DC Code A What training do you receive in using it?

26.51 GIFFIN (laughs) I think we did this before.

DC Code A Yeah, yeah.

GIFFIN Erm we're just instructed the first time we use it

and then there's er a leaflet up on the wall in the erm treatment room that we can refer to if we've

got any queries.

DC Code A Right, okay. If, is it, do you recall there being a

change of model or a change of make on the

ward?

GIFFIN No.

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DC Code A No, so it's...do you recall using the same one,

for how long? How long had that been on the

ward?

GIFFIN It must be, well I mean I've only been on the

ward, that ward for about three weeks but in the hospital overall it must be ten, twleve years,

must be.

DC Code A Okay. Just another point, just going back to the

previous notes about, there was a comment made on the twenty first (21st) about her chest, Mrs RICHARDS chest, it didn't look very clear and a mention of hyoscine on here, from your

recollection you stated that you had no concerns

over....

28.07 GIFFIN ...I don't recall her being chesty...

DC Code A No.

GIFFIN ...but then

DC Code A I think you'll find that she had hyoscine from

the seventeenth (17th) anyhow, although its...

GIFFIN ... No she'd had that

DC Code A ...was it, where's the...have a look at the drug

thing, I think Doctor BARTON prescribed it if required and it was administered straightaway.

GIFFIN Well no it was actually put...first put up on the

nineteenth (19th).

DC Code A On the nineteenth (19th) did it sorry.

GIFFIN Yeah, nineteenth (19th), twentieth (20th) and the

twenty first (21st).

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So by the time you actually came on duty she DC Code A

may have not had to...

GIFFIN ...No.

...the rattle so to speak because she's already on Code A

the hyoscine.

GIFFIN On the nineteenth (19th) at eleven twenty (11.20)

she would have had it all day...

DC Code A ...So that

GIFFIN ...prior to me coming on duty at eight.

DC Code A 28.47 So you wouldn't have heard it anyhow?

> **GIFFIN** No.

DC Code A Okay.

Code A Just...can I ask a question for a sec?

DC Code A Yeah, yeah go on.

In relation to the medicines that she received the Code A

> four medicines that we've already been through, are you aware of any possible adverse effects which may have affected Mrs RICHARDS

health because of the combination of drugs?

GIFFIN No.

DC Code A There's nothing adv...like a and b don't really

go so she shouldn't have them?

GIFFIN No, this is a combination we use regularly.

Yeah and also is there any equipment on the Code A

> ward, like to assist people's breathing or used in emergencies to resuscitate people or anything

like that?

GIFFIN We do have a trained resuscitation erm...

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DC M Code A

...Equipment on

GIFFIN

...equipment on it and we do have oxygen on the

ward.

29.48

DC Code A

But somebody in...sorry

GIFFIN

Well, a lot of the patients and not for

resuscitation.

DC Code A

Yeah.

GIFFIN

It's not like the younger, you know so mostly on patients we wouldn't use it but we have got it on

the ward and we can use it if necessary.

DC Code A

Yeah but somebody like in Mrs RICHARDS situation may have, she's ninety one (91), she's

situation may have, she's ninety one (91), she's poorly, hip replacement, deaf, can't see very well, can't look after herself that's the sort of patient that would be put under the no resus?

GIFFIN

Yeah, they would be given a combination of the

drugs as well.

DC Code A

Yeah.

GIFFIN

Erm.

DC Code A

The combination of the drugs as well, I mean...

GIFFIN

...It's a very strange exercise to erm, er and all shouting all (laughs) resuscitation because it

just...

DC Code A

There's no point.

GIFFIN

...wouldn't be relevant. Unfortunately this is all

overtime by us even if we know all the

circumstances it's not...

30.59

DC | Code A

...I'm sure it does.

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GIFFIN ...it's not easy. It's all life.

DC Code A Okay, just looking through your statement on

page three.

GIFFIN Oh dear.

DC Code A No it's just a point...

GIFFIN Not the right account.

DC Code A ... you mention the daughter also believed that

her mother was far healthier mentally than what

had been diagnosed?

GIFFIN Mmm

DC Code A Can, obviously you only saw Mrs RICHARDS

when she was...

GIFFIN Right, yeah.

DC Code A ...you know obviously sedated or whatever.

What's drew your attent...

GIFFIN What makes you say that?

DC Code A ... Yeah what makes you say that basically?

GIFFIN It, this must have been part of the handover that

resume of what had happened in the week before and erm I, it's so long ago but I think I remember being told that despite being asked to

erm because obviously I was giving out a

stay in her chair she wouldn't do that. Her

belief in herself that she could get up and do whatever she thought she wanted to do outside

the room which we get all the time and erm on

this particularly occasion she did get up and she

did fall which is very sad but Mrs, what Mrs..the

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way Mrs RICHARDS was talking her mother was talking to them perfectly normally, well again it's a case of perception erm and for Mrs LACK it might well have been normal, what she'd gotten used to...

DC | Code A

...Yeah.

GIFFIN

...because she'd been with her mother on a continuous basis. They very often don't realise the degree to which the dementia is there whereas the people outside would query it

quicker, does that help, is that okay?

DC Code A

Yeah that's fine, yeah. Were you aware that she

had senile dementia?

GIFFIN

Yes.

DC Code A

And you're aware of her other ailments at the Would that have been part of the handover you received?

GIFFIN

Yeah.

DC | Code A

Can you recall what they were?

GIFFIN

No.

(laughing)

DC Code A

Fair enough.

GIFFIN

For the most part we, erm bits that stick are the relevant bits at that, that time, things that are gone before I found, wanted to query something

I could look it up.

DC Code A

Okay, right is there anything else you wish to

add?

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DC | Code A

Can I go home, you can go home (laughing)

GIFFIN

(laughs)

DC Code A

Is there anything you want to clarify? Anything

you've said that you feel we haven't understood

or warrants further explaination?

GIFFIN

I don't think so.

DC Code A

Okay. Hand you a notice explaining the tape recorder procedure which is just there. Time by my watch is twelve forty one (12.41) (coughs)

excuse me, turning the recorder off.

END OF INTERVIEW