

1 Wednesday, 27 November 2024

2 (10.51 am)

3 MR GRIFFIN: Chair, this is the third and final day of this
4 hearing and we will hear further commemorative and
5 impact evidence and, indeed, this morning you have
6 already heard one account in private. A reminder to
7 everyone of the emotional support that is available,
8 either through the Inquiry team's mailbox, at
9 contact@lampardinquiry.org.uk, or via the website,
10 lampardinquiry.org.uk at the "Support" tab.

11 Chair, you will now be hearing the commemorative
12 account of Lynda Costerd. It is about her father,
13 Geoffrey Toms, and it will be read by Counsel to the
14 Inquiry, Rachel Troup.

15 Statement of LYNDA COSTERD read by MS TROUP

16 MS TROUP: Commemorative account of Geoffrey George Toms,
17 11 May 1927 to 14 May 2015.

18 "It is very hard to put together a commemorative
19 statement about someone who had so many redeeming
20 qualities and a real character and a bit of a charmer,
21 but I will attempt to try.

22 "My dad was born on 11 May 1927 and was named
23 Geoffrey George Toms. I always thought it sounded like
24 a really posh name but my dad definitely couldn't ever
25 be described like that. He was born in Erith and he was

1 one of four brothers.

2 "The Toms family were already quite well known due
3 to their sporting prowess and my dad certainly strived
4 to carry on this prowess but, instead of becoming
5 a runner like his dad, his passion was cycling and he
6 was really good, and even a talented professional for
7 a while.

8 "He met the love of his life, my mum, through club
9 cycling. Three years later they married, on 24 May
10 1951. Due to his cycling, Dad always kept his hair in
11 a buzz cut and Mum asked him to let it grow a bit for
12 the wedding but when he turned up at the church he was
13 sporting a freshly buzz cut head of hair.

14 "My mum was my dad's whole world and they were
15 pretty inseparable. The day he passed was only ten days
16 until their 65th anniversary. Dad was very romantic
17 when it came to Mum. He initiated a renewal of their
18 vows on their 50th anniversary and ensured mum had
19 a bouquet of the same flowers as she had carried
20 50 years before.

21 "My mum and dad went on to have two children: myself
22 and my older brother. My dad was a good dad but quite
23 strict in his requirements of behaviour, though it has
24 to be said that when he became a grandad he became
25 a complete and utter pushover, something I did point out

1 to him many times.

2 "Dad worked in sales throughout most of his life and
3 he really had the gift of the gab. As the old saying
4 goes, he could sell water to a fish.

5 "Dad was never predictable and definitely kept Mum
6 on her toes. She often used to tell us how he used to
7 drive off to work in whatever car they owned at the time
8 but would drive home in something completely different,
9 as he had done a deal or a trade with someone as he had
10 got bored with what they had.

11 "Dad was a real character and a proper charmer. He
12 had this way of making all the women among their friends
13 feel really special but in such a way that it was never
14 misconstrued. There are so many antics and behaviours
15 I could tell you about which were all part and parcel of
16 my dad, but being as that would take way too long,
17 I will just mention a few of them.

18 "My dad was capable of falling asleep anywhere. He
19 was known to have fallen asleep at a party with his back
20 against the speaker with the music blaring out. He also
21 hated the cold so much and I remember I had gone on
22 holiday with Mum and Dad and I had tricked Dad into
23 thinking that the water was really warm, when it was in
24 fact freezing cold. Dad was a person who just dived
25 straight in, and in this case straight back out again.

1 It gave Mum and I a really good laugh.

2 "Dad always used to tell me how proud he was of me
3 and he had a way of looking at you with so much love.
4 I had a daughter and he always used to refer to mum,
5 myself and Kerry as his three girls.

6 "Unfortunately, by the time Kerry had her own
7 daughter, Dad had been diagnosed with vascular dementia,
8 but his love for Kerry's daughter still shone through,
9 and we have some amazing photos and memories of the time
10 they got to spend together. He was walking with a stick
11 by then and, like all small children, she wanted to
12 mimic her Pops, so he cut a walking stick small enough
13 for her to use and they used to walk hand in hand, both
14 with their sticks.

15 "Dad was a very proud man and he hated what vascular
16 dementia was doing to him and his inability to look
17 after Mum and his girls made him so angry and upset. He
18 and I had quite a few conversations about how much he
19 hated himself and his life now, and he did use to say
20 about how he didn't want to live like this any more.
21 This disease stripped him of his dignity, strength and
22 the overarching love he had for his family.

23 "I was away on holiday when my daughter rang to tell
24 me that the visiting nurse had decided that Dad should
25 be admitted to Rochford Hospital where they would be

1 able to help him with his talk of ending it, even though
2 Dad had vascular dementia and these were not rational
3 thoughts and feelings. My Dad walked into Beech Ward on
4 Tuesday, 8 May 2015. By 11 May, his 88th birthday, he
5 looked like he had been beaten severely. He had
6 an obvious broken nose, two black eyes and so many other
7 injuries but he was also, as we now know, comatose.
8 Within less than a week they had stripped my dad of
9 absolutely everything: his dignity, strength, mobility
10 and any independence he might have had. It was beyond
11 horrific to see the damage that had been done.

12 "On 14 May 2015 he passed away in Southend hospital
13 as a result of the injuries and infection from his very
14 short time on Beech Ward.

15 "Life without Dad is so hard. Mum had lost her soul
16 mate. I have lost one of my best friends and Kerry and
17 her daughter have lost the best Grandad and Pops you
18 could ever wish for. We will never get over the guilt
19 we feel over leaving him alone with people who treated
20 him so horrifically and denied him the love and support
21 he needed. The constant anger is so tiring and we can
22 only hope something positive will come out of this
23 Inquiry and nobody else will suffer whilst in their
24 care."

25 MR GRIFFIN: Thank you.

1 Amanda, would you put up all of the photographs now
2 please.

3 (Photographs were displayed)

4 Chair, that is the last of the photographs and
5 indeed the end of that account.

6 THE CHAIR: I would like to thank Lynda for her very moving
7 account of her father Geoffrey. I'm very grateful to
8 you.

9 MR GRIFFIN: We now hear an account provided by Paula
10 Watkins and it's about her brother Kevin Watkins. It
11 will be read by Counsel to the Inquiry, Kirsty Lea on
12 Paula's behalf.

13 May I ask first that the photograph is put up.

14 (Photograph was displayed)

15 Thank you very much.

16 Kirsty, please start when you are ready.

17 Statement of PAULA WATKINS read by MS LEA

18 MS LEA: A heartfelt plea to Baroness Lampard from Paula
19 Watkins regarding the tragic loss of Kevin Watkins.

20 "Dear Baroness Lampard, with a heavy heart I write
21 to you about my beloved brother, Kevin Watkins. The
22 pain of his loss, now 15 years past, still feels as raw
23 as the day we lost him in February 2009. He was just
24 42 years old, a life cut tragically short by a system
25 that failed him when he needed it the most.

1 "Kevin was more than just a statistic. He was
2 a soul brimming with kindness, a laugh that could light
3 up a room and a heart so big it seemed to encompass the
4 world. But beneath his warm exterior lay a deep
5 unhealed wound: the loss of our brother to suicide in
6 1989.

7 "This tragedy cast a long shadow over Kevin's life,
8 a shadow from which he never fully emerged. The thought
9 of our parents having to bury their child, of our family
10 gatherings forever missing his presence, it's almost too
11 much to bear. Every birthday, every Christmas, every
12 family milestone is a stark reminder of the empty chair
13 where Kevin should be sitting.

14 "What makes his loss even more unbearable is the
15 knowledge that it could have been prevented. In the
16 weeks leading up to his death, Kevin had been in
17 a mental health facility, a place where he should have
18 been safe, where he should have received the care he so
19 desperately needed. Instead, he was released without
20 a care plan approach, a critical oversight that still
21 keeps me awake at night.

22 "I can still hear Kevin's words echoing in my mind,
23 his desperate plea to the mental health team, 'If you
24 release me, I will take my life'. How could these cries
25 for help have fallen on deaf ears? The anguish of

1 knowing that Kevin predicted his own fate, only to have
2 it disregarded, is a torment I wouldn't wish upon
3 anyone.

4 "In the aftermath of Kevin's death, my grief
5 transformed into a relentless pursuit of justice and
6 change. Every letter written, every complaint filed,
7 every sleepless night spent pouring over documents, it
8 was all fuelled by the hope that no other family would
9 have to endure what we have but, time and time again, we
10 have been met with closed doors and hollow promises.

11 "Learning that nearly 2,000 other precious lives
12 have been lost under the care of this Trust has shaken
13 me to my core. Each of those 2,000 was someone's Kevin:
14 someone's brother, son, father, friend. The magnitude
15 of this tragedy is almost too much to comprehend.

16 "Baroness Lampard, I implore you, please don't let
17 Kevin's death and the deaths of so many others be in
18 vain. When I close my eyes, I can still see Kevin's
19 smile, hear his laughter, I can feel the warmth of his
20 hugs. But I also see the faces of 2,000 others, lives
21 cut short, families left shattered.

22 "The documents I have submitted, the Ombudsman
23 reports, the Serious Untoward Incident report, the
24 correspondence, they tell a story of systemic failure,
25 but they can't convey the depth of our loss, the endless

1 nights of tears, the birthdays we will never celebrate,
2 the milestones Kevin will never see. I beg you, from
3 the depths of my grieving heart, to be the catalyst for
4 real, meaningful change. Let Kevin's story and the
5 stories of all those we have lost be the force that
6 reshapes our mental healthcare system. Too many hearts
7 have been broken. Too many lives cut short.

8 "With hope, Paula Watkins."

9 MR GRIFFIN: Could the final photograph be put up now,
10 please.

11 (Photograph was displayed)

12 Thank you. Chair, that is the end of Paula's
13 account.

14 THE CHAIR: Well, I'm extremely grateful to Paula for
15 a very, very powerful account. Please pass on my thanks
16 to her.

17 MR GRIFFIN: We will now hear a commemorative account about
18 Richard Astill. It is by his brother and his daughter,
19 Jim Astill and Louise Astill. It will be read by Rachel
20 Troup on their behalf. Before Rachel starts would
21 Amanda please put up the photograph.

22 (Photograph was displayed)

23 Thank you. Rachel, please start.

24 Statement of JIM and LOUISE ASTILL read by MS TROUP

25 MS TROUP: Commemorative account about Richard Astill. This

1 account will be in two parts, first from Jim, Richard's
2 brother, and then from his daughter, Louise.

3 "Richard was adopted by William and Gladys Astill
4 when he was around three years old. Prior to this
5 taking place, he had been with a foster family rather
6 than with his biological parents. Jim was also adopted
7 and was four years younger than Richard.

8 "Richard had his children, a son in 1991,
9 a daughter, Louise, in 1993 and another son in 2003.

10 "In the 1970s, we were living in Whitwell,
11 Derbyshire, and Bingham, Nottinghamshire. This was
12 undoubtedly the time where I was the closest to my
13 brother, as we were both under 10 for most of the
14 decade. He was as happy as any child could be during
15 this time. We were both cared for very well, even
16 though times were tough financially for our parents. We
17 shared a bedroom during this time and often played games
18 until the street lights went out just after midnight.

19 "Times were very different in the '70s and, being
20 older than me, it wasn't uncommon for him to be out with
21 his friends for most of the day, coming home at the time
22 he was asked to by our mum.

23 "We holidayed mostly at the same place in North
24 Wales, year after year, but it was just as exciting,
25 even though we did visit the same types of places each

1 year.

2 "Richard was 10 in 1977 and I guess this is when we
3 started to develop our own paths, more so for him,
4 I guess. Towards the end of the decade, we moved to
5 Bingham in Nottinghamshire and from this point onwards
6 we had our own bedrooms.

7 "In the 1980s we were living in Bingham,
8 Chesterfield in Derbyshire and Spalding in Lincolnshire.
9 The early '80s were a more turbulent time. We moved in
10 relatively quick succession through our parents' work.
11 Richard did take to the changes relatively well, as he
12 was much older and more confident. We lived in Bingham
13 between 1979 and 1983, which means we were quite settled
14 during this period. For a time, we were at the same
15 school but we didn't really mix due to our age ranges.

16 "Our holidays to North Wales continued and
17 I remember Richard getting into trouble with a few
18 others for drawing on one of the toilet blocks. Our
19 parents were quite embarrassed by this but I thought it
20 was quite cool and I admired him for doing it.

21 "We lived in Chesterfield for six months in 1983 and
22 there is nothing meaningful to report from this period.
23 We finally settled in Spalding in late 1983 and that
24 area became his home as he started his adult life.

25 "By this point, we had separate lives, as Richard

1 had started college and, by the end of the decade, he
2 had started work. During this time, he made some good
3 friends that have all supported each other. They did
4 some crazy things, had some good nights out and started
5 seeing girls on a regular basis.

6 "Towards the end of the 1980s, he did become
7 a little unsettled. My dad always said this was down to
8 the issues of his very early life and being adopted at
9 a later age. There was talk at this point of him
10 searching out for his birth parents but, to my
11 knowledge, this never went any further.

12 "I can't remember exactly when he met his ex-wife.
13 It was later in the 1980s and, from memory, they married
14 in 1988 or 1989. A standout memory was when we both had
15 mopeds. He had a Lambretta, from what I could remember.
16 We would regularly go for a relatively slowish ride down
17 some of the rural roads around Spalding. I remember
18 meeting him in a supermarket car park one Sunday on our
19 bikes. He was letting his wife have a go. It was very
20 funny.

21 "As I spent most of the '80s in school and college
22 and Richard had started work, we didn't really see much
23 of each other from that perspective.

24 "In the 1990s, Richard was living in Cambridge and
25 Colchester in Essex. Richard's work took him from the

1 Inland Revenue to British Telecom and saw him initially
2 living in the Cambridge area with his wife. These were
3 definitely happier times in Richard's life. His two
4 children were born and he got a better job with BT that
5 took him to Colchester. There were various family trips
6 to Colchester to see him and the family but these were
7 few and far between.

8 "Things got a little more complicated when Richard
9 and his wife split up but they did their best
10 collectively for the children. Richard had told me he
11 was happy that she had met someone who cared about his
12 children.

13 "Richard lived most of the later '90s either single
14 or in shorter-term relationships. During this period,
15 we spent a little more time together at weekends and had
16 some epic nights out. On reflection, I think this is
17 when he started to suffer with his own mental health, as
18 he didn't have a particularly stable personal life.

19 "Some stability returned later in the 1990s as he
20 met his partner who also worked at BT with him in the
21 Colchester area. They had a good life together and for
22 Richard this was the stability that he needed.

23 "In the 2000s Richard was living between Colchester
24 and Lausanne, Switzerland.

25 "My first two children had arrived by 2001 and, on

1 a semi-regular basis, we would travel down to Colchester
2 and meet up with Richard and his partner, along with his
3 son and his daughter, Louise. We would spend time doing
4 family things, such as visits to the zoo. For a reason
5 unknown to his family, Richard decided to take a job for
6 Orange in Switzerland in 2002, which meant he was living
7 between the UK and Switzerland. His relationship with
8 his partner continued, until he started a new
9 relationship. This led to a separation from his
10 previous partner and, following the new relationship,
11 his youngest son was born in 2003.

12 "I visited Richard in Switzerland and, whilst it was
13 initially clear he had made a new life for himself, he
14 didn't always appear happy. In the UK, he had many good
15 friends but in Switzerland I think those he thought were
16 friends played on his insecurity and it was this period
17 that ultimately led to the decline in his mental health.

18 "I remember a visit to Switzerland in 2003 to
19 collect Richard's belongings as he returned permanently
20 to the UK, living back with his previous partner. To
21 this day, I don't know what really happened out there
22 but it's clear he was not himself and the paranoia had
23 set in. A comedy moment during this trip was when
24 I joked about the van getting drug searched when
25 returning to the UK. It was this moment that Richard

1 realised there was still something in the van: this was
2 quickly disposed of.

3 Ultimately, it was this paranoia that led to him
4 taking his own life in March 2004. I recall
5 a conversation with him on the evening he died where we
6 reflected on our lives together.

7 "Despite this, his legacy continues in his sons and
8 his daughter, Louise, and they are three fantastic
9 children, who are now adults themselves. His youngest
10 son was very young and clearly didn't know his dad but,
11 for the older two children and those around them, I know
12 that it was very hard."

13 The next part of this commemorative account is from
14 Richard's daughter, Louise.

15 "My dad was a brilliant father. He was loving,
16 bright, generous and patient but, above all, he was fun
17 and silly. He was full of life and he was very loved by
18 everyone in his life. He always had time for his
19 children, to do activities, to help with homework or to
20 play games. He always knew how to get a smile and
21 a laugh out of us, whether it was doing silly voices,
22 cracking terrible dad jokes or attempting funny walks in
23 the park. He loved to take us on adventures, to picnic
24 in the forest, or paddle boarding in the sea. Most of
25 our holidays as children were with him, taking us to new

1 places.

2 "He loved his children fiercely and would do
3 anything for us. He was my best friend and, when he was
4 around, I didn't feel like I needed anyone else.
5 I wanted to spend all of my time with him.

6 "Whilst my brother and I predominantly lived with
7 our mum growing up, we frequently stayed with our dad on
8 Thursday nights and every other weekend, until he moved
9 abroad for work. Our time together was filled with days
10 out, activities, fun in the garden or cuddled up on the
11 sofa watching TV. Even when he moved abroad for
12 a period, we were still very close. We would speak on
13 the phone most nights, talking about our days. He
14 always made time to answer my calls, even when he was
15 busy with work or life.

16 "Our trips to Switzerland to see him were always
17 full of fun and excitement. We went sightseeing,
18 tobogganing and sledging. He would speak French
19 haphazardly, frequently asking for ham and chocolate
20 croissants, getting funny looks from locals and giggles
21 from us.

22 "Dad was never the best cook but always tried his
23 best, frequently calling his mum, my grandma, for
24 recipes and cooking tips. He thought he was a master of
25 the barbecue and we pretended we didn't see the prawns

1 that had fallen between the slats. He attempted to make
2 cheese fondue, which was far too boozy and infused with
3 his own chili oil. He often tried to get us to eat the
4 spicy foods he loved. We would often go on out for
5 dinner, trying all sorts of new foods together. Being
6 foodies our thing.

7 "He had an eclectic taste in music and bought me my
8 first album, By the Way, Red Hot Chili Peppers. We
9 would sing along to it in the car at the top of our
10 voices. He was a keen runner, taking part in numerous
11 races, and he always hoped to one day run the London
12 Marathon.

13 "He helped me with my studies, teaching me the
14 importance of this, which I have carried through my
15 life. He started to read us the Harry Potter books and
16 took us to see the initial films in the cinema. These
17 remain my favourite books.

18 "He would come and visit us out of the blue and it
19 was always the best day if he turned up. His laugh and
20 energy always filled up the room. For me, my dad was
21 the person who I could always turn to and rely on, no
22 matter what.

23 "Dad's mental health deteriorated quite rapidly in
24 the final years of his life. It all happened quickly.
25 His personality changed, he became paranoid and

1 frightened. Despite this, there were still glimpses of
2 his former self there and it was a battle he fought to
3 remain with us for as long as he could.

4 "His death still has a profound effect on us
5 20 years on. We have lived more days without him than
6 we were able to have with him. Whilst we are grateful
7 for every day we were able to spend with him, it was not
8 enough. He was gone too soon. He has missed out of so
9 many big life events. He never got to see me graduate
10 or got to meet my fiancé and see me getting married. He
11 never saw his youngest son growing up or saw how well
12 his eldest son has done in his life.

13 "I still struggle to talk about him. It is too
14 difficult. I continue to carry the grief and the anger.
15 Whilst it has become less heavy with time, it stays with
16 me. I blamed myself, believing I let him down and
17 I have had to live with that since he died.

18 "The trauma and hurt associated with losing our dad
19 at such a young age has shaped our lives. We had to
20 grow up too fast, losing our carefree childhoods.
21 I often think about how different our lives could have
22 been if he was still in them. He was a bright light
23 that went out the day he died."

24 MR GRIFFIN: Would you please put up the further
25 photographs, Amanda.

1 (Photographs were displayed)

2 That is the final photograph there, Chair, and the
3 end of that account.

4 THE CHAIR: My thanks go both to Jim and Louise for the
5 account of their brother and father, Richard. I'm very
6 grateful.

7 MR GRIFFIN: We now move to an account that has been
8 provided by Jackie Hammond and it's about her mother,
9 Diana Hammond. It will be read on Jackie's behalf by
10 Kirsty Lea.

11 Amanda, would you put up the photograph first
12 please.

13 (Photograph was displayed)

14 Kirsty, would you please read Jackie's statement
15 when you're ready.

16 Statement of JACKIE HAMMOND read by MS LEA

17 MS LEA: "My name is Jackie Hammond and I am the daughter of
18 Diana Hammond who was born 9 April 1945 and died aged 60
19 on 3 December 2005.

20 "My mum died at Broomfield Hospital A&E after
21 absconding from the Linden Centre in Essex where she had
22 been getting treatment. I have two younger brothers.

23 "My mum was always very loving and everyone loved
24 her. She was chatty and bubbly and always good with
25 children. However, my mum suffered with recurrent

1 depressive disorder and bipolar. She experienced very
2 high highs and very low lows. She would have manic
3 episodes and mood swings and would suffer from periods
4 of no sleep.

5 "My first memory of my mum having a mental health
6 crisis was when I was about 10 years old. It was at
7 this time that she tried to harm us, so we went to live
8 with my aunt for a year or so. We moved a couple of
9 years after that.

10 "I recall my mum being well for the early part of
11 the move, but then the stress of it all being too much
12 for her and her mental health deteriorating.

13 "My mum had suffered with suicidal thoughts and had
14 multiple admissions into mental health facilities. She
15 made multiple attempts to end her life, including one
16 occasion when my younger brother had found her. I have
17 found out since her death that she attempted suicide
18 more times than we knew when she was alive but I do not
19 know how many attempts were made.

20 "There were sustained periods in which my mum was
21 well, the longest being 15 years. I was in my late 20s
22 during this time and had gone to work in Australia, as
23 I felt she was well enough that I could go, although
24 I would come home every year to see them, as I got
25 homesick. During this time, she was on medication that

1 seemed to fit her well. It was after I got back from
2 Australia, around 2003, that her medication changed.
3 I don't know why her medication was changed as she had
4 been stable. At the time, she was treated by a doctor
5 in Southminster and my dad just told me that they had
6 changed it but didn't elaborate on the reasons.

7 "We weren't told much when we were younger as our
8 dad dealt with much of the detail of caring and
9 supporting our mum. He still finds it very difficult to
10 talk about my mum and what happened.

11 "In 2003, after my mum's medication was changed, she
12 was treated on and off at the Linden Centre, mostly
13 under Section, but there were voluntarily instances as
14 well. I think the first time she was taken to hospital
15 after the medication change was when she had been found
16 in a park in Basildon, after taking an overdose. She
17 was admitted in Basildon and then moved to the Linden
18 Centre from there. Mum's first admission to the Linden
19 Centre led to a prolonged stay of a few months, and we
20 would visit her regularly. After that, she was
21 re-admitted on a few occasions when she was unable to
22 cope at home. She was getting no sleep at all and was
23 a risk to herself and her family.

24 "On 16 November 2005, my mum was admitted to
25 Finchingfield Ward at the Linden Centre, as she was

1 actively talking about suicide. I believe this was
2 under Section. Whilst she was at the Linden Centre, the
3 nurses would communicate to us what she had done or what
4 medication they had given her. They would give her
5 medication, as well as try and do some talking therapy
6 and group therapy. She had always been so chatty and
7 bubbly but, when she was on the medication, she was
8 drowsy and quiet and more introverted, so I don't know
9 how she got on with the groups.

10 "When we would visit her at the Linden Centre, we
11 would walk around the grounds there or, if the weather
12 was poor, we would sit in the TV rooms with her. We
13 thought Mum was getting treated and that she was in the
14 place where she could be helped.

15 "The Linden Centre told my dad they wanted to try
16 electroconvulsive therapy, ECT, on her. The electric
17 therapy had been explained to Dad and he relayed it to
18 myself and my brothers. We were all hopeful it would
19 work and I think my mum was too.

20 "On 2 December 2005, after the second session of
21 ECT, my mum absconded from the Linden Centre. She was
22 meant to be watched every 15 minutes, so I don't know
23 how she could have got out, as it seemed so secure. She
24 must have not been being observed properly and
25 sufficiently and obviously something went wrong.

1 "When my father rang me to tell me she had gone
2 missing, I went home and met him and we drove around
3 looking for her, before we got a call from the Transport
4 Police who said she had been found. She had been found
5 seriously injured on the train tracks and taken to
6 Broomfield A&E. She died in the early hours of
7 3 December 2005.

8 "As a family, we were distraught at the
9 circumstances of Mum's death and couldn't understand how
10 she had been able to abscond from a facility we thought
11 was secure and meant to protect her.

12 "Following her death, my father pursued legal action
13 against the Linden Centre and an inquest was held,
14 looking into the care she received, although to my
15 knowledge there was no internal investigation by the
16 hospital.

17 "The hospital apologised but we didn't get much
18 support from the hospital after she died. The last time
19 we went there was when we went to get her belongings and
20 I don't think we had much correspondence with them.
21 I never felt the hospital showed much remorse at all and
22 it felt like they treated my mum as just another
23 statistic.

24 "My mum's death has seriously impacted my own mental
25 health and I have had NHS counselling sessions over the

1 years and have tried therapy to come to terms with my
2 grief.

3 "My mum was a loving and popular person with many,
4 many friends, some from all the way back to her first
5 job when she was a telephonist at Chelmsford Telephone
6 Exchange. I remember her going off to bingo and line
7 dancing with her friends. She loved music, especially
8 ABBA and the Beatles. She once went to a Tom Jones
9 concert and kissed him, which was a story she loved to
10 tell. I happened to also meet him once on holiday in
11 Spain and told him this and he asked, 'What was her
12 name?'

13 "She was only 60 when she died and my children, aged
14 13 and 17, never got to meet her. She would have made
15 a lovely grandma. She was so great with children and
16 used to make the most fabulous chocolate cake, which
17 I know they would have loved. She got to meet my niece,
18 who was only a few months old when she was alive. She
19 got to hold her and was great with her. I used to work
20 as a nanny and have the children I cared for around her.
21 She was always so good with them.

22 "I have found it hard not having support from my mum
23 with my own family and missing out on all the important
24 milestones in our lives.

25 "I treasure the letters she wrote me when I was in

1 Australia and the videos of Mum, often up and dancing,
2 as she loved parties. As my children grow older,
3 I worry about them asking why she is not with us and
4 what to tell them.

5 "I want to speak about my grief and experience, as
6 I don't want this to happen to anyone else. Something
7 needs to be done to ensure that patients are monitored
8 properly and especially prevented from harming
9 themselves whilst under treatment and care within
10 a facility. I hope the work of the Inquiry succeeds in
11 stopping other families from suffering the terrible loss
12 we are still coming to terms with."

13 MR GRIFFIN: Please put up the final photographs.

14 (Photographs were displayed)

15 Thank you.

16 Chair, that is the end of Jackie's account.

17 THE CHAIR: Can I thank Jackie for taking the time to
18 provide that account. It was very touching indeed,
19 a very touching account of her mother Diana and
20 I particularly thought the photographs were beautiful
21 too.

22 MR GRIFFIN: Thank you.

23 Chair, the accounts we are now going to hear are
24 about Michael Goldwater. They're read by his sister
25 Lisa Goldwater and she gives her own account and then

1 she goes on to read the accounts of her partner, Aiden
2 Spence and her son Connor Spence and I'm going to ask
3 Amanda now to please play those accounts.

4 Pre-recorded statement by LISA GOLDWATER

5 MS GOLDWATER: My name is Lisa Goldwater and I am here to
6 speak about my brother, Michael Paul Goldwater, who died
7 on 5 April 2000, when he was just 35 years old.

8 Michael was adopted by our family when he was
9 10 days old and was the third child after my older
10 brother, David, and myself. My parents were so relieved
11 to have him and he was welcomed into our family by all
12 our relatives. As Michael was only a couple years
13 younger than me, we were close growing up. He was
14 a happy child, and used to tease my brother and I by
15 saying we were just born but he was chosen. When the
16 inquest into his death took place, his adoption was
17 stressed and emphasised as if it meant he wasn't my
18 parent's actual child, or that he meant less to us, but
19 this was not the case. Michael was my little brother
20 and I always wanted to protect him growing up. Mike was
21 very funny and chatty, and he made me laugh a lot. He
22 was kind and befriended children who were left out in
23 his class, alongside loving animals and going to the
24 zoo.

25 Michael had shown signs of mental health struggles

1 as a teenager and would act out at times. I remember
2 the first time being frightened of him when he was about
3 15 but then things went back to normal for quite a few
4 years. It wasn't until Michael was about 18 that he
5 really started to show signs of mental health problems.
6 He had started to smoke cannabis and once told me he
7 felt like he was stuck in a trip, other times he
8 believed he had telepathy. I was concerned and was
9 training to be a mental health nurse at the time and so
10 my mum and I got hold of a psychiatrist to come to our
11 house to see him, but they told us Michael was fine.

12 When Michael was about 19, my parents were going on
13 a big trip on the Trans-Siberian railway and I was
14 worried about Michael being at home alone, so went down
15 to stay with him with my boyfriend at the time. It was
16 during this time Michael first went into hospital. He
17 had barricaded himself into his room and when I tried to
18 open the door, he became violent, throwing table legs at
19 me and I later saw he had carved "Lisa die" into one of
20 them alongside many other messages written about me.
21 I was scared and my boyfriend managed to shout him down
22 and stayed with him while I went to a nearby phone
23 booth. I called the emergency doctor and they took him
24 to hospital. I didn't want to put him into hospital but
25 I was worried and I wanted to make sure he was okay for

1 my parents. He wouldn't let me go with him and I worry
2 he never forgave me.

3 After that, Michael was in and out of inpatient care
4 at Runwell Hospital, most of which was informal
5 admission. When he was home there were incidents of
6 violence towards my parents, he was paranoid they were
7 attacking him. When he was in hospital, he always said
8 he wanted to be home and this made my parents feel
9 hugely guilty but he needed to be helped and we thought
10 he would be.

11 Michael's diagnosis did change over the years but he
12 suffered with schizophrenia or schizoaffective disorder.
13 He would self-medicate with marijuana and other drugs as
14 he said this would stop him feeling anxious and stop him
15 hearing voices but I think this was only making his
16 mental health worse. He would also be in hospital in
17 intensive care for periods at a time as he wouldn't eat
18 properly or take his medication for his diabetes.

19 Michael's stays at Runwell started in the early 80s
20 and sadly continued until his death in 2000. He seemed
21 to be in all the time, as each admission was for fairly
22 extended periods. When he was home it felt like it was
23 just a matter of time before something happened. He was
24 using drugs and I tried to get him help and let him come
25 to stay with me but social services had washed their

1 hands of him. I wanted to help him but didn't know how
2 and his illness took over our lives. His mental health
3 continued to deteriorate and he would be admitted back
4 into hospital as an inpatient. I always had the feeling
5 his care was substandard and there was a lethargic air
6 with a lot of people put into the big hospitals.
7 I didn't like him being in hospital but you think, at
8 least he will be safe.

9 My parents and aunt had visited Michael the day he
10 died and say he seemed much brighter, buying them coffee
11 and loving the gifts they brought him. Later that day,
12 the police arrived at my parents' door and told them
13 that Michael had had a heart attack. They said he had
14 been taken to Basildon Hospital but as there were no
15 intensive care beds he was being taken to Harlow. When
16 my mum and dad arrived at the hospital and saw him on
17 life support the doctor then told them it was very bad
18 news and the police wanted to speak to them because it
19 was a homicide inquiry.

20 The morning after Mike went into hospital my parents
21 rang me to tell me he had had a heart attack. When
22 I got to the hospital, I realised he had been restrained
23 and he was put on a life support machine. He had
24 already lost his pulse. It is all a bit blurry but
25 I accidentally walked in when they were doing a brain

1 stem test on him and I could just see the flat line.
2 I grabbed my breath and that's when I realised there was
3 no brain activity.

4 The circumstances of his death raised very serious
5 concerns about the quality and timeliness of the care he
6 received. While no criminal proceedings were pursued,
7 an internal investigation was conducted, resulting in
8 temporary suspensions. A year after Michael's death, an
9 inquest recorded a verdict that his death had been
10 accidental, which we were shocked at.

11 The Trust didn't offer us any support after Michael
12 died and I saw my parents just getting older and older.
13 I will always be angry about that. It was all a bit
14 secretive, mucky and my experience was there was no
15 support whatsoever from the Trust. We never got
16 a sincere apology from the Trust for their failings in
17 care.

18 The inquest was an extremely stressful and traumatic
19 time and it felt everyone there was just trying to cover
20 their own backs. My parents didn't want to sue the NHS,
21 we just wanted to know what had happened. It felt like
22 no one took the proceedings seriously and this took
23 a huge toll on our family. My dad suffered a major
24 stroke and was completely paralysed, with no speech,
25 that he never recovered from. He died in 2004, just a

1 few weeks later. In 2005, my older brother went missing
2 and was found dead after a week. It was like a domino
3 effect, everything happened one after the other. It was
4 harrowing. It's not just what happened to Michael, it's
5 also everything that happened as a result of it and the
6 devastating impact that has left lasting scars that will
7 never fully heal.

8 I share what happened to Michael in the hope that no
9 other family will endure the same heartbreak and that
10 urgent changes will be made to protect vulnerable
11 patients in mental health care. The number of families
12 in Essex facing similar preventable tragedies is
13 staggering and I hope this Inquiry brings about
14 meaningful reforms, ensuring that this pain and trauma
15 ends.

16 This is Aiden Spence's statement from a brother in
17 law, as his relationship to Michael:

18 "I'm also a mental health nurse and had a positive
19 relationship with Michael for years inside and outside
20 of institutions and, at one point, invited him in to our
21 family home when he was discharged from hospital. This
22 decision, we feel, was taken prematurely and I indeed
23 wrote to his consultant requesting we discuss this,
24 explaining that I was a senior forensic Community
25 Psychiatric Nurse in a London borough. I did not receive

1 a response.

2 "In a work capacity I had an in depth understanding
3 of how the situation arose and was dealt with. Mental
4 health nursing is a small disparate community and for
5 myself and Lisa it became smaller. There were many
6 events we needed to avoid at this point.

7 "The impact on my family was devastating.

8 "Our children, all at different ages, each dealt
9 with it in their own way, some with more insight and
10 understanding than others of course but all feeling the
11 traumatic damage it hurled, particularly on their
12 mother.

13 "This impacted on a daily basis to the extent that
14 Lisa withdrew from the business -- by this time we owned
15 and managed a mental health care home -- finding it
16 difficult to engage and put her usual positivity into
17 her work. This, of course, meant me working and being
18 away from the family for longer periods and Lisa trying
19 to be present for the children on her own for longer
20 periods, which I know she found a struggle. This cycle,
21 as cycles do, prevails in the family and is present to
22 this day.

23 "Given the circumstances, I believe that together we
24 coped extremely well. I think we were very lucky to
25 have been brought up in strong, nuclear families

1 ourselves and if this were not the case it is unlikely
2 that we would have stayed in one unit. We also spent
3 much of our time straddling the business with family
4 responsibilities, thus integrating and creating a close
5 healthy relationship with our Carehome residents.
6 Witnessing Michael's deteriorating mental health in the
7 community assisted in our motivation to set up our
8 carehome for men displaying challenging mental health
9 issues -- we hold an outstanding CQC rating. The kids
10 have never had Christmas dinner in our own house without
11 a table full of paranoid schizophrenics and although
12 I say that with a sardonic smile, I believe that our
13 focus saved us from a much worse outcome.

14 "Strong families can find a way and, as parents, we
15 always have to find positive outcomes to our often
16 unique challenges. All families experience trauma and
17 after all, we are only as happy as our unhappiest child.
18 Maybe that's what drives us.

19 "Thank you for giving us this opportunity to speak.
20 It is, at the least, a wonderfully cathartic experience
21 and helps us reflect and put some of the past into
22 perspective in our own unique way."

23 When asked about the impact that Michael's death
24 had, my oldest child, Conor, said:

25 "Well, it was horrible, of course and I saw it

1 having a huge impact on everyone else. It was very
2 heavy. Mum and grandma, in particular, became more
3 withdrawn and snappy, with Grandad having
4 a near-paralysing stroke within a year of the death in
5 the following March. The weight of the inquest was
6 palpable in our home, having a significant impact on
7 them and on all of us. I didn't know the circumstances
8 for a few years but I knew, even at seven, that it was
9 strange for a 35-year-old to have a heart attack."

10 To conclude: the biggest impact on all of us was my
11 father having a stroke after the inquest, my father
12 dying and my brother, David, going missing ten months
13 after that and being found dead.

14 MR GRIFFIN: Chair, that is the end of the accounts read by
15 Lisa.

16 THE CHAIR: Well, my thanks go to Lisa for providing a very
17 moving account of her brother Michael and also to Aiden
18 and Connor for their contributions. Thank you.

19 MR GRIFFIN: Chair, we're now going to have a break for
20 around half an hour, so I invite people to return at
21 12.20, that's for people on the live feed. There's
22 a ten-minute delay for those watching on YouTube. So
23 12.20 for the live feed. Thank you very much.

24 (11.48 am)

25 (A short break)

1 (12.20 pm)

2 MR GRIFFIN: Chair, we will now hear -- Chair, we will now
3 hear from Nicola Cotton about her brother, Darren
4 Porter. This is a pre-recorded account and you will
5 see, sitting next to her, her aunt, Teresa Neale and
6 before the video is played, Amanda would you please
7 first put up the photograph.

8 (Photograph was displayed)

9 Thank you very much. Would you play the account.

10 Pre-recorded statement by NICOLA COTTON

11 MS COTTON: Hello, firstly a big thank you for letting me
12 speak today, Darren passed away 15 September 2020
13 aged 41.

14 Darren was born 11th May 1979 I was already three
15 and a half years old when he was born, we lived in Kent
16 with our parents who were originally from Essex.

17 Darren had rosy, red cheeks and a cheeky giggle of
18 a laugh; with very fluffy flyaway hair mum could never
19 get to lay flat.

20 We spent most weekends going to Nanny and Grandad's
21 in Essex. Saturdays was fish 'n' chip day and we would
22 regularly go to Romford Market with mum and our Auntie,
23 then visit Grandma to see what she was baking.

24 Darren loved watching '80s shows like: The A-team,
25 Dukes of Hazzard, Knight Rider, The Karate Kid, and many

1 others. This was in-between us going through the Index
2 catalogue marking out what we wanted for our birthdays
3 and Christmas. He loved He-Man he had all latest action
4 toys we were both very lucky. Driving home from Essex
5 to Kent we always played duck the bridge in the car and
6 seeing who could spot Leeds Castle first through the
7 trees, then we knew we would be home in about
8 20 minutes.

9 During holidays we would visit our dad's sister and
10 family in Tolleshunt D'Arcy; we loved going there as it
11 was remote and peaceful compared to our Kentish town.
12 We would also spend time down at Maldon promenade,
13 Holidaying in Yarmouth, Isle of Wight and Euro Camp in
14 France with family and friends.

15 Christmas time, Essex family would come to Kent,
16 Darren and I would bunk in together and my Auntie
17 oversaw getting us to sleep. One year, mum left a load
18 of pressies in her wardrobe and she had to sneak in to
19 retrieve them, Darren and I were hiding under the duvet
20 watching -- must have been the year we realised there
21 was no Santa. Waking at 3.00 am we would both try and
22 open our stockings -- not too sure why we bothered we
23 could not see a thing -- and auntie telling us to go
24 back to sleep. One year we both got racing bikes, we
25 cleared a path and were taking it in turns to ride

1 around in and out of the living room to dining room and
2 turning around in the kitchen at 6.00 am.

3 In 1989 we went to Gran Canaria this would have been
4 our last family holiday as a four but Darren and I would
5 never have known any different. We had such a fantastic
6 time, two weeks of fun, laughs, site seeing, camel
7 rides, and cowboy shows. Darren revisited the same
8 place in later years and sent me photos of the hotel and
9 sites.

10 Mum sadly passed away on 3 April 1990 from Cancer;
11 Darren was 10, me, 14.

12 We slowly adapted as a family of three, we still
13 went to Essex and dad's sister came to stay, making sure
14 we were okay, then we would stay at hers with our
15 cousins whilst dad could work in the school holidays.

16 Darren started secondary school and fitted in well,
17 made loads of friends and they all had a love for BMX
18 bikes: they would fix them up in our garage then head to
19 Hastings to the ramps. He was quite often found in the
20 kitchen knocking up pancakes, my good friend always
21 comments at this as being one of her fondest memories of
22 him, singing his heart out and waking us up.

23 Dr Hook was the beginning of his love for the singer
24 Peter Cetera who sang "glory of love" and the band he
25 was lead singer in "Chicago" and this kick-started his

1 lifelong passion for what we all called, his cheesy
2 music which included Chicago and the Bee Gees.

3 I came home one day and Darren was crying, no idea
4 what had possessed him but he had his hair shaved right
5 down the middle. Dad actually saw the funny side and we
6 all started laughing and still did -- even in more so
7 recent years. Only thing was he had to have a grade
8 nought to rectify it; he made me write a letter to
9 school to say he had to wear a cap as he had a hair
10 condition.

11 When Darren was eleven, he was diagnosed with
12 glandular fever: he spent weeks in bed asleep.

13 I do not think he ever got over this as even in
14 adult life he loved a drop of sleep.

15 Mid 1990's, dad remarried and the family moved to
16 Sussex. I did not go I was eighteen and had a job, so
17 I managed to secure a room with a family friend then,
18 later, got my own flat.

19 Darren, one Saturday in the pouring rain decided to
20 come to Kent on his moped. He had to come the coastal
21 route, it took him hours and when he arrived, he was
22 soaked through and so tired he slept for 12 hours solid
23 and didn't even see his friends as he had to go back the
24 next day.

25 Dad's marriage did not work out and he moved to

1 Essex to be near his sister and set up home. For
2 a brief time, we all lived together again in Essex which
3 was great to be under the same roof again as a family of
4 three.

5 Dad met Ann, of whom he married and they have been
6 together for over 20 years now, our family grew from
7 three to eight and over twenty once all the
8 grandchildren and great-grandchildren came along.

9 Darren moved back to Sussex after meeting a girl
10 when he went back to visit a school friend for the
11 weekend and the rest was history; they set up home and
12 in time had two children.

13 In 2006 Darren started to show signs of Paranoia: he
14 was convinced people at work were talking about him;
15 following him, and trying to get him the sack. He
16 became very depressive, negative, even to the point
17 a song which was number one in the charts at the time,
18 Crazy by Gnarls Barkley, he thought was written about
19 him.

20 On the 2 April they held a birthday party at the
21 grandparents in Sussex's home. One of the family
22 friends who attended was a policeman and had noted
23 strange behaviour in Darren, such as making an unusual
24 speech full of guilt and sadness before doing birthday
25 cake and then becoming suspicious of a Dr Hook song

1 playing in the kitchen thinking it was a message from
2 people telling him he needed to see a Doctor.

3 On the 3 April, Darren went into Tesco in Worthing
4 for baby formula leaving his partner and Daughter sat in
5 the car waiting. This day was the anniversary of our
6 mum's passing; Darren never returned to the car.

7 A search was put in place; police were alerted quickly
8 due to his mental health state and was supported by the
9 police officer present at the party the day before. We
10 made posters, we searched and searched day and night,
11 driving around for four days.

12 Just as his partner was about to leave to do a TV
13 appeal to try and find him, Darren called his home phone
14 to ask his partner if the paranoid thoughts were in his
15 head or real?

16 Whilst being reassured over the call, the call was
17 traced to a payphone near the site he went missing and
18 the police were able to locate Darren and assure him
19 that he was safe and ask him if they could take him to
20 hospital to seek the help that he so clearly needed. He
21 gratefully went with them, and they took him to be
22 assessed; he had been hiding in an abandoned garage.

23 At the hospital I remember running in and grabbing
24 him but there was no emotion he was very tense and
25 rigid. It was like he was on a different planet; he

1 didn't say anything. There was nothing but
2 I distinctively remember a smell which, later,
3 I realised was stale congealed blood on his wrists where
4 he had tried to slit them.

5 A doctor assessed Darren and it was immediately
6 requested that he be sectioned. A place in Chichester
7 was available: we all drove him there. By this time it
8 was dark and very eerie; the place had high security.
9 It was horrible leaving him, was like leaving a little
10 boy but we knew, as well as Darren, that it was for the
11 best, for his own safety. He spent about four weeks in
12 there till he was transferred to a less security unit
13 near his home. He spent several more weeks getting the
14 help he needed to be able to return to the family.

15 For a while life seemed to be fine, Darren got
16 a job, his second child was born.

17 Around mid-2007, His partner went on a holiday with
18 the children and her mum, Darren was working in
19 a self-employed role and felt he couldn't afford the
20 time off even though he was asked to go along and the
21 holiday had been paid for. Darren didn't go, but
22 literally a day into their holiday Darren, overnight,
23 went downhill: he took some medication alongside
24 alcohol. Darren though, despite this, sought help from
25 the Samaritans and it was them that called an ambulance

1 who took him to the local hospital. Whilst this was
2 happening, Darren's partner had become concerned because
3 he wasn't returning her calls or texts and hadn't shown
4 up for plans she had made with friends to keep him busy
5 and upbeat whilst she was away. So she asked her
6 stepdad to go to the house, it was then a neighbour had
7 told him she saw him leave in ambulance; Darren was
8 discharged under his care. With this, they both
9 travelled to Spain to be with the family. They spent
10 the remainder of the holiday together which is what
11 Darren needed.

12 Early 2008, their relationship mutually broke down
13 and Darren decided to move back to Essex with our dad
14 and stepmum. He still had contact with the children and
15 would visit weekends when not working, spend time down
16 there and even bring the children back to Essex to visit
17 the family. Darren and his partner were dear friends
18 still and there wasn't no animosity or hate and still
19 this remained till he died. It was just a case that
20 they knew it was the right thing to do for everyone to
21 recover from the damage that had taken its toll on them
22 both. Darren's health and the family's wellbeing with
23 such small children to consider. Both still very much
24 loved each other and the decision, although the right
25 one, was a very difficult one to be made.

1 Darren knew he had to give them space and not drag
2 them down and this was the best way for everyone to be
3 happy, including himself.

4 Mid 2009 he had another relapse. This time though,
5 he took himself off to The Brambles, a mental health
6 clinic in Colchester, where he spent about two weeks
7 rehabilitating himself and getting advice and help he
8 needed.

9 From this he returned to dads and work, he even
10 found himself a flat.

11 Over the years, Darren was so up and down. One day
12 you would talk to him and he was extremely low, then
13 I would call back the next day and it was like he had
14 won the lottery; no two conversations would be the same
15 with him. You did need a lot of patience and I did, as
16 did Dad and Ann, they lived closer than me I was back in
17 Kent. He had many relapses and times he would turn up
18 at their home in the early hours in tears, they would
19 sit with him for hours, sometimes in silence till he was
20 ready to talk, drinking lots of tea with dad.

21 Early 2018, Darren went to the doctors as he wanted
22 help, he knew he needed medication and at the time was
23 not on anything permanently. He was a bus driver and he
24 did not want to jeopardise his job or take something
25 that could make him tired. I am on the understanding he

1 possibly was prescribed something. The doctor then
2 referred him for some cognitive counselling but the
3 referral time was slow so Dad, Ann and I paid for him to
4 have private counselling whilst he waited for
5 an appointment, for which he was extremely grateful. He
6 never turned down help, he always found it difficult to
7 open but it was easier for him to talk with strangers.
8 He had private sessions which helped him massively.

9 Darren turned 40 in 2019 and he wanted to do another
10 sky dive. He had done one previously, back in 1999 and
11 loved the thrill. We all chipped in for his birthday
12 and even paid for it to be filmed to keep as a memory.

13 2020 started odd for everyone with COVID and I guess
14 this gave Darren a lot of time to think. I would often
15 call him or vice versa when he was on a break. We would
16 chat about day-to-day stuff, give each suggestions on
17 what Netflix films to download; he seemed fine, nothing
18 out of the ordinary.

19 June 2020, when we were allowed to start mixing
20 outside, I met him at the children's mums house. We
21 spent the day in Arundel with the kids, on the rowing
22 boats, walking, chatting and eating ice-creams.
23 I absolutely treasure this day. I have a photo of us
24 all balancing on a huge tree stump and a stranger took
25 a photo; it's one of my last smiling memories of him.

1 We also had a trip to Chessington World of Adventures,
2 where we took the children for a fun filled day out.

3 August came, Darren brought himself a Mini Cooper.
4 He loved these cars and had several before but this one
5 was a classic red and his absolute pride and joy. It
6 was not cheap, so he brought it a tent to act as garage,
7 to help preserve it.

8 Bus driving was not for Darren, really. He loved
9 driving but I think the people where a bit too much for
10 him at times. So, late August, he started the process
11 to become a lorry driver. He took the relevant
12 on-screen tests and seemed extremely positive and
13 excited and all was going well.

14 The week before Darren died, I can't recall anything
15 different in him, we spoke as normal but something must
16 have happened and triggered off his depression; he even
17 signed himself off work.

18 On Sunday 13 September, my dad called me to say
19 Darren was in a bad place, he was expressing signs of
20 paranoia, guilt, and that he just didn't know what to do
21 as he feared he was being watched by faces in the window
22 across the road in a nearby building. He was even
23 convinced people were flashing there car lights as part
24 of a conspiracy to capture him when, in reality, it was
25 people probably being nice and letting the bus out. He

1 did not trust anyone; he was not eating as he thought he
2 was being poisoned. The crisis team were called, and
3 Darren was visited that afternoon in his home.

4 Darren confessed to trying to take his life several
5 months before; none of us were aware of this. The guy
6 asked Darren several questions about his state of mind,
7 one being, "are you feeling suicidal"? His response
8 was, "yes". No notes were made on this visit, all the
9 guy could do was reassure Darren that someone would call
10 him and visit the next day, Monday. This did not sit
11 well with Darren as there were quite a few trust issues.
12 The guy left and did not submit his report till 23:59
13 that evening, hours after leaving Darren.

14 I called Darren the Monday morning and wanted him to
15 know I loved him and was trying to get him to eat and
16 drink -- reassure him all will be okay. The
17 conversation was very much one sided, he could not even
18 string more than 2 words together.

19 Problem with Darren: he carried unnecessary guilt.
20 One that has stuck with me since his first relapse in
21 2006 is that on the day of our mum's funeral, after, he
22 went off playing football with friends. I don't
23 remember this, neither my dad but he had seen this an
24 awful thing to do and it carried heavy on his mind. We
25 both said to him, so many times, mum would not have

1 wanted anything more than you to be happy and playing.

2 On Monday's visit, again, Darren asked if suicidal
3 response was the same, he was, in-fact, worse than the
4 Sunday due to lack of food and water. His mind was very
5 psychotic: he trusted no one, he was blank. The guy
6 asked several questions about his past. He would have
7 been aware of Sunday's visit and Darren's history as he
8 was in the system. No medication could be prescribed
9 without a doctor and the first available appointment
10 offered to Darren was on Wednesday 16th via a zoom call.
11 This would never have worked for Darren; he needed face
12 to face help and support. His depression and anxiety
13 and deteriorated and this call did not even guarantee
14 medication would have been prescribed.

15 That Wednesday was also my uncle's funeral. Darren
16 had already expressed concerns and felt guilty for not
17 being able to go. We tried to reassure him this was not
18 an issue, Dad said he would be with him during the zoom
19 call. As the day went on, he became more depressed and
20 very vulnerable. He even asked if he went to hospital
21 where would he go, a response was "it wouldn't come to
22 that". This, to Darren, would have been a massive blow
23 to him as would have seen this a negative. He never
24 ever had an issue with getting help, he would have seen
25 this as people playing with his mind.

1 That evening, the mother of his children also called
2 him with concern. She recognised the signs of paranoia
3 she had witnessed before and asked him, "do you feel
4 safe"? To which he replied, "no and I can't talk", as
5 he felt he was being listened to and unable to talk
6 freely.

7 On the morning of Tuesday 15 September, around
8 6.30 am, Darren sent himself to sleep forever. He was
9 found with a ligature around his neck.

10 I have no words on how I felt when my dad called me.
11 All I remember is screaming, "No, he did not need to, go
12 check there must be a mistake". My poor dad was beside
13 himself. It breaks my heart knowing he was there,
14 sitting with Darren on the floor, waiting to be
15 collected by the coroners for several hours.

16 I then had to break the news to the children's
17 mother who had to tell his children the devastating news
18 that we had lost their father so suddenly. Something
19 I never thought I would have to do and breaks my heart
20 to this day, having to say those dreaded words, "he's
21 gone I'm so sorry".

22 When the police arrived, after the ambulance crew
23 had finished, my dad was sat in the lounge and as the
24 Inspector left, he heard him say to his PC, "mark it
25 down as a suicide". Nothing was said by dad till

1 several weeks later, I figure the shock of absorbing his
2 son had died hadn't sunk in but it seemed very
3 insensitive and how on earth did he know what had
4 happened just by glancing. He had only spent
5 five minutes upstairs, if that.

6 The first couple of days were a blur, then the
7 coroner said he could not give a cause of death due to
8 insignificant findings, no marks on him to show how he
9 had died. From this it led to an autopsy being taken and
10 then would go to an inquest.

11 This at first was very daunting and we all had mixed
12 feelings and emotions. We had no idea of the process,
13 but looking back now it opened a massive assortment of
14 problems and concerns we had that could be raised by us
15 as a family. So, we took this as a positive.

16 We requested a full EPUT report and statements and
17 so did the Coroner. In-fact, from Darren dying to the
18 actual, full, two-day inquest which was 22 months, we
19 still had to chase and chase even on a few days before
20 the start.

21 On reading the report there was so many failings,
22 the report was half complete, a lot of copying and
23 pasting, wrong information, silly things like they
24 referred to Darren having one child of whom he has no
25 contact with -- this was far from the truth. It said

1 Darren had denied any active intent, this again was not
2 true as he had said so on the Sunday and this was
3 documented in the report. Boxes ticked that indicated he
4 should have been sectioned. If someone who has a
5 history -- and tells you they are suicidal and has
6 recently tried -- tells you all this, then surely
7 appropriate action is to get them in somewhere of
8 security and help, especially when they are willing to
9 go.

10 After two days of reading police, Ambulance, GODSAMS
11 first report, coroner and Toxicology, on top of EPUT's
12 input, the coroner concluded Darren's death as
13 Asphyxiation by Ligature without Intention. It could
14 have been avoided. The coroner also requested
15 a regulation 28 be made by EPUT but we are yet to see
16 this report. In evidence, EPUT responded "yes, he
17 should have been sectioned" and apologised for not doing
18 so. This was awful and soul destroying for us to hear.

19 I can only describe Darren's mental health issues
20 starting the day our mum died, his psychosis crept in
21 and this slowly ate away at him over the years leading
22 to his death. We didn't know what the future held, he
23 may have spent time in and out of institutes, he may
24 have become a long-distance lorry driver, cruising the
25 towns and cities living his best life, we really don't

1 know but what I do know is that it was cut short by the
2 neglect and him not being taking seriously and with
3 this, his future ended.

4 The impact on myself and the family I can only ditto
5 what everyone else has said that has sat or stood here.
6 It's affected us all in numerous ways. My Dad and Ann
7 have moved as they couldn't bear seeing the bus Darren
8 would have been driving: it literally stopped outside
9 their home.

10 I don't want this to be about me, I am strong and
11 will fight. We all sit here in the same boat which is
12 filling up but one thing is for sure, we won't let it
13 sink.

14 Darren was a fun-loving guy, a super dad who would
15 do anything for his kids, he was kind, extremely hard
16 working, we all miss him terrible -- especially that
17 giggle.

18 A few weeks after his death we found, in my parents
19 wedding album, tucked inside, letters written by Darren.
20 One to myself and another to Dad and Ann. We treasure
21 these as he expressed his love and gratitude for us
22 always being there for him.

23 My letter back to Darren would have read:

24 "There is no need for thank yous, you are my brother
25 and a son to Dad and Ann, we would have always been

1 there for you it's what, naturally, families do. You do
2 not need to thank or apologise to anyone, remember you
3 are only human, no one owns you, I just wish you were
4 listened to. My only peace I have in all this is that
5 our mum has you now under her wings and you can be clear
6 of the demons. Love you always, Fly High little brother.
7 xxxxx."

8 MR GRIFFIN: May we now see the further photographs. Chair,
9 Nicola has already referred to one or two of the happier
10 events that you will see in these photographs.

11 Amanda, would you put them up. Thank you.

12 (Photographs were displayed)

13 Chair, that's the final photograph and the end of
14 the account.

15 THE CHAIR: I extend my thanks to Nicola for that very
16 moving account of her brother Darren and for sharing her
17 memories of him with us. Thank you.

18 MR GRIFFIN: The next account is by Nyarumba Nota and it is
19 about his son Christopher Nota and it will be read by
20 Rachel Troup.

21 Amanda, would you first please put up the
22 photograph.

23 (Photograph was displayed)

24 Thank you very much.

25 Rachel, please start when you're ready.

1 Statement of NYARUMBA NOTA read by MS TROUP

2 MS TROUP: "My dearest son, Christopher Sampson Nota, it is
3 with a heavy heart and profound sorrow that I write
4 these words to commemorate your life, a life tragically
5 cut short. Captured images of you falling to your
6 death, my son, are images I can never erase it from my
7 mind.

8 "The systemic failures that plague our National
9 Health Service's support for dual-diagnosed autistic
10 individuals robbed you of your future and the pain of
11 your absence is a wound that will never fully heal. You
12 were a beacon of light, a unique and beautiful soul who
13 deserved so much more than the hand you were dealt.

14 "From the moment you entered this world you brought
15 with you a radiant energy and an unwavering spirit.
16 Your autism was an integral part of who you were,
17 shaping your perceptions, your passions and your
18 interactions with the world around you. It was never
19 a burden, never a deficit, but simply a different way of
20 being, a different way of seeing the world.

21 "Your mother, Julia Hopper, spoke at length about
22 your growing pains. I adopt each and every word she
23 mentioned.

24 "As a child, you were fascinated by numbers, by
25 patterns, by the intricate workings of the world around

1 you. You had a thirst for knowledge, a desire to
2 understand how things worked. You loved learning about
3 history, about science, about the universe and you had
4 this amazing memory, able to recall facts and figures
5 with incredible accuracy. You were also talented in
6 your own way at recognising sequences, interpreting
7 them, expressing yourself through symmetry or arranging
8 toys in a particular manner. You possessed a keen eye
9 for detail, noticing the nuances that others often
10 missed. You had an unwavering focus on your interests,
11 pursuing them with passion and dedication, whether it
12 was learning about historical events, mastering a new
13 video game or immersing yourself in the world of
14 music -- how you loved music!

15 "As you grew older, you would listen to your
16 favourite songs for hours on end, lost in the rhythm and
17 the melody. Music was your escape, your solace, your
18 way of connecting with something bigger than yourself.
19 It was a language you understood, a language that spoke
20 to your soul. The world was a tapestry of sights and
21 sounds to you, a symphony of sensations that you
22 absorbed with an intensity that was both beautiful and
23 awe inspiring, and you had a genuine love for the people
24 in your life, expressing it in your own unique and
25 beautiful way.

1 "The world, my dear son, was not always kind to you.
2 The challenges you faced were immense and the resources
3 available to support you were woefully inadequate.
4 I remember the countless hours your mum and I spent
5 searching for therapists, for schools, for programmes
6 that could cater to your unique needs. I remember the
7 frustration, the anger, the despair that washed over us
8 as we navigated a labyrinth of bureaucracy and
9 indifference at trying to obtain support for
10 an education support plan that took your special and
11 individual needs into account.

12 "Because your mum stayed at home to focus on looking
13 after you and your two brothers, she felt like she was
14 constantly fighting, constantly advocating, just to get
15 you the basic support you deserved during the early
16 years of your education. I recall the countless phone
17 calls, the endless paperwork, the constant struggle to
18 advocate for your needs. I remember the feeling of
19 isolation, of being lost in a system that seemed
20 designed to exclude, rather than to include. I remember
21 the nights we lay awake worrying about your future,
22 praying for a world that would embrace you for who you
23 were, not judge you for what you were not. I longed for
24 a world that would see your potential, your strengths,
25 your unique gifts. I longed for a world that would

1 celebrate your autism, not see it as something to be
2 feared or pitied.

3 "The system failed you time and time again, leaving
4 us to navigate a complex and often hostile landscape.
5 The lack of understanding, the absence of tailored
6 support and the persistent stigma surrounding autism
7 created barriers that you should never have had to
8 encounter. But through it all you persevered, your
9 spirit shining brightly despite the darkness that
10 surrounded you.

11 "You taught us the true meaning of resilience, of
12 finding joy in the face of adversity. You remained
13 patient, understanding and loving. You never complained
14 and you never gave up hope. You found joy in the
15 simplest things, the things that many take for granted.
16 You revelled in the sensory experiences of life, finding
17 wonder in the everyday. You had this incredible ability
18 to connect with people on a deep level, even when
19 communication was challenging. Your smile could light
20 up a room. Your laughter was contagious and your hugs
21 were the warmest embrace. We called it the 'Nota bear
22 hug'. You had a way of seeing the good in everyone and
23 you taught me the true meaning of unconditional love.

24 "Do you remember that trip we took to New York City?
25 Your stepmum Christine, you and I, explored the city

1 together, hand in hand, navigating the crowds and the
2 noise with a shared understanding. We were a team,
3 facing the world together and, in those moments, we felt
4 an incredible sense of connection with you. The way
5 your face lit up watching the street performers in Times
6 Square, the vibrant colours and the cacophony of sounds
7 stimulated your senses in a way that only you could
8 appreciate. You were mesmerised by the towering
9 skyscrapers, feeling the energy of the city pulse around
10 you. The hustle and bustle, the sheer vibrancy of it
11 all captured your imagination. You asked insightful
12 questions. Your curiosity driving you to learn and
13 explore.

14 "As we toured the city, we could see the wonder on
15 your face, your inquisitive mind asking questions about
16 different cultures and lifestyles, taking in our
17 feedback and thoughts and synthesising ideas into your
18 own world view. You saw the world with such wonder,
19 such an eagerness to understand its complexities. That
20 trip was a testament to your spirit, your ability to
21 find joy, even amidst the chaos.

22 "And who could forget that rainy afternoon we spent
23 at that indoor American baseball facility? The joy on
24 your face as you swung the bat, the concentration in
25 your eyes as you tracked the ball, the pure elation when

1 you connected for a hit. You had such a natural swing,
2 a fluid motion that spoke to your innate athleticism.
3 I watched you joyfully, seeing you as both the excited
4 child you were and the determined young man you were
5 becoming. We laughed together, cheered each other on
6 and, for a few hours, the world outside faded away. It
7 was just you and me sharing a moment of pure joy. You
8 were safe with me, a moment that I will treasure
9 forever.

10 "These moments, these precious memories are etched
11 forever in my heart, a reminder of the beautiful bond we
12 shared.

13 "My wife and I even braved a comedy club with you.
14 The laughter and the energy of the crowd washing over
15 you. You may not have understood every joke but you
16 were entertained by our unease with some of the humour
17 and we secretly cherished it, knowing that you felt
18 perhaps too overprotected by us. You also experienced
19 the collective laughter in the room, the shared
20 experience of human connection. You loved being part of
21 the audience, feeling the energy and the excitement.
22 You laughed along with everyone else, your own unique
23 laughter adding to the symphony of sounds. It was
24 a reminder that, even in your unique way of experiencing
25 the world, you still wanted to connect to something

1 larger than yourself, another small yet beautiful
2 moment.

3 "Back home, you found solace in the routine of
4 helping us prepare meals. We went to the gym together,
5 the physical exertion a way to channel area energy and
6 focus your mind, the rhythmic clang of the weights, the
7 steady beat of your own heart, these were the sounds of
8 your inner strength. You were determined to build your
9 strength and endurance and I admired your dedication.

10 "Since it was the winter when you came to New York,
11 oh, how you loved the snow! Your first instinct at
12 seeing snow was to dive into a pile of snow and make
13 a snow angel whilst shouting 'I love snow, I love snow'.
14 You had a way of transforming an ordinary task into
15 something extraordinary. I would always step a step
16 back and watch you in wonder, finding beauty in the
17 simplest of things, a billion small moments of joy were
18 a testament to your resilience, your ability to find
19 beauty in the world, despite the challenges, including
20 mental health issues, you faced.

21 "In general, you had an incredible sense of humour,
22 a quirky and playful way of looking at the world. You
23 could see the funny side of any situation and your
24 laughter was infectious. You loved making people laugh
25 and you had a knack for bringing joy to those around

1 you. Your humour was a gift, a way of bringing light
2 and laughter into the world.

3 "You were also incredibly kind and compassionate,
4 always willing to help others in need. You had a big
5 heart and you cared deeply about the people in your
6 life. You were a loyal friend, a loving son and a true
7 inspiration to all who knew you.

8 "You taught me the true meaning of empathy, of
9 seeing the world through the eyes of others. But the
10 world, my dear son, did not always see your beauty, your
11 intelligence, your kindness. The world often focused on
12 your differences, on the ways in which you did not
13 conform to societal expectations and this, my son, is
14 the greatest tragedy of all: a world so focused on
15 conformity.

16 "Why, I ask myself, over and over again, why did
17 this have to happen? Why was my beautiful, loving son
18 denied the support he needed to thrive? Why do we live
19 in a world where autistic individuals are so often
20 marginalised and misunderstood?

21 "The answers, my dear son, are complex and
22 multifaceted. They lie in the systemic inequalities
23 that permeate our society, in the lack of funding for
24 autism services and those dually diagnosed with other
25 conditions, and in the pervasive stigma that surrounds

1 neurodiversity. They lie in the fear of difference, the
2 discomfort with those who do not fit neatly into
3 predefined boxes.

4 "But your legacy, my son, will be one of change.
5 Your memory will forever be a beacon of light, guiding
6 us towards a more inclusive and accepting world, a world
7 where every autistic individual is valued, respected and
8 supported, a world where your light continues to shine
9 brightly, illuminating the path towards a brighter
10 future. We will fight tirelessly to ensure that no
11 other autistic or dually diagnosed individual suffers
12 the same fate as you. We will advocate for increased
13 funding, for better training and for greater awareness
14 of the unique challenges and strengths of autistic or
15 dually diagnosed people.

16 "We will push for a world where neurodiversity is
17 celebrated, not stigmatised, and where every autistic
18 person is given the opportunity to thrive. We will
19 fight for a world where autistic children are not forced
20 to fit into a mould that does not suit them, where they
21 are not judged for their differences, where they are
22 celebrated for their unique ways of being.

23 "We will fight for a world where autistic adults are
24 given the support they need to live independently, to
25 pursue their passions, to contribute their talents to

1 society. We will fight for a world where autism is not
2 seen as a burden but as a different way of experiencing
3 the world, a way that is just as valid and valuable as
4 any other. We will fight for a world where autistic
5 individuals are not seen as less than but as fully
6 human, deserving of love, respect and dignity.

7 "We will fight for a world where your memory serves
8 as a reminder of the incredible potential that lies
9 within every autistic individual, waiting to be nurtured
10 and unleashed.

11 "My dear son, your life was a gift. You taught me
12 about love, compassion, patience and the true meaning of
13 acceptance. You showed me the beauty in diversity, the
14 strength in vulnerability, the power of human
15 connection. You taught me to see the world through
16 different eyes, to appreciate the nuances and
17 complexities that others often miss and, though your
18 time on this earth was tragically cut short, the impact
19 your life had on your family in the UK, the USA,
20 Zimbabwe, South Africa, Australia and New Zealand is
21 immeasurable. Your legacy will live on in the hearts of
22 those who loved you, in the memories we cherish and in
23 the fight for a more just and equitable world.

24 "I will remember all the moments we shared from when
25 you were a child running carefree at the old castle, to

1 young adulthood, talking and texting and simply sitting
2 together, watching the world go by. All the moments
3 were precious. A reminder of the deep bond we shared.

4 "You will forever be a part of me, my dear son.
5 Your spirit lives on in every beat of my heart, in every
6 breath I take. You are the sun that warms my soul, the
7 moon that guides me through the darkness.

8 "My dearest son, I love you beyond words. May your
9 soul find peace and may your legacy be one of hope,
10 acceptance and progress.

11 "With eternal love, your father."

12 MR GRIFFIN: Please show the video montage now.

13 (Video was played)

14 Chair, I'm sure you will have recognised the montage
15 played there, prepared by Christopher's mother, Julia
16 Hopper, and that is the end of that account.

17 THE CHAIR: I would like to thank Nyarumba Nota for a very
18 poignant account of his son Christopher, for sharing
19 those memories of him. Thank you.

20 MR GRIFFIN: We now move to the commemorative and impact
21 statement about Keith Jason Skeet. It's provided by
22 Christine and Keith Skeet, his parents and also by Tara
23 Natasha his sisters. It will be read by Kirsty Lea on
24 their behalf, and I will ask Kirsty to start when she is
25 ready.

1 Statement of THE SKEET FAMILY read by MS LEA

2 MS LEA: This is the commemorative and impact statement of
3 Christine and Keith Skeet and their daughters Tara and
4 Natasha, in respect of their son and brother, Keith
5 Jason Skeet, known as Jason.

6 "How can you share how much you are hurting because
7 that hurt is so deep you can't explain it. I died that
8 day and only a part of me lived because of the love of
9 my daughters. However dark it gets, I think of them.
10 Jason always looked out for his sisters and would be
11 angry if I also left them.

12 "Jason was looking forward to fulfilling his dreams.
13 Jason shared his many hopes and dreams for the future.
14 He had achieved one of them. He cracked his teeth and
15 wanted to have them capped. He got over this fear of
16 the dentist to achieve this, four weeks before his
17 death. He was elated that he had now completed his
18 treatment. He could not stop smiling.

19 "He never had the chance to go on to achieve any
20 more of his hopes and dreams for the future as they all
21 died with him. Jason did not want to die. He wanted to
22 live and to see his daughter grow up. Jason had so much
23 to live for and to continue to fulfil his dreams.

24 "Our hearts were broken on 28 November 2001 and can
25 never recover. As a family, we have each had our

1 difficulties coping, managing such a loss of a son and
2 brother. One of our difficulties is trying to
3 understand and having to accept the death of Jason that
4 could have been prevented: my son, a brother, a father,
5 whose daughter will never be able to get to know her
6 father.

7 "Mental health staff and services seem to be able to
8 make and change the rules as they go along. They seem
9 to forget that the patients in their care are there for
10 treatment and mental health patients are human beings
11 and not a piece of garbage you just throw out when they
12 are not mentally fit for discharge. All mental health
13 patients should be treated as you would like to be
14 treated yourself. Because I trusted the mental health
15 system I carry the guilt with me for the rest of my life
16 for my son's death: a son, a brother, a father who was
17 loved by all who knew him.

18 "Our hearts are forever broken.

19 "Jason was discharged on 27 November 2001 and we
20 lost him 28 November 2001. I can't go more in-depth as
21 it is too painful.

22 "Mrs Christine Skeet, on behalf of herself, Keith,
23 Tara and Natasha."

24 MR GRIFFIN: Chair, that is the end of that account.

25 THE CHAIR: I'm very grateful to the Skeet family for that

1 account. It was very good of them to --

2 MR GRIFFIN: You are muted at the moment. I know you're
3 saying thank you.

4 THE CHAIR: I was saying that I'm very grateful indeed to
5 the Skeet family for that account.

6 MR GRIFFIN: Thank you very much.

7 Chair, we now move to the final account of this
8 hearing, and it's from Ben Jackson and it's about his
9 brother, Edward "Ed" Jackson. It will be read on Ben's
10 behalf by Rachel Troup.

11 When Rachel is ready I will ask her to start
12 reading.

13 Statement of BEN JACKSON read by MS TROUP

14 MS TROUP: "Dear Baroness Lampard,

15 "I am writing as requested to provide an account of
16 the life of my little brother, Ed, who died by suicide
17 whilst a mental health in-patient in Essex on New Year's
18 Eve 2007.

19 "I will do my best to describe some of the impact
20 that his illness, the circumstances of his death and
21 subsequent events, up to and including my involvement in
22 this Inquiry, have had on me. I hope that the following
23 also conveys the extent to which our childhood together
24 has been a positive influence on my life.

25 "Edward Jackson was born in March 1989 in Ipswich,

1 Suffolk. He was two years my younger and, since I was
2 born 14 days later in the month, we shared the same day
3 of the week for our birthdays each year. We grew up in
4 villages in Suffolk. For the first nine years of Ed's
5 life, this was just north of Ipswich, where we lived in
6 a house in a quiet cul-de-sac, off an equally quiet
7 lane. We went to the village primary school, which we
8 often walked to and from together through the
9 churchyard, which abutted our back garden.

10 "In our village, we learned to ride bicycles, to
11 rollerblade, to play football. Ed was so good at
12 football. He played in mid-field for a local league
13 team and was player of the season on at least one
14 occasion. We played with friends in our houses and in
15 the woods and fields around the village. We built dens
16 in ditches and played roller hockey and football in the
17 road and on the verges outside our house.

18 "We embarked on the digging of a hole to China. We
19 collected conkers from the horse chestnut trees in the
20 churchyard and cured them in vinegar or in the airing
21 cupboard. Ed diligently painted the glass patio doors
22 of the dining room in mud. We played badminton in our
23 front garden and Ed attempted to cultivate a menagerie
24 of wild spiders, which he numbered, in lidless margarine
25 tubs in the back. One day, we collected all the frogs

1 we could find, six, to keep as pets in a sandpit that we
2 had filled with tap water. Us not really understanding
3 how frogs worked and them being unable to escape, they
4 drowned overnight.

5 "We set fire to anything to hand with the help of
6 the sun and a black plastic magnifying glass.
7 I remember Ed sitting cross legged facing a lavender
8 bush, perfectly still surrounded by bees. He broke his
9 arm when he slipped out of the two big shoes I had lent
10 him so that he could try climbing the wrong way up the
11 slide of a climbing frame. He made a heartfelt
12 declaration of love for Tina Turner on the occasion of
13 her 60th birthday.

14 "At some point during primary school, Edward became
15 Eddie. He expedited this change by insisting on us
16 saying 'Eddie' five times for each transgression.
17 Around the end of primary school, we moved to another
18 village in Suffolk. Here we attended high school from
19 our respective ages 11 to 16. By the end of this period
20 he was Ed.

21 "Our curious fire setting graduated with us to
22 include lighters and petrol and aerosol cans. We
23 invented a game called fire hockey. We quit learning to
24 play the piano at similar ages and before attaining any
25 real proficiency at it, but I can remember him playing

1 'In the Hall of the Mountain King' on electric guitar at
2 breakneck speed.

3 "Encouraged by neighbouring children, we learned to
4 fish. Our favourite venues included the moat of
5 an Elizabethan hall, which was full of tench and a small
6 slow river which was full of pike and perch. We spent
7 days on end at these places and the memory of them is
8 perfect in my mind. We saw our first kingfishers flying
9 past us. I remember hunkering down on the banks of the
10 river during a summer thunder storm while Ed, unphased,
11 looked on condescendingly. He was brave and comfortable
12 outdoors.

13 "To get to the part of the river that we knew, we
14 had to cycle for five or six miles, which meant tying
15 our rods to our bikes. As we grew older, we cycled
16 further from home and faster. We tried to trigger
17 30 miles per hour speed traps on a tandem. As the front
18 passenger, I would try to scare him by driving up the
19 verge or swerving wildly. As the rear passenger, he
20 would stand on the pedals suddenly, lifting me out of
21 the saddle from the extra resistance. Car drivers
22 always seemed benevolent towards us, smiling approvingly
23 as we inconvenienced them.

24 "We grew more teenaged. We didn't always get on.
25 Ed moved on from cycling with me to half pipes and dirt

1 jumps. I spent more time with my friends and less with
2 my brother. We developed loves of music, some of which
3 was shared, like The Prodigy, Two Lone Swordsmen,
4 Propellerheads. We took my first car for a drive along
5 roads that we used to cycle down. We happened upon
6 a stoat, which dropped the rabbit it was carrying and
7 disappeared into the hedge. We backed up and waited,
8 and it obliged us by returning for its meal.

9 "To the best of my recollection, Ed started to
10 become unwell roughly after moving schools for Sixth
11 Form. A year later, I left Suffolk to go to university.
12 I was home for Christmas in my second year when Ed died.
13 He was 18. A policeman knocked on our door in the
14 middle of my friends arriving for a New Year's party at
15 my parents' house to tell us. I remember his awkward
16 kindness and I remember telling my friends that they
17 would have to leave but I don't remember anything else
18 from that evening.

19 "In general, my memories for the year or so prior to
20 Ed's death are less clear than at other times in my
21 life. I largely absented myself from the situation at
22 home at the time because I found it hard to be around
23 Ed's illness. He threatened violence and was obviously
24 in anguish. I also think that I suffered some temporal
25 dissociation due to stress but I do remember some

1 things.

2 "Ed told me that he appreciated the influence that
3 my musical taste had had on him, which more than made up
4 for his losing my CDs during in-patient stays. I think
5 that he stole a taxi in an effort to escape from
6 hospital. I think that he was stopped by the police
7 riding his motorbike to safety up the A1. I am so proud
8 of him. I am less proud of myself.

9 "Soon after his death, you might have found me
10 saying that the impact of it was blunted because the
11 person that my brother was had already been gone for
12 some time. I find this attitude so horribly arrogant
13 and callous, looking back. For years afterwards I would
14 sometimes dream that he was still alive, returned to us
15 after a period of being missing, but these were not
16 happy dreams. In them, his reappearance was to be
17 feared because it meant a return to the stress of living
18 with his illness.

19 "I had thought that I had forgiven myself for my
20 behaviour at the time which now seems far from perfect,
21 far from brotherly, but I wonder if that will ever
22 really be possible.

23 "You do not appreciate how often people ask you if
24 you have any siblings until you find yourself in the
25 situation where the answer is no when once it was yes.

1 For a while, it seemed to me that there was no good
2 answer to this question. One can reply no, which has
3 the benefit of not having to explain, but the minor
4 drawback of inviting comments about only children and
5 the major drawback of the guilt associated with denying
6 the existence of the person who you feel is the most
7 deserving of it in the whole world; or one can say yes
8 and hope that the conversation ends there.

9 "I find now that the least worst option is to tell
10 the whole truth but this puts you at the mercy of the
11 questioner's social skills or lack thereof. I assume
12 I will always struggle with this question to some
13 extent.

14 "Some years after Ed's death, I attended the
15 coroner's inquest into it. I missed the first day,
16 which included the paramedics' account of finding him,
17 because I was working. I do not remember thinking
18 particularly badly on a personal level of any of the
19 staff involved in his care that I met there. I do
20 remember one person attending telling me that my
21 mannerisms reminded them of Ed.

22 "I never visited the ward where Ed died. I was
23 included in the invitation to open a brand new facility
24 named after him, Edward House, with the promise that it
25 would offer a safer and more therapeutic environment for

1 the people staying there. I must have found this
2 mollifying but it is impossible not to think that
3 a better tribute to his life would have been not to be
4 learning now about all the circumstances that this
5 Inquiry is investigating. It seems to me that that was
6 the implicit promise of Edward House after all and it
7 feels to me that that promise has been broken.

8 "Earlier this year, I read for the first time the
9 sentencing remarks of Mr Justice Cavanagh in R v Essex
10 Partnership Foundation Trust from 2021. They include
11 this passage:

12 "'Each of the people to whom I will refer in greater
13 detail in a moment, died by their own hand by hanging in
14 one of the Trust's mental health wards but it does not
15 follow that they really intended to commit suicide. It
16 is often the case that such attempts are made as a cry
17 for help without the desire to actually die.'

18 "It has been nearly 17 years since Ed's death. In
19 that time, on occasion, I have fallen into thinking of
20 just how desperate and desperately lonely he must have
21 been on that New Year's Eve, Christmas time, away from
22 home, his life in that moment presumably not looking
23 remotely like anything he had imagined. These thoughts
24 had become less frequent as time passed but reading the
25 remarks above brought them back with extra devastating

1 meaning.

2 "I think that at the coroner's inquest I was told
3 that Ed wanted to get home from hospital so that he
4 could go fishing with his brother, but this memory is so
5 unclear that I don't know if I trust it or not. I do
6 know for sure, as I write this letter, that I would very
7 much like to go fishing with him.

8 "Yours faithfully, Ben Jackson."

9 MR GRIFFIN: Chair, that is the end of that account.

10 THE CHAIR: I am very, very grateful to Mr Jackson for that
11 account of his brother, Edward. Thank you.

12 MR GRIFFIN: Chair, that is the end of the evidence at this
13 hearing. Many difficult memories and issues have been
14 addressed and I would like, once again, to remind those
15 engaging with the Inquiry of the emotional support that
16 is available. Following the hearing, information can be
17 found on the Inquiry website, lampardinquiry.org.uk, at
18 the "Support" tab.

19 Finally, Chair, before I hand over to you I would
20 like to thank Amanda, our evidence handler, and the team
21 from RTS for their technical assistance with this
22 hearing.

23 Thank you, Chair.

24 Closing remarks by THE CHAIR

25 THE CHAIR: Thank you, Mr Griffin, and I reiterate my

1 gratitude and thanks to everybody involved in ensuring
2 the smooth running of these hearings, including members
3 of the Inquiry team.

4 We have come to the end of the Inquiry's impact and
5 commemorative hearings and I wish to thank everyone who
6 has engaged with these hearings and provided personal
7 accounts and opening statements over the past three
8 days.

9 The three opening statements have given me much to
10 think about and have raised matters that I and the
11 Inquiry team will carefully consider. I am grateful to
12 those representatives who made those statements for
13 their assistance.

14 I wish once again to give my sincere thanks to all
15 those who provided commemorative and impact accounts.
16 I do not underestimate how difficult it will have been
17 to make those contributions. The commemorative accounts
18 shared, in all their various formats, public and in
19 private, not only add to our understanding but are also
20 invaluable in drawing the attention of the wider public
21 to the depth of tragedy in each individual loss. These
22 accounts are vital to the Inquiry's work.

23 Each commemorative account was moving and memorable.
24 Each has captured the essence of the person who has been
25 lost and of the impact on those who loved them. Each

1 story will endure in my mind and I'm sure in the minds
2 of many others listening to these hearings.

3 As I said at the outset of these hearings, I have
4 asked my Inquiry team to consider how we may gather all
5 the accounts heard by the Inquiry and present them in
6 a way that preserves and reflects their vital importance
7 to the Inquiry's work and I have asked that this be done
8 in collaboration with the families who provided the
9 accounts.

10 Whether I have heard an account publicly or
11 privately, and whether it's been pre-recorded, given
12 live or read by someone else on your behalf, the account
13 will form part of the evidence base of this Inquiry and,
14 although these hearings have been virtual, they will be
15 afforded no less weight than an in-person hearing.
16 Indeed, virtual hearings are essential to ensure that
17 everyone who would like to be able to provide an account
18 has a means of doing so that is comfortable, safe and
19 suitable for them.

20 Looking forward to next year, the Inquiry will hold
21 its next set of hearings in April 2025, some details of
22 which have already been touched upon by Mr Griffin in
23 his opening statement, but further information will
24 follow on the Inquiry website shortly.

25 I want to conclude by once again expressing my

1 sincere thanks to all those who have been involved in
2 these hearings and by paying tribute to their encourage
3 and dignity. Your account and your involvement are
4 pivotal to the work of this Inquiry and I very much
5 thank you for it. Thank you.

6 MR GRIFFIN: Thank you very much, Chair, and please now end
7 the live feed.

8 (1.38 pm)

9 (The Inquiry adjourned)

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