

EXHIBIT 'A'

Home
28 Nov 07

Dear Peter,

I feel moved to write to you on learning in recent weeks a little of the distressful scrutiny you and other colleagues have been forced to endure. As I still deliberately avoid self-help groups and can fortunately also avoid frequent trips to clinics, combined with the fact that my life has been too busy in recent years to find time to read local newspapers, I had been completely unaware of the events unfolding around yourself and former colleagues. Even now I only have a sketchy picture, but what bits I do know make me feel truly saddened on your behalf.

It is very important to me that I share with you something of my own point of view on these matters, at least insofar as they pertain directly to my own situation, the only area where I can comment with complete authority. I hope you don't mind me writing like this. My sole purpose is to try and redress the balance a little by recounting how things were for my family at least, a less vocal but equally involved and affected group.

I firmly believe that in an era when we were all working to some extent in the twilight zone, if not completely in the dark, 'innocent' mistakes were bound to happen. That's just the way life is sometimes. We're not gods; we're human (if we're lucky). Hindsight is such a wonderful thing, as is increased factual knowledge and greater statistical evidence to assist us with informed decision making. We had little of those things to work with in the eighties. By 'we' I really do mean *all* of us.

A doctor is human and of course can also be a patient. A patient is human and of course can also be medically informed and proactive in efforts to safeguard emotional and physical well-being. A patient is not an entirely submissive vessel, just as a doctor or nurse is not a foolproof 'doer-unto' and miracle maker. The good stuff happens when the interplay is well balanced between physician - person and patient - person. Sometimes, as in my own profession and no doubt many others, we find ourselves to be in the business of damage limitation; the offering of best-fit kindnesses, reasonable hope and personal dignity.

What we always had, as the horrible drama began to reveal itself in the North East, was a Haemophilia Centre staffed by highly professional and unquestionably caring team players. The care, advice and guidance given to my husband and myself in those dark and difficult days, was always an attempt to support the whole person and was always, *always* well intentioned.

I know that GRO-B and yourself had several spats and there were times when I felt a bit like piggy in the middle. I know he drove you crazy with his frequent watch-glancing when he was attending a clinic (almost always based on him

being desperate not to let down [GRO-B] back home by being late back), As you know, he tried hard to live as normal a life as possible - to earn enough money and to make and protect investments so as to offer at least some degree of financial buffering to his little family in the difficult years ahead. His personal example in the face of adversity was in fact the best buffering he could ever give.

Nevertheless, I can appreciate that his 'way' must have been a little exasperating for hospital staff at times. I understood that with so many very sick patients and unpredictables in your daily timetable, there needed to be some room to manoeuvre. It was also a little easier perhaps to think with a calmer head when my own potential nightmare was anticipated at least a little further down the line.

[GRO-B]s understandable anger at what had happened to him came out in various ways, and the impatience which he sometimes exuded at clinics was, I think, just one of those ways. I'm sure that you all understood this and never held it against him. At times his willingness to speak up on medical matters saved him and possibly others from additional problems. We never held anything against individual staff and only expected (and always received) people's best efforts in the dire circumstances within which we all found ourselves.

I know you will agree with me when I say that Maureen was a complete star. She was a role model for nursing staff everywhere and I feel absolutely privileged to have crossed paths with her. Her motherly, approachable yet always completely professional manner inspired total confidence. She was [GRO-B]s Aunt Maureen. This is a status in a small boy's life that most nurses or teachers never attain. She was the special one, the Jose Mourinho of the RVI. He loved her. I still do.

I number Pat as one of the other 'greats' of my whole life – the person from whom I have received colossal personal support throughout a 20 year relationship. In my working life I've come across several examples of all that is weak about social services. Pat was and remains to this day the embodiment of respectful regard for another individual in challenging circumstances. She is tactful beyond words and quietly metes out self-effacing yet blindingly effective support for all those fortunate enough to work with her. She has regularly helped me to save the quality of my own life. Though I'd like to think that I would have done this anyway, Pat made sure I speeded the process up. She held up an accurate mirror to my life, encouraging me to notice all the things I was getting *right* – sometimes a challenge for us Catholics. She didn't strike me from her Christmas card list when I was nearly squeezed out of my own personality by the bullying [GRO-B] I was targeted by after [GRO-B]'s death. She was always a completely safe sounding board for those hardest of all conversations around self and sex, love and fear, self protection and selfishness, strength and joy and death.

What I can also say with confidence is that at no time at all, either then or now, did either of us feel that we were not getting the best care and support possible, given the nightmare that we were suddenly caught up in. Yes - we were given some of the worst possible news that young people could ever be given (save the same news regarding a child of our own, which may well have broken us completely – thank God we were spared that.) Yet the dreadful news, both initial test results and following on from that, the endless specimen results, was followed up with directness and attention to our emotional well being in ways which were generally effective and supportive and which must have been very draining for yourselves personally as professionals. You were always kind, professional and clearly determined to offer the best possible clinical care in extremely difficult circumstances.

We would occasionally reflect on how hard this must all be for you – having helped raise a generation of physically and emotionally optimistic young men, their life threatening condition well medicated and well managed, only to have to watch the sky fall on their heads. We knew it must be an awful sentence for you personally to have to be the main messenger of doom. We never for a moment considered it reasonable or necessary to shoot the messenger. Your shoulders have had a lot to carry and I was delighted to hear a little of the fantastic retirement celebration held at the RVI in your honour.

I was also delighted for you the day we met briefly in the Metro Centre, when you were on your way to be Father Christmas at your grandsons' school. That is what life is about. In my own opinion, for what it's worth, you have more than earned the right to a stress-free, experience - rich and family centred retirement. I wish you that for Christmas and the New Year and for all your future New Years. You are a good and caring person, Peter and the people who really matter will always know that.

Yours sincerely,

GRO-B

[Handwritten signature]