

Witness Name: C WALTON

Statement No: WITN1589009

Exhibits: WITN1589010-22

Dated: April 2020

INFECTED BLOOD INQUIRY

EXHIBIT WITN1589018

From: "Perks, Robert"
Date: 13 January 2015 at 10:53:29 GMT
To: Clair Walton
Cc: "Hewitt, Emily"
Subject: RE: HIV Testimonies Cat No C743

Clair

Thanks for your email. I'm not sure I have very much to add. I think we have now established conclusively that we never received an interview with you for the C743 collection. If we had we would by now have traced it. It is a very well-organised and well-documented collection, and I know you have checked the small number of interviews with women with pseudonyms.

My best guess, if you are certain that you carried out an interview for the BL, is that you might have been recorded by someone called **GRO-A** who carried out a few interviews for the series when it first started. As Emily has indicated, **GRO-A** had a nervous breakdown not long after the project began and had to withdraw. I have a memory that we didn't get all the interviews (I can't remember how many) from her which she had been carrying out before she was extremely ill and we lost contact with her. You'll note that several of her content summaries are also missing. I have heard nothing from her since.

It's very regrettable, especially as you can't remember who interviewed you, which might have helped us be certain this is what happened. I've looked through the file and there's nothing further there to shed light on this. Obviously it was a very distressing and embarrassing time for Wendy Rickard and I, but once **GRO-A** had stepped down we were able to move forward with the project and Babs Gibson came in to help with some interviews. We always struggled to get funding for the project and I actually funded it largely through my BL acquisitions budget. Wendy was the real expert driving force behind the project and I know Emily has spoken to her about your interview and she also has no memory of us every receiving it.

As you know we carried out the initial interviews in 1996-7 and followed up some of the interviewees with second interviews in 2005-7 to assess the longer-term impact of the virus.

If you have further questions I'd be pleased to try to respond. You might also want to talk to Wendy, in which case I'll ask her if she's willing to be contacted directly.

With best wishes

Rob

Dr Robert B Perks
Lead Curator, Oral History
Director, National Life Stories

British Library
96 Euston Road
London NW1 2DB

GRO-C
rob.perks@GRO-C
www.bl.uk/oralhistory
www.ohs.org.uk

-----Original Message-----

From: Clair Walton [mailto:clairwalton@GRO-C]
Sent: 09 January 2015 14:12
To: Perks, Robert
Subject: HIV Testimonies Cat No C743

Dear Rob

I have been conversing with Emily Hewitt regarding sound recordings taken in the mid 1990s for deposit in the BL. I understand she has spoken to you about this.

I have an interest as I was a participant in the project and as part of a current PhD proposal I was hoping to access my recording. It appears the recordings may not have reached the BL as a portion of the interviews disappeared .

This, obviously, raises a number of questions for me, not least the whereabouts of the tapes but also the circumstances and decisions taken at the time of the departure of one of the interviewers. I understand you may be able to assist me further with information about the project. If this is possible, I would be very grateful.

Kind regards

Clair
tel: GRO-C

Emails with Clair Walton if needed.

From: Hewitt, Emily
Sent: 09 January 2015 08:45
To: 'Clair Walton'
Subject: RE: HIV/AIDS testimonies

Dear Clair,

Apologies for the delay, I was on leave over Christmas and have been catching up with emails this week.

Thanks for your message yesterday. I'll be in the office this morning if you'd like to speak on the phone.

Unfortunately we don't have any record of GRO-A work, as I mentioned in my last email we lost all contact with her after she withdrew from the project.

I agree that it is very sad that we are unable to trace these tapes, and completely understand

how frustrating this is.

If you'd like to discuss the matter over the phone then please let me know.

Best wishes,

Emily

From: Clair Walton [mailto:clairwalton@GRO-C]
Sent: 18 December 2014 16:12
To: Hewitt, Emily
Subject: Re: HIV/AIDS testimonies

Dear Emily

Thank you very much for your persistence in this matter.

It could have been GRO-A Unfortunately being so long ago it is difficult to remember. It is frustrating that tapes were not deposited. Those who were interviewed gave so much of themselves - such intimate details and emotionally charged - often grieving for lost friends and in my case as a grieving widow. It is so sad to think tapes have been lost.

Do you know if there is record of any of GRO-A work?

Kind regards
Clair

Sent from my iPhone

On 18 Dec 2014, at 15:54, "Hewitt, Emily" wrote:
Dear Clair,

Many thanks for your email.

I have spoken to Wendy Rickard and Barbara Gibson, and unfortunately they have no record of your oral history recording.

It's a long shot but I wonder if you were interviewed by GRO-A did carry out a number of recordings for the collection, but unfortunately due to health reasons she withdrew from the project and did not deposit all of the recordings - we were then unable to contact her.

Best wishes,

Emily

-----Original Message-----
From: Clair Walton [mailto:clairwalton@GRO-C]
Sent: 11 December 2014 10:44
To: Hewitt, Emily
Subject: Re: HIV/AIDS testimonies

Dear Emily

A few months ago, you kindly looked into tapes of an interview I took part in during the 1990s and unusually were unable to find record of them.

Since then I have listened to other tapes i.e.F6046 Emma, which have been useful for my research, however, I am concerned that my tapes have not been found in the records as they could form valuable insight and evidence in my reasearch.

Locating the tapes or understanding what happened to them, would greatly assist me in my research - ironically which concerns the hidden voices of HIV positive women.

You mention you contacted Wendy Rickard. There is also Barbara Gibson. If you are at a dead end, is it possible pass my details (and correspondence?) on to Wendy and Barbara so that I may be in contact to perhaps solve the mystery and locate the tapes whereabouts if they still exist?

I look forward to hearing from you.
Kind regards

Clair Walton
Tel: **GRO-C**
Sent from my iPhone

On 18 Sep 2014, at 16:22, "Hewitt, Emily" wrote:

Dear Clair,

I understand from my colleagues in the Listening and Viewing Service that you are trying to locate a recording that you made for the HIV/AIDS Testimonies project (catalogue reference number: C743).

I have carefully reviewed all the documentation for this particular project and for all other British Library oral history collections that relate to HIV. Unfortunately I can find no record of an interview with you being received by the British Library. I have also been in contact with Wendy Rickard, the project coordinator, and she also has no record of an interview with you being deposited at the Library.

Is there any further information you can recall about the interview you recorded? If you can think of any more information I promise to look again into the matter.

I apologise that we cannot help at the moment and for any inconvenience caused. You are of course more than welcome to come to the Library to listen to the other open recordings within the collection. If you have any questions then please let me know.

Best wishes,

Emily

Emily Hewitt
Assistant Archivist
Oral History & National Life Stories
The British Library
96 Euston Road
London
020 7412 7404
emily.hewitt@GRO-C
www.bl.uk/oralhistory

-----Original Message-----

From: Clair Walton [mailto:clairwalton@GRO-C]
Sent: 16 September 2014 14:37
To: Dryden, Steven
Subject: HIV/AIDS testimonies

Hi Steven

Further to our telephone conversation regarding my search for a sound recording I made in the 1990s and deposited within the BL, I confirm my name is Clair Theresa Amanda Walton.

My date of birth is GRO-C 1961.

I was living in GRO-C Warwickshire when the interview took place. I went under another name. I had used the name Mary but Janet also rings a bell - also Jane. Although the dates do not tally, it may be that C743/56 with Barbara Gibson could be me. Barbara Gibson's name is familiar but also is Wendy Rickard. It is highly likely I placed an access restriction as I had professional links with the BL in my work as an archive conservator.

I look forward to seeing you on Friday - I should be there by 12 30 - I would like to listen to other female testimonies from the 1990s that have chosen to use an alias.

Many thanks

Clair
Sent from my iPad

Experience the British Library online at www.bl.uk

The British Library's latest Annual Report and Accounts :

www.bl.uk/aboutus/annrep/index.html

[dex.html](#)> Help the British Library conserve the world's knowledge.

Adopt a Book. www.bl.uk/adoptabook

The Library's St Pancras site is WiFi - enabled

The information contained in this e-mail is confidential and may be legally privileged. It is intended for the addressee(s) only. If you are not the intended recipient, please delete this e-mail and notify the postmaster@bl.uk : The contents of this e-mail must not be disclosed or copied without the sender's consent.

The statements and opinions expressed in this message are those of the author and do not necessarily reflect those of the British Library. The British Library does not take any responsibility for the views of the author.

Think before you print

From: Clair Walton
Date: 14 January 2015 at 10:52:49 GMT
To: Wendy Rickard
Subject: Re: Interview

Hi Wendy

Thank you for your reply.

I truly appreciate your help. It is sad to hear about GRO-A. Whether it was GRO-A or not who interviewed me, I remember the kindness and professional manner in which the interview took place, in what was a difficult period for me.

I will wait to hear if anything comes of your enquiries with her institute, and I will take you up on you offer with more general queries about the project in due course.

With kind regards

Clair

Sent from my iPhone

On 14 Jan 2015, at 10:25, Wendy Rickard wrote:

Hi Clair

I have had lots of conversations recently with Rob Perks and his colleagues at the British Library about your request for a copy of your interview recorded in the early 1990s. I am really very sorry that we have not come up with anything -Rob said he has explained to you the tragic circumstances with GRO-A which meant that the first few interviews for the collection were not deposited. GRO-A was living in a GRO-A last time I saw her.

I have contacted the Institute of Education where GRO-A was based to see if I can get any contact to a member of her family to find out what happened, but it is a very long shot I am afraid.

Your PhD sounds interesting. If there is anything more general about the collection that I could help you with, do write. I am not working in the field any more.

best

Wendy Rickard