

WITNESS STATEMENT

Criminal Procedure Rules, r27.2; Criminal Justice Act 1967, s.9; Magistrates' Courts Act 1980, s.5b

Statement of: WHITTON, GEORGE PETER

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

Occupation: SECTION SUPERVISOR

This statement (consisting of 5 page(s) each signed by me) is true to the best of my knowledge and belief and I make it knowing that, if it is tendered in evidence, I shall be liable to prosecution if I have wilfully stated in it anything which I know to be false, or do not believe to be true.

Signature: G P WHITTON

Date: 29/03/2018

Tick if witness evidence is visually recorded ☐ (supply witness details on rear)

This statement refers to my role as a Section Supervisor at Masterdor Ltd.

I am George Peter WHITTON, however I'm known as "Pete".

I started working for Manse Masterdors in 2002 as a key person in the paint department painting Manse Masterdor timber doors. Approximately three (3) months afterwards I was promoted to Section Supervisor in the paint department and hang glazed pack line and frames a position I still hold. I used to supervise approximately twenty (20) personel however currently I have approximaely eighty six (86) personel to supervise. I started at the Ambergate site to the current location in Heage when Synseal took over the company under Masterdor Ltd.

When I initially started we did timber doors and were the overspill of the work from Manse Masterdor factory in Knaresborough, Yorkshire. This lasted for approximately 3-4 years and I remember a very large timber door contract for Dagenham + Redbridge Council.

Eventually the timber door market declined so the company began manufacturing the GRP composite door which is basically a foam filled pvc "wood effect" skin door. GRP became very successful and still is today.

As my role progressed I was still hands on in an active production role assisting in any of the area's of my section. This could include paint, GRP, frames, glazing or hardware sections but I also have

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responsibilities for other things such as administration including job cards for each individual door, health and safety, inductions and training of new employees in my section.

During my time at Manse Masterdor I answered to a director of LB Plastics named Barry GOOCH.

While working for Manse Masterdor I was aware that LB Plastics who owned Manse Masterdor suffered financial trouble and this was one of the reasons the site at Manse in Knaresborough and everything came to our Ambergate site. The company continued manufacturing doors however the company was still losing money. I believe Manse borrowed more money from the bank and two (2) males names Paul HERBERT and John ARMSTRONG came into the company. The rumour I heard was that HERBERT and ARMSTRONG were sent to the company on behalf of the bank to turn it around. Redundancies occurred, and they also sold the factories machinery.

During this time we also had a new "General Manager" called Gary FOX and a new "Production Manager" called Brian O'SULLIVAN, I answered to both of these managers. During this time the company continued making changes and departments closed or became integrated with other departments within the company.

I also heard that Mr Leon LITCHFIELD sold off some assets, paid money back to the bank that was owed and removed both HERBERT and ARMSTRONG from the company.

The changes continued and things evolved one such change was we stopped the TDR's. TDR's were a training document record which was used to show exactly how to produce a door. The TDR's were thick manuals and extremely useful but disappeared during the FOX and O'SULLIVAN management period.

I also remember some manufacturing changes that occurred and this was during the period of 2010-2012 approximately and involved Gary FOX and Jim DUNCAN (Technical Manager) along with another male named Dan JONES from Seal Tight Solutions (as they have now been called). Took more of an interest into the production of the doors. They were looking for ways to save money and costs. We were specifically asked to remove products and items from doors. Looking back now I can see the integrity of the doors were compromised. Anything that could be made cheaper was made cheaper, and anything that could be removed was removed.

Specific examples of these changes were as follows. In our hayday we used to have intrumescent for glazing door, then butile (which is liquorise on a door and £65 per roll) then the internal clamp screw to the door. This changed by removing the butile and using compression clamps on both sides and the removal of the intumescent in the aperture of the timber doors.

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Also another big change on the doors made by them was the removal of the intumescent lock strip and intumescent pads off the top and bottom lock pockets.

A third change I can think of was on a GRP door we were instructed to remove clips from the side of the glazing leaving just the two (2) bottom clips. I have drawn diagram showing these changes and exhibit this drawing as GPW/1. In my opinion these changes were solely for cost cutting purposes and detrimental to the door design. The instructions to complete the changes to the manufacturing were verbal instructions by those mentioned already. I argued on many occasions regarding the changes but was instructed to do it the way they wanted it done.

In the last two (2) or three (3) weeks things have gone back to doing things the old way with full measures in place.

I was also asked a range of questions in a questionnaire style questionnaire sheet which I have answered to the best of my ability as exhibit this questionnaire sheet as GPW/2 and a Poster of a door label as GPW/3.

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