

## **BROOK HOUSE INQUIRY**

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### **FIRST WITNESS STATEMENT OF ASHLEY MARTIN ALMANZA**

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I, **Ashley Martin Almanza**, Executive Chairman, Allied Universal – International, 46 Gillingham Street, London, SW1H 1HU will say as follows:

#### **INTRODUCTION**

1. My date of birth is DPA and I make this statement following the Inquiry's Rule 9 request dated 3 February 2022.

#### **BACKGROUND**

2. Prior to joining G4S, I trained as a chartered accountant and then held a number of executive roles at British Gas plc, BG plc and BG Group plc from 1993 to 2012, including Group CFO from 2002 and Executive Vice President from 2009 to 2012. I was a non-executive director of Schroders plc between 2011 and 2016 and Noble Corporation Inc. between 2013 and 2018. I have previously served as Chairman of the Hundred Group and was a member of the Advisory Board for the Oxford University Centre on Business Taxation.
3. I joined G4S in May 2013 as the Group CFO and became Group Chief Executive of G4S plc in June 2013, holding that position until 6 April 2021.
4. G4S plc was a global corporation with over 550,000 employees deployed across around 90 countries, organised into 6 regions: Africa, Asia Pacific, Europe, Latin America & Caribbean, Middle-East & India, North America, and UK & Ireland. Each region had a substantial regional executive team (Finance, HR, Legal etc.), led by a region Chief

Executive/President. The region CEO's/Presidents together with the Group CFO, Group HR Director, Group General Counsel, Group Corporate Affairs Director and Group Strategy and Commercial Director formed the Group Executive Committee. In my role as Group CEO I led the Group Executive Committee and reported to the Chairman of the G4S Board. The G4S Board and Committees provided independent oversight of the Group's governance, strategy, risk appetite and controls and performance.

5. I had no management roles within any of the Group's operating business units including G4S Care and Justice Services (UK) Limited ('CJS') and G4S Health Services (UK) Limited ('G4S Health').
6. CJS and G4S Health were operating business units within the UK & Ireland region.
7. Brook House formed part of the Gatwick IRC business and were managed by the Director, Ben Saunders, who reported to the Managing Director (Jerry Petherick), Custody and Detention Services ('C&DS') (an operating business unit of CJS) who, in turn reported to the President UK & Ireland (Peter Neden). As noted above, Peter Neden reported to me.
8. G4S plc was acquired by Allied Universal on 6 April 2021, and subsequently delisted. On 6 April 2021, I was appointed to the role of Executive Chairman of Allied Universal International. I remain in this position to the present day; Allied Universal International is headquartered in London and operates in around 80 countries that are organised into five regions: Africa Middle-East, Asia Pacific, Europe, Latin America, and UK & Ireland. Each region has a Regional Chief Executive Officer, supported by regional executives (e.g. HR, Legal, Finance etc.) and senior line and functional executives in each country.

### **THE CONTRACT**

9. I did not have any involvement in the initial contract with the Home Office to run Brook House, which was awarded to GSL in 2008. I am advised that G4S did bid for the

contract but was not successful. The contract winner was GSL, which was subsequently acquired by G4S, thereby acquiring the contract. During the period 2017-2019, I will have participated in discussions about the re-procurement of the Gatwick IRC contract by the Home Office. I believe that the Home Office suspended the re-procurement in 2017/18 and extended the contract with G4S for around 2 years, after which G4S ceased to operate at the Gatwick IRC.

10. In relation to contract amendments. I have no recollection of ever meeting the Home Office to discuss this contract. G4S was a global company with several thousand contracts and, as the Group Chief Executive, it was not my role to negotiate contracts or any amendments thereto.
11. I did not have responsibility for contract profitability before, during or after the Relevant Period (April to August 2017). In the case of Brook House, I believe that responsibility for contract performance (including health & safety, compliance, profitability etc.) was held by the MD, C&DS (Jerry Petherick) and the Director, Gatwick IRC (Ben Saunders).
12. Granting access to the financial information to assess the profitability for each contract is a decision that would typically be taken by the Regional CEO/President. I expect that the MD, C&DS (Jerry Petherick) and the Director, Gatwick IRC's (Ben Saunders) would have had access to some or all of the contract performance information (including profitability).
13. I am asked to set out what profit G4S made from the contract. This is not something that is within my current knowledge. However, I understand that the National Audit Office's Memorandum for the House of Commons Home Affairs Committee dated July 2019 [DL0000175] addresses overall profitability figures for the period 2012 to 2018.

**INTERACTION WITH BROOK HOUSE DURING THE RELEVANT PERIOD**  
**- GENERAL**

14. I have never visited Brook House. I do not recall meeting the management team at Brook House. I believe that I briefly met Ben Saunders when he was working at Medway Secure Training Centre, but not in connection with Brook House.
15. The Brook House contract was one of many contracts held by G4S and I have no recollection of any meetings with others within G4S to discuss matters relating to Brook House (save as otherwise expressed).
16. Group management would have regular performance meetings with the Regional CEO/Presidents during which we would usually review health and safety, financial performance, sales pipeline and any other material matters relating to the relevant region. Although it is possible that specific contracts may have been mentioned from time to time, this was not the level at which these reviews were focussed and I do not remember any material discussions about Brook House (save as otherwise expressed).
17. I do not recall having ever met with the Home Office to discuss Brook House. I believe that the Regional President UK&I (Peter Neden) and other member/s of his team did meet the Home Office to discuss the Brook House contract.
18. Although, I had no direct knowledge of the management and leadership culture at Brook House, I would have expected the culture to be consistent with the G4S values of integrity, respect, security, safety, service excellence, innovation and teamwork. G4S had, and still has a very clear set of values, which were/are extensively promoted by the Board and Management. It was, and is, a mandatory requirement that all employees adhere to the values of the company. G4S conducted periodic employee surveys that were structured around its values. The surveys achieved high levels of participation (in 2018/19 there were c. 450,000 respondents) and the vast majority of employees confirmed that G4S values had been clearly communicated to them and that they felt able to speak up if they noticed unethical behaviour.
19. Prior to the Panorama programme, I expected individual conduct and culture at Brook House to be consistent with the G4S values. I was shocked and dismayed to see, in the

Panorama programme, that the unacceptable conduct of some individuals was not consistent with those values.

20. The only occasion that I recall being made aware of someone raising concerns about the treatment of detained persons at Brook House was when I received an emailed letter from David Waldock. The letter was almost entirely focussed on interactions between employees and between Home Office officials and employees. However it did make some reference to the treatment of detainees. In accordance with our established process for investigating whistleblowing reports, I promptly referred the allegations to G4S HR and Legal Departments and I believe that these were logged and investigated in accordance with the G4S whistleblowing policy. I believe that the company promptly contacted Mr Waldock, established an investigation team and investigated the allegations. I understand that the whistleblowing process is addressed in more detail in the CJS corporate statement.
21. Prior to the Panorama programme, I did not have any specific concerns in relation to financial, commercial or reputational pressures impacting on the ability of staff to do their jobs and ensure the health, safety and wellbeing of detainees at Brook House. Since joining G4S, I have always made it very clear to the shareholders, the Board and management and employees at G4S, that health and safety is a vital priority. Consistent with this priority, G4S employed numerous H&S officers / managers to support the company's work in this area.
22. Prior to the Panorama programme, I do not recall (other than the David Waldock allegations – please see further below) being aware of any specific concerns about any verbal or physical abuse of detained persons by staff at Brook House.
23. Prior to the Panorama programme, I do not recall being aware of any racist, homophobic or misogynistic attitudes or behaviours amongst staff or management at Brook House.

24. Prior to the Panorama programme, and other than in relation to the David Waldock letter, I do not recall having any concerns about staff or management at Brook House being bullied by other staff. As noted above, I promptly referred the letter from David Waldock to the HR and Legal Departments and believe that the allegations in the letter were investigated in accordance with the company's whistleblowing policy.
25. G4S had/has many contracts and it is the responsibility of the contract director/manager and the business unit leader to ensure that they have a proper understanding of the required staffing levels and to ensure compliance with those requirements. The Gatwick IRC director was responsible for maintaining staffing levels to comply with the contract. If there were any issues with staffing this would have been addressed by the Gatwick IRC centre Director, the MD, C&DS and potentially/or the UK & Ireland management team. I understand that staffing levels are addressed specifically in the CJS corporate witness statement.
26. I do not recall any discussions about deliberately leaving staff positions open in order to maximise profits at Brook House.

### **COMPLAINTS PROCESS**

27. My general understanding of the complaints processes that were in place at Brook House during the Relevant Period is that there were multiple channels for concerns to be raised by staff and/or detainees. These channels included raising concerns/complaints with: management at the centre, the Home Office Monitor at the centre, the Independent Monitoring Board (whose members had unfettered access to the centre), or via the G4S Speak Out hotline. I expected that there would also have been an opportunity to raise concerns during HMIP inspections.
28. I understand that the actual complaints system that was in place during the Relevant Period at Brook House is addressed in detail in the CJS corporate witness statement.

### **COMPLAINT FROM DAVID WALDOCK**

29. I received the letter from David Waldock dated 15 April 2017 [VER000061], which is the letter I refer to above, in which he raised a number of allegations about the conduct of Ben Saunders and Steve Skitt.

30. As noted above, I promptly referred the allegations to the HR and Legal Departments. I believe that the allegations were investigated in accordance with the G4S whistleblowing policy and procedure which I believe are appropriate. I do not recall having any further involvement in the investigation once I had referred the complaint to the Legal department. To put this in context, G4S employed over 550,000 staff around the world, and had therefore established systems and resources to effectively investigate complaints.

#### **RELATIONSHIPS WITH OTHER BODIES**

31. I do not recall having any meetings with the Home Office regarding Brook House.

32. I do not recall having any meetings with the IMB.

33. I do not recall having any involvement in the HMIP inspections into Brook House in 2016 and 2019. I believe that I would have been notified of the results.

#### **REACTION TO PANORAMA AND EVENTS THEREAFTER**

34. I was shocked and dismayed when I saw the Panorama footage.

35. My immediate involvement in G4S' response was to alert the Board of Directors and the Chair of our CSR committee, Clare Spottiswoode. I asked Ms Spottiswoode to visit Brook House, which she did. I discussed the matter with the Board and we agreed to commission an independent investigation into the events at Brook House. We asked Clare Spottiswoode to meet with firms that might be able to conduct an independent investigation, including Verita, the firm that was subsequently appointed. In parallel, the then Regional President (Peter Neden) was tasked with establishing an action plan

in response to events at Brook House. I believe that Peter Neden consulted/discussed the plan and progress with the Home Office. Peter Neden also provided updates to me and the Board CSR committee, whose members comprised independent directors of G4S plc.

36. I am asked whether I was involved and/or kept aware of negotiations which led to a settlement being reached with Ben Saunders. In accordance with normal practice, unless it related to a member of my direct team, I was not responsible for negotiating these agreements and I don't recall having any involvement in this negotiation. I understand that this matter is addressed in the CJS corporate witness statement.
37. As noted above, following Panorama, I agreed with the Board that we would commission an independent investigation. I believe that Clare Spottiswoode, as Chair of the CSR committee, was asked to agree the Terms of Reference.
38. The notes of my meeting with Ed Marsden (of Verita) and Clare Spottiswoode on 20 October 2017 (VER000191) record that I pointed out "*that despite on-site HO, the IMB, HMIP and G4S management things went awry at BH*", and that I was "*concerned about the fact that all barriers appeared to fail*". I believed that the system of checks and balance - as designed - was sufficient and that the Board and management needed to understand why the system had not detected and/or prevented the unacceptable conduct seen in the Panorama programme.
39. I also asked whether the composition of the detainee population had a bearing on what happened at Brook House. It was important that we commissioned Verita to investigate all potential factors that contributed to the unacceptable conduct seen in the Panorama programme.
40. I am referred to the fact that it is recorded that there had been no decision on the G4S re-bid for Brook House and that I "*thought G4S should be clear about this before proceeding with the independent investigation.*" Later it is noted that "*KL & EM to postpone meetings scheduled for next week until G4S are clear about contract award.*"



*This was agreed after the meeting in an email exchange between Debbie Walker and Kate Lampard” and I am asked what I meant by the statements. This discussion took place some time ago and to the best of my recollection, I believe that we felt it was important to be clear about the rebid decision before the investigation commenced so that staff did not have to be concerned about, or be influenced by, the rebid process when responding to Verita’s investigation.*

41. *It is recorded that “G4S board has changed its risk profile i.e. lower tolerance for risky services and that I was concerned HO can alter the risk profile of BH without G4S really understanding the implications or having the contract flexibility to adjust the working environment e.g. staffing levels, debating the number & type of residents. He thought the G4S management team were too accommodating of HO-initiated changes without really understanding the implications. AA asked that we didn’t ‘pull our punches’ on this matter. He believes G4S needs more flexibility in the contract”.*
42. *I believe that, shortly after Panorama aired, the MD, C&DS (Jerry Petherick) expressed the view that management of the centre was made more complex because of the changes in the composition of the population of detainees (a greater number of Foreign National Offenders) and the increased duration of detention. My understanding was that the Brook House contract enabled the Home Office to make these changes without the agreement of C&DS or the Brook House management team. I believed that Verita should consider this in its investigation.*
43. *To the best of my recollection, shortly after Panorama aired, the MD, C&DS (Jerry Petherick) expressed the view that the use of drugs at the centre sometimes made it difficult to manage the detainees and I gained the impression that C&DS management may have felt reluctant to take a more proactive approach to detecting and preventing substance abuse. I believed it was appropriate for Verita to investigate this concern, hence my comments: “AA would like us to take a hard look at how the centre management deals with drugs. He thinks that G4S doesn’t manage this sufficiently assertively or use all the tools at its disposal. He wants the terms of reference to be stronger on this matter.”*

44. I am referred to an email sent by Kate Lampard and Ed Marsden of Verita to Peter Neden and Elisabeth Fleuriot in November 2018, expressing concern at the initial decision of the G4S Board not to publish their report in full [HOM011797]. This e-mail expressed the reasons why they thought that the report should be published.

45. I believe that that the G4S Group General Counsel had provided privileged advice to G4S that recommended that the report be published in redacted form. A number of Board members, including me, met and discussed the advice and concluded that the report should be published in full, with only minimal redaction.

46. We adopted, as far as we were able, all of the recommendations from Verita and issued a public statement about the progress made in implementing the recommendations. I believe that this topic` is addressed in more detail in the CJS corporate statement.

#### **STATEMENT OF TRUTH**

**I believe that the facts stated herein are true.**

**I understand that proceedings for contempt of court may be brought against anyone who makes, or causes to be made, a false statement in a document verified by a statement of truth without an honest belief in its truth.**

**Signature**

Signed: .....

Dated: 21 February 2022