

**Witness Name:** Robert Oakly

**Statement No.:** WITN0055001

**Exhibits:** WITN0055002 – WITN0055003

**Dated** 04.10.2020

## ROYAL COMMISSION OF INQUIRY INTO ABUSE IN CARE

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### WITNESS STATEMENT OF Robert Alan Dundas Oakly

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I, Robert Alan Dundas Oakly, make the following statement: -

#### INTRODUCTION

1. My name is Robert Oakly. I am a 63-year-old European male living in Auckland. I was also known as Robert Spittal. I started using my real name when I applied to get my passport before I went for a trip to America in 1976.
2. My evidence is about the abuse I suffered from Archdeacon **Jameson**, who I knew as 'Archie'. Archie was the Archdeacon for the Brightwater Church of the Nelson Anglican Diocese. He was also the Scout Commissioner for the Nelson area.
3. My evidence also relates to my attempts to get recognition, an apology and compensation from the Anglican Church for the sexual abuse I suffered.

## ABOUT ME

4. I was born in the Rai Valley. I grew up in Murchison, Nelson region, but lived in lots of places.
5. I come from a broken family. My mother left my father when I was about two or three and my stepfather came on the scene. My stepfather is one quarter Maori. We left my father and moved up to the Tutaki. I went to school and that's where I was called Robert Spittal - they put me down as Robert Spittal because my mother was embarrassed that she was a separated woman.
6. I loved the Tutaki – I had 1000 acres to play on.
7. My mother was a farmer's wife. She had had a child at 16 in England and had to move to New Zealand with the family because she had embarrassed the family. My stepfather had a farm down the Rai because he was a war veteran from the Korean war. My father was also a farmer. I didn't have much contact with my father until I was 15. I think we met him once at the Murchison AMP show and he gave me a shilling, but I didn't know who he was.
8. My mother abused me. My first abuse was when I was three or four. She beat the shit out of me with a rubber hose when I wouldn't get out of the bath. And she never took us anywhere to socialise. One of our aunties used to call us the Spittal Savages.
9. After my mother met my stepfather, I was brought up as the oldest of 6 siblings. There was me and a brother from my birth father's side (we went with my mother) and then there were four other children. Me and my brother from my father's side had a different life to the other boys, definitely. We were dressed from the op shop. They got favouritism. I only found out from a neighbour of a friend when I went holidaying later that my name had been changed and that I had older brothers and sisters.

## MY EXPERIENCE OF ABUSE

10. In this part of my statement, I talk about what Archdeacon **Jameson** did to me. As I cover later in this statement, my lawyers have been in discussions with the Church about an apology, compensation, a contribution to my legal aid debt and the provision of other support. I understand the Church told my lawyer that the Church has accepted responsibility for what happened to me. In my mind this must be because the Church accepts I was in Archdeacon **Jameson**'s care when I was abused.
11. We moved to Nelson in 1967 when I was 10 and I went to Hope School. It was a small school. I found it hard at school. The teacher even said, "I can't save Robert, he's too far gone". I don't know why they said that, I thought I was ok.
12. Around then I joined the Scouts. It was something to do. That's when Archdeacon **Jameson** who we called 'Archie' was the Scout Commissioner for the Nelson area and he used to come on camps.
13. I remember my mum made comments that indicated that she had a sense that Archie was unusual way before any abuse.

14. I remember on a Scout trip one weekend there was a dare to take all your clothes off and go swimming naked in this freezing cold mountain stream up Mt Arthur, around the Flora Hut. It wasn't summer or swimming time. It might have been a Labour Weekend. There were probably about 20 other boys present. I thought "everyone's going to do it" but I jumped in and there were only two of us that did it. It was so cold you couldn't move, it was such a shock. Everyone else was standing around watching and they were all clothed. I suppose all the other boys were used to it. It must have happened before. It was like I had been sucked in, I had been fooled. I got out and Archie dried me with a towel - all I remember is the towel being held out, plus Archie would have been in his forties at the time.
15. I never talked to anyone about it. I didn't think anything of it until I've done the counselling recently and now I realise that was cruelty, that was macabre actually. I can't handle the cold. I never allow myself to get cold now, that's maybe got something to do with it, I never want to be there, cold.
16. Allan Davis was our Scout Leader. He was physically present when this event happened. I believe he was an innocent bystander. He would have been in his thirties at the time. He was junior to Archie in the hierarchy. He was a really nice guy, a good person. He always looked after me. We used to go and pick strawberries for Allan Davis at the place that he worked in Richmond near Waimea College. Allan would probably be around late seventies or early eighties now if he's still alive.
17. There were probably two or three Scout camps I went to. Archie used to appear for a day or an outing on these camps. These camps are the first time I ever had sexual experiences, it's almost like it was a culture.

18. Also around that time my stepfather beat the shit out of me - in Form 1 when I was 11. I think that is where my mental impairment started. My mother called me a liar when I admitted this to her last year, but - I know, I was there, I was the one that was being punched. She was screaming and yelling to get the boys to get the neighbours next door. There was no involvement of the Child Welfare Department. It was all covered up. I went to bed and I was scared.
19. This shit that goes through your head, it never goes away. I didn't go to school the next day. I stayed in bed for weeks and cried. My mum gave me a buck a week pocket money to get out of bed. She even took me to a different doctor to our usual one because I was severely depressed. I hated being at home with my stepfather. I hated the smell of him, hated everything about him.
20. I think my experiences with my mum and stepfather definitely had an impact on my vulnerability to what happened to me later. I didn't have an adult who I could rely on. I didn't have any form of education on how to have proper relationships. The counsellors think that the lack of education contributed to what happened. It wasn't normal. We weren't loved. We didn't tell a teacher or anyone about the abuse at home because it seemed normal to us.
21. When I was about 15, there were several incidents. It was about 1972 or 1973 and I was at Waimea College by this time. In the period between the swimming event and this I had only had contact with Archie at Scout nights. Archie would come along to something special.
22. We had moved to Brightwater and I didn't know anyone in the area and was working in the little dairy. One of the boys in the shop told me to come down to Uncle Tom's place to hang out with a bunch of other guys.

23. Uncle Tom had been run over by a bus or something. He was an older man, he would have been about 60 or older at that time and is probably not alive anymore.
24. He had worked at the Motueka boys' home but now was retired. My understanding is that Archie and Tom knew each other from working at the boys' home. Archie used to come and bathe Uncle Tom, bring him meals on wheels, and probably see what talent was around.
25. Uncle Tom's was like a hangout place. It was where everyone met after school. And you used to go home to have dinner and then back to Uncle Tom's. There would be about a dozen or more of us go there (not all at once) from age 13 up to 17 or 18. There was nothing sexual about us being at Uncle Tom's place. He was just looking for company and was used to looking after the boys.
26. Archie used to hang around and roll up to Uncle Tom's whenever the boys were there. He was known to take the boys for drives. On the drives you were allowed to thrash his car and do wheelies and things. It was almost a competition as to who got to go for a ride in his car. It was a white Cortina with brown bench seats.
27. The people of Brightwater used to think Archie was teaching the boys how to drive but he wasn't - he was trying to touch them.
28. There was quite a grooming phase with Archie. I recall he started to touch me by placing his hand on my knee or leg while I was driving his car to indicate to me to slow down or drive a bit more safely. This touching happened over a few drives that I went on with Archie. There was no one else in the car when he would do this.

29. The touching proceeded to get closer and closer to my groin area over time. Then it got worse and Archie started to stick his hand down my pants and play with my penis. I don't remember him ever making me touch his penis. I've always had a problem with people touching my stomach, it makes me feel physically sick, and I realise that it is because I used to push my stomach against my jeans to stop Archie getting his hand down my pants.
30. One day Archie told me to sneak out of my house and meet him after dark. I climbed out the bedroom window. He picked me up in his car and took me for a drive. I can't remember if he drove or I drove. It probably was me because I liked to drive his car. We went down a paper road out at Waimea West off Teapot Valley Road. It was the first time we had gone there.
31. He took the keys out of the car. He bastardised me. It was horrible. What I mean by that is that he forced anal sex on me. I couldn't handle it. I was screaming. He was getting angry that I was screaming. He got wild and stopped for a brief time and then it happened again. It was horrible. He then drove me home and dropped me off. I can't remember him saying anything to me.
32. It's been shut out, but it comes back every time a little bit more.
33. I never told anyone at the time. I don't think there was anyone in a position of authority that should have known what was going on. They all thought he was teaching the boys to drive. There were no other adults present during the abuse.
34. I think the boys must have known what was happening to each other.

## IMPACT OF THE ABUSE ON ME

35. I have been asked to comment on the impact of the abuse on me. As I explain below, it has affected every aspect of my life.
36. I remember I was in Greymouth with Jenny Spring my GP, it could have been ten years ago. She asked if I had been sexually abused. I said, "Yes when I was 15 or 16 but I don't want to go there" and she said fair enough.
37. It got so bad. It's only been the last 6-8 months that I haven't thought about suicide. I'd rather not be on this earth. I'm only here because other people have saved me, and they would be upset.
38. I'm working, but I have had time off and have lived on a benefit - and you can't. Even the dentist rips you off. It's a horrible and demoralising thing.
39. Now I'm now an excavator operator. I want to save money. I retire in a year and a half.
40. I've been diagnosed with PTSD. I think I've had nine jobs in the last 3-4 years, and I can't handle them when there is a corrupt person. I can't tell a lie. I hate liars, thieves. But I've had the three years of counselling, I've actually worked with a couple of guys I can't respect and normally I would have got out of there, but now I think I can handle it better.
41. It's had an impact on me financially, jobs, relationships. I long for a sensual sex life, for it to be beautiful and loving. But now it's just traumatising. I think old men are dirty old bastards and now younger guys think I'm a dirty old bastard, so I can't have a relationship with anyone. I see people that remind me of Archie.

42. I don't talk to my mum. I haven't talked to her since last year, but then I feel guilty about being like that. But every time I go back and talk to her, she hits me with something new, like telling me I have mental health issues - as if she didn't contribute to that. I don't have much contact with my siblings.
43. I have one or two supportive people, but that's about it. One of the supportive people was a student of mine - I'm a parachute instructor as well. Skydivers are like family, it doesn't matter who you are, you're all mates. Skydiving has been great, but I've had a brother who's pulled me away from it twice to work for him - he is a big civil contractor. I despise my brother for this. He is now a multi-millionaire. I helped him get there and get no credit for it.
44. With skydiving, I enjoy the people and the interaction and training. I've just got back into it after three years off. That's why I'm in Auckland, I came back up to see my supportive friend. He was beat up as a kid by his stepfather, so he understands it all. He understands me and I understand him. My own family don't understand me. He is the reason I am here on this planet, he saved me once, he found me in the forest.
45. I don't feel like I can believe in god because I was abused by a man of the cloth. I hate the word God.
46. I don't drink because I'm abusive when I do. I get really bad anxiety and sometimes use other substances to help with my anxiety.

47. I grind my teeth. I've got low self-esteem. I give to others rather than take, and I even take the blame for things to let others off the hook. I'll take the shit. I hate people who abuse other people. I'm thinking all the time. I never stop thinking, I analyse every single thing. My mind never stops. I can't rest, that's why I go skydiving. It's a coping mechanism for me.
48. I've had 5 attempts at suicide. My first attempt was straight after the rape. GRO-C  
GRO-C  
GRO-C
49. I get into this headspace and I don't know where I'm going or what's happening, it's like I've just got to get out of here.
50. Last time I attempted suicide was three years ago. GRO-C  
GRO-C  
GRO-C I was taken to hospital and then came out of hospital and got sectioned by the psychiatrist GRO-C No one ever asked me why I did it, not one single person. It was just like "because you've done this, you're going to be punished". I was locked up for five days, it was horrible. They strip you of everything, all your personal things. It was freezing cold and you're lying in the sun that's coming through the window. It was dehumanising – it was the treatment of being a nutter. The whole experience was evil, horrible, traumatic and barbaric. I would have hoped to be treated like a human being. Once they let you out, there is no help. You just have to pretend you're all good. You can see why we have a high suicide rate. There's no help. It's all punishment.

51. I've only started to revisit the abuse recently, in the counselling. I've hidden it for years thinking it was my fault. I just thought it was a normal thing. I didn't think it was abuse. The counsellors say it was grooming. It's not until I'd had the three years of counselling that I actually realised how horrific it was. The pictures come back to you all the time.
52. I had accepted that what had happened to me was because I was gay and it was just something that had happened to me, you know, shit happens. I thought it was my fault because I'd gone driving with him. It's only been the last few years through the counselling that I've put the pieces together.
53. I went into the full details with the counsellors. My first counsellor was the first person I'd ever gone into the detail with. He was the one that suggested I go to the police. So it was him that started bringing everything out.
54. It was a burden lifted to realise that I had been abused, that it wasn't just me. Before that I'd just hidden it. It was a factor in my depressed episodes and confusion in life.

### **REDRESS PROCESSES**

55. In this part of my statement, I describe the processes under which I have tried to get help and recognition for what happened to me.

### **ACC**

56. I first had contact with ACC about the PTSD three years ago. It was after my last suicide attempt – I was seen by a doctor who asked me if I was a victim of sexual abuse, to which I confirmed I was. She arranged for me to undergo some counselling through ACC. I've had the counselling, a psychiatrist and a psychologist through ACC.

57. To deal with ACC is horrific, it's like being raped. I went for an appeal and it was a great big scary reviewer. I had the police called on me twice because they thought I was unsafe. They denied me weekly compensation because I wasn't working at the time, which is the law, I understand it, but I thought they would look out for me but then they knock you down wherever they can. We need to share the love more and actually help each other rather than have that.
58. I went into the process hoping for weekly compensation at 80% of my wages but then they said I wasn't an earner at the time, and I'd be better off on the dole because I haven't worked much anyway. But I hadn't worked because of the PTSD. So I went back for a review of undiagnosed PTSD because that's what it's been for the last nine or ten years, and they said there's no such thing as undiagnosed PTSD.
59. I think ACC is not accessible. They make things worse. They make you feel small, raped, as though you are nothing. I thank them for the counselling, the psychiatrist and psychologist reports, but that doesn't put food on the table. To live on \$250 a week and to have to sell your assets is demeaning.
60. The review was in person, I did my own review because I couldn't afford a lawyer. There are so called advocates, but you can't find one. I was up against 'FairWay' the review people who are paid by ACC. I would have appreciated having a lawyer – having some money for that. My review failed so I have parked the compensation aspect. I know you can get pay out for anxiety and depression, but it's too hard to do it, it's just too much to do it.

61. I didn't know what I was entitled to. At the outset I wasn't provided with all the information I would need to know, to know what to ask for. You find it out as you go. I wasn't in the mindset to read through any information and rules and regulations either. If I knew what I know now, I would do it differently. I had about 3 different case managers. I had to retell the story again and again. I consider that ACC is evil.
62. ACC do pay me \$20 a week for the rest of my life for being 15% mentally impaired. I think about the meeting with the psychiatrist – he put his hands on my knees at the end of the hour session. I didn't like that and the next morning I woke up freaking, thinking that was horrible. It wasn't professional. I wrote a letter to my case manager and he sent it off. Then I freaked out about that. Initially I was also two minutes late for the meeting, I was coming from Hokitika – normally I'm early. Next moment the psychiatrist is rudely and abruptly asking where I am, saying that he'd come from Whangerei. It wasn't a good start.

***Police complaint***

63. Through the counselling three years ago I went to the police and reported the historic abuse. It was a big thing to go and do it. When I did it I felt good and in control, like I'd confirmed it.
64. I went and made a statement to a Detective called Shane Pyke at the Orewa Police Station. He was a really nice guy but I couldn't talk about the intimate details to him. I only got up to where Archie pulled the keys out of the car. I feel like I should have told more but I was embarrassed in front of a macho policeman. It's a bit embarrassing.
65. I gave them a list of names of people I thought were also abused by Archie.

66. He sent an email back and said it was such a long time ago. They told me there was nothing else to do. It might have even been him that said that Archie was dead.
67. I think the process was acceptable.

### **CLAN**

68. I was in an anxious state. I didn't know what to do so I googled sexual abuse. I clicked on an organisation called CLAN NZ which is an advocacy group for New Zealanders who were brought up in State care.
69. On the 16th of September 2017 I wrote to the email address on the CLAN website and told them of my abuse by Archdeacon Jameson and that I believed the Church need to be accountable for crimes committed in the past against children.
70. On the 19th of September 2017 I received an email back from CLAN which informed me that the organisation was in the process of pushing the New Zealand Government to hold a Royal Commission of Inquiry into Institutional historic abuse which will make it much easier to be able to hold organisations accountable.
71. They told me that the current process of making historic claims was not very workable or fair.
72. CLAN suggested that I seek legal advice before deciding how to approach the Anglican Church. They recommended that I engage with the only lawyer in New Zealand that specialises in these matters and they gave me the contact details of Sonja Cooper from Cooper Legal based in Wellington.

### **Anglican Church**

73. During my counselling sessions I became a bit more in touch with what had happened to me as a teenager and I thought I needed to do something. I couldn't keep living with the anxiety and memories of what Archie had done to me.
74. I posted a message on the Waimea Parish website stating that I had been abused by Archdeacon **Jameson** and that I was receiving counselling for the trauma I've experienced. I also let them know that I was making a police complaint.
75. On the 19th of September 2017 I received an email from Annie Fraser, the Executive Secretary of the Diocese of Nelson. I refer to this email as Exhibit WITN0055002.
76. Annie Fraser wrote that she had received the email that I posted on the Waimea Parish website. She acknowledged my complaint and wrote that she was saddened to hear of my treatment by Archdeacon **Jameson**.
77. She further went on to say that the Church is aware that Archie was prosecuted for similar offences in 1978 and was appalled by his behaviour. She acknowledged that I was receiving counselling and that I had reported the matter to the police.
78. She wished me well with my healing and told me that they would support me in their prayers.
79. I didn't think their response was very acceptable. They didn't accept responsibility for me and there was no further offer of support other than to pray for me. I'm a non-believer because of what they've done, so praying is not going to do anything. I also imagined them all standing around together saying "today we're going to pray for Robert Oakly who was raped by Archdeacon **Jameson**".

80. I didn't have any phone contact. The only contact I've had was the email. They didn't offer any recompense.
81. I didn't know what to expect, I was just stirring them up to see what I got. I suppose an apology for me would have to be something I couldn't say no to. I would like medical care for the rest of my life. I've got all sorts of things wrong with me and I think it's that that caused it.

***Cooper Legal***

82. The dealings with Cooper Legal have been traumatic. I didn't want to see a lawyer but I just wanted help and to do something. I had had the contact from the Church who had said sorry and we'll pray for you, and I didn't think that was enough so I decided to go to the lawyer.
83. I was told it wouldn't cost anything but now I have about \$7000 of legal aid over my property. They tell me it will get written off, it's only a formality, but I was afraid I would be out of pocket. I decided to go ahead and even when I rang up to say that I would go ahead they told me that was costing money.
84. I was very confused because someone told me it would be 3-4 months then it was 3-4 years. I feel like I had to harass Cooper Legal to work on my case and provide me with updates. When I was desperate and couldn't handle it I would write them emails in the middle of the night. I was waking up at 3am with my thoughts and emailing them. And then I'd get self-conscious of what I'd done. It's a horrible thing. It's only the squeaky wheel that gets the oil.

85. I've only had one face to face meeting with them in three years. That was in October three years ago. They came up to Auckland even though I'd told them I'd go down there to try to save money. The meeting was to talk to them about what actually happened. I haven't met with them since. I would have wanted to meet with them again, but nothing is done unless you hound.
86. I'm not trusting of them. They are the biggest users of legal aid in the country.
87. What I really didn't like from them was the last email from them which I refer to as Exhibit WITN0055003. Cooper Legal told me in March 2020 that it was all good news and that the Church had admitted that they were responsible for Archdeacon's actions and that we could be settling in a couple of weeks. They asked me if there was anything I could think of that the Church could buy for me like a cheap car or some furniture. I wrote back and said something along the lines of "does your firm think a fucked-up life is worth a cheap car or some grotty old furniture". I thought that was really insensitive because the sexual abuse happened in a car.
88. Next thing I'm speaking to Sam Nightingale and he implied that my case was the first case like this. Then they change and say that the highest someone has got from the Church was a woman in 2012 or 2013 that got \$75,000. I said "no there was a person recently that got \$100,000 in 2016". And so I've got no faith in Cooper Legal. I said that I was quite happy to go to the media and he said I'll put you onto the Royal Commission and you can tell your story to them.
89. The process to get redress is almost actually worse than that event itself, and I wonder if it is even worth it. I felt offering to buy me a car or furniture was demeaning, and it was like they were treating me like a drug addict low life.

90. There's been no discussion about filing any legal action. It's been more focused on an outside of court process. I just want the world to know about Archdeacon **Jameson** and the Church, but then I think what about his children. So then I think just keep it quiet and go for some money. But the thing is, I want both. I want the Church to compensate me and I also want them to be liable. The Church's priest has ruined several lives.
91. I would like a bit of financial security for the rest of my life. The Government puts a life a \$4.8 million, and the Americans at \$10 million. They say the New Zealand Government is too cheap for a life. I've never had any advice from Cooper Legal about what I could achieve through the course of action.
92. I feel like there is no sympathy from Cooper Legal, no feelings there whatsoever. I would like a bit more sympathy and more face to face meetings, and actually with Sonja. But I'm always thinking about it costing me money, and being used and abused. I don't know what the status of my legal aid is. It makes me really anxious and it screws my head that I have to pay legal aid to get redress. It plays on my mind all the time. There's about \$7000 clocked up now. I worry that I am going to lose again, and that everyone else is winning out of this and I've got to suffer it. Each time I have contact with Cooper Legal I feel worried that it's costing me money, rather than it being a reminder of a step towards getting this resolved. I wonder if they are really working for me or for themselves. I've never had an assessment of my case or advice on different options. I would like more clarity around what my legal options are. I feel like I'm another number.

93. I do like Sam, he sounds amicable. I really like the relationship I have with him. He has acted when I've been stressed out and written emails in the middle of the night, the next morning he's written back and replied straight away. I wouldn't have come to the Royal Commission if it wasn't for him, I don't think. When they do have the time to communicate it has been sometimes positive. I feel like he's ok, but there's this head who controls them all and says what they can and can't do. But that's just my imagination.
94. Someone also proposed a face to face meeting with a bishop. That made me sick the first time I thought about it. I think of a paedophile, slimy in a robe. Anybody that looks like Archie is horrible, yuck. But my thoughts are starting to change on this meeting. I'd be happy to meet with the bishop in public, or if he gave a public apology. I want an apology and an admittance to what actually has happened to hundreds of boys around the country over these past years. I think the biggest thing is that they accept it. To let all the believers know that there's a whole lot of abused people. A lot of the people in jail, drug addicts, alcoholics are abused people.
95. I don't want a confidential apology. It has to be public and open to be fair for the country and the people and for all abused. I want Archie and the Church to be brought to justice.
96. I would like to know what the Church actually know about Archie. I would like to know any information about his practices. I would like answers from the Scouts as well. Anything to bring justice.

## OTHER ISSUES

97. I think there are lots of other boys that Archie abused (but I am not in touch with them). I remember a boy, he was 13 or 14. I walked into Uncle Tom's and that boy was stressed to the max. Someone told me he'd just been for his first drive with Archie. They were all going for drives with him. It's a whole region, the Scout thing. You used to see him with the boys, he would be stopped chatting. I have a list of about a dozen boys that I believe are in a similar category, who were in my group that I think may have been abused in some way.
98. I found out through my sister that three people have died, but that's just what my sister told me, there may be more. She met up with a person whose brother was also a victim, and my sister was told of three people who have died. After that my sister said she now understood my pain.
99. I also think Archie went to Court and was prosecuted for some type of abuse in 1978 or 1979. My mum had said something about that. But I was in Australia at the time, and I never received any more information. I have since found out who that person was and made contact with them. What they spoke to me about is horrific, and confirms what my sister told me.
100. I hope from the Royal Commission that the Church is exposed. I feel I'm a Christian as far as being a good person, but the people who go to Church every Sunday are hypocrites most of them. The abuse that's happened through the Church is part of our high suicide rates in this country today. The bad things in our society have come from abuse, including from the Church.

101. There is not enough awareness that men can be victims of sexual abuse too. It would definitely be worthwhile to have investment in a public awareness campaign, that would have helped me realise it sooner. A lot of men that I speak to have been abused by their elders.

**Statement of Truth**

This statement is true to the best of my knowledge and belief and was made by me knowing that it may be used as evidence by the Royal Commission of Inquiry into Abuse in Care.

Signed 

GRO-C
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Dated:04/10/2020 

GRO-C
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