MICHALINA GRYCIUK

Warsaw, 14 February 1946. Judge S. Rybiński, delegated to the Commission for the Investigation of German Crimes, interviewed the person named below as a witness, having first taken an oath. The witness was advised of the obligation to speak the truth and of the criminal liability for making false declarations, and testified as follows:

Name and surname	Michalina Gryciuk, *née* Dudzik
Date of birth	12 September 1897
Parents' names	Franciszek and Anna, *née* Dubińska
Occupation	housewife
Education	I can read and write
Place of residence	Warsaw, Nowogrodzka Street 34, flat 24
Religion	Roman Catholic
Criminal record	none

I have appeared in response to an appeal published by the District Commission in the daily papers. In order to prove my identity, I hereby present my identification card N 537621 (presented). During the War and the occupation, until the Warsaw Uprising, I lived in house number 124 on Chmielna Street in Warsaw, together with my husband. Previously, our three sons also resided there with us.

On 9 April 1940 my son, Ryszard Grzegorz (born on 28 December 1921), left our flat and never returned. He left at 11.00 and vanished into thin air. I was unable to learn anything about his fate.

On 9 October 1940, in turn, my second son, Michał Gryciuk (born on 23 September 1924), also left home. He was angered by the round-ups and before leaving told us that he would

go somewhere. On 16 March 1943 I received a communication from the Red Cross informing me that he was in London. Once Michał (about whose present whereabouts I know nothing) left home, we remained with our other third – and eldest – son, Zbigniew Gryciuk (born on 11 March 1920). This son had graduated from a vocational school and worked as a metal turner at the Bieler factory (Skierniewicka Street 5 in the Wola district), right up until the outbreak of war. He then joined the army as a volunteer and fought at the battle of Boernerowo. He managed to avoid German captivity and returned home. On 10 January 1941 he was detained in a round-up and deported to Germany, where he was forced to work in his profession in Kassel. In June 1941 he was released due to ill health. In September of the same year he was summoned by the *Arbeitsamt* and once again deported to Germany, this time to Munich. There, he also worked in his profession, right up until the spring of 1943. Once he returned home, he left for Smoleńsk and came back on 16 September 1943. In Smoleńsk he also worked in his profession. Following his return, Zbigniew remained at home and did not work anywhere. On 12 November 1943 my son left home to visit his fiancée, Jadwiga Pawlikowska, who resided at Emilii Plater Street 20. He left home sometime after dinner. That day on Emilii Plater Street Gestapo agents were going from house to house, conducting searches and checking documents. They found Zbigniew in his fiancée's flat together with another boy, the fiancé of Pawlikowska's sister. His name was Roman Ostrocin and he lived in Sulejówek.

I don't know where his family currently lives. Jadwiga Pawlikowska and her sister, Stanisława (Ostrocin's fiancé), presently reside at Noakowskiego Street (I don't know the house number).

The Gestapo agents checked the identity documents of my son and Ostrocin, and allowed them to go home, ordering them to walk in the direction of the Main Railway Station. They, however, were afraid that they would run into other Gestapo officers along the way, and decided to enter the house at E. Plater Street 21, assuming that the Gestapo would not stop them there and that they could spend the night at the flat of their fiancées' sister. When they passed through the gate, they were stopped by other Gestapo men and led to the flat of the building's caretaker. There, as the caretaker's daughter told me (I don't know her name and I don't know where she now lives, for the house was burned down during the uprising), the Gestapo officers checked the identity documents of my son and Ostrocin, after which my son took a few steps back and started to explain something to the Gestapo agent, but this man became infuriated and hit my son on the face.

The next day we were visited by Jadwiga and Stanisława Pawlikowska, who told us that both Zbigniew and Ostrocin had been arrested and taken to Pawiak. I then learned from Marian Pawlikowski, the brother of Zbigniew's fiancé, that there was a certain German woman who might be able to facilitate my son's release. Pawlikowski introduced me to a certain Ochmańska (I don't know her first name), who at the time lived at Elektoralna Street (I don't know the house number), but I don't know her present whereabouts. Ochmańska took me to Oleandry Street, house number 4, where there lived a young German woman by the surname Bock, who – as Ochmańska told me – was a secretary to commissar Leist. The woman agreed to make an attempt to get my son released and demanded 50 thousand zlotys for her efforts, at the time requesting me to make an immediate payment of 10 thousand zlotys. I consented and paid the requested sum; I was to pay her the remainder – 40 thousand zlotys – three days after my son was released. We had this conservation at Bock's home on Monday, 15 November 1943.

My son had been arrested on Friday, 12 November, and already on Saturday he figured on the list of hostages who were selected to be shot, which had been hung up around the city. Before she took the money from me, Bock went outside – ostensibly to the Gestapo offices to determine whether my son could be released. When she returned, after fifteen or so minutes, she told me that my son would be freed in three days time, provided ,however, that I first pay her the abovementioned balance.

This German woman, Bock, whose first name I do not know, was young, around 21 years of age, handsome, short, with dark blonde hair. She had a husband who was thirty-something years old. They both spoke fluent Polish. They had an eight-month-old child. Despite her assurances that my son would soon be released, on 17 November, Wednesday, in the afternoon, a list of those executed by firing squad was put up around Warsaw, and this included my son's name and surname. Ostrocin, who had also been mentioned in the previous list of hostages, did not figure on the list of those shot dead. His family was also making efforts, through different channels, and he was not executed at the time, however he was not freed from prison, and in May once again figured on a list – the final list – of hostages who were selected to be shot. I don't know what happened to him, for he did not return home.

I don't know where his family currently lives.

When I learned that my son had been shot dead, I visited the German woman, Bock, and started asking her what had happened to my son. She denied that my son had been shot and assured me that he would soon be released from prison, but later said that they would deport him to a camp outside Lublin, for it had been disclosed that he was a member of the resistance. Just under two weeks later, I visited her again. She told me then that she would introduce me to a Gestapo officer who would try to get my son freed. Sure enough, she took me to Aleje Szucha and introduced me to this Gestapo officer, whom we met in the street.

I don't know his name. He was a tall, black-haired, slim, handsome man, who spoke halting Polish. He wore a Gestapo uniform, with a death's head on his cap. This man told me that my son would return in a month, and then started talking with Bock in German. She then turned to me and said that I had to give the Gestapo officer 30 thousand zlotys. I declared that I had already promised not 30 thousand, but 40 thousand zlotys, and I would only pay when my son returned. The German then promised me that he would visit me at home dressed in civilian clothes, and inquired as to my address. However, I never saw him again.

When a few days later I visited Bock again and started crying that she was leading me on, she replied: "Please calm down, for they can make you disappear, too", while her husband said: "Please calm down, for the Germans are saying that Poles can be executed by the hundred, for they are as numerous as lice; you know of course that in Kijów they have put up gallows in the streets". As a matter of fact, during the first two weeks I visited Bock every day. Then I became afraid and did not demand that she return the money which I had handed over; finally, in the spring, I went to her flat and said that I would be going to a hospital in Kraków, for my eyesight had worsened due to the nervous state that I was going through, while my husband would be going to Germany to work. I said this because I was afraid of them.

I learned nothing about my son, Zbigniew, until the poster giving information of his execution was put up. When the uprising broke out, my husband was at Nowogrodzka Street and was unable to return home. Finally, on 17 August the Germans deported him to Germany. He was kept in a labour camp, where he was worked very hard and returned – exhausted – in October 1945.

We now live in a basement with a concrete floor, in complete darkness, in very difficult conditions.

My husband's name is Grzegorz Gryciuk.

The poster giving information of my son's execution mentioned that the public execution took place at an embankment near the Western Railway Station. A cross has been placed there, together with a plaque stating that this execution had taken place on that spot. I go there with flowers.

My eyesight has gotten very bad since my son's death.

The report was read out.