



# Record of Inquest

Following an Investigation commenced on the 18th day of December 2020;  
And an Inquest opened on Eighteenth March 2021;  
At an Inquest hearing at Norfolk Coroner's Court (County Hall 1), County Hall, Martineau Lane, Norwich commencing on the Seventeenth September 2024, heard before Yvonne BLAKE, Area Coroner in the coroner's area for Norfolk, **the following findings and determinations were made:**

1 Name of Deceased (if known)

**Vera Olga Sofia CROGHAN**

2 Medical cause of death:

**1a Inhalation of Fire Fumes**

**1b**

**1c**

**1d**

**II**

3 How, when and where and for investigations where section 5(2) of the Coroners and Justice Act 2009 applies, in what circumstances the deceased came by his or her death.

**Mrs Vera Croghan died at 301, Unthank Road, Norwich, Norfolk on 11 December 2020 of inhalation of fire fumes following a house fire set at her home by her grandson (M).**

**Her grandson had previously been detained under section 2 of the Mental Health Act following a psychotic episode in May 2020 where he damaged a door and punched his father. He was under the care of the early intervention in psychosis team after his release. Apart from his father no one else in the family knew he was staying there. He went away to university in Manchester and he stopped taking his antipsychotics. He was not followed up there because he refused consent. There were fire detectors and smoke alarms in the house Mrs Croghan was 89 years of age and had hearing loss.**

**Police had been called to the house on 11 December by her son stating (M) was being violent just after midnight, Mrs Croghan was in bed. Two officers arrived and spoke to (M) and his father, his father stated there had been no violence but that (M) was staring at him in the same way as he had in May.**

**(M) had been calm all day until he asked to use his phone and there was a disagreement.**

**(M)'s dad wanted him removed. The officers did not believe any criminal offence had taken place and that (M) was not behaving in a way to cause them concern and said there was no legal basis to remove (M). After 17 minutes in the house the police left, there was no assessment of (M) or Mrs Croghan and advised that (M) should be asked to leave in the morning. They did not believe that (M) needed a mental health act assessment. Mrs Croghan was apparently undisturbed.**

**(M)'s dad was not reassured and left the property intending to return in the morning to deal with (M).**

**He left at approximately 00.55 hours. We do not know what time the fire was set but the alarm activated at 04.50 hours on the NEST system. A passerby saw smoke at 06.41 hours and called 999. The fire investigator opined that the fire had largely been a smouldering one causing a lot of smoke which moved upstairs. Mrs Croghan was found deceased on her bedroom floor by firefighters.**

4 Conclusion of the Coroner as to the death

**Unlawful killing. A plea of diminished responsibility for manslaughter was accepted.**

5 Further particulars required by the Births and Deaths Registration Act 1953 to be registered concerning the death

(a) Date and place of birth:

**Twenty-Third October 1931 Kristianstad, Sweden**

(b) Name and Surname of deceased:

**Vera Olga Sofia CROGHAN**

(c) Sex: <b>Female</b>	(d) Maiden surname of woman who has married: <b>GUDMUNDSON</b>
(e) Date and place of death: <b>Eleventh December 2020</b> <b>301 Unthank Road, Norwich</b>	
(f) Occupation and usual address: <b>Lecturer (retired),</b> <b>301 Unthank Road, Norwich, Norfolk</b>	

Signature of Area Coroner



**Yvonne BLAKE**