# Sample Witness Declaration: A Guide

The following pages show the English version of a witness statement taken in Japanese by Japan PI investigators, prepared as a draft declaration for counsel, with a translator's certificate. Real statements run from a few pages to a dozen or more; this one is shortened to show the format. The **orange numbers** correspond to the notes below. **All names, addresses, telephone numbers and events are fictional.**

### 1 Caption and title

Left as placeholders for counsel. The court, parties and case number are inserted by the attorney filing the declaration.

### 2 Who the declarant is

Name in English and Japanese, address, occupation, and the date and place of the interview, so the reader knows where the statement came from.

### 3 Numbered paragraphs

One fact per paragraph. Counsel and the court can cite "paragraph 8", and the other side's challenges are easier to answer point by point.

### 4 Time, place, distance, conditions

When, where, from how far and in what light the witness saw something. Specifics let the reader judge reliability.

### 5 Personal knowledge, and its limits

What the witness did not see or does not know is stated plainly. An overstated declaration is the easiest kind to break on cross-examination.

### 6 How the interview was conducted

Who interviewed the witness, when, and that they were told participation was voluntary and how the statement might be used.

### 7 Initials and page numbers on every page

The witness initials and dates each page after reading it. With "Page 1 of 2" numbering, this guards against pages being swapped or removed.

### 8 How the statement was prepared

States that investigators drafted it from the interview, that it was read to or by the witness in Japanese, and that the witness confirmed it.

### 9 Declaration and signature block

Closing language, date and place of execution, printed name and signature. For U.S. federal matters, unsworn declarations signed outside the United States commonly follow 28 U.S.C. § 1746(1). The wording, and whether a notarized affidavit is needed instead, is counsel's decision; we confirm it before the witness signs.

### 10 Translator's certificate

Where the witness signs in Japanese, the English version is accompanied by a certificate from the translator stating their competence and that the translation is accurate. The Japanese original is kept and supplied with it.

This sample illustrates format only and is not legal advice. It does not guarantee that a document in this form will meet the requirements of any particular court or procedure. Japan PI Inc., registered under Japan's Private Investigation Business Act.
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**UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT**
**[DISTRICT]**

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| [PLAINTIFF],<br>Plaintiff,<br>v.<br>[DEFENDANT],<br>Defendant. | Case No. [ ]<br><br>**DECLARATION OF HANAKO MIHON** |

I, Hanako Mihon (見本 花子), declare as follows:

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1. I reside at 1-2-3 Mihon-cho, Meguro-ku, Tokyo, Japan, Sample Heights Room 101. Telephone: +81-90-0000-0000. I make this declaration from personal knowledge. I was interviewed about these matters on April 10, 2025, from 2:00 p.m. to 3:40 p.m., in the drawing room of Ms. Ichiko Kono's residence.

2. Since April 2018, I have worked as a live-out housekeeper at the Tokyo residence of Ms. Ichiko Kono ("Mrs. Kono"), Monday to Friday, 9:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. My duties are mainly cleaning, laundry and shopping.

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3. Two other housekeepers and one cook also work at the residence. Each housekeeper has assigned days and rooms. Mine are the living room and drawing room on the ground floor, and the hallway and washroom on the second floor.

4. The Japanese-style room at the end of the second floor (the "Back Room") is used by Mrs. Kono's eldest daughter, Ms. Futami Kono ("the Daughter"). The Back Room was cleaned only on Tuesday mornings, and only when Mrs. Kono or the Daughter was present.

5. In about 2020, Mrs. Kono told me that a gold family heirloom (the "Heirloom") was kept in a paulownia chest in the Back Room. I have never seen the Heirloom, and I have never opened the chest.

6. The Daughter was admitted to hospital on March 3, 2025. While she was in hospital, the Back Room was not locked.

7. Mr. Saburo Otsuyama ("Mr. Otsuyama"), who is in a relationship with the Daughter, visited the residence once or twice a week before her admission. He usually talked with Mrs. Kono in the drawing room. Before the date described below, I had never seen him go up to the second floor.

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4 8. On Friday, March 14, 2025, at about 3:00 p.m., I was walking along the second-floor hallway carrying dry laundry. I saw Mr. Otsuyama come out of the Back Room into the hallway. I was about five meters from him. The hallway was bright with sunlight from the window, and I could see his face clearly. He was wearing a navy jacket and carrying a brown leather handbag.

9. When he noticed me, Mr. Otsuyama said, "Futami asked me to pick up some books." I replied only, "I see," and went on to the washroom. I did not see what he did inside the Back Room, and I do not know.

10. When I went downstairs at about 4:00 p.m., Mr. Otsuyama had already left. I did not see what time he left.

11. On the morning of March 28, 2025, Mrs. Kono told me that the Heirloom was missing from the chest and asked all of the staff whether we knew anything. I did not mention what I had seen on March 14. Because Mr. Otsuyama is important to the Daughter, I was afraid of causing a misunderstanding.

6 12. On April 10, 2025, two investigators from Japan PI Inc., who said they had been engaged by Mrs. Kono's attorney, interviewed me in the drawing room. They told me that I was free to decide whether to speak, and that what I said might be used in court. I then described what I had seen on March 14 for the first time.

5 13. Apart from March 14, I have never seen Mr. Otsuyama go up to the second floor. I am not on the second floor every day, so I do not know whether he went up on other days.

14. I do not know where the Heirloom is. I have never taken the Heirloom.

8 15. This declaration was prepared in Japanese by the investigators from what I told them. I read the Japanese text in full, confirmed that it is accurate, and initialed each page. I understand that this English text is a translation of that Japanese text.

9 I declare under penalty of perjury under the laws of the United States of America that the foregoing is true and correct.

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| Executed on | April 18, 2025 |
| At | Tokyo, Japan |
| Signature |  |
| Printed name | Hanako Mihon (見本 花子) |

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# CERTIFICATE OF TRANSLATION

I, Taro Honyaku, certify that I am fluent in the Japanese and English languages and competent to translate between them, and that the attached English text, consisting of two pages and entitled "Declaration of Hanako Mihon," is a complete and accurate translation of the original Japanese document signed by Hanako Mihon on April 18, 2025.

The original Japanese document is retained by Japan PI Inc. and a copy is attached to this translation.

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| Date | April 21, 2025 |
| Signature |  |
| Name | Taro Honyaku |
| Organization | Japan PI Inc., Tokyo, Japan |

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