

07 JAN 2019

Witness

Name: Paul Pike

Statement

No.: WITN0181/001

Exhibits:

WITN0181/002 – 005

Dated: 29<sup>th</sup> XII, 2018

## INFECTED BLOOD INQUIRY

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### WRITTEN STATEMENT OF PAUL BARCLAY GABRIEL PIKE

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I provide this statement in response to a request under Rule 9 of the Inquiry Rules 2006 dated 29 November 2018.

I, Paul Barclay Gabriel Pike, will say as follows: -

#### Section 1. Introduction

1. My name is Paul Pike. My date of birth and address are known to the Inquiry. I am retired but formerly I was a Royal Air Force navigator and after that a security consultant for IBM. I am married with three children and 5 grandchildren.
2. I intend to speak about my infection with Hepatitis C virus ("HCV"), which I contracted as a result of being given transfusions of contaminated blood to treat what the doctors thought was "melaena".

3. In particular, I intend to discuss the nature of my illness, how the illness affected me, the treatment that I received and the devastating impact it has had on my life and the rest of my family.
4. I confirm that I have chosen not to be legally represented and that I am happy for the Inquiry team to assist me with my statement.

## Section 2. How Infected

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5. During my career with the Royal Air Force I was a navigator. Aircrew were not allowed to fly when they had a cold. This is due to potential damage to the eardrum if one is unable to clear one's ear. If I ever had a cold I would take Aspirin with whisky to get over the cold.

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6. In May 1981, when I was in Sardinia, I had a heavy cold and I took some Aspirin and whisky. As I found out later, this caused tiny holes in my stomach. Few days later I collapsed and I was taken to the Ninewells Hospital in Dundee.

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7. The doctors told me that I had "melaena" and had lost four pints of blood from gastric bleeding, caused by the small holes in my stomach. I was given six units of blood through blood transfusions and stayed in hospital for about two weeks. The "gastric erosions" subsequently healed and I was able to keep flying. I had never received blood before. Although I had been a donor in the 1960's.

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8. By June 1981 I began to feel very tired and I went to see a doctor at King's Cross Hospital in Dundee. I have recently obtained my medical records from the Royal Air Force. The "Summary of Admission" from 22 September 1981 says that my symptoms in June 1981 following the

transfusion were "general malaise, sweats, anorexia and tiredness (WITN0181/002).

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9. The doctor told me, after taking some blood tests, that I had non-A, non-B Hepatitis. I had no idea what Hepatitis was. The doctor did not really explain anything about it to me, but I have to say that I did not really ask. I do remember that they said it could be passed on through sexual activity and blood to blood. They did say that I had almost certainly contracted the Hepatitis from my blood transfusions.

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10. I was not given any treatment but I recovered from my main symptoms very quickly. I did often feel tired and I would feel sick after only a couple of glasses of wine. Sometimes I could hardly eat any food. Mostly I was just frustrated that I could not fly following my diagnosis.

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11. Following my Hepatitis diagnosis I received regular blood tests. About a year after I was diagnosed I had a visit with a doctor at the RAF Hospital at Nocton Hall. My records from that appointment say that my repeat full blood count and ESR were within normal limits, and my liver function tests were all entirely normal. The consultant physician told me I had made a recovery from my Hepatitis and that I could return to flying the following week (WITN0181/003).

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12. I had assumed that Hepatitis was just like most viruses that pass after a while. So when the doctors told me I was healed I did not ask any questions. I did not really think about it again and I just got on with my life.

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13. In 2011 we found out that GRO-C needed

a kidney transplant. I planned to be a donor for him. In order to be a donor you need to fill out an extensive questionnaire and take various tests. We went to the hospital in Leeds to carry out all these tests. After the first day of testing I was called in and the consultant told me that I had Hepatitis C. They said that their view was that I would have had the Hepatitis all along, and that I never really got rid of it.

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14. When the doctor told me about the Hepatitis C in 2011, he was very sombre about it, saying that I simply could not be a donor. He made a big deal about it, but in a nice way. He did not explain much about Hepatitis C to me but recommended that I go to my GP to discuss it further. My GP went into a lot of detail about Hepatitis and he was very helpful, giving me lots of pamphlets and information.

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15. In order to get treatment for the Hepatitis C, my case had to go before a panel. This was because I was 61 at the time. The consultant said that, had I been 10 years older, they would have rejected me. However, my application was accepted and I started the treatment on 2 August 2013.

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16. I was given Telaprevir, Pegylated Interferon, and Ribavirin for around 6 months (WITN0181/004-005); the treatment worked. In 2014 I was told I had a Sustained Virological Response, which I understand means the treatment was successful. I was told that I had some Cirrhosis of the liver, but that it was nothing to lose too much sleep about.

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### Section 3. Other Infections

17. To the best of my knowledge I have never

contracted any other infection and I have never been tested for HIV. I assume that I would have been tested for this and other viruses when I was planning on donating a kidney. But this is just my opinion, nobody clearly told me about it.

#### **Section 4. Consent**

18. I always consented to having the blood tests, which were often two blood tests per day for two weeks. I never had a feeling that something was wrong and I did not resent any of my testing or treatment.
19. I do not recall the doctors giving me much information or explanation of the tests. However I never really asked either. I was well informed in 2011 but there was not much information in 1981 and I did not want to know.
20. I have no complaints in relation to the treatment I received and to the best of my knowledge I have not been subject of any research. I did not feel anything has been done behind my back.

#### **Section 5. Impact**

21. The main impact that Hepatitis C had on me was the tiredness. This has never really left me since my infection. However, it has never held me back. I played sports throughout my life and I still play football and I swim every week. I did often feel sick after a drink or two, but I was able to view this as a positive thing because it meant I could always drive after a night out. I do not feel that Hepatitis C affected my social life or home life at all.

22. I do not believe that I have had any further medical complications as a result of HCV.
23. I have never had any difficulties or obstacles accessing medical treatments. I have actually been lucky on both occasions when I was diagnosed with Hepatitis C, to receive medical assistance easily.
24. I was fortunate during my 6-month treatment in 2013 not to get most of the side effects I was told about. I did not lose any weight or appetite. I was very lethargic. I worked hard to fight that by doing things like gardening. I found it quite hard though because I had no energy. In the fifth month of my treatment my skin broke out in large rashes and blisters. There was some suggestion of stopping the treatment at that point. Given it was so close to the end of the treatment I wanted to push on and after six months I was given the all clear.
25. Since my treatment has finished I still suffer from tiredness. However, I am not sure whether this is as a result of the Hepatitis C, the treatment, or whether it is my mind not realising my body is getting older and naturally slowing down.
26. I do not feel that my family or I have suffered any stigma as a result of the infection. I told my family about Hepatitis C when I was re-diagnosed.
27. HCV has not really affected my education or work life. For most of my career I did not know that I still had Hepatitis C. My only symptom looking back was tiredness, and I was not going to let that affect my life. Except for the year between my transfusions and being "cleared" of Hepatitis C, I was able to fly for the Air Force, and

subsequently I worked at IBM.

28. Accordingly, there has been no real financial impact from the infection. During my time off work in 1981 I was still paid by the Air Force. During my treatment in 2013 I was paid by IBM. So I never really suffered from the financial point of view.

### Section 6. Treatment/Care/Support

29. I have never been offered counselling or psychological support. I did have a nurse who was always available but I never felt I needed it either.

### Section 7. Financial Assistance

30. I believe that it was my allocated nurse who first told me about Skipton Fund. I remember filling out the application form, which the doctor signed. In 2013 I received a cheque for £20,000. In December 2016 I got another cheque for £20,000 from Skipton Fund. This one was out of the blue and I was not expecting it.

31. I do not receive any monthly payments. My view is that I do not need a regular payment. This is because the infection has had minimal impact on me and I do not need the payment to survive.

### Section 8. Other Issues

32. I have not taken any group litigation in the past and I have never been part of any campaigning.

33. My perception of what happened to me is that this thing happened to me, it should not have happened, but it was a mistake and no individual

was responsible.

34. I have been asked what are my expectations from this Inquiry. My view is that the fact that people have been infected with Hepatitis C through the use of contaminated blood products was something that should not have happened; but it was a mistake, and no individual was responsible. I do not expect anything from this inquiry but I think that the outcome should take all measures possible to prevent this sort of thing happening again.

### Statement of Truth

I believe that the facts stated in this witness statement are true.

Signed

GRO-C

Dated

29. XII. 2018