

Witness Name: Eric Holland

Statement No: WITN2161001

Exhibit: WITN2161002

Dated: 29th June 2019

## **INFECTED BLOOD INQUIRY**

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### **FIRST WRITTEN STATEMENT OF ERIC HOLLAND**

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I provide this statement in response to a request under Rule 9 of the Inquiry Rules 2006 dated 5th November 2018.

I, Eric Holland, will say as follows: -

#### **Section 1. Introduction**

1. My name is Eric Holland. My date of birth is GRO-C 1950 and my address is known to the inquiry. I am married to Patricia Holland and we do not have any children. I intend to speak about my experience of becoming infected with hepatitis C. In particular, the nature of my illness, how the illness affected me, the treatment received and the impact it had on me and my family.

## Section 2. How Infected

2. I became infected when I received a blood transfusion in October 1988 at the Glasgow Western Infirmary. At the time of the transfusion, I was in hospital for a kidney transplant and I lost a lot of blood. That is the reason why I required a blood transfusion and it was the only blood transfusion that I have ever had.
3. I do not have any medical records from the Glasgow Western Infirmary. There is no mention of hepatitis C in my medical records at all apart from a letter from a Doctor Cuthbertson from Ninewells Hospital, Dundee dated the 31<sup>st</sup> October 2005. I produce this letter in evidence and identify it as **WITN216102**. The doctors who treated me at the time were Dr Alan Jardine, Dr RSC Rodger and Dr JD Briggs. I do not know who the doctor in charge was at the time of the blood transfusion, but I would guess it was Dr Rodger. I did not notice anything off at the time of the blood transfusion and I was not told when I had it that there might be a risk attached.
4. I found out that I was infected with hepatitis C on 15<sup>th</sup> August 1992 at the Monklands Hospital. It was Dr Smith who informed me that my blood results from the Western Infirmary had come back positive for hepatitis C. I was on CAPD dialysis and contracted peritonitis. The blood tests came from the Western Infirmary in Glasgow. They do not always tell you why or where the blood tests are done, just the results. When you are on dialysis, they take blood tests automatically; the Western Infirmary never told me that I was infected with hepatitis C, but I assume they informed Dr Smith at Monklands. Doctor Smith told me that that I was Hepatitis C positive in 1991 and received several blood transfusions while on dialysis, although I have no precise date for these transfusions.

5. Dr Smith just told me that I had hepatitis C from a blood transfusion that I had received in 1988. He had no problem admitting where the infection came from and did not try to deny it.
6. At the time, I was not provided with any information to help me understand and manage the infection on a day-to-day basis.
7. I do believe that information should have been provided earlier to me, but only if doctors knew that I had hepatitis C. However, I am not sure as to whether or not they knew at all, and I am not sure as to whether or not they knew for a long time before I did.
8. My views about how the results of tests and information about the infection were communicated to me are that they could have given me more information about the effects of hepatitis C and how it could be passed on, but I was never told about these matters. Dr Smith was not particularly forthcoming with information.
9. I was given no information at all about the risks of others becoming infected as a result of my infection. When I went back to the Western Infirmary for my second kidney transplant in 1994, I was told about the effects and damage of hepatitis C. It was Dr Mary Watson who provided this information. I was told at the time that the only way for another person to become infected as a result of my infection was through blood contact and that it could be 30 years before hepatitis C had a real effect on the liver. About the infection itself, I was told that it would just do damage to the liver.

### **Section 3. Other Infections**

10. I was only infected with hepatitis C and did not receive any other infections.

### **Section 4. Consent**

11. I do not believe that I have even been treated or tested without my knowledge, without my consent or without being given adequate or full information. Ever since I was told about the hepatitis C, I think that all the medical professionals involved in my treatment have done their best.

12. I have been treated for the purposes of research, but I have always volunteered for this. It has not happened without my authorisation.

### Section 5. Impact

13. Becoming infected with hepatitis C did not have any mental effects on me. As for the physical effects, I do not know what they might be as there are a few other matters that are wrong with me health-wise and I do not know which one causes the tiredness. I have low kidney function, as well as peripheral artery disease. All the medication that I take can make me feel tired too, so I do not know if hepatitis C is responsible for this. Currently, however, I do not feel healthy and I feel very tired.

14. It is hard to say what further medical complications or conditions could have resulted from the hepatitis C. I would say that maybe the hepatitis C has affected my kidney function, but I do not know for certain. I do not have any liver damage. The last time that I received a fibro-scan at Ninewells Hospital, I was told that my liver was thickening but not failing. This was a year and a few months ago and I was seen by Dr John Dillon, who is now a professor.

15. I have received two treatments in order to try and clear my hepatitis C, neither of which has worked. I had the first treatment in 2006. I do not remember the name of the medication that I was taking, but I do remember that it was tablets. It was a 12 week course of treatment. The hepatitis C disappeared after the 12 weeks and then came back after 3 months.

16. The second treatment that I received was in August 2017. I was taking ribavirin and zepatier. Both medicines were tablets. I had to be taken off my medication for gout in order to be able to go on this course of treatment. I was on this treatment for a week and my gout became so bad after one week that I could not put my feet on the ground due to the inflammation. This was due to crystallisation of my joints and it was very painful. When I came off this second course of treatment, that was the end of it.
17. I would not say that my first course of treatment had any mental or physical effects for me. My second course of treatment simply had the effect of making my gout unbearable. However, I said that if another treatment comes up that does not require me coming off any of my medication, I will try that.
18. I do not believe that I have faced any difficulties or obstacles in accessing any of the treatments.
19. I do not think that there were any treatments that should have been available to me that were not.
20. I do not believe that being infected with hepatitis C has affected or impacted on other medical treatment, apart from the problems that I experienced with gout. I have never been refused treatment by a dentist or any other medical professional.
21. It is difficult to say what the impact of my hepatitis C on my private, family and social life has been as I do not know what my life would be like if I did not have hepatitis C. I would not say however, that I socialise less and I also make friends very easily.
22. I have never felt that there was any stigma associated with my diagnosis of hepatitis C. All of my family and friends know and I never have a

problem telling people about it because they know that I am not a drug addict and that this illness came from the blood transfusion.

23. I was 38 years old when I became infected and the hepatitis C did not have any effect on my education.

24. I would say that the hepatitis C had an impact on my job. When I was 41 years old, I was advised to retire from the prison service on medical grounds. I was not told to retire, simply advised, and I think part of that was due to the hepatitis C. The welfare officer from the Scottish Office was the one who advised that I retired. I eventually followed the advice and retired in 1992. This was the same year that I found out that I had hepatitis C. I was the one who decided to tell my work about the hepatitis C due to the job circumstances, which means that if you contract a contagious infection, you have to let them know. I never returned to any kind of employment, as my GP would not recommend it. This did not have much effect on my mental well-being as I was still reasonably well at the time.

25. When I was retiring, I was on full pay for six months, then it went down to half pay for the next six months and then I was on unemployment benefit. However, because my retirement was a medical retirement, I started getting my pension immediately. This was less than my normal salary, but we managed to pay the mortgage because my wife, Patricia, was working as well. She had to carry on working, but was not affected significantly.

#### **Section 6. Treatment/Care/Support**

26. Counselling and psychological support have never been made available to me as a consequence of being infected with hepatitis C.

#### **Section 7. Financial Assistance**

27. I received two lump sums from the Skipton Fund. The first lump sum was £20,000 and I received this about 12 years ago. The second lump sum

was of £30,000 and I would have received this in 2017, about two years ago. I also receive £525 a month from the Scottish Government as a result of the Penrose Inquiry. I started receiving this in September 2018.

28. I found out that financial assistance was available through Thompsons. It was Frank McGuire, who died, who was dealing with my case and now Patrick McGuire is dealing with it. I have to say that Thompsons have been absolutely brilliant.

29. The process of applying for financial assistance was simply filling in forms and all I had to do was give written permission for Thompsons to obtain my medical records from Monklands, the Western Infirmary and Ninewells Hospital. Thompsons really did everything.

30. Once Thompsons contacted me, I do not think that I faced any difficulties or obstacles in applying for and obtaining financial assistance. I did not know that financial assistance was available before that point in time.

31. I do not think that there were any preconditions imposed on the making of an application for or the grant of financial assistance.

32. My observations about the payments that I have received are that the amounts that I received have helped, and with regards to the last payment, that is, my monthly payments I was asked how badly I had been affected by hepatitis C. I did not think that I had been severely affected and decided to be honest as this was offered with no questions asked. I am quite happy with being honest, as if I had said I was severely affected, I could be getting £1,500 a month. The only thing that I could say is that I could have done with the money a lot earlier than I got it and I believe this is part of the cover-up that took place within the Penrose Inquiry as they were looking to avoid having to make any payments.

## Section 8. Other Issues

33. I was previously involved in the Penrose Inquiry. I think that the Penrose Inquiry was not great but infected people still managed to get something out of it. I consider myself lucky that Thompsons was involved in my case.

34. I have never been involved in any litigation as a result of becoming infected with hepatitis C. I have not been involved in any campaigning either, but I would have if I had been fitter.

35. I believe that Thompsons have recovered all the medical records from the Western Infirmary, which I have now seen and read.

36. I do not wish to remain anonymous.

#### **Statement of Truth**

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

Signed

GRO-C

Dated

29 June 2017