

Witness Name: Victoria Gleadhill-Brown

Statement No.: WITN1883001

Exhibits: WITN1883002

Dated: 12 April 2019

INFECTED BLOOD INQUIRY
WITNESS STATEMENT OF VICTORIA GLEADHILL-BROWN

Section 1: Introduction

1. My name is Victoria Gleadhill-Brown. My date of birth is GRO-C 1976. My address details are known to the Inquiry.
2. I make this statement in memory of my father, Peter Lloyd who passed away on 30 June 2008. My dad had two children, my elder brother Martin and me. My dad received a blood transfusion on 16 July 1985.
3. I am married and have one child, a daughter called GRO-C
4. I have worked as a community dental nurse for 20 years now.

Section 2: How Affected

5. Dad worked for the Royal Air Force (RAF) from the age of 17 and for most of his working life. He worked in telecommunications and electronics and at the pinnacle of his career held the rank of Chief Technician. He worked away quite a lot and as a result the family went with him. As a family we lived in GRO-C

and [GRO-C] in England, [GRO-C] in Germany, [GRO-C] Oslo in Norway, and Cyprus. During our time in [GRO-C] my dad worked away and so my brother and I only saw him at weekends.

6. My dad was a very honest person, he was also very kind and he held a very strong moral code. He was very affectionate and tactile and really respected nature. He really loved his family. My dad and I were very close; I was a real daddy's girl. I loved to help him to fix things. Our dining room table at home was always filled with different pieces of electronic equipment that he kept and used so that he could fix things for people; I used to help him.
7. My brother attended boarding school in [GRO-C] from around 1985. I was living at home in [GRO-C] at the time with my mum; we saw my dad at the weekends. [GRO-C] and dad went to an RAF Ball one evening; I remember they were all dressed up. I don't know where exactly that took place. My grandmother was looking after me for the evening. I have been told that when [GRO-C] and dad were on their way back from the Ball sometime in the early evening, and were driving around a roundabout in Welwyn Garden City near Hertfordshire they became involved in a very serious car accident. I don't know what happened exactly but I understand that my dad lost consciousness while he was driving and lost control of the car. [GRO-C] tried to stop the car by pulling the handbrake but was unable to do so. Eventually the car hit a tree. [GRO-C] and dad had to be cut out of the car by the fire brigade. They were taken to the Queen Elizabeth II Hospital in Welwyn Garden City. My grandmother received a phone call while I was with her and was told about the accident. My grandmother told me that [GRO-C] and dad had been involved in a car accident; I remember she told me in a light-hearted way to manage the seriousness of the situation. My brother came back from boarding school that night, to my grandmother's. A few days later we found out that the accident was very serious. I remember that we were not allowed to visit [GRO-C] or dad because they were both in intensive care; I recall having to wait approximately two weeks before we could go to see them. At the time my teacher told me that she had been involved in a car accident once, that a tree had fallen on her car

and she was ok. This gave me hope that they would be ok. The wait to see GRO-C GRO-C seemed to go on forever. When I eventually did see them, I remember thinking that they were both seriously injured; my dad more so than GRO-C. I remember looking through a glass door of the hospital ward and there being a big frame around a bed and seeing both GRO-C in the Ward together. They were both in traction. They were both alert GRO-C GRO-C. My dad had previously been seriously ill and on a ventilator. I was a little bit frightened at the time when I came to visit. I remember that when I came closer to my dad, he reached to remove a hair I had in my mouth and his hand really shook while he did this. GRO-C GRO-C GRO-C My dad stayed in the hospital for longer; he was transferred to an RAF Hospital in Halton, Aylesbury, Buckinghamshire to recover fully. I do not know exactly for how long he was in the hospital. I found out later that it was during the operation that he had at Welwyn Garden City that he was transfused with contaminated blood.

8. My dad did not have a bleeding disorder.
9. I do not think that my father would have been aware of the need for a blood transfusion or even aware of the need for his operation at the time of his arrival and admission to the hospital following the accident. I understand that he was unconscious at the time and therefore unable to give consent. I have asked my mum if she was spoken to prior to the operation and blood transfusion but she has said that she was not. I was not given any information or advice. I was a child and not at the hospital at the time.
10. My father was infected with hepatitis C.
11. We were living in Cyprus as a family in around 1996 when my dad came down the stairs one morning and told my brother and me that he had received a letter informing him that he had received a blood transfusion during the operation that he had after his road traffic accident, and had contracted hepatitis C as a result. He explained to us that he was told that the National Health Service did not

know about the virus which is why they had not screened the blood for it back in 1985. My dad never told me what operation he had and why he required the blood transfusion, I just knew he had an operation. He must have had a positive test for hepatitis C at this stage, I think. He told me not to worry, that he was fine.

12. I do not know what information was provided about the infection or who provided it but I understand this information can be provided by witness Wendy Campbell, and reference can be made to witness statement WITN1848001.
13. I do not know whether adequate information was provided to my dad to help him to understand and manage the infection but I understand that this information is known by witness Wendy Campbell and that it is contained within her statement. Reference can be made to witness statement WITN1848001.
14. I cannot understand why it took so long for my dad to find out that he had received infected blood. There was a delay of eleven years. If they were able to trace the blood back to him eleven years later, why were they not able to trace it back to him as soon as they found out there was a risk of him being infected. I don't know what made them trace it back then. To me the tracing back of it came out of nowhere because my dad was well at the time; at least I thought he was. I understand that whomever it was that wrote to him made out that they could not previously trace my dad to tell him sooner; that they could not find him, but, this does not make sense to me because I think that it would have been easy to find someone who was a member of the armed forces, if they really needed to.
15. I have no views about how the results of tests and or information about the infection were communicated to my dad. I assume my dad had to be contacted somehow and I suppose that since he received a letter, that this method was the only way to inform him at the time as we lived abroad. Apart from how they communicated the infection information to my dad, I know nothing about what he was told.

16. My dad explained that there was a small chance of passing on the infection. He said that the risk of infection was low and we could not catch anything from him by hugging him for example. I did not think much of it at the time and as a family we did not worry about it. We believed that there needed to be blood to blood contact in order to pass the infection on; we knew you could not get it from using the same nail scissors or forks and knives. My dad made light of the seriousness of the infection at the time. We did not talk to anyone outside of the family about it. It was not that we were not supposed to talk about it, just that there was an awareness of there being some kind of stigma attached to it, because people assume that you got it through drug misuse.

Section 3: Other infections

17. I believe that my dad was infected with hepatitis C only.

Section 4: Consent

18. As I mentioned above, I do not believe my dad was consented because I understand that he was unconscious at the time of the operation and blood transfusion. I asked my mother whether she might have consented for him but she said that she did not as she too was too unwell. I believe therefore that my dad was treated without his knowledge, consent and without there being adequate or full information given; however, I do not believe that he was treated or tested for the purposes of research.

Section 5: Impact

19. The effects of the infection on my dad were huge. The car accident put a lot of strain on my parents' relationship. They eventually split up and divorced in around 1996, perhaps the diagnosis brought an end to everything. When they split up my parents had been living in Cyprus together. My mum moved back to GRO-C I was at College in GRO-C at the time and my brother was at University in GRO-C. I remember that my dad was very upset at the time.

20. Initially, my dad seemed to be ok physically but I think he hid a lot from us, to protect us. I remember him saying to me once, *"when you are used to not feeling great all the time, you forget what it's like to be perfectly normal"*. I do recall him being tired a lot of the time but still getting on with his day-to-day work. He never really complained. We did not talk about the infection outside of the family. My dad would not have wanted people to know about it because he would not have wanted people treating him differently. He must have been embarrassed about having the infection, so I think that mentally it was having an effect on him. It was later on that things really started to change and quite significantly, very quickly. My dad left the RAF reluctantly in October 1992; I understand that he had to leave because of his ill health and he could not extend his service. His long-term plan had always been to stay in as long as he could but his health prevented this from happening. After he left the RAF, he eventually came back to GRO-C in England to live and work. He bought a garage business as a going concern. I think he was feeling quite positive about working for himself for the first time ever. Looking back, I know that he started his treatment for the hepatitis C soon after he arrived back in GRO-C, but not straight away. I know that these changes to his life became very stressful for him. I recall seeing my father looking very unwell and I attribute this to the interferon treatment which I know he had. I remember he was extremely tired and his hair; which was previously really thick had become very thin, it looked like he was losing his hair. I also remember that he was not as sharp mentally. He also seemed to be worrying more about me; he wanted to fix me, to help me because I was going through a difficult time. As he was able to do less, he did not have the purpose that he once had, and as I was not letting him help me, this made things difficult for him and for me. Our relationship suffered. Dad started going to the pub more which would not have helped. The business venture proved extremely difficult for my dad. It transpired that he had invested everything that he had into it in order to make it work. Unfortunately, it did not work out for him; whether this was because he was sick and unable to do what he needed to do to make it work or whether it was just because the business was floundering already, I do not know. In the end he suffered a mental

breakdown which I believe was triggered by the stress and financial worries related to the business that were brought about by his inability to give to the business what he needed to in order to make it work. I think that the hepatitis C was partly responsible for this inability to give the business what was needed. I have a memory of dad coming to visit me on my birthday one year; he drove all the way from GRO-C to GRO-C, which was an hour's journey. It was around the time of his business failing and his interferon treatment. His partner Wendy called me to come outside of the house to say that he would not get out of the car, so I had to go out to the car to see him and found him inconsolable. He did not say much to me. I asked him to come into the house, he felt that he could not because he was in such a bad state. His partner Wendy drove him home, while he was still upset. I think my father never recovered from his breakdown, I remember him being really fragile after this. I know that he was on anti-depressants at the time and that he continued to take them until his death. As the years wore on, I became more aware of my father's ailing health.

21. I know that he developed Type II Diabetes which progressed to Type I; he developed cirrhosis of the liver and was later diagnosed with colon cancer. He was devastated when he phoned me to tell me, but the cancer was treatable; he had a re-section at the hospital which was successful. He did not require chemotherapy. Twelve months later, he was told that he had developed cancer in his liver. The medics said it had metastasised from his colon.
22. As I mentioned above my dad passed away in 2008, he was only 55 at the time. I went to visit him on his last Father's Day on 15 June 2008; a short time before his death and I noticed he was very jaundiced and very swollen. I know that he had to go into the hospital to have the fluid drained from his stomach. I know that he could not even put his shoes on he was so swollen. He lost a lot of his independence; he loved driving and cars and as soon as he had to stop driving, he started to give up on his life. My dad did not want to know how long he had left to live. Soon after my brother and I went with him to his final liver specialist's appointment. My dad asked us to go with him, to involve us. I remember we were late for the appointment. He had an examination done

behind a curtain. We were under the impression that it would be palliative care from then on. I was desperate to know how long left, but I had to respect my dad's wishes. On the day before he died, the 29 June 2008, I was on my way up to see him and I got a phone call to say that he had been taken into hospital but that he was ok. I assumed that he was having the fluid on his stomach drained again. An ambulance was called. I felt a great urgency and a need to get to the hospital to my dad quickly. I got there. My dad was on a normal ward at this stage and talking and joking when I arrived. Dad gave us some money and told us to go to Pizza Express, eat some food and come back. I remember his partner Wendy told me that they were going to get married a couple of weeks later. I asked my dad about it and he said that we would talk about it later. I remember that when we came back from Pizza Express, he had gone downhill and had collapsed and he was not able to engage in conversation again. We called all of his family to come; we managed to get all of his family there. I know that dad was quite scared. I felt his hands and they were freezing cold, which I know is what happens towards the end of your life. I kept putting his arms under the blanket and he panicked and kept taking them out again. He wanted his partner to be with him because I think she made him feel safe. This went on overnight and over that time dad got progressively worse. The hospital provided us with a flat to stay in that night. There were around 19 of us there. They rang us to say there had been a change. I worried in case this meant that they were going to move him and did not want this to happen because he was frightened. We were all there for his last breath; it was really nice that we were all there for him. The best thing was seeing my brother with him. They had quite a strained relationship and I remember he cried and told him he loved him. We told dad that it was ok for him to go; that it was ok for him to leave us. Within seconds he looked really well again, like his old self again. He passed away on 30 June 2008.

23. My dad was given interferon and ribavirin in combination for six months in 2003 to treat his hepatitis C. The treatment was reported to be successful initially but did not clear the virus. It was known in May 2004 that the virus had circumvented the treatment. I do not think that dad received further treatment.

He developed cirrhosis and then liver cancer.

24. I am not aware of my dad facing any obstacles or difficulties in accessing the treatment, but thinking about this now, it seems that there was a major delay in getting the treatment to him. He was infected in 1985, returned to the UK for treatment in 1996 but did not receive it until 2003. It was unsuccessful and reported as so in 2004 yet no more treatment was given. I do not know why this was. Dad passed away in 2008.
25. I think it was important to my dad to take the advice of the medical professionals so he always followed what they said and advised. I do not think that there were treatments which ought to have been given, but which were not made available to him, but I do not know for sure. I do think that my dad could and should have been treated sooner.
26. I think that my dad's condition was much worse from the interferon and ribavirin than it was from the chemotherapy he received for the liver cancer. It certainly knocked him a lot more than the chemotherapy. It is not possible for me to tell exactly what condition came from the hepatitis C and what came from the treatment but given he needed the treatment for the hepatitis C, it all came from there. I definitely think his depression worsened as a result of the treatment for the hepatitis C.
27. I am not aware of my dad's infected status impacting on his treatment for other conditions while he was alive other than potentially his dental treatment becoming more complicated because of the risk of infection due to something simple like a filling.
28. I don't know how my dad's hepatitis C impacted on his private life. It may have had an impact on the relationship that he had with my mum, and later on his partner Wendy. It did not affect the way we thought about dad, we were not ever worried about getting infected, we knew that having close contact with him was not a risk. He told all of his family about his infected status, and no-one in the family treated him any differently. My dad had some close friends in

GRO-C There were three of them that used to go to the pub in the afternoon together. He was able to maintain close relationships. One of his friends was his dentist. My dad worked hard to maintain his privacy and to ensure that his infected status remained confidential to his close family and friends only. I imagine that the sicker that dad became the more his private, family and social life suffered.

29. I had to have counselling when my dad was terminally ill. We fell out quite a bit when he was really poorly. He was on steroids at the time and very stressed and frightened. I remember he was aggressive from time to time; he swore at me and this was something he would never have done before. I recall him being angry and frustrated. He completely distanced himself from me; it felt that at certain points, he did not want me anywhere near him and now I feel that this is the time when I should have spent as much time as possible with him. If I could go back, I would deal with it all in a completely different way. I suppose I was very unsure about it all then. I am on fluoxetine (Prozac) now. I was not on this before. I feel cheated out of the last year with my dad and cheated out of having him in my life into his old age. I am more emotionally upset than angry about what has happened. When I saw the photographs on the television from when the preliminary hearings took place, I burst into tears and cried about dad all night. I would have liked my dad's picture to have been part of the collage and so I include some photographs now with this statement in the hope that the Inquiry will be able to use them **[WITN1883002]**. The impact of my dad not being around has been really significant in very many ways. He was not there to give me away when I got married; he has not met my daughter **GRO-C**; he has not met my husband. I often wonder what my dad might advise me to do in various situations, and I want to talk to him, but of course I am not able.
30. The biggest and most upsetting thing to happen in relation to the stigma of dad being infected with hepatitis C happened when he had passed away. We (dad's family, partner and I) could not believe that the undertakers initially refused to embalm my dad. I could not believe that even in his death the infection was following him. It felt like the funeral directors were indirectly

discriminating against him without being able to substantiate it. The undertaker told me that under certain regulations he was not able to embalm a person with hepatitis C. I asked him how he could tell that everybody he dealt was infection free. He was unable to answer this question. Through my persistence he finally agreed to go back and check his regulations and, in the end, he did embalm my dad. The whole process was extremely stressful and really upset me and the whole family. Our family did not speak about the hepatitis C. It was easier not to.

31. The impact of this on my dad's brothers and sisters has been huge. They were a very close family and miss him greatly. My dad was the big brother who took charge of a lot of things. He looked after everyone. Every year we hold a barbeque in his memory. It is a lovely thing for us all to do. We talk about him as much as we like. My dad would like to know we are all having a drink and having fun in his memory. My Uncle Sam always gives a little speech about dad. It happens every year, near enough to the date of the anniversary of his passing away. It gives us a good excuse to talk about him. This really helps. I don't think my brother was expecting this all to be so serious and I think he has buried his head in the sand over it. When my dad died my brother's daughter **GRO-C** was absolutely devastated as she had a very strong bond with him. She was only six years old at the time. For years after his death she wrote letters to my dad and put them under his pillow at his home for him. She is 17 now and still misses him. My dad and Wendy; my dad's partner, were the constant in **GRO-C**'s life when she was little as my brother and **GRO-C**'s mum had broken up when she was only three. **GRO-C**

GRO-C

GRO-C

32. There were work-related and financial effects of the infection which I discussed above.
33. Ultimately my dad retired early through ill health from the RAF and moved back to England. He set up a business which failed and which caused him a serious amount of stress. He suffered a breakdown and never fully recovered from it.

From there his physical state deteriorated and in particular from the point at which he was receiving the interferon and ribavirin combination treatment.

34. I just carried on, I kept going to work. We are all very close at work. That is where my friends are. I have been working at the same dental practice for 18 years; this gave me some strength to get through what happened. My dad's infection and death did not really affect me financially, educationally or in a work-related way.

Section 6: Treatment/ Care/ Support

35. I am not aware of my dad having faced difficulties or obstacles obtaining treatment, care or support, but I do know he experienced a delay in obtaining the treatment and after he was told the interferon and ribavirin had not worked, he was not given any further treatment. I know he was prescribed anti-depressants but I do not know what if any other care and support he received.
36. I have had counselling through occupational health and I have my friends and family for support. I don't think that the support I was offered for counselling was adequate. I ended up paying to go private which really helped. I do not know if counselling or psychological support was made available to my dad but I really hope that it was.

Section 7: Financial Assistance

37. I refer to the witness statement that has been provided by Wendy Campbell, under Witness Statement Number W1848001.

Section 8: Other Issues

38. There are no other documents that I wish to make the Public Inquiry aware of.
39. I want my dad to have a voice in this Inquiry even though he is not here.

40. I hope that the Inquiry will prevent something like this from ever happening again and ensure that lessons are learned from it.

Statement of Truth

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

Signed:

GRO-C

Full Name: Victoria Gleadhill-Brown

Date: 12-04-19