

Witness Name: Joshua Baum

Statement No: WITN7129001

Exhibits: 0

Dated: July 2022

INFECTED BLOOD INQUIRY

FIRST WRITTEN STATEMENT OF JOSHUA BAUM

I, Joshua Baum, will say as follows:-

Section 1. Introduction

1. My name is Joshua Baum. I was born on GRO-C 1971, and I live at GRO-C
GRO-C Israel.
2. I was infected with the Hepatitis C Virus (HCV) through a contaminated blood transfusion.
3. This witness statement has been prepared without the benefit of access to my full medical records.

Section 2. How Infected

4. I had (what turned out to be a contaminated) blood transfusion during an emergency Colectomy operation at the Bristol Royal Infirmary in 1991. I wasn't informed that I was infected with HCV until 2004, 13 years later.

Section 3. Other Infections

5. I do not think that I was exposed to any other infection than HCV.

Section 4. Consent

6. No-one prewarned me (or my father present at the hospital) of the risk of infection at the time of the blood transfusion. I suffered with Ulcerative Colitis and my colon was nearly perforated, necessitating emergency surgery (and the resulting blood transfusion). It was, in effect, a life-saving operation. However, I was not aware that I had been placed at risk of infection at any time after being given the blood transfusion in 1991. I knew nothing of it for 13 years.

Section 5. Impact

7. I am in poor health. Over the years when I was infected with HCV, I suffered a lot of lethargy and depression on top of my battle with Colitis – which became Pouchitis.
8. I had a lot of trouble with my health, but I wasn't clear what the reason for it was. I was very fatigued, weak and depressed. When I had the blood test

for HCV (in Israel), the diagnosis explained a lot as to why I had not been feeling well (with fatigue, lethargy and depression). I remember having a liver biopsy further down the line which was painful. After that there was some urgency about me having HCV clearing treatment as my liver was found to be in a bad state.

9. To complicate things, in 2012, after a severe relapse lasting a year, I was diagnosed with Multiple Sclerosis (MS), which has also been periodically debilitating after many years on Copaxone.
10. I cleared HCV with a combination of Ribavirin and Interferon treatment over the course of a year in 2014. It was a very difficult year (as was the year preceding the treatment). I suffered with mood swings. I broke out in skin lesions. It took a toll on my marriage. We didn't divorce that year, but we did afterwards. The treatment certainly didn't help. My life would have been very different if it hadn't been for the infection. We wanted children but that didn't happen. The infection has taken a massive toll on the quality of my life. I have been unable to work for substantial periods of time and I have suffered financially as a result.
11. As a direct consequence of the HCV clearing treatment, and for several years, I became hypothyroid (a known side effect of Interferon), and I was taking Thyroxine. I would have taken that drug for life had I not made my own decision to come off it.
12. I became extremely ill again in 2015 when my colon pouch eventually failed, resulting in another emergency operation to bypass the pouch in favour of a permanent ileostomy. I now live and function with a stoma.
13. Through being infected with HCV I have sustained scarring to the liver, and I undergo regular liver function testing. I am on the Tecfidera drug to stabilise my MS. My clinicians have to be very careful with the medication prescribed to treat my MS because of my liver problem. I have to be very careful with my diet and I hardly ever drink. There is no history of MS in my

family. I am uncertain as to whether there is a direct correlation between MS and HCV and I would like to know. I would be outraged if there was. I also suffer with Psoriasis.

Section 6. Treatment/care/support

14. I wasn't offered any counselling or support. All I remember is the urgency for me to have treatment because of the extent of the scarring to my liver, as revealed by the biopsy.

Section 7. Financial Assistance

15. I received the Stage 1 Skipton Fund payment.

Anonymity

16. I do not seek anonymity, and I understand that this Statement will be published by the Inquiry.

Statement of Truth

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

Signed..... **GRO-C**

Dated.....19th July 2022.....