

**INFECTED BLOOD INQUIRY**

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**FIRST WRITTEN STATEMENT OF MATTHEW MCVICKER**

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I, Matthew McVicker, will say as follows:-

**Section 1. Introduction**

1. My name is Matthew McVicker (Matt). I was born on [GRO-C] 1971. I am married and live at [GRO-C] with my wife and three children. I am a business development manager.
2. I make this statement as an affected person and in relation to my mother, Mary Theresa McVicker, who was born on [GRO-C] 1943 and died on 22nd February 2014. She was infected with Hepatitis C (HCV) following a blood transfusion she was given after the birth of my brother and me. I have 7 siblings in total and I understand that my sisters Bridget Clarke (Bridie) and Marion English have also given statements to the Inquiry.
3. This witness statement has been prepared without the benefit of access to her medical records.

## **Section 2. How Affected**

4. I was born with my twin brother on GRO-C 1971 at The Mater Informorum hospital in Belfast. I believe that Mum had a normal delivery but subsequently required a blood transfusion. However, she did not discuss this with me.
5. She was a very strong independent woman and whilst I noticed that she had ailments it was put down to the fact that she was always very busy looking after and supporting her eight children.
6. I recall that every time she went to the doctor she complained about something that was not right in her stomach and eventually I understand that blood tests were taken which showed that her liver functions were raised and she was referred for a liver biopsy. It was following this that she was diagnosed with Hepatitis C and she was told that she had been infected following the blood transfusion in 1971.

## **Section 3. Other Infections**

7. I am not aware that she contracted any other disease.

## **Section 4. Consent.**

8. I am unaware as to whether she consented to the blood transfusion or whether it was done as an emergency. She did not discuss this with us.

## **Section 5. Impact**

9. I know that Mum had a lot of ailments but she got on with life; she had to with eight children and I think initially she put her tiredness and lethargy down to how busy she was.
10. As my sisters Bridie and Marion were nearly 10 years older than me they tended to support Mum at her medical appointments.

11. I cannot recall the date when she was told she had HCV specifically but I do remember that she was started on Interferon and Ribavirin treatment shortly after she had been diagnosed.
12. I remember visiting Mum during this treatment and she was constantly vomiting.
13. She had a house in GRO-C which she loved visiting but because of her illness she could not drive herself. I recall one occasion driving her to GRO-C and having to stop the car so that she could be sick.
14. I do not know whether this treatment was completed or whether Mum stopped it herself.
15. Her personality changed following the diagnosis and following this treatment. She was never a depressed person prior to it but she started to display some form of depression and became more withdrawn and quiet.
16. Mum and Dad split up during the 1990s and Mum had started working at a place called The Fold which was a home for able bodied elderly people. She was the warden there and she began to live life for herself until she became ill. She loved working there and eventually when she could no longer work she stayed in the home and paid for her accommodation.
17. When I popped in to see her she would be sitting in her chair and had possibly been sitting there all the time; she no longer seemed to interact. She would always say that she was fine but I knew that she wasn't.
18. I do not think that I fully understood how ill she was. Mum did not tend to tell "us boys"; there were only two of us in the family!
19. Towards the end of Mum's life she suffered hugely with fluid retention. I recall that a doctor came to us and said that they could not do anymore with diuretic treatment for Mum and that her kidneys were shutting down. They said that they would try a shot of protein to see if it helped and it did for a very short while.
20. I am a very positive person. I remember Lorraine one of my elder sisters crying on me and saying that this was it. I replied saying that Mum would be fine once the fluid was under control and never mentally thinking that she was going to die.

21. She was always so lethargic and tired and did not want to do much. My sisters and I lost out and my children who were born on 2001, 2006 and 2010 lost out. Certainly Mum was deprived of enjoying her life, her children and her grandchildren. As a result of her illness we tended not to visit as much and I am saddened by this.
22. She spent her last Christmas in hospital. I remember her crying when we took Christmas to her and all went to the hospital. I think she knew that it was her last; I had rarely seen her cry.
23. I believe that Mum was stolen from us not only too early in life but her energy and life was sapped from her at an early age depriving her of enjoyment. We did not get the time to enjoy her and she didn't get the chance to enjoy us.
24. I was lucky enough to have the support of my elder sisters who knew much more of what was happening than I did at the time. If I had not had this support I feel that I would have been affected much more mentally but I am fortunate that my work and career did not suffer.
25. I feel guilty that perhaps I could have done something more to help if I had been more aware of what was happening. I am angry that she has missed out on her 27 grandchildren and that she was not able to enjoy being with them as she was so ill. My children only saw Mum when she was ill and always used to say that Nanny always falls asleep.

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

26. I am not aware that she was offered counselling or any other treatment, care or support.

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

27. I believe that she did not receive any financial assistance in the form of support from any Trust or fund.

Anonymity, disclosure and redaction

28. I confirm that I do not wish to apply for anonymity and I understand this statement will be published and disclosed as part of the Inquiry.

29. I would prefer not to give oral evidence to the Inquiry.

Statement of Truth

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

Signed.....

GRO-C

Matthew McVicker

Dated.....

23-1-20