Witness Name: Steven Kirkland
Statement No.: WITN2178001
Exhibits: WITN2178002-003
Dated: 29th July 2020

INFECTED BLOOD INQUIRY

FIRST WRITTEN STATEMENT OF STEVEN KIRKLAND

I provide this statement in response to a request under Rule 9 of the Inquiry Rules 2006 dated 15th May 2020.

I, Steven Kirkland, will say as follows: -

Section 1. Introduction

1. My name is Steven Kirkland. My date of birth is GRO-C 1978 and my address is known to the inquiry. I currently work in construction and have been working in that sector in various role for the last thirty years. I also refurbish antiques and furniture from time to time as well. I intend to speak about my father William Joseph Kirkland who was born on GRO-C 1956 and passed away on GRO-C 2013 from heart failure, dilated cardiomyopathy, liver cirrhosis and portal hypertension.

2. I do not wish to be anonymous for this statement.

Section 2. How Infected

3. I got on really well with my Dad, he was like brother or a friend to me more than a Dad. He was the sort of person I felt I could talk to about anything. My Dad loved his family, even when he started to get ill he kept working as much as he could because he never wanted to have us go without anything as a family. My Dad was quite a character as well. He was the sort of person who could hold an audience and really captivate a room. There would be times where he was in hospital and the consultant or the professor would ask if he minded if some of the medical students could watch over his check up, and he would always be laughing and joking with them. He always tried to make the best of things and have a good attitude to life. When he had the infection he would try and stay positive. He would always keep himself amused if someone came in to the hospital with a sprained ankle or something, he would chuckle to himself and say “at least you've not got what I've got”. He never let anything get him down.

4. He was a bricklayer by trade and did that for decades. He was a fully qualified bricklayer and had completed extra qualifications that meant he could train people in college as well but I think he much preferred working on a building site, he loved working away outside in the fresh air. My Dad was very good at what he did and he would often be the one that would be put in charge of brick laying squads to oversee things and make sure everything was done properly. He had worked on buildings all around Glasgow: the Templeton building, business centres and lots of schools. My Dad was just your average working man, he went out and worked on the site during the day and would come home and spend time with us. He would go out for the odd drink with his friends at the weekend when he could. I remember when me and my brother were young my Dad would take us out to work with him on certain jobs so we could earn some extra pocket money. Instead of doing a paper round, we would make up the cement for him whilst he was building walls or working around the site. Those early experiences made me want to do bricklaying myself and I feel my Dad's infection sort of spoiled that a bit. My Dad was training me and my brother up at one stage but all that had to stop when his infection forced him

to stop working. I feel like I missed the opportunity to follow in his footsteps. I ended up taking a different path career wise but I still think about it even now. I would have loved the chance to work in the same team as my brother and my Dad, maybe even start our own wee business, but we didn't get the chance.

5. My Dad was infected with hepatitis C on the 2nd May 1988. I remember it being that date because it was a bank holiday that weekend and my Dad had some of his friends round for a few drinks. I remember him starting to feel really unwell, I think it was some kind of viral infection, almost like pneumonia. He started coughing up some blood because of it and we sent for a doctor from his GP at the Bridgeton Health Centre, Glasgow. I can't remember the name of the doctor that came out to see him but it was a local out-of-hours doctor. He advised him to go to the Glasgow Royal Infirmary immediately and he was taken there by ambulance. When he went to the hospital he was given a blood transfusion in response to what they assessed at that time. He received four pints of whole blood for that transfusion. I cannot say exactly what they determined he had but my Dad contracted hepatitis C from that transfusion. I do not know what batch number he received but I know that my Dad had provided the batch number to the Skipton Fund when he had applied to them so I know that they would have a note of the batch number he received.

6. My Dad received no information about the risk of infection from the blood transfusion beforehand, nothing was mentioned at all. It was an emergency situation, he needed blood and they gave him it. I think either they didn't know the blood was a risk or they didn't feel the need to say anything about it.

7. In 1997, my Grandad on my GRO-C's side had died of hemochromatosis. It is a condition that can be passed on to children, in that they can be a carrier of the condition. When my Grandad died, his doctor recommended that GRO-C, myself and GRO-C be tested for the condition. When we were tested, we found out that my GRO-C were both carriers and I was not. Whilst we were in the hospital being tested, the Sister on the ward mentioned that we had never been tested for hepatitis C. We were quite friendly with her so

we asked if we could be tested for hepatitis C as well. So, five years after my Dad was diagnosed, they tested us for hepatitis C as well, whilst they were testing for hemochromatosis. But only after we asked ourselves to have the test, they didn't ask us. Our results were negative but they really should have advised that we be tested long before that. They should have ensured we were tested when my Dad was diagnosed. If we hadn't asked on that day in 1997, we still wouldn't know to this day.

8. My dad was diagnosed with hepatitis C in 1991, I cannot remember the exact date. Just before his diagnosis, he started to suffer from a lot of flu-like symptoms. He was very tired and lethargic, it was like he had a cold or a flu that he couldn't shake. He knew that something wasn't right and he kept going back and forth to his GP, Dr Humayun, at the Bridgeton Health Centre and the Glasgow Royal Infirmary to try and get the issue sorted. He was tested numerous times for these symptoms for a number of different conditions but they couldn't figure out what it was. Nobody seemed to be putting two and two together and looking at the transfusion. Eventually, during one these referrals to the Glasgow Royal Infirmary, he was told that during one of these tests, they had discovered he had contracted hepatitis C.

9. At his diagnosis, I think my Dad was only really given leaflets about the infection. They did not say a lot to him about it, they just sort of deferred to the leaflets. From what I remember, it was just general information about the infection he was given. There was nothing about it being contagious or needing to get your family tested for example.

10. I think the information he was given was very limited. He was only really given the basics, there was some advice around not sharing toothbrushes or having your own nail clippers, but it was all focused on small things you shouldn't be doing. Nothing was explained in any detail. If he had been given more substantial information, he would have known that his family should have been tested as well. Instead, we were tested by chance six years later. I don't think what he was told was adequate at all.

11. I think my Dad should have been informed about his infection much earlier than he was. The NHS knew that the blood they had posed a risk in either 1984 or 1985, once they knew there was a risk they should have been following up with people that were exposed to that blood. It wouldn't have been too advanced for them to attempt to trace if someone had received infected blood, they just did not try.

12. I think when they gave my Dad his diagnosis, it was just a case of them telling him that he had it that was it really. They asked him a lot of questions about his drinking habits and his sexual partners. They asked him whether he was using intravenous drugs as well. I remember at that time, my Dad's liver was showing signs of damage so I think that's why they were trying to find fault with him first. My Dad got the impression they were trying to see if the liver damage could have been caused by him and not the infection. The evidence was right there in front of them, my Dad had been given infected blood. It felt like they were beating around the bush, they knew what the problem was but they weren't addressing it. Between his infection in 1988 and his diagnosis in 1991, they knew there was damage to his liver but they would not acknowledge that is was the infection that was causing it. You don't catch hepatitis C from having a few pints. My Dad's death certificate did not acknowledge that he had died with hepatitis C either. I exhibit his death certificate under **WITN2178002.** I feel that was information they were holding back. The death certificate noted my Dad's liver cirrhosis, which was caused by the hepatitis C infection, but not the infection itself. I feel hepatitis C was not something the NHS wanted to advertise that people had.

Section 3. Other Infections

13. As far as I know, my father did not contract any other infections other than hepatitis C.

Section 4. Consent

14. I think my Dad was both treated and tested without his knowledge. I know at the Glasgow Royal Infirmary they kept a treatment journal for my Dad. They knew that the infection was something they hadn't seen before so they would log everything they tried with my Dad in this journal: treatments, tests, prescriptions etc. This was all after my Dad's diagnosis. My Dad always knew that the hospital staff knew more than they were telling him. Sometimes one doctor would tell him one thing, and another doctor would tell him something else. My Dad knew there was something going on with the way they would test him for so many things, and be constantly checking his liver by performing biopsies. They would always be checking his blood to assess the state of his liver or just taking blood from him to test in general, but they wouldn't explain properly why they were doing it.

15. I could not say for sure whether my Dad was ever treated or tested without his consent.

16. I do believe that the Glasgow Royal Infirmary were doing some kind of study that involved my Dad. Junior doctors, student doctors and nurses would always be taken into my Dad's room so he could be shown to them. Sometimes my Dad would be asked permission if they could come in, and other times they would just walk in. He was obviously a special case to them if they were taking students and juniors in there to learn about it.

Section 5. Impact

17. My Dad tried not to let the infection affect him too much mentally. He was a good soldier, he didn't complain a lot. He would always make jokes about his health and try and stay upbeat about everything and not let his worries show. I know he would have been annoyed that his infection was stopping him from working. He loved being on the site, out in the sun and working outside with his tools, so I know that would have been something he missed quite a lot. I think my Dad was the sort of person that would have been embarrassed to get help from a counsellor or someone like that. He wouldn't have wanted that kind of help so I think he would just put on a brave face and try and get on with

things. I know that the infection would sometimes make him feel quite down though. There were times where I could tell he wasn't feeling like himself.

18. Before his infection, my Dad was very physically fit, he had arms like Popeye from lifting bricks and equipment every day. As his infection went on, I started to notice him losing a lot of weight and a lot of his strength. He wasn't able to do the same things physically that he could do before the infection. It was almost like the weight loss you would see with someone who had cancer, except it wasn't as fast. My Dad was also dealing with other conditions throughout all of this, he had started to suffer from the effects of heart disease around that time. He also had instances of gout and he developed arthritis as well so I think all of those things piling up was a lot for him to deal with physically.

19. My Dad's infection did not lead to any further medical conditions or complications as far as I am aware.

20. My Dad was treated with Ribavirin and Interferon in 2010. I have two attendance notes from the Queen Elizabeth University Hospital, Liver and Gastroenterology Department from the 23rd September 2010 and 21st October 2010 where he had appointments in relation to that treatment. I exhibit these attendance notes under **WITN2178003.** The treatment was an injection and tablet and as far as I can remember, he was shown how to do the injections once or twice in hospital and then he was able to take them at home. He was only able to take four or five doses before the side effects became too much for him and he had to stop. I can't remember exactly how it affected my Dad but I remember it just making him feel extremely unwell, so much so he felt it might kill him so he decided to stop the treatment after a few doses. His consultants and the Glasgow Royal Infirmary seemed to agree that it was doing him more harm than good. My Dad did not receive any further treatment after that but the hospital would be continually monitoring him, especially his liver, for any changes. It got to the stage where the hepatitis C was just another thing he was dealing with. He had his arthritis and his heart disease, his liver

cirrhosis, the infection felt like a drop in the water at times. My Dad died with hepatitis C still active in his system.

21. When Ribavirin and Interferon first became available to my Dad, he asked if he could be treated with it. I remember my Dad's doctor at the Glasgow Royal Infirmary at the time, Professor GRO-D, had a bit of an argument with my Dad about the treatment when he asked to get it. Professor GRO-D did not want my Dad to receive the treatment. My Dad always got on well with everyone but Professor GRO-D was always very awkward and dismissive when it came to this treatment. One side of the argument was that Professor GRO-D said the treatment might not help him and the other side was that the treatment was too expensive. He kept telling my Dad that because it was a new drug it was very expensive and kept pushing back when my Dad asked to be treated with it because of the expense. I know that would have riled up my Dad, to be told that there was a potential cure for his infection but that he couldn't get it because the price of the treatment. My Dad did eventually receive the treatment but that was only after Dad had threatened to go the newspapers with his story and write to his local MP about the refusal. Dad really had to stand his ground to get what he needed.

22. I don't think there were any other treatments Dad could have received. His consultants were just trying to manage his health as best they could.

23. Due to Dad's infection, whenever he went to the dentist at the Bridgeton Health Centre, he was always the last person to be seen. I think that was so they wouldn't have to think about sterilising the equipment for other patients, so they just booked him in for the last appointment of the day. If he had to get a tooth removed, that had to be done in the hospital. I could not fault my Dad's dentist at all but I remember one occasion where the woman on reception asked my Dad, in the waiting room full of people, if he still had hepatitis C. I think that was just naivety from her but the dentist took her into a room and gave her a telling off, she was very apologetic about it. The dentist apologised again when he went in for his appointment and I think my Dad was okay about it, he wasn't the type of person to be bothered by something like that.

24. I remember as well that my Dad always had to explain his condition from the beginning with any new doctor. Whenever he saw someone new at the hospital they would just open up his file and pick up from the last thing done so he would have to explain about his infection quite a lot and I know that must have been annoying for him.

25. Dad's infection had a huge impact on his life, especially his work. He wasn't able to go out and work because of the long physical shifts that you do on a building site. I know he missed working a great deal. He also wasn't able to get out as much because of the state of his health. The fatigue and everything else made it too difficult for him to socialise as much as he wanted. The infection also affected us as his family, we were always worried about him. That worry only really got worse as things went on.

26. I remember even when Dad was really unwell he would still make an effort to go and meet his friends for one or two drinks, just to socialise, when he felt he could. He was always the type to try and keep up with the friends in his life. He knew he was not meant to be drinking but he liked to catch up with people and his attitude was that one or two drinks now and again wasn't going to kill him.

27. My Mum and Dad used to go on a lot of holidays around Europe before his infection, maybe four or five times a year. But the infection made that a lot more difficult because the travel insurance just became so expansive. There was also the worry that if he was in accident abroad, they wouldn't have his medical history and they might give him the wrong treatment or medication. Going on holiday became something where the risk of it all had to be considered for my Mum and Dad.

28. Dad had always formed good relationships with his doctors and because of that they would tell him things they maybe shouldn't have. He found out that his infection combined with his other conditions was effectively a death sentence at one stage. When he told me that, I was devastated. After hearing that, I was walking around with the knowledge that Dad did not have a lot of

time left and that was a very painful thing to know. I was really close to my Dad and I wanted to stay close to him when he was ill. I remember times where I would be offered a job far away and would turn it down so I could be there for Dad. I always had that in the back of my head, the worry that I couldn't go away and do other things with my life because Dad was so unwell and I wanted to be there with him. There would be times where I would be away on holiday and all I could think about was how Dad was getting on. Knowing that Dad wasn't going to have a full life was very difficult. It was like finding out he had terminal cancer, you just start thinking about life differently.

29. It was really hard for me when Dad died. It was hard enough having to see him in the hospital in the state that he was in, but his death was really difficult. The day he died, we were in the hospital with him and I remember it getting harder and harder for him to breathe. I remember at one point he sort of knew it was his time, and he leaned over to me and told me to look after my mum, and then he was gone. What happened with Dad's infection just made his death so much worse, the fact that there was this big cover up and that it played a role in him dying the way he did.

30. I know my Dad's death was very difficult for the rest of the family. He had three sisters and they all really looked up to him so I know it was particularly difficult for them. Our family are all really close, it's like a clan. What happened really shook us all. The injustice of what happened made it a lot harder on everyone, it was extra layer to it that didn't need to be there. Everybody in the family wants to know what happened and make sure something comes from all this. We all know that something like this will never happen again but that doesn't undo what happened to my Dad.

31. The stigma around hepatitis C was never something that affected my Dad or the family. It was only really the family that knew about it and it they were all there supporting him so stigma didn't really come into it.

32. My Dad had to stop working as a bricklayer because of the physical nature of the job. The infection just made him too weak to able to keep doing it. I can't

remember exactly when he stopped working, but I think it was around four or five years after his diagnosis. At first his work was just sort of tapered, he wouldn't be on site as much or would be given less heavy lifting for example. He would work with smaller teams on smaller jobs towards the end, just doing what he was able to. Luckily my Dad had been quite a successful bricklayer so having to stop working didn't have a huge financial impact. He had a lot saved and the family was always there if he needed help. He also received some payments from the Skipton Fund before he died but those payments were less than he would have made working.

Section 6. Treatment, Care and Support

33. Other than having to push for interferon treatment my Dad did not face any other obstacles to obtaining treatment, care and support.

34. At the very start of my Dad's infection, no counselling or psychological support was ever offered. As far as I can remember, I think my Dad was offered some sort of counselling around 2009 or 2010. I don't think the counselling was offered directly because of the hepatitis C though, it was more in relation to all of his conditions as a whole. I cannot remember what was offered exactly but I know that it was suggested to him that he could get counselling if he wanted, he was told it was there if he needed it. My Dad wasn't the type of person who would have wanted to go to counselling, he was quite old fashioned in that way. He would have just discussed anything he was going through with the family.

Section 7. Financial Assistance

35. My Dad received £20,000 from the Skipton Fund on 1st August 2005. He then received £40,000 a few years after that but I cannot remember exactly when. Finally he received a further £25,000 on 28th March 2011. It was my Mum who found out about the Skipton Fund, I think she found it online. After she found them she sent off the application form. It was my Mum that dealt with the

application but as far as I can remember it was just a lot of forms you had to fill out for the most part. I remember my Dad had to prove that he had received infected blood, so he asked one of the nurses on his ward at the Glasgow Royal Infirmary to photocopy a note of the batch number he received so he could include that in the application. I don't think she was meant to have done that for him but she wanted to help. The application was fairly easy to do other than having to provide the proof of infection. My Dad did get some help from that nurse but a lot of his medical records no longer existed. He was told once by a doctor he was quite friendly with that a junior had *"got rid of"* his records. So without help with getting that photocopy of the batch number, I think proving my Dad had received infected blood would have been quite difficult. Other than the proof of infection, there weren't any other problems with the application as far as I know.

36. I think that the level of proof that you needed for an application was very high. My Dad was lucky in a way that his application had enough to go through, but there must be so many people who don't have their records who can't prove anything. There are people who are struggling with these applications because their paperwork does not exist and that is not fair.

Section 8. Other Issues

37. I would like to point out that there are other countries in Europe who have had similar blood scandals, who have managed to prosecute the people responsible. I cannot understand why that hasn't been done here yet. Other countries have already had some kind of justice but we have not.

38. Another thing that has always bothered me is that my Dad was infected in 1988 which is one of the later dates people were infected. By that time I feel they should have known that the blood he was receiving was a risk. I think when it comes down to it there will be a date where they knew that the blood

pool was a risk and if they gave anyone that blood after that date, they are at fault.

Statement of Truth

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

Signed **GRO-C**

Dated Sep 2, 2020