

Witness Name: Kerrie Donna Sherreard

Statement No: WITN1707001

Exhibit: WITN1707002

Dated: 28<sup>th</sup> February 2019

## INFECTED BLOOD INQUIRY

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### FIRST WRITTEN WITNESS STATEMENT OF KERRIE DONNA SHERREARD

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I, Kerrie Donna Sherreard will say as follows:-

#### Section 1. Introduction

1. My name is Kerrie Donna Sherreard. My date of birth is the **GRO-C** 1983 and I live at **GRO-C** Bristol, **GRO-C** with my husband, Ian. We have a 10 year-old son, **GRO-C** I work part-time as an assistant leader at a local pre-school.
2. This impact statement is made in relation to my late brother, Lee Dean Turton, born on the **GRO-C** 1981, who sadly passed away on the 22<sup>nd</sup> January 1992 as a result of Human Immunodeficiency Virus (HIV), which he contracted through contaminated blood products.
3. This witness statement has been prepared without the benefit of access to my brother's full medical records.

## **Section 2. How affected**

4. Lee was diagnosed with severe Haemophilia A when he was six months old in November 1981. He was originally treated with Cryoprecipitate (Cryo) when he was a baby then with Factor VIII.
5. As a direct result of being treated with contaminated blood products Lee contracted HIV. I am told Lee was diagnosed when he was only four years old it was just before he started school. I was 2 at the time.

## **Section 3. Impact**

6. Lee and I were always very close. There was a two-year difference between our ages, so we had always played together and had fun.
7. I do not recall everything that had happened in a lot of detail, as I was very young at the time and it is a long time ago, but I remember that as we became older Lee started to become weaker and weaker. As a result of this, we played less, and we spent less time together.
8. As the time went on, Lee became quite withdrawn and he became too weak to live his life.
9. His childhood and his life were taken away from him and from us as a family.
10. I recall spending Christmas at the Bristol Children's Hospital because Lee was so poorly. When he started getting very poorly he was constantly in and out of the hospital, more so than before, when he needed treatment for his Haemophilia. I recall that attending hospital was normal for me as a child.

11. When Lee's condition became worse, my parents excluded me from what was happening, and I was sent to stay with relatives. I did not understand it at the time, as I was very young, but I do understand it now. I think that my parents wanted to protect me.
12. Notwithstanding the fact that I was very young at the time, I do remember a lot of things very clearly. I recall watching my brother die slowly and my family suffering as a result of this. His illness and subsequent death affected me greatly.
13. When we were living in GRO-C near Bristol, we suffered from intrusion from the press, which has stayed with me. We had to keep our curtains closed, the press were knocking on the door and in the end our neighbours became involved. It was very distressing.
14. I also remember having to enter school through the back entrance due to the intrusion from the press, and being met by a teacher. It was quite embarrassing to be met by a teacher at school.
15. Due to the difficulties encountered in GRO-C with the press, the school and neighbours we moved to Cornwall.
16. I still get flashbacks to the time when Lee was ill. I see him having a fit at our Nan's house for example. It was terrifying and the sight will stay with me forever.
17. When Lee was dying, we had nurses with him in the house. I had to live next door at my Nan's house or with my aunt and uncle.
18. My biggest regret was that I was not old enough to understand what was happening when Lee was dying. I was told to give him a kiss goodbye, and I responded that I do not kiss my big brother, I was 8 years old. I really regret that now.

19. I believe this affected my relationship with my own son, as I am very protective of him and very demonstrative towards him.
20. After Lee died we did not speak a lot about him. I think it was too painful for all of us.
21. Lee's death led me to a period of Obsessive Compulsive Disorder (OCD). I have never told my parents about it, but I used to do everything and say everything three times; even if it was only in my head. I was convinced that three was a lucky number for me and that I had to do it.
22. In my mind it meant that nothing bad again was going to happen to my family if I continued doing it, but if I stopped, I thought something bad would happen immediately.
23. This went on for a while, although I am not able to say how long. As a child it was quite stressful and I was trying to deal with Lee's death on my own.
24. After Lee died I was bullied at school, physically and emotionally. I was beaten up and told to die like my brother. As a result of this I did not enjoy school and I did not want to go. Therefore my grades suffered. Fortunately we moved from Cornwall back to North Somerset so I moved schools. It was a fresh start and I just got on with it.
25. There is now produced and shown to me marked 'WITN1707002' a copy of a letter I found in my school books. There was a task in the English class to write a letter. I was 12 when I wrote the letter, three years after Lee died. It shows I was still thinking about all that happened and how losing Lee deeply affected me. It also tells the close relationship we had, as I was able to tell him anything and I have been deprived of that. I felt I had lost my best friend.

26. In the end, I did well academically. I passed GCSEs, A Levels and eventually I did my degree. If anything it has made me stronger.
27. Lee's death also affected my relationship with our younger sister, Robyn. Our parents had Robyn in 1991 during the final months of Lee's life. I felt all the attention was on her and Lee. I felt pushed away.
28. As a result I did not get to create a bond with Robyn, and I do not have a close relationship with her even now. Robyn is 27 and I do not see her very often. She lives close by but we only see each other on Christmas day, family events or when we accidentally bump into each other at our parents' house.
29. I am closer with our younger brother, Jack who was born after Lee died in 1992. However, I do feel left out as Robyn and Jack have a close relationship because they are of similar age.
30. Lee's death affected my relationship with our parents. We have never had any discussions about what had happened, although we are a lot closer now. They found it difficult to show emotion and I feel they have hardened up
31. I feel Lee's death has affected me in how I handle relationships, including with my own family. I am guarded and I do not show emotions; even my friends find that to be the case.
32. Lee's death was extremely painful and traumatic for me, so I now try to protect myself emotionally; perhaps to some level subconsciously.
33. I was never given psychological help or support. I recall having one counselling session after Lee died, but it was not of much help, as it consisted of doing some colouring.

34. This tragedy also affected my relationship with doctors and medical staff as I do not trust them. When my son is poorly, I try not to go to the doctors, but if I do I always doubt what they say, do they know what they are doing? On occasions I have obtained a second opinion.

35. Our mother has suffered significantly due to Lee's illness and death. She has developed Fibromyalgia, which I understand can be caused by physical or emotional stress due to events, such as death of a loved one. She is no longer able to work and she is in constant pain.

36. She cannot do things with the family, such as bike rides because it is too painful for her. She is not able to play with her grandson, for the same reason.

37. My son has never had the chance to meet his uncle. I often take him to Lee's grave, and he gets upset. He would love to have met Lee.

#### **Anonymity, disclosure and redaction**

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

39. I do not wish to be called to give oral evidence.



**Statement of Truth**

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

Signed....

GRO-C

Kerrie Donna Sherreard

Dated 28 February 2019