Witness Name: Philip Cuthbert
Statement No: WITN7380001
Exhibits: **Nil**
Dated: 5-2-2023.

INFECTED BLOOD INQUIRY

WRITTEN STATEMENT OF PHILIP CUTHBERT

I provide this statement in response to a request under Rule 9 of the Inquiry Rules 2006 dated 28 November 2022.

I, Philip Cuthbert, will say as follows: -

Section 1. Introduction

1. My name is Philip Cuthbert. My date of birth and my address are known to the Inquiry. I live in GRO-C Scotland, with my wife of 17 years, Sandra. I was born in GRO-C and I was adopted by my parents at the age of two, living with them in Kent before moving to Scotland.

2. I have had a varied career including a spell in the army, working in hotel management, I studied contract law and accounting for three to four years and used these skills in a working environment. I am currently involved in the community safety panel and victim support scheme. I like to give back to my local community whenever I can.

3. I intend to discuss my father John's infection with HIV, which he contracted through his use of blood products which he used to treat his haemophilia.

4. This witness statement has been provided without the benefit of access to my father's full medical records.

5. I can confirm that I have chosen not to have legal representation. My family has not been involved in prior litigation. The anonymity process has been explained to me, and I do not intend to seek anonymity

6. I can also confirm that the Inquiry Investigator has explained the 'Right to Reply' procedure, and that if I am critical of a medical professional or organisation, they will have the right to reply to that criticism.

7. I wish to acknowledge that naturally as time passes, memories can fade. I have been able to provide approximate timeframes for matters based on life events. However, I can only recall to the best of my ability, and these timeframes should be accepted as 'near to' rather than precise dates.

Section 2. How Affected

8. My dad's name was John Petrie Cuthbert. His date of birth was GRO-C 1905 and he was born in a little village in the GRO-C in Scotland.

9. My dad had various jobs throughout his life. During the war my dad tried to enlist in the forces but was refused because of his haemophilia, and so became a member of the Air Raid Precaution driving an ambulance, and was medically trained. He later ran a shop with my mum, amongst other things.

10. My dad had lots of interests outside of his work. One of his passions was the scouts, and he was a scoutmaster. He met my mother when his group of scouts were camping in Scotland in 1931. As part of the excursion, the group took part in a street march, and that is when my parents met.

11. They got married in 1932 and later, adopted me and my adoptive sister. I was born in St Helens Hospital in Hastings, but due to my natural family circumstances at the time, I was fostered until I was fortunately adopted by Mum and Dad. When I look back at my life, I feel very lucky to be adopted by such a loving and homely couple who brought me up with good moral values. I was two years old when I was adopted into the family and we initially lived in Kent, before moving back up to my father's native Scotland in 1959.

12. My dad had haemophilia. He had been diagnosed long before I came on the scene, presumably when he was a young child. I always knew him to have it and was very much a prominent factor in my childhood as his haemophilia was quite severe so bleeds could turn serious very quickly. I remember ambulances quite regularly having to come to the door when he cut himself, and my dad often having to be hospitalised as a result of bleeds.

13. When we were living in Kent, my father attended Lewisham Hospital for haemophilia treatment and Professor Cecil Holman was one of the main doctors in charge of my dad's haemophilia treatment.

14. We knew Professor Holman socially and as a family friend as much as a doctor. This came about from my dad having to have such regular treatment and as a result my parents growing close with him. My dad had also been training to become a doctor but could not continue with it because of his haemophilia, so educationally, he had some common history with his doctors, and so the friendship may have also developed because of that.

15. Professor Holman lived in a large house near ours in Kent. He and his wife had children of a similar age to me, and we all grew up together. For example, I would often walk to his house after school, and our families would attend social events together.

16. In 1959, my mum, dad, sister and I moved to Scotland, where we lived in a number of different places, due to dad being restricted on the type of work he could do because of having Haemophilia.

17. Once we moved, my dad's haemophilia care was also transferred away from Lewisham to Scotland.

18. After the move, life continued as normal, and our family was a happy one. Mum and dad ran a shop together before they both retired.

19. As far as I am aware, dad's health was fine when he retired, however I believe this was before he had had any treatment with Factor VIII.

20. It was in the late 1970's that I learnt about a new treatment that dad had been put on. This was a blood clotting medication called Factor VIII. The medication seemed to be fine for a while, but dad started to lose weight and became very tired and drawn looking.

21. I can also recall that we started noticing a lot of people in the haemophilia community were testing positive for AIDS in around the early 1980s.

22. My dad was always somewhat involved with the haemophilia community. For example, I remember Haemophilia Society magazines always being around the house, so we tended to know what the prominent issues within the community were.

23. It started to filter through to us that blood coming from America was problematic and our concerns about the blood products began to grow as time went on.

24. I do not have much recollection of how my dad was diagnosed, I just remember my mum pulling me aside and telling me about Factor VIII and said that my dad had AIDS, and this was in around 1982.

25. Both my mum and dad knew my dad had AIDS. They tried to get more information and assistance from medical professionals but they were fobbed off. From my view, my parents were repeatedly dismissed and denied. I feel, in that respect, that my dad's infection was covered up.

26. My dad sadly died on 21 September 1983, at Victoria Hospital in Kirkcaldy.

27. For reasons of which I am unaware, there was no mention of AIDS, HIV or HCV, or even haemophilia, on my dad's death certificate. The causes of death are registered as "1. respiratory failure, 2. massive pleural effusion, 3. cirrhosis of the liver". I feel that even on my dad's death certificate, they are trying to cover up the truth.

Section 3. Other Infections

28. I am unaware if my dad was exposed to any other infections through his use of blood products, though the fact that he had cirrhosis suggests he may have also contracted HCV.

29. I do not feel there was much openness and honesty about his infection at the time at all, and we were kept very much in the dark.

Section 4. Consent

30. I am unaware of what consent was sought or given by my dad in respect of the blood products he used, or if any risks were ever explained to him.

31. He was attending the hospital regularly, and I think generally he would have consented for treatment and testing if he was asked.

32. However, I do think he was tested without his consent.

Section 5. Impact

33. After I became aware of my dad's HIV diagnosis and by the Summer of 1982, my dad had become very ill very quickly. He lost a huge amount of weight; he was very thin and gaunt, and was visibly seriously unwell.

34. There was obviously a huge impact on my dad's health as he became very unwell as a result of the infected Factor VIII, and this caused him to have to endure a lot of suffering in his final couple of years. My dad's ill-health had a ripple effect on his life.

35. My dad was very good with his hands. He loved gardening, and he was terrific at it. He could build walls, landscape and paths. He had a huge knowledge of flowers, for example he knew the Latin names of all flowers and this was something he was very proud of. It was very sad for him when he was too ill to be able to do the things, he enjoyed like tending to his garden.

36. There was a very significant impact on my mum. She was a very strong woman who died just shy of her 102nd birthday. She therefore lived a very long life, and she lost out on having her husband for a large part of it. We always thought it would be the two of them until the end. Apart from his haemophilia, my dad was a very healthy man who would likely have lived a lot longer had it not been for the infected blood products.

37. My mum and dad were married for over 50 years, and my dad had been a huge influence on mum's life. Her life changed for the worse once my dad passed away, and she missed him greatly.

38. For their 50th wedding anniversary in Summer 1982, my parents planned to have a party to celebrate. My dad's sister Mary did not want the party to go ahead because of how ill he had become by then. Fortunately, the party went ahead as that was what my parents both wanted. Professor Cecil Holman was one of the guests present at the party.

39. We have photographs from that day and it is nice to think about the happy memories of my parents enjoying themselves with friends and family. Although, that photograph also provides an insight into how unwell my dad had become; my dad is visibly ill, gaunt and drawn.

40. The photographs from that party are the last photographs we have of my dad. Just over a year later, in September 1983, my dad passed away.

41. My dad's illness and death were also very hard for my adopted sister, who was also very close with our parents.

42. Our parents were both very good to us. They pushed both of us to get on and achieve what we wanted in life. My sister went to live in Australia, and then America, where she still lives now. To see someone who had been so kind to us suffering was very difficult.

43. My son, Ross, was sadly diagnosed with muscular dystrophy when he was six years old. He eventually went off his feet at the age of nine and used a wheelchair for the rest of his life. There are several reasons why I have brought this up. The first, is, we as a family were going through all the trauma of knowing our son and mum and dad's grandson was critically ill and would have a short life. Secondly, coinciding with the knowledge that dad was given treatment, which we knew would eventually lead to an early death.

44. This took place at around the same time; my son became ill and my dad was deteriorating. It was very hard to juggle the two responsibilities, and I could not be around for my dad as much as I wanted to because of what was going on with my son. It was such a difficult time.

45. I can remember coming back from the hospital, then just walking around the high street, from one coffee shop to another, as I could not bear to go home. The combination of having to deal with both of their serious illnesses was indescribable. It was unbearable.

46. My dad had been heavily involved with my son, before he became too ill himself, so the situation of them being very unwell at the same time was distressing for them both and they missed one another.

47. With Ross, we decided to keep it from him that he was going to have a short life. He knew part of the truth but not all of the truth, in order to protect him. We felt it was in his best interest to just enjoy his life without the worry. My son, Ross, tragically died on 7 January 1989.

48. Dad knew he was dying and had to live with this knowledge. Knowing he had AIDS changed him a lot. He had been a very jolly person but he became very different. His change in personality was very upsetting for all of us.

49. Everything changed after we found out about dad's infection. It was a secret and we could not speak to anyone about it.

50. My mum was an ardent churchgoer, but nobody in the church knew anything about it. The minister was very close to my mum and always kept a close eye on her, but even he did not know anything. There was a huge amount of stigma so we kept it to ourselves.

Section 6. Treatment/Care/Support

51. The doctors must have known that there was something very wrong, but they seemed reluctant to do anything about it and the situation never really came out in the open. We were never convinced we were being told the full truth about my dad's worsening health.

52. As far as I am aware, my dad did not have any treatment for HIV aside from the usual monitoring by his GP, who was Dr GRO-D at the GRO-D Health Centre.

53. Dr GRO-D started to give dad all sorts of pills and potions after we challenged him about why he had suddenly become unwell. He responded to our questioning, coming up with several explanations unrelated to Factor VIII.

54. At this point, my dad began to suffer from confusion, which I am sure was down to his infection. I can remember speaking to Dr GRO-D about this, and he took me aside and said that my dad was confused because of the haemophilia treatment he was getting.

55. He also said that he had recommended to my dad that he lies with his feet up, so the blood can filter down to the brain. This was quite baffling to me at the time and did not seem to add up.

56. Meanwhile, my mum and dad were getting dismissed every time they questioned anything. We pestered our surgery for information but we were just fobbed off. Doctors denied that there were any problems with Factor VIII, and also refused us the opportunity to see my dad's medical notes.

57. In 1984, soon after dad passed away, my mum and I started to push again for his medical records so we could see what was going on that we were not being told. We were informed that neither the hospital nor the GP could find the records. When I remember back to the period after my dad died, and mum and I tried to get some information and documentation relating to his death, it was then that we knew there had been a massive cover up. I cannot emphasise enough that every department would put up barriers.

Section 7. Financial Assistance

58. My parents never applied for or received any financial assistance, and neither have I on behalf of the family.

Section 8. Other Issues

59. I feel that this Inquiry is long overdue.

60. What prompted me to contact the Inquiry myself was a programme that I saw recently on BBC1 about contaminated blood. I was disturbed by the fact that they were still giving this treatment to people despite concerns, and I felt compelled to tell my dad's story.

61. I am also providing my statement for my mum and dad's sake and in their memory. They were dismissed and denied at the time so I want their story to be heard now.

62. It has been almost 40 years since my dad passed away, and the experiences of lies and deception are still with me today.

63. I followed the Penrose Inquiry to an extent, but I felt it was a disaster, a sham even. It was very expensive but nothing happened at the end of it.

64. I have followed the Inquiry hearings and it was quite upsetting and frustrating to watch witnesses like Kenneth Clarke as his evidence seemed to just deny it all.

65. I have made comparisons in my own mind between my son's drug trials for muscular dystrophy and the infected blood scandal. For every drug there was a double-blind trial, everything was tested and double tested before the children were put on them. It does not seem that anything remotely like this happened to test the safety of blood products before patients were treated with them.

66. Worse still, it became known that it was prisoners and vagrants who needed money; all people with a higher chance of having AIDS and other blood-borne infections, were the main groups donating blood in the USA, and the UK were

then buying this blood. But no one in the medical community ever explained any of this to those using the blood before it was too late.

67. I simply cannot get my head around the fact that Factor VIII was still being used even once it was known to be contaminated.

68. I have tried on a number of occasions over the years to obtain my dad's medical records, however as yet, I have not been successful in accessing them, which as mentioned was the same story in 1984. I very recently received a call from my GP surgery's manager, who is very competent and helpful, but she unfortunately was not successful in obtaining any records. There are, disappointingly, therefore still a lot of unknowns with regards to my dad's story.

69. I would like to see someone held to account. The people that knew and would have ordered this to happen will mostly be dead by now, so those who should be standing trial are not here to do so. Even Professor Cecil Holman passed away over 20 years ago in the late 1990s.

70. Ultimately, lots of people have died because of this scandal, and more will die. It has shaken a lot of families, so I would still like to see some sort of justice.

71. When I think back on all the publicity that this scandal has received over the years and all those poor families who pushed for answers, when their loved ones were dying and nobody gave them any help. It is terribly sad.

Statement of Truth

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

Signed GRO-C

Dated 5 - 2 - 2023.