

Witness Name: OLIVER REDMOND

Statement No: WITN5647001

Exhibits: WITN5647002-5

Dated: MARCH 2021

INFECTED BLOOD INQUIRY

FIRST WRITTEN STATEMENT OF OLIVER REDMOND

I, Oliver Redmond, will say as follows:-

Section 1. Introduction

1. My full name is Oliver Matthew Nowell Redmond. I was born on GRO-C 1981 and I live at GRO-C, Hampshire GRO-C
2. I was infected with the Hepatitis C Virus (HCV) through contaminated blood products.
3. This witness statement has been prepared without the benefit of access to a full set of my medical records. There are huge gaps of missing notes in the records sent to me, and absolutely nothing (no HCV or HIV test results, no letters and no clinical notes) between (the relevant time period) 1989 and 1995. I have chased the local health authority and my GP practice for the missing notes to no avail.

Section 2. How Infected

4. I have Von Willebrand's Disease (VWD). My mother was investigated for suspected child abuse when I was two months old due to bruises to my ankles and under my arms (where my mother was lifting me to change me). Dr Peter Green, Consultant Haematologist at St Mary's Hospital in Portsmouth sat on the Social Services Panel. No-one in our family was known to have VWD and they didn't know what it was. My father was away at this time, on deployment to the Falklands conflict, with the Royal Navy Task Force.
5. Samples of my blood were sent to Dr Rizza at the Oxford Haemophilia Centre. My mother was then informed that I have a severe and unusual variant of VWD, with a 'bent molecule' anomaly being identified as present. My Dad returned from a Royal Navy Task Force deployment to the Falkland Islands. He played rugby and ran cross-country for the Navy's team and Dr Green noticed his cuts and bruises and went on to take blood samples from him (as an anecdote, my Dad passed out at the sight of the needle). My GRO-C
GRO-C
6. I was treated for VWD with some Cryoprecipitate but mainly with copious amounts of Factor VIII (FVIII) concentrate at St Mary's Hospital. My mother (training to be a nurse at that time) was encouraged to treat me at home, with a large stock of FVIII kept in a small fridge she bought specifically, as there wasn't enough room in the kitchen fridge to store it all. I was often treated on a prophylaxis basis in order to prevent spontaneous bleeds and bleeds into my joints. Those suffering with VWD do not ordinarily suffer with internal bleeds to the joints. My VWD is no longer classed as severe. I do not know if, and when, the criteria changed, but I have been labelled as moderate, type IIA over the course of the last 18 years (at least) and I have been under the Basingstoke Haemophilia Centre for the last 12 years.
7. In December 1993, at what we thought was to be a routine appointment, Dr Green told me that I had been infected with HCV. He said 'It is a little worrying

but at this point in time, there is nothing we can do about it and nothing can be done to undo it, so we just need to move forward with it'. I remember being shell shocked, but I was just 12 years old and I took Dr Green's direction on how I should feel. He was very matter of fact about it all. I had grown up in the AIDS pandemic, fearing HIV/AIDS and had been severely bullied because of its associations with haemophilia. I trusted Dr Green and had no idea that I had been tested for any form of infection.

Section 3. Other Infections

8. I was not infected with anything other than HCV, although I was frequently tested for HIV (and other forms of hepatitis) from the age of two.

Section 4. Consent

9. I was most certainly tested for infection without my parents' consent. It is apparent from my medical records that I was tested for infection on many occasions throughout the 1980s (and at the least at six-month intervals). I was pumped full of large doses of FVIII concentrate on a regular basis and blood samples were taken pre and post treatment. My mother wasn't told why. She was given to understand that it was to check to make sure the FVIII was working properly. In retrospect (and despite issues with my knees that would sometimes last for weeks), I fear we were gaslighted into believing that without prophylaxis treatment I would suffer with continuous bleeds into my joints (as outlined at paragraph 6). I was given so much treatment that my veins would collapse on occasion and I would have to go to hospital to have treatment through a cannula. My mother was a nurse. My mother and I believed that she had a good relationship with Dr Green. They seemingly had an open and honest relationship and we relied on his advice. I had very fond thoughts and memories of Dr Green for a long time. When I was young, I wanted to become a doctor like him. He reminded me of Roald Dahl. He was very direct and used to threaten to tell my mother if I missed appointments. Even when I reached the age of 18, it worked.

10. I believe it highly likely that I was unknowingly used for the purposes of research. Dr Rizza took a special interest in me. We thought that was because of the unusual VWD variant I carried. I refer to Exhibit WITN5647002 being copy correspondence between Dr Green and Dr Rizza. Because of Dr Rizza's apparent interest in me, my mum even took me up all the way up to the Oxford Haematology Centre in December 1982.

11. I refer to Exhibit WITN5647003 being a copy extract from my medical notes dated 15/1/85. Despite the known risks, I was offered, and my mother refused, 'unheated' treatment and her refusal was noted to be 'quite justifiable'. Given that I was subsequently (8 or 9 years later) identified as having HCV, it would appear likely that the damage was already done.

Section 5. Impact of the Infection

12. Being told that I had HCV and the way in which I was subsequently treated at school had a devastating effect on me. As stated at paragraph 7, I was severely bullied in school. I recall an incident forever ingrained in my memory. At my previous school (Boundary Oak, 1987-1990) during a morning assembly of the whole school, I was told to stand up by GRO-D in front of everyone and he announced that I was 'different', that I should not be 'punched or kicked' because I 'bleed easily' and that they should not get near me if I had a nose bleed or 'share towels' and to give me a 'wide berth' because I had HCV and possibly 'other diseases like AIDS'.

13. There is now produced and shown to me at Exhibit WITN5647004 an exchange of correspondence between the School Medical Officer at Portchester Community School and GRO-D in February 1995 about my HCV diagnosis. After I had been diagnosed with HCV, a circular letter went out to all the parents of students in my year group about me. This was done without consulting my parents and my mother was livid. I was seen as dirty. I was made to use a separate changing room for PE and whenever we went swimming. No-one wanted to be around me in case I gave them 'AIDS'. I had a lot of issues making

friends and it is a time of my life that is still very dark. I had had a decent circle of friends before that happened.

14. It wasn't until I reached Year 10 in a lesson about STIs that I began to turn a corner. When asked what we knew about sexually transmitted diseases, a student shouted out 'Ollie knows everything about it' and the teacher offered me the opportunity to explain how I had been infected. After this point the other students began to see me as something other than a 'dirty' child and a 'sexual deviant'.
15. In or around 1995 I developed jaundice and had to have a liver biopsy. There was a suggestion (in March 1996) that I be given Roferon treatment to try to clear HCV. The side effects were thought to be worse than having HCV itself and there was no guarantee it would work, so I didn't have it.
16. My aspirations to become a doctor were ruined. I was actively discouraged from studying medicine by a careers advisor in Year 10 and even Dr Green, "in case you infect anyone" and I was told to choose a different career path. It was suggested that I study optometry because of the reduced risk of contaminating others. Having HCV affected my relationships with the opposite sex. As I felt I should offer informed consent before becoming intimate.
17. I was later (I cannot recall when it was) found to have cleared the virus myself as I tested positive for only the antibodies. I cannot get life insurance due to the positive HCV test, despite only having antibodies, meaning I can't get a mortgage. I have been left with a whole host of psychological issues to include PTSD and chronic depression. As a teenager I decided that I never wanted to have children (fearing they would go through what I went through should they inherit the VVD). When my wife and I decided to start a family, we had to weigh the risks of our children inheriting VVD. It was explained to us that there was a 50% chance they would inherit VVD and 'only a 25% chance they would be as severe'. When two of our three children, our son (who is Autistic) and daughter were diagnosed with type IIA, they were found to have clotting levels much lower than mine. I have to endure the terror of seeking treatment for their

injuries; and I fear every time they receive Voncento that it is a possibility they too could be infected, despite the improved safety protocol. I am now also left with degenerative disc disease/chronic pain, chronic migraine, chronic tiredness, sleep apnoea (requiring the use of a C-PAP machine at night) arthritis and pilonidal disease. I am also receiving Cognitive Behavioural Therapy for Post Traumatic Stress Disorder, due to my experiences as a child.

18. My mother suffered too. I lost a childhood friend, Craig, to AIDS. He was just 9 years old when he was infected with a batch of contaminated FVIII concentrate meant for me. My mother had taken me to the St Mary's Children's Ward to receive treatment after a tooth extraction would not stop bleeding. We had to wait whilst the Factor was retrieved from the blood bank across the road, when a staff member became available - which frequently meant a several hour wait for treatment. Craig and his mum arrived at the hospital with a severe injury to his hand and my mother said his mother could have my FVIII treatment and we would wait for the next batch as Craig needed it more. He died eighteen months later. I remember a heated exchange between our two mothers at Craig's memorial service and his mother was angry with mine for some time. I know she was just lashing out. No parent could have foreseen what would happen. My mother was just being kind and caring in trying to do the right thing by another mother in need. She always felt a sense of survivor's guilt.

19. Had my mother known of the risk of infection to me she would not have been willing to administer bottles of bottles of prophylaxis home treatment to me at times when I was not even having a bleed. I refer to Exhibit WITN5647005. Even as late as 1995, Dr Green was still receiving directions from Dr Rizza at the Oxford Haemophilia Centre to trial different prophylaxis regimes and forward the test results. No apology has ever been made to us. It is hard to know how to cope with the knowledge that we survivors have been used as guinea pigs and that we were cheaper to use than monkeys. We are having to relive it all through the Inquiry. We all want closure either for ourselves or for loved ones we have lost.

Section 6. Treatment/care/support

20. I am having ongoing therapy for the period of my life when I was infected with HCV. I have a diagnosis of PTSD and am working to get through this. I wasn't offered any counselling or psychological support whilst infected.

Section 7. Financial Assistance

21. I was refused a Skipton Fund payment as my infection was not considered to be 'chronic enough' and fall within their criteria at the time the application was made. It seems to me that the goal posts are forever changing. How successful you are depends upon who you get on the phone on any given day. I am in the process of applying for support through the EIBSS and I know that I will have a fight on my hands. Being infected with HCV has had a massive impact on my life.

Anonymity, disclosure and redaction

22. I do not seek anonymity and understand that my Statement will be published by the Inquiry. I am more than willing to also provide oral evidence to the Inquiry.

Statement of Truth

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

Signed.....
GRO-C

Dated..... 30th April 2021