Witness Name: Cavan Pawson
Statement No.: WITN0100/001
Dated: 11/05/19

INFECTED BLOOD INQUIRY

WRITTEN STATEMENT OF CAVAN PAWSON

I provide this statement in response to a request under Rule 9 of the Inquiry Rules 2006 dated 1 April 2019.

I, Cavan Pawson, will say as follows:

Section 1. Introduction

1. My name is name is Cavan Pawson. My date of birth is GRO-C 1966 and my address is known to the Inquiry. I am employed as a freelance sports photographer.

2. I have Hepatitis C following blood transfusions with cryoprecipitate. I intend to speak about the circumstances around my infection with Hepatitis C. In particular, the nature of my illness, how the illness affected me and the treatment received.

Section 2. How Infected

3. I was born with Haemophilia, type A. I found out that I had Haemophilia when I was about four years of age. My parents took me to the hospital after I bit my tongue and I was bleeding too much.

4. I was diagnosed with moderate Haemophilia. Although it was not considered severe, I have suffered from some bad bleeds throughout my life.

5. For example, between the ages of seven and twenty-five years of age, I was frequently receiving treatment for accidents like falling over and twisting my ankle when playing football or rowing. Every time I went for treatment, the doctors would tell my parents that I needed to be more careful and stick to indoor activities like chess and painting.

6. My older brother was also Haemophiliac. He passed away from testicular cancer, which as far as I know is not related to his Haemophilia or any infection.

7. I was primarily treated at the Royal London Hospital Trust for bleeds after my family moved to GRO-C London. The hospital was previously called London Hospital, Whitechapel. My primary doctor was Dr Colvin, who I believe was the Head of Haematology until his retirement about eight years ago.

8. I initially commenced treatment for Haemophilia using Cryoprecipitate sometime in about 1974. I remember the Cryoprecipitate would be given to me from big yellow bags in hospital and it would often take hours to finish each round of treatment.

9. The longest time I ever spent in hospital was about a month due to an injury to my knee when I was about nine years old. While I was in hospital, the doctors drained the fluid from my knee but it continued to bleed.

10. I can't remember how I long I was in hospital each time I needed treatment, but I believe I was usually there for a minimum of ten days, and sometimes up to a month.

11. I believe I was treated with Cryoprecipitate up until about 1985, from which point I was treated with Factor VIII. I remember my doctor advising me that Factor VIII would be more efficient than Cryoprecipitate.

12. I could also just inject myself as needed with Factor VIII so it was easier to use. I don't follow a particular regime like some Haemophiliacs, but use reactive injections as needed.

13. If I need treatment for bleeds now, I usually go to the Haemophilia centre in Canterbury or to a centre close to where I live in France. It is rare that the bleeding gets to the point where I have to call an ambulance but it can happen. The severity of the bleed depends on different variables such as blood pressure and location of the bleed.

My diagnosis with Hepatitis C

14. I used to go to hospital to receive a blood test every six months or so with Dr Colvin or one of his associates. The treating doctors would always take my blood, but they only started testing for HIV and Hepatitis sometime in the 1980s. When I was younger, my mum or dad would go with me but as I got older I would usually go to these check-ups by myself.

15. Dr Colvin would say to me that the blood used for Cryoprecipitate and Factor VIII had been pre-screened for bacteria and viruses and was safe to use. I can recall him saying that from about the early 1980s. However, over time I remember this advice changed and I was advised that the blood had been heat treated and the risk of infection was low.

16. I can't remember exactly when I was told I had Non-A Non-B Hepatitis, which was later called Hepatitis C. I believe it was sometime in about 1987. It was Dr Colvin who told me I was infected and said something along the lines of '*my liver function test was compatible with someone with hepatitis.*' I remember it being odd that he used language like this and did not just say explicitly that I had contracted hepatitis.

17. In terms of symptoms, I remember Dr Colvin told me that I might feel tired, develop jaundice and blood shot eyes when I was first diagnosed with Hepatitis C.

18. My wife was also concerned about contamination when I was diagnosed. Dr Colvin said at the time that cross contamination couldn't happen but then overtime his advice changed and he recommended that my wife be tested. GRO-C

19. At the time, I believe doctors mainly cared about HIV/AIDS as there was no cure for this and so the risks and issues relating to Hepatitis C were overlooked.

20. I have a small tattoo from when I turned eighteen but I received this tattoo after I was diagnosed with Hepatitis C so I do not believe it is related to my infection.

21. All the blood products that I have received have been through the Haemophilia centre at the Royal London Trust. There was one occasion when I was treated at Bart's Hospital but this occurred after my infection.

Section 3. Other Infections

22. I have been tested for HIV, and other illnesses like Creutzfeldt-Jakob disease. As far I am aware, I have only been diagnosed with Hepatitis C.

Section 4. Consent

23. As far as I am aware, I have always given consent for the testing of my blood and was made aware of the purpose of the tests.

24. After I was infected, I remember seeing big stickers written on my blood samples at the hospital to warn others to be careful when handling my blood and taking it to the pathology lab.

25. I therefore believe the doctors who treated me were always upfront about the purpose of the testing.

Section 5. Impact

26. The impact on me from Hepatitis C infection includes being physically sluggish, particularly during winter.

27. However, it was the effect of the treatment I received for Hepatitis C that has been the most severe.

28. I first started taking Interferon about fifteen or sixteen years ago for treatment of Hepatitis C.

29. When I was first prescribed Interferon, the doctors at the Royal London Trust gave some Haemophiliacs a placebo and others the real drug. I was told after that I was given the real drug and it worked initially but I was so sick that I had to stop taking it. I took Interferon about three times a week for six months.

30. While I was supposed to inject myself three times a week, I found it affected me so badly that in the end I took all three injections in one day. I injected myself each Saturday and did this so I would be well enough for work on Monday.

31. When I was taking Interferon, I spent most of the weekend in bed. I have never considered myself to be depressed, but I couldn't get out of bed. I couldn't eat and suffered cold and hot flushes.

32. It also frequently gave me diarrhoea and made me feel generally lethargic. I didn't want to talk to anyone or be out late. Even when taking Interferon on the Saturday, I would still feel groggy on the Monday. I stopped enjoying life.

33. After I stopped treatment with Interferon, the Hepatitis Infection returned. The doctor used similar language to when I first was diagnosed with Hepatitis C, that my *"liver functioning was consistent with someone with the virus"*.

34. About two years ago, I received a phone call from the Canterbury Haemophiliac Centre and I was told that my platelet levels had dropped to a severe level. I suspect that this reduction in platelet levels could also be part of why I feel unwell at the moment.

35. I also think the fact that this disease is always on my mind, has also impacted me.

36. I have recently been put on a course of new medication called Ribavarin and have been told that there is a 96% chance of clearing the hepatitis with this drug.

37. The Ribavarin has made me feel forgetful and clumsy. I also frequently feel either too cold or too hot, I never feel comfortable temperature wise. In winter, in particular, I feel down and lack motivation. When I feel too hot, I can also experience nose bleeds.

38. I don't think I really missed out on any higher education opportunities as a result of the Hepatitis C. I did miss a lot of school though when I was younger from having Haemophilia.

39. I believe my diagnosis did have some work -related effects. For example, I was offered a six-month contract in Australia to photograph the 2006 Commonwealth Games on the Gold Coast.

40. I was advised to not disclose on my Australian visa application that I was diagnosed with hepatitis or Haemophilia as this would have an impact on my application.

41. I worry about this every time I travel for work and always see my doctor before I travel to ensure I have enough medication (Factor VIII) for the trip.

42. I do not know whether there have been significant impacts on my ability to obtain insurance as a result of being diagnosed with Hepatitis C.

Section 6. Treatment/Care/Support

43. I have never received any NHS counselling, other than counselling for PTSD after I travelled to Iraq as a photographer. I have never received counselling relating to my treatment of Hepatitis C and have never felt I needed this.

44. I dreaded receiving any more treatment for Hepatitis C after my experience with Interferon. When I first started, I was younger and more positive and thought it would work. I just stuck with it even as the effects became worse. My wife was very supportive through this, and encouraged me to get through it. I was looking for an end goal.

45. If my platelets hadn't dropped recently, I probably wouldn't have treated my Hepatitis. The drug I am on at the moment is not as bad as Interferon, but is still not great for me.

Section 7. Financial Assistance

46. I believe I received about £12,000 from the Skipton fund sometime in about 2007. I was registered with the Haemophilia society and they wrote to me sometime in about 2007 to advise me about the Skipton fund and that I could apply for a lump sum payment.

47. I am not sure if there were any conditions attached to this payment, but I vaguely remember hearing something that if I accepted a lump sum payment, I wouldn't be given any more money from them.

48. I currently receive ongoing monthly payments of about £345 and up to about £4000 annually from the English Infected Blood Support Scheme.

Section 8. Other Issues

49. I was initially reluctant to give any evidence to the Inquiry as I didn't want the doctors and nurses who treated me to get in trouble for something they didn't do.

50. The NHS has done a lot to help me and the doctors I have seen have been great. I believe someone has made a mistake somewhere and it is sad that it has come to this. I don't believe Dr Colvin and his associates ever intended to mislead me, I just don't think they properly knew about the risks when I was infected.

51. I am very lucky that I don't have HIV, but this doesn't take away from the issues that I have experienced from being infected with Hepatitis C from using blood products.

Statement of Truth

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

Signed GRO-C

Dated 11/05/19