

Witness Name: Andrew Lay

Statement No.: WITN0965001

Exhibits: nil

Dated: 16 OCTOBER 2019

## **INFECTED BLOOD INQUIRY**

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### **WRITTEN STATEMENT OF ANDREW LAY**

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I provide this statement in response to a request under Rule 9 of the Inquiry Rules 2006 dated 27 August 2019.

I, Andrew Lay, will say as follows: -

#### **Section 1. Introduction**

1. My name is Andrew Lay. My date of birth is GRO-C 1951 and my address is known to the Inquiry. I have three grown up children. I am now retired but I had a career as a traveling salesman. I intend to speak about how I was told I could no longer donate blood as I may have contracted infections through a blood transfusion. In particular, how this affected me and the difficulty I had in obtaining a test. I do not wish to remain anonymous.

## **Section 2: How Affected**

2. I had a very serious road traffic accident on 14<sup>th</sup> July 1986. Both of my legs were trapped inside the car during the accident, and as a result I lost a lot of blood. I was admitted into Kettering General Hospital in Northampton, and I was immediately given a blood transfusion.
3. I have a memory of being told that I had zero blood pressure and in order to bring my blood pressure back up; I had to be given a blood transfusion on the spot which I consented to.
4. Following the accident, I endured a slow recovery and I have had various issues with my legs since.
5. I had been a blood donor for a long time; donating on a regular basis and I had even gained my badge for achieving twenty-five blood donations. In fact, I began donating blood from my late teens as soon as I was allowed to.
6. I received a letter from the National Blood Transfusion Service in 1987 stating the words 'Please do not donate your blood again because you had a transfusion and this may have contaminated your blood.' I do not have a copy of this letter anymore, but I believe I received this letter a year after my transfusion.
7. I was given no specific information from the National Blood Transfusion Service regarding the type of infection I could have contracted.
8. I did not respond to the letter as I understood that there was nothing I could do.
9. Although, the only reason I found out the blood that I received could have been contaminated was because I was a blood donor. If I did not give blood I would have never known that I could have potentially been

infected and a risk to others. Up until I had contacted the Inquiry earlier this year I had not been tested for any infection. Each time I had asked on the basis of the letter in the 80s telling me I may be infected, I was refused.

10. I believe that I could have donated blood at least once in the year following the blood transfusion until I was informed to stop donating.

11. Following receipt of the letter, I knew little or nothing about the infected blood scandal, and so I did not worry too much at first. However, within a couple of years I began reading in the press reports about others being contaminated with infected blood. I had no idea it was so widespread.

12. There had been many reports in the press related to Factor 8, which my understanding was imported blood from America given to haemophiliacs.

13. As I learnt more about the infections people were being diagnosed with, especially Human Immunodeficiency Virus (HIV) which was coming to the forefront at that stage, it began to worry me.

14. In 2016, before the Inquiry began, a significant incident occurred. I was starting a new job and I was asked to complete a work questionnaire which asked for my blood group. I did not have this information and so, I went to my GP but they had no record of this information. I then contacted the National Blood Transfusion Service and I asked if they still had my records. They informed me that my records had been destroyed as they were over 30 years old. I then asked if that was the case then could I now donate my blood, and they responded by saying that I would be referred to speak with the 'director'. I spoke with the 'director' and he said that from the point of view of HIV and Hepatitis C Virus (HCV) there should not be a problem for me, but that I am now on the list for Variant Creutzfeldt-Jakob disease (vCJD) and so, for that reason I could not donate, as they would not take my blood.

15. Up until this point, I have never been informed of the possibility of being at risk of vCJD, and this was thirty years after my blood transfusion. It was soon after this, that I got in touch with the Inquiry.
16. I contacted the Inquiry in the first part of 2019 and I completed my Expression of Interest form with a view to providing a statement on 2<sup>nd</sup> May 2019.
17. On 10<sup>th</sup> May 2019 I received a letter from an Investigator on the Inquiry named Ian Williamson. We had engaged a series of correspondence via email, in which Mr Williamson explained that without being tested we had no basis upon which to take a statement. I told him that all efforts I had made to be tested had been refused. Subsequently, Mr Williamson provided me with a generic letter from the Inquiry to hand to my GP in order for me to get a blood test, covering relevant infections.
18. After years of being refused testing from medical professionals, I presented this letter to the receptionist of my GP, and a test was carried out by the practice nurse immediately.
19. I was tested for HIV, HCV and vCJD, however when I was undergoing the blood test I was actually informed by the nurse that they could not test for vCJD.
20. I had to wait a week for the results to return and thankfully, I was informed that I am clear of HIV, HCV and also vCJD, which was confusing as I was initially told could not be tested for vCJD.

### **Section 3: Impact**

21. I have lived the last 33 years under the shadow of wondering whether I had an infection from the contaminated blood I was given.

22. I lived not knowing whether I could have passed infections onto others, and that I may have passed on the infection through a blood donation following the time between the transfusion and receiving the letter from the National Blood Transfusion Service. Consequently, these have been very concerning thoughts for me.

### **Section 4: Treatment/Care/Support**

23. I faced many difficulties and obstacles in obtaining a test in consequence of being told I could be infected.

24. In fact, it was never suggested to me by National Blood Transfusion Service, or my GP that I would be tested for infections. However, I have asked my GP on a number of occasions to be tested for infections.

25. Furthermore, I have changed my GP many times over the years with the hope that I would be referred for testing, but none of them have.

26. I have written a record of the GP surgery's that I have been attached to where I have requested testing and been refused. However, I cannot remember the names of all GP's involved.

27. All of my life up until July 2012, I was registered with Whitehall Medical Practice, Morton Gardens, Rugby CV21 3AQ. It was here that I first requested testing and was refused by Dr Kilvert and Dr Jackoby.

28. Between July 2012 and 2013, I was with St Peters Surgery, St Peter's Street, Carmarthen, SA31 1AH, and my GP was Dr Westhoff. I do know

that he is no longer working at this surgery. Again, I asked for testing and was told not to bother.

29. My current GP is Dr [GRO-D]  
[GRO-D] where I was previously refused a blood test up until the point that the Inquiry assisted me.

30. I think that it is worth pointing out, that all of my GP's have always said they do not know anything about the infected blood scandal. They do not seem to understand that there are people that have been infected by this contaminated blood and also that people like me have been told that they may be contaminated but have never been tested.

31. I assume doctors to be highly educated and updated with current affairs, so this seems very strange to me. Do they not circulate information within the NHS? I believe the GP's were hiding something, as I cannot believe people with their education and contacts would be unaware of such a scandal.

32. I have never been offered any kind of support such as counselling from medical professionals following my letter from the National Blood Transfusion Service, or even upon me informing my GP of my potential infection contraction following the blood transfusion.

33. I was never given advice on how to identify symptoms associated with infections.

34. I was never informed of the risk of infecting others.

35. In fact, the only information I had to assist me is from my own research and from watching documentaries on television.

## **Section 5: Other Issues**

36. My purpose for providing this statement to the Inquiry is to highlight the fact that I'm likely to be one of many in a similar position, that have not only been prevented from donating blood, needlessly in my case but consequently left hanging, wondering whether they had been given an infection. I was given absolutely no information or support beyond a very short letter declining further blood donations. Thankfully, I may not have been infected, as others have in this scandal covering decades but I have been 'affected' by the ineptitude of a service that possibly, in trying to protect future recipients of blood from the negligence of their own service, have insensitively and thoughtlessly left question marks over the health of people who only ever wanted to altruistically give their blood to help others.

### **Statement of Truth**

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

Signed

GRO-C

Dated

16 Oct 2019