Witness Name: Alan Few
Statement No: WITN4397001
Exhibits: WITN4397002-11
Dated: 21 JAN. 2021

INFECTED BLOOD INQUIRY

WRITTEN STATEMENT OF ALAN SHERMAN FEW

I provide this statement in response to a request under Rule 9 of the Inquiry Rules 2006 dated 24 June 2020.

I, Alan Few, will say as follows: -

Section 1. Introduction

1. My name is Alan Sherman Few and my date of birth is GRO-C 1963. I live in GRO-C Cheshire and my full address is known to the Inquiry. I have been married to my wife for over 25 years and we have two adult children together. I have held several different jobs over the course of my career, but I currently work for a company that assembles machinery to detect cancer in hospital patients. I intend to speak about my infection with hepatitis C (HCV). In particular, the nature of my infection, how it has affected my life, my family and our lives together.

2. I confirm that I am not currently legally represented and that I am happy for the Inquiry team to assist with my statement.

Section 2. How Infected

3. I was born in GRO-C in 1963, but spent a lot of my early years living in various other places around the UK, including GRO-C in Wiltshire, and GRO-C in Glasgow. My parents divorced when I was young and my mum remarried, I lived with my father in GRO-C before I moved to GRO-C to live with my mother and step-father who was a scientist, working at a local laboratory. I moved up north to GRO-C when I was about 18 years old. Once I had moved to GRO-C, I would ride my scooter down to GRO-C to see my friends almost every weekend – it was an eight-hour journey. I still had plenty of friends down in GRO-C and I also remained in a relationship with a girl down there.

4. On 4 January 1985, just after the Christmas of that year I was in GRO-C, I had been staying with my girlfriend and I was taking her to work on my scooter. We were riding down GRO-C, a car turned onto the road in front of me and I struck the front left-hand side wheel. Because cars in those days were rigid and solid, unlike more modern cars that are designed to crumple upon impact, I went straight over my handlebars and onto the bonnet of the car, with my head going through the car's windscreen.

5. My girlfriend broke her tibia and fibula. Unlike me, she was conscious after the collision and, as luck would have it, an ambulance was coming down the road in the opposite direction and was able to attend to us both. She told me afterwards that they had remarked of me, "It doesn't look like he'll make it." As I went through the windscreen, I cut my neck, giving me a 'Dracula love-bite' type scar. One of my knees was cut open and the other was broken by it hitting into the car's hood ornament, it was a Humber Huskey. I also had a broken hip and significant internal damage. I can't remember the exact areas of internal damage that I suffered, but I believe that there were many small ruptures that caused a lot of bleeding internally.

6. I was taken to A&E at Queen Alexandra Hospital (QAH) in Portsmouth and went straight into the operating theatre. They dived straight in; I now have a lengthy scar running from the central base of my rib cage, to the top of my pubic region as they needed to perform internal surgery. To my dismay, they had to cut through my favourite jeans and leather jacket. Luckily, I was also wearing the best motorcycle helmet available at the time, the Stadium Achilles. I was told that if I hadn't been

wearing it, I would have either been killed instantly or left in a permanent vegetative state. Even with the helmet, I suffered a considerable amount of brain damage, concentrated on the top of my head. My medical records show that I received four pints of blood whilst in the operating theatre. **WITN4397002; WITN4397003**

7. This brain damage has caused me a lot of problems throughout my life. In fact, it causes me problems every single day. I have issues with my short-term memory; I am terrible at remembering words and the names of people I meet and places I go. I have issues with recall and if I try to remember saying something at some point during the day, I will struggle to grasp it in my mind until I'm lying in bed late at night, when it just pops into my head. However, I wasn't aware of the extent of this damage for some time.

8. I was in a coma for several days after the accident, then a semi-coma for another couple of days after that. In total, I spent three months in QAH after the collision. My mum and step-dad came to visit me in the hospital, as did my dad and step-mum. I remember being told that for a period after I gained consciousness, that I had the mind of a three-year-old. I'd refer to my mum as 'mummy' and my step-mum as 'mummy-mummy'. As the weeks passed, I progressed up the ages; the following week I had the mind of a five-year-old, a seven-year-old the next, and so on. I was eventually transferred up to Warrington Hospital as my dad, who lived in GRO-C now, needed to return to work and couldn't stay with me in the hospital. So, I was moved back up north, where my mum lived and had the time to visit me in hospital.

9. It was in Warrington Hospital that my memory began to return and my recovery really began. I can remember being in a newly built unit in the hospital, looking out over the town, and everything just sort of clicked. I knew where I was, who I was and what had happened to me. I remember thinking, "how's my scooter?" I was myself again, as I believed. I had a few friends in the town that would come to visit me and I think this helped. After a while, the nurses persuaded me to start walking again and I began doing circuits around the ward's corridors.

10. When I finally got out of the hospital, I went back to live with my mum in GRO-C However, there was still not a lot of movement in me and I'd largely just sit in an

armchair and watch telly or play card games. I got addicted to the game of Patience and would sit and play it on a tea tray on my lap for hours just playing the game. As the weeks passed, I started to experience some odd physical after-effects. My mum would bring me a cup of tea and, as I picked it up, my arm would fly into the air of its own accord and toss the cup of tea away. I felt like it was my nerves reattaching and testing my body. At first, I would have no idea that was going to happen, but eventually I began to know when it was coming and try to stop myself. I would have to crawl on my hands and knees to get to the toilet initially, but as time went by, I noticed that my brain was gradually retaking control of those damaged areas.

11. Because I was just sitting in the house all day, even though it was the middle of the summer months, I'd get really cold and our heating bill was huge. This in turn had a financial impact on my mother and step-father, which I was unaware of at the time. The damage to my brain could also mean I was very abrupt and short and this often upset my mum; it put a real strain on her and my step-dad. I also suffered some depression after my accident, which wasn't treated at all. None of it was helped by the fact that, as soon as I left the hospital, there was no further support of any kind offered to me. There was no physiotherapy, no counselling, no support given to my parents to help with my care. All in all, my recovery lasted about a year.

12. I initiated a claim for compensation against the driver of the car. By sheer chance, the solicitor that we chose to represent us was a former neighbour from down in GRO-C. He worked for Brutton & Co Solicitors, which is also based there. On three separate occasions, to myself, my mum and my dad, the solicitor stated that he expected us to be awarded about £50,000. At a meeting some time later, he suddenly dropped this to £8000 and denied ever saying it would be fifty thousand. We didn't know at the time, but it turned out that the solicitors firm representing the driver of the car had offered my solicitor a job and I suspect that this may have had something to do with the revised estimate. Brutton Solicitors did set me up with another representative and I was ultimately awarded £35,000. A friend of mine also had an accident similar to mine, but he only suffered minor internal damage and a broken knee. Because he was employed at the time and could claim for loss of earnings, he won £95,000. I felt so miffed. I really don't like the Americanised culture of compensation, but it felt like I was being told that my suffering wasn't worth as

much as his. In reality my injuries were much worse, but he got more than I did just because he had a job and I didn't. Where's the sense in that?

13. What I also hadn't been told was that the interim payments I had received contributed to the whole final compensation sum and I had been spending the money, so in a short space of time it had all gone.

14. It was during the course of this litigation that I actually learned the true extent of my brain damage. I went to a psychiatric hospital in Warrington for a head scan, presumably to produce some medical evidence for the claim. Before this, I hadn't been made aware of how damaged my brain really was. It just wasn't ever explained to me. I was classed as disabled for a while after my accident, or as an 'invalid' as it was referred to at the time, and was entitled to some benefits and financial support as a result of my reduced mobility. I only learned recently that the damage to my brain means that I could have been classed in the same way ever since. I could have been claiming for money for a car, help with my bills etc. But I wasn't told anything about it, so I got nothing.

15. When I was finally able to work again, I held several jobs for a number of years before getting a job at Daresbury Laboratories in Cheshire. My step-dad was working there at the time and helped me get a decent job at the Labs. I worked there for 13 years in total.

16. When working at Daresbury Laboratory, there was a blood donation vehicle that would come around to the site every so often and take donations from the workers there. I thought I would become a donor and registered to donate. My life was essentially saved by having received a blood transfusion following my accident and I thought the least I could do to give something back was become a donor myself. I was quite scared of needles and medical procedures generally before my accident, but the treatment I received afterwards broke my phobia and I was able to face the thought of giving blood, so I gave my first donation, I am unable to recall the date but this would have been sometime in the 90s.

17. I think it was shortly after my first donation, I think about three months later, that I went to donate again. A few weeks after I donated, I received a letter telling me not

to donate any more blood and advising me to make an appointment with my GP. Of course, I was a little bit concerned when I read this letter, but it didn't faze me too much. I don't think that the letter mentioned HCV, it just told me to speak to my doctor. I wasn't experiencing any symptoms at all, so didn't really think that there was much to worry about. I made an appointment straight away.

18. When I got to my GP surgery, the doctor sat me down and gave me the news face to face. The donation I had given had been rejected on the basis of a positive hepatitis C test result. When he told me he wasn't at all abrupt and I think he handled it just fine. It did come as a bit of a shock, but I don't remember being overly worried after I received my diagnosis. Not too much was known about it at the time and, if I remember correctly, it is much easier to pass on hepatitis A & B. He gave me a few leaflets and maybe advised me about the low risks of sexual transmission and that was it.

19. I think I did make a link in my head between the diagnosis and the transfusion I received after my accident. It was the only time that anything had happened with my blood, so I assumed that it must have been then. My job at Daresbury Labs involved exposure to possible unsanitary materials, such as canal water. As a result, we sometimes got jabs for things like Weil's disease and tetanus. I may have asked my doctor if this could have had any impact on the test result. Whatever was said at that meeting, I remember not being too concerned so I think he assured me that it wasn't something to worry about too much.

20. I have no other risk factors that could increase the chance of me getting hepatitis via another route of transmission. I have no tattoos or piercings, have never used intravenous drugs and have never received medical treatment abroad or in high-risk areas.

Section 3. Other Infections

21. As far as I am aware, I have not been infected with or exposed to any infection other than hepatitis C as a result of the blood transfusion I received following my scooter accident.

Section 4. Consent

22. I was completely unconscious for several days after my accident, so was completely unaware of the subsequent surgery and treatment, including the blood transfusion. I, therefore, had no opportunity to consent to the transfusion and there was no possibility that the risks would have been explained to me.

23. Though I don't specifically remember doing so, I assume that I provided my consent to have my donation tested for HCV as part of a standard agreement when giving blood. I suppose my blood was probably tested for HIV as well but I have no specific recollection regarding the extent of consent.

24. As I will detail further in Section 6, below, I have not received any treatment for my HCV infection. I therefore, have nothing to add regarding the provision of consent for such treatment.

Section 5. Impact

25. The impact of my initial diagnosis was considerable. It hit me like a huge force. I'm not really the sort of person to worry unnecessarily, but it was a massive shock to the system. I knew a little bit about hepatitis, but not loads. I think one of the problems was that no one seemed to know much about it. I think the advice given to me was adequate, but it's always going to be limited by what was known at the time.

26. The physical and mental impact of my HCV infection is difficult to quantify. I think any health issues I experienced after my accident were simply attributed to the injuries I had sustained in the crash. The fact that I was recovering from a significant brain injury, as well as debilitating physical injuries, makes it even harder to distinguish between the effects arising from the accident itself and those caused by my infection with hepatitis. Because I was not looking out for the specific symptoms that are caused by the virus, as I was not aware at the time that I had been infected, any effects I did feel would just have been lumped in along with the various physical, mental and neurological effects of my accident. How was I supposed to know what

to look out for? I had no idea I even had the virus and was in the midst of a complex and lengthy recovery process.

27. With the benefit of hindsight, I am able to identify certain symptoms that could possibly be attributed to my infection with hepatitis. Years after I had recovered from my physical injuries, I can remember getting tired extremely easily and suffering from persistent fatigue. This is noted in a letter from my Consultant Physician at Warrington Hospital, Dr Linaker. Dr Linaker notes that I believed this to be a result of my busy work life, but at the time I knew very little about the possible effects of my infection and this could definitely have been caused by the virus. My medical records state that it was noted, that I was a 'little spotty' with regards to my liver biopsy results. **WITN4397005**

28. One of the most devastating effects for me personally has been the fact that I am no longer able to donate blood or any of my organs. As previously mentioned, I wanted to give blood in order to give something back after my own life was saved by a transfusion; I would have really liked to have helped to save someone else's life, just as mine was. When I first gave blood through the scheme at Daresbury Labs, they told me that my blood type was A+, which is quite rare. It means that my blood can be used to treat 'neo-nates', or babies in the womb. It was a great feeling to be told that my blood could be used for such good causes. This made it that bit harder to come to terms with my infection and accept the fact that my blood couldn't be used to help anyone. Knowing my blood was so valuable, and that this value would essentially go to waste, was really difficult for me.

29. It was the same with organ donation. There was a little girl that lived down the road from my mum and she died at only eight years old needing a kidney. It was something that was sort of on my bucket list, to donate my organs to someone that needed it more than me. It really hit home when I realised that my hope to save lives by donating my blood or my organs was no longer a possibility. This had a profound impact on my mental health after my diagnosis.

30. No psychological support or counselling was offered to me after my diagnosis. Ever since my accident, I have had troubles with my mental health. I have been on several different anti-depressants over the course of my life. I was prescribed

Prozac whilst working at Daresbury Labs, but these completely zombified me. I wasn't on them for very long. More recently, I have been on Citalopram. I believe that I have been on this for too long; I've been taking it for a few years now. They have tried to gradually ease me off Citalopram several times, but I just kept yo-yoing between amounts – "this is a bit too much", "this is not quite enough". I am quite happy with my current dose; even if it is till the day I die, the benefits of taking it are worth it. That said, I know that I have been on it longer than I really should be.

31. The brain damage I suffered has had a huge impact on my emotional processing and, therefore, my mental state. Before I started on the Citalopram, my emotions were all over the place, constantly going up and down. The medication just makes those peaks and troughs closer together so that my emotions are on a more even keel.

32. Having struggled with the psychological impact of my brain injury since my accident, it was another big blow to discover there was this additional impact of my crash that I hadn't even known about for so long. I was so grateful for the treatment I had received, but knowing that it had given me this infection was hard to handle. The emotional side to my mental health issues are always just under the surface and simple stresses at work or in my personal life can quite easily get to me sometimes.

33. Those closest to me, as well as my relationships with them, were also hugely impacted by my diagnosis. I told my mother about my HCV and it really hit her hard. She was so shocked; after spending so long caring for me during my recovery, it was just another thing to add to the long list of difficulties caused by my accident. You try to reassure your loved ones – "It's ok, it's not doing anything to me." It does help a bit, but the worry is still there. My mother passed away two years ago and this did set me back. I was up and down a bit just before she died, but it sent me right off kilter. I had to go and see my doctor to request a reassessment of my mental state.

34. My step-dad didn't have too much of a reaction, but this is just in his nature. He'd come out with little snippets of information that he had discovered about the virus and this did help me to know more precisely what was happening in my body. It was only a small comfort, but a comfort nonetheless.

35. My infection did have an impact on my children as well, but this was minimal. They know about my health conditions and are aware of what it all means, but it doesn't affect them hugely.

36. I've always been very open about my infection; I can't really think of anyone in my life that doesn't know. I suppose this may have something to do with the fact that I didn't need treatment and cleared the virus myself. I always make sure people know that it is of no harm to them – my honest approach when it comes to my infection means that I am able to do this comfortably.

37. I sometimes feel like I've been cocooned. People are still there; you can see them and touch them, but there is this little barrier there between me and those around me. If they needed my blood, or if I were to bleed on them, I could cause them harm and this has sat at the back of my mind ever since my diagnosis.

38. I am generally a very happy and positive person. I'll be myself at work, joking around and having a laugh, and then the emotional side of it all will come straight out as soon as I am alone. It's always just under the surface.

Section 6. Treatment/Care/Support

39. After my HCV diagnosis, I went for yearly blood tests in Runcorn. They were conducted at a general clinic, not at a hepatitis or haematology unit. I remember the first one indicating that the hepatitis C was active. However, subsequent tests showed that, while I had the damage associated with HCV, the virus itself had cleared. This happened without any treatment; I am still on quite a lot of medication for issues arising from my motorbike accident, but I am not aware if any of them are related to my HCV infection. I was apparently still infectious though, so unfortunately, I still wasn't able to donate blood or be an organ donor, and this has had a profound impact on me psychologically.

40. In September 1994, I had a liver biopsy to check on the progression of the infection. **WITN4397004** I believe this was on the advice of my GP. It was an outpatient's procedure conducted in Warrington and involved a huge needle that looked like a

straw going into my side. I was fully conscious, but they used local anaesthetic so it wasn't too painful. I couldn't help but take a look at the needle as it went into my skin but I wish that I hadn't. It was not a pleasant experience. A couple of weeks later I had an appointment with my GP and he told me that the results were fine. I can't really remember much of what he said, but I know that the results were not something my doctor was extremely concerned by.

41. I don't think that my wife was ever given a test for hepatitis. She certainly wasn't offered one when I received my diagnosis. I had my daughter at the time and I do remember worrying a little about the possibility that she herself was infected. However, I don't specifically remember members of my close family being tested themselves. I also can't remember the exact advice that was given to me personally following my diagnosis. There may have been some basic guidance provided around things such as alcohol consumption, but I cannot recall exactly.

42. I can specifically remember going from positive to negative and that was obviously great news to receive. However, from memory I am unable to recall specific dates or time-frames. I was still, unfortunately, unable to give blood though, which was a real disappointment. I have detailed the impact of this aspect of my diagnosis in greater detail in Section 5, above.

43. Last time I went for a blood test, which is yearly, they confirmed that I am still HCV negative. I still see a nurse regularly and she takes my bloods, but this isn't to test specifically for HCV. I am on a medication that has pushed me towards being a type 2 diabetic, so the blood tests are mainly related to this. Mental and physical tiredness means that I haven't had the time or energy to pay attention to other areas of my health and this has probably contributed to me being borderline diabetic.

44. Having apparently cleared the virus naturally, without the need for potentially debilitating treatment, I consider myself to be one of the fortunate few that has not been extensively impacted by the physical effects of HCV infection. Of course, I have experienced a considerable impact from my infection, which I have detailed in Section 5, above. But I appreciate how lucky I am to have cleared the virus naturally and I am aware of how many others suffered far more than I have done, particularly in the physical sense.

45. I have had no problems accessing dental treatment as a result of my HCV infection. I told my dentist when I first went for an appointment after my diagnosis and he was fine about it. I always tell doctors and nurses in any medical situation and have never noticed a difference in the way I have been treated. I've never encountered stigma in a medical setting.

46. I have not received or been offered any counselling or psychological support as a result of my HCV diagnosis. No psychological support or counselling was offered to me after my diagnosis and ever since my accident, I have suffered with my mental health, for which I take anti-depressants as mentioned in Section 5, above.

Section 7. Financial Assistance

47. I can't remember exactly how I came to know about the Skipton Fund; the name just seemed to float around and just came to me by chance. I was in contact with the Hepatitis C trust, though I was never referred to them by my GP or a hospital. It is possible that the Trust informed me about the Fund. Regardless of where I heard about it, I decided to pursue an application to the Skipton Fund of my own volition. I do find some of the details quite difficult to remember; there are certain things you subconsciously don't want to. However, documents have since come to light relating to my Skipton application and this has helped me piece things together, retrospectively.

48. Ever since my accident, I can be quite forgetful and it can take me quite a long time to get things together, such as the various documents and forms required for the Fund's application. This contributed to a significant delay in the submission of my application, which was also hampered by problems getting my records. I was told that there had been a fire at one of the hospital records department. I will attempt to provide a chronological recollection of my experience of applying to the Skipton Fund and illustrate the process, using the documents from my application.

49. I first filled in the Skipton Fund application form in 2007. **WITN4397006** I can't remember how exactly I received the form but my signature is at the bottom of the application form (page 2), dated 23 February 2007, as well as my initials next to the

date 22 February 2007 (page 1), lead me to assume that it was around this time that I was first provided with the application form itself. **WITN4397006**

50. Two further things were needed to complete my application – I needed to obtain documentary evidence of my transfusion and a section of the form needed to be completed by my doctor. Firstly, I contacted Warrington Hospital, where I was moved to a few months after my accident. I assumed that any records they could provide would include notes from my period of care at Queen Alexandra Hospital, when I received the transfusion. Despite not being able to recall a great deal about this process, I remember being informed about a fire in the Hospital's records department by a secretary there. As a result, I was unable to obtain any of my medical records from Warrington Hospital. When I submitted my application, I stated in my covering letter that I also tried to obtain records from another source. **WITN4397007** I cannot recall exactly where this was from. However, I was still unable to access my medical notes because of them "*swapping filing systems.*" Despite my best efforts, I was unable to obtain any of my own medical records for myself.

51. I then gave the form to my GP, Dr O'Brien from Brookvale Practice in Runcorn, to complete. I can't remember exactly, but I assume that he then returned the papers to me so that I could send the whole bundle off to the Skipton Fund. Sections 2 to 5 are those required to be completed by the applicant's doctor or consultant. As evidenced by pages 3 to 8 of my application form (**WITN439706**), Dr O'Brien did not complete the forms and all of the necessary fields are blank. As noted in his letter (**WITN4397008**), dated 20 March 2007, Dr O'Brien did not, in fact, complete the form as required, as evidenced when he wrote to the Skipton Fund administrator:

> *"Rather than complete your form, as requested by this patient, I have sent you copies of relevant correspondence, together with Alan's last hepatitis C result in 2005. I have also enclosed a list of hepatitis C antibody test results, which date to 1994."* **WITN4397008**

52. The documents that Dr O'Brien provided are exhibited here and include: a printout of my previous hepatitis C antibody test results, which shows positive tests for anti-HCV in 1994, 2005 and 2001 (**WITN4397009**); a letter to my former GP, Dr Horgan, from the Deputy Director of the Mersey and North Wales Regional Transfusion Centre, following my positive HCV test result in January 1994 (**WITN4397010**) and the previously noted letter sent to Dr Horgan from my Consultant Physician at Warrington Hospital, Dr Barry Linaker, in April 1994 (**WITN4397005**). There are several other relevant documents included, listed in the Summary of Exhibits below.

53. On reviewing my Skipton Fund application documents, included were two extracts from my medical records that reflect the treatment that I received from my accident in 1985. I cannot recall whether these were obtained as a result of my own efforts or were provided to me by Dr O'Brien for the purposes of my application. Regardless of their origin, they provide indisputable proof that I received a blood transfusion during the surgery carried out after my crash. The first, which has already been referenced (**WITN4397002**), notes that I received four pints of blood following significant blood loss in theatre. The second, (**WITN4397003**) contains what I presume to be a slip of paper that would have been affixed to the bag containing the transfused blood donation. It has bag number and notes my blood group, as well as the blood group of the donor, both of which are A+.

54. It is now over ten years later, and unfortunately, I cannot remember receiving these documents from Dr O'Brien. It may be the case that I simply did not feel it necessary to ensure that he had filled out the forms. Even if I had, I think it is reasonable to assume that I would have thought my GP would know best and believe that his response was adequate. Dr O'Brien was surely aware of what was needed of him and I do not believe that I would have questioned the validity of his letter. I know, of course, that doctors are extremely busy people and I would most likely have simply assumed that his response was sufficient and would satisfy the Fund's requirements.

55. In an undated letter (**WITN4397007**), which I deduce was written around September 2009, I enclosed my application to the Skipton Fund, along with the documents and letter provided by Dr O'Brien. I apologised for the delay in submitting my application

and explained that this was caused by the previously noted difficulties with obtaining my records.

56. I received a letter from Nicholas Fish, Scheme Administrator at the Skipton Fund, dated 8 October 2009 (**WITN4397011**). The letter stated:

> *"We have recently received your blank application form back, various letters and medical records relating to the procedure you underwent in the 1980s and various hepatitis C antibody test results. In all cases it is essential that we receive an application form completed by the applicant's doctor and I therefore enclose another blank form for you to have completed by either your specialist or GP."*

57. The application form that I submitted, which has been shown to me by the Inquiry, has the words "VOID – RECEVIED BLANK AND THIS FORM IS NO LONGER IN USE" handwritten across it. It is, therefore, evident that my application was not taken further because of Dr O'Brien's failure to complete the form as required.

58. Again, I cannot recall receiving this letter and have no specific memory of reading it. I do, however, remember my response to receiving it. It felt like I had hit a brick wall again, like another kick in the teeth. I just remember thinking that it was a flat-out rejection and deciding not to bother pursuing it any further. I felt like I didn't need any further reminders of the stress caused over the previous two years and I made the decision to put it behind me and move on.

59. Looking at the forms again now, I understand that it was a procedural error that led to the initial rejection. It is very frustrating, however, to know that this error was caused by Dr O'Brien not filling out a very simple form. I appreciate that doctors don't have a lot of time for things like this, but it was hugely disappointing to learn that he hadn't completed the form at all and just responded to my request as he saw fit. **WITN4397008; WITN4397006**

Section 8. Other Issues

60. I think there should be more general public education on the risks of these sorts of viruses. AIDS is a good example of this – it was such a huge thing back in the 80s, but now it's like it was before then. Everyone going around and having sex with others without protection, without a thought about the risks. Another thing will surely come along and cause people harm and it's almost as if we've forgotten how risky it all is.

61. I do think it is quite strange that I wasn't on the shielding list when it came to the recent Covid-19 crisis. There was a lad at work who is on immunosuppressive medication and he was on the list so he wasn't working on the site. Colleagues would say to me "you've got diabetes and hepatitis haven't you, how come you aren't on the list?" I asked my GP about this and he said I was just on the edge of several different groups that were advised to shield.

62. There were some really serious issues with the limited care I was provided with after my accident. I so clearly needed physiotherapy and all sorts of other support to help my recovery, but it just didn't materialise. To then find out the blood I was transfused with has given me hepatitis, and was possibly suffering with its effects throughout my recovery, it brings all those hard feelings back up. I didn't even know what was happening to me, so had to push it all down the tracks that I was aware of, rather than the true one.

63. My engagement with the Inquiry has been a positive experience and I am happy to add my story to the voices of those affected by the scandal.

Statement of Truth

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

Signed GRO-C

Date 21 JAN. 2021

Summary of Exhibits

Exhibit number	Date	Description
WITN4397002	04/01/1985	Extract from my medical records, showing that I was transfused with four pints of blood because of blood loss during surgery following road traffic accident
WITN4397003	04/01/1985	Extract from my medical records, featuring a label from a blood donation bag with my personal details and blood type
WITN4397004	26/09/1994	Letter to Dr Horgan, Stockton Health Medical Centre, from Dr S Majid, Warrington Hospital, showing the details of my liver biopsy
WITN4397005	19/04/1994	Letter to Dr D Horgan, Stockton Heath Medical Centre, from Dr B Linaker, Warrington Hospital, noting that I have tested positive for hepatitis C antibodies but am experiencing no symptoms other than tiredness
WITN4397006	25/09/2009 (Received by Skipton Fund)	The Skipton Fund application form, first section completed by me, subsequent sections left blank by Dr O'Brien
WITN4397007	Undated (September 2009)	Cover letter sent to Skipton Fund, explaining the delay and detailing the difficulties I had obtaining my records
WITN4397008	20/03/2007	Letter to the Skipton Fund from Dr O'Brien, stating that he has provided documents rather than completing the form as requested

WITN4397009	13/12/2005	Printout of my HCV antibody results, showing positive tests in 1994, 2001 and 2005
WITN4397010	26/01/1994	Letter to Dr D Horgan, Stockton Heath Medical Centre, from Dr A Shepherd, Deputy Director of the Mersey and North Wales Blood Transfusion Centre, confirming my HCV diagnosis and removal from blood donor panel
WITN4397011	08/10/2009	Letter from Nicholas Fish, Scheme Administrator at the Skipton Fund