

GRO-C

Witness Name: Michael James Roddis

Statement No.: WITN0914001

Exhibits:

Dated:

M. J. Roddis  
07/07/19

## INFECTED BLOOD INQUIRY

### WRITTEN STATEMENT OF MICHAEL JAMES RODDIS

I provide this statement in response to a request under Rule 9 of the Inquiry Rules 2006 dated 16 May 2019.

I, Michael James Roddis, will say as follows: -

#### Section 1. Introduction

1. My name is Michael James Roddis, born GRO-C 1957. I live in Wiltshire, England; my full address is known to the Inquiry. I work as a Hazardous Waste Chemist. I was previously an Infantryman in the British Army. I live with my wife Elizabeth. I am a father of two boys, and a grandfather of five.
2. I intend to speak about my infection with the Hepatitis C virus ("HCV"), which I contracted as a result of infected Factor IX blood products while being treated for my haemophilia.
3. In particular, I intend to discuss the nature of my illness, how the illness affected me, the treatment I received, and the impact it had on my life and the rest of my family.
4. I confirm that I have chosen not to be legally represented and that I am happy for the Inquiry team to assist me with my statement.

5. I have been advised by the Inquiry of the ability to be anonymous. I have elected not to be anonymous. I do not have anything to hide and I wish for others to know my story.
6. I wish to acknowledge that I do not have all of my medical records and I did not make notes over the years. Naturally, as time passes memories can fade. Despite this I have been able to give approximate time frames for matters. These timeframes should be accepted as 'near to' rather than precise dates.

## **Section 2. How Infected**

### **Haemophilia**

7. I was diagnosed with haemophilia in 1972 when I was 15 years old. 

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8. When I was diagnosed, I went to see a specialist at the Haemophilia Centre in West Cumberland Hospital. I cannot remember the Doctors name but he was very informative and told me everything he could. Some of it went over my head at the time, but it helped. I remember he told me my clotting percentage was around 14%. Nowadays it is around 0.4%.
9. The diagnosis meant that I stopped playing rugby, and took up swimming. I was fortunate I do not bleed at the drop of a hat. I would say it has never really held me back in life. I have never had to self-inject blood clotting factor products. I don't remember the haemophilia affecting me very much then, for example when I was 17 years old I broke my wrist, but it didn't bleed into the joint so I didn't receive any blood products.
10. It is only now that it's starting to affect my life as I have recently started to bleed into my joints.

## Hepatitis C Virus

### Infection

11. On the 24th of May 1977 when I was 19 years old, I was recruited at the Army Recruitment Centre in Workington, Cumbria. During the selection process, at a camp in Sutton Coldfield I underwent three days of physical exams and three days of written exams. I did well enough in the exams I had the option of joining any branch of the armed forces including the Coldstream Guards, despite this I chose to join my local regiment.
12. I then spent three weeks at Catterick Garrison, where I was tested and bled extensively. I was approved to join the Army and completed six months basic training in GRO-C I then joined my regiment (The King's Own Royal Border Regiment) at GRO-C
13. Around this time I needed two or three wisdom teeth extracted. I went to the Army Dentist and told him I would need to have Factor IX as a precaution to stop me bleeding. I knew I needed something as a precaution from what the Doctor at West Cumberland Hospital had told me.
14. In 1977 the Army Dentist sent me to the Queen Elizabeth Military Hospital at Woolwich Arsenal. They put me on the cancer ward and I was there for six weeks whilst they collected Factor IX from whole blood. I would imagine this came from the NHS, but do not know. They could have got it from wherever they could.
15. I remember hearing there was a massive shortage of blood at the time, which is probably why they were getting it from America.
16. They gave me Factor IX and the Dentist took my teeth out. I believe this is when I contracted HCV.

17. After that I saw a specialist in St Thomas' Hospital. I do not know his name was. We talked for nearly an hour. I remember during the appointment being distracted, by the grand looking Houses of Parliament which were behind this Doctor's shoulder. The only thing I remember from the appointment was that he mentioned something about 'Non-A Non-B'. I don't remember anything else. On reflection they clearly did not know much about as they didn't call it HCV.
18. While I did not understand it at the time, as I learn more about HCV the Doctors comments have resonated with me. I believe it was during my preparation for my dental treatment at the Queen Elizabeth Military Hospital I received infected Factor IX.
19. Five weeks later I went back to my regiment on the 01/11/1978 in **GRO-C** near **GRO-C**. I went into the guardhouse and they told me to see my sergeant who told me 'You're leaving the army Private Roddis'. I knew what was happening because of my health issues. At the Queen Elizabeth they had earlier told me they would have to discharge me due to 'a defect in enlistment procedure'. I believe this was them basically saying they shouldn't have taken me on in the first place. It wasn't a big surprise to leave the Army. It was more of a surprise they let me in the first place.
20. After this I continued living my life working in the building industry, I got married, had children, I went back to college, working and completing my A levels. Which lead me to University to complete a Science Degree in 1997.
21. Throughout this time my health was generally good. I had two operations at West Cumberland Hospital in the late eighties and early nineties in which I received Factor IX.

#### **Information**

22. In 2002/2003 my teeth started to deteriorate. I had to have five out within three years. I went to Bath, to see the Dentist, who was advised on my bleeding disorder by a haemophilia specialist. I was told by this specialist there that I had a one percent chance of having vCJD. I knew about prion proteins from my Science degree, and I knew that they couldn't remove the prion proteins from the equipment.

23. Each time they took a tooth out, they had to throw away the surgical instruments. My Dentist told me it was costing them about five grand a tooth. She said 'I can't keep doing this Michael'. In approximately 2009, I was transferred to the Bristol Royal Infirmary for dental treatment.
24. Looking back, I wonder if they might have tested me, found out I had HCV, and transferred me to Bristol.
25. Shortly after being transferred to Bristol, I was diagnosed with HCV. I got a phone call asking if I could come into the Haemophilia Department and see them. I was told I had HCV by Doctor **Andrew Mumford**. I remember they had long faces and looked serious. It was a contrast to the usual happy team. Despite this I still didn't understand the gravity of it.
26. The meeting was around twenty minutes long and I learned two main things: that I couldn't get insurance, and I shouldn't look it up on the Internet. I remember receiving a two-page leaflet, which didn't really tell me anything.
27. During the discussion the Doctors didn't ask when I got it, or what it meant for my health.
28. I had done first aid for many years, so I knew HCV is transferred blood-to-blood. I suppose the Doctors knew I had that experience so didn't need to walk me through everything step-by-step. If they had, it might have felt more serious.
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### **Section 3. Other Infections**

30. I do not believe that as a result of being given infected blood I have contracted any infection other than HCV.
31. I do believe the treatment for HCV has left me with on-going medical complications which I will discuss in Section 5 of this statement.

#### **Section 4. Consent**

32. I have been asked whether I have ever been treated or tested without my knowledge or consent. To the best of my knowledge, I do not believe that I have treated without my knowledge.
33. I do wonder if I was tested for HCV prior to be transferred from Bath to Bristol for dental treatment but that is me speculating.

#### **Section 5. Impact**

##### **Physical and Mental**

34. I have suffered physical and mental side effects as a result of my infection with HCV. Prior to treatment I suffered from depression and anxiety. I would get either a high or low mood, feeling utterly useless periodically.
35. Throughout the late 1970s, 1980s and 1990s I had chronic fatigue. I could fall asleep anywhere at any time. I struggled to focus and had to rest in the evenings and at weekends.
36. Prior to treatment I would wake up at 4:00 AM and be at work 7:00 AM, even though I didn't start until 8:00 AM. I'd be falling asleep every day at 2:00 PM. I would come home around 5.30 PM. I would fall asleep after my tea until 7:30 / 8:00 PM. Then I go back to sleep. Every weekend I would sleep during the afternoons and all night. The only time I could focus was from 4:00 AM to 11:00 AM, the rest of the time I was chronically fatigued.

##### **Further Medical Complications**

37. I suffer from a Vitamin D deficiency. My liver isn't able to assimilate Vitamin D. I know this as the Haemophilia Team at Bristol Royal Infirmary had a consultation with me and we talked things through.
38. My liver cannot process Vitamin D any more. I am not sure whether it is from the damage the HCV did to me, as a consequence of the treatment or a combination of both.

39. Not being able to assimilate Vitamin D doesn't help my depression and anxiety. The damage to my liver has a ripple-effect on my health.
40. I also have trouble standing up after anything more than light exercise. I can't afford time off work so this worries me greatly.

#### Treatment

41. Shortly after I was diagnosed I met with a Doctor at Bristol Royal Infirmary who I cannot remember the name of, but was more senior than Andrew Mumford and Amanda Clarke. During the discussion she was clear I needed treatment for HCV. I would describe it as being 'railroaded' into having treatment.
42. I say 'railroaded' because following my diagnosis I told a family member about it. The family member disclosed that they too had been diagnosed with HCV but wasn't having treatment for it. Their Doctor was based in GRO-C.
43. I didn't know there was a choice about treatment. My family member advised they had an ultrasound scan and they told their liver would be okay without the treatment. They were advised of the possible side effects that included psoriasis. I believe my family member was given greater information to consider so they made a more informed decision. I remember being told I may need some time off work, as I could be 'a little tired'. I don't believe I was given enough information.
44. It felt like this was done as part of a research programme for the hospital.
45. Treatment began in November 2010 and consisted of a 12-month course of a weekly self administered of Interferon on a Friday and two Ribavirin tablets daily. Despite the treatment making me exhausted I worked full time throughout the treatment.
46. They sent the injections and a sharps box to my house. I would go once a month to the Hospital that had an automated Pharmacy to pick up the tablets. I remember sitting there and waiting for a long time watching this big machine pick out the pills.
47. I remember I used to inject the Interferon on a Friday evening after work. As soon as I took it, I would collapse into a ball. I would say the injection 'hit me for six' all weekend.

48. I had to come home from work during the treatment to have a nap at lunchtime. It tended to be Monday to Wednesday when I was the most tired, as by Thursday the effects of Interferon would be wearing off. Then it would be back to injection on Friday and another weekend of being unwell.
49. Managing the treatment got easier as it went on. I got into the routine, I got better at managing my moods and my family got used to me not being able to attend things. The Interferon was horrible.
50. I have always felt I have got to get on with life. I have worked and have always tried to drag myself to work even when I felt terrible with the treatments. I believe you have got to keep body and soul together. I have got to be very careful these days as I'm quite fragile from the treatments. It is now something I have to work and be mindful of.

#### **Access**

51. There were no real difficulties in obtaining the treatment however, everything felt a bit rushed.

#### **Mental and Physical Effects of treatment**

52. The treatment caused psoriasis to my skin. During the course of treatment I itched all over. I was so itchy I wouldn't be able to sleep. It scratched so much my legs would be covered in blood. Even with no nails I would scratch until I bled. My wife needed to lather me up in cream to try and provide some relief. Before the treatment I had never had any problems with my skin.
53. It made me very grumpy, and tired. I was so moody I could spend several days without even speaking. That is unusual for me because I like to talk. It magnified all the bad feelings and thoughts I had at the time.
54. When I was in a bad mood from the treatment my family wouldn't come near me. I was really quite snappy towards them. Sometimes I would lose it without a good reason. Something very small would set me off and I would explode. I would change from being really nice to being blooming awful and my wife had to put up with it. This never happened before the treatment. Now I sometimes still get in those bad moods, much more rarely though.



55. I missed out on a lot because at home I would be sleeping. On Sunday I would cook lunch then have to go to bed, and wake up again at 6pm. I would wash the dishes, then go back to bed again. I was not able to do very much. By resting all weekend it enabled me to work, but I missed out on family time.
56. I was never overly anxious or scared of anything before the treatment, except maybe spiders! I was always up for a new experience.
57. Now, after the treatment, I'm scared of doing new things. I have to plan things meticulously in order to calculate all the faults and worry about them in order to do it. Sometimes even just driving to work scares me. Before the treatment I wouldn't think twice about it.
58. During and following treatment I was very depressed. So much so, that at one point I looked for answers through religion. It didn't stick, but I was so worried I was worrying about the afterlife. Little things set off the depression and anxiety now, whereas prior to the Interferon I was fairly happy-go-lucky.
59. I grind my teeth in my sleep and my wife knows I struggle with anxiety and depression. I try and kick my own backside not to let myself fall into it. I have to use humour to cope with it.
60. I wake up at 4am every morning; that is the only time I am awake, the only time my mind can focus. This affects my work.
61. I went to Frenchay Hospital after the treatment and they checked out my liver. They did an ultrasound to check the fibrosis. They said that the treatment pushed my HCV to 'below-detectable levels'. Nobody said the treatment would do that. I assumed it would cure me. It turns out it cannot be 'cured,' you can never get rid of it. I did not know or understand this about the HCV prior to treatment.
62. When I look back, I feel I was pushed into the treatment. I saw the same lady at Bristol who I refer to at paragraph 41 following treatment. She said, '...Oh when it comes back...', then said 'wait, IF it comes back'. Again this shocked me, I thought that I would be 'cured.'

63. She told me the treatment is better now, only 6 months. I said I could not go through that again. I could not put my family through that ever again.

### **Stigma**

64. Prior to starting treatment I got everybody together in my office and told them about my condition, the treatment, and what it meant. I said I had haemophilia, been infected with HCV from infected blood, and that for 12 months I would be grumpy and tired while on the HCV treatment. My boss was very good. Most people listened but didn't understand. I felt no stigma about this at all. I was fortunate to have great co-workers.
65. I have been lucky enough not to have come across any prejudice.

### **Section 6. Treatment/Care/Support**

66. The haemophilia team at Bristol Hospital have offered counselling to me. They have been wonderful. The nurses were really good throughout and said 'if you need it, it's here'. I haven't chosen to take it up.
67. The nurses asked me about my anxiety and depression. I told them I manage it myself. I found it very difficult to talk about actually. I have spoken to a lad at work who had struggled with it, and talking really does help.
68. I have discussed with the Inquiry Investigator the existence and contact number of counselling and psychological support service the British Red Cross is running in collaboration with the Inquiry. I have a copy of their card and will consider calling them.

### **Section 7. Financial Assistance**

69. I first found out about the prospect of financial assistance from the team I received my HCV treatment from at Bristol Hospital.
70. During my first meeting when diagnosed with HCV I was told I could get £20,000, I was advised that I would have no problem getting the second stage payment of £25,000. However, this turned out to be incorrect.

71. I had no problems getting the first stage pay-out, once I located proof I had been given Factor IX. Despite having received it multiple times it was only noted once on my GP records. It was written on a tiny piece of paper. I was fortunate my GP surgery found this in my notes. I have received a payment of £20,000 from the Skipton Fund.
72. I remember receiving letters from Mr Nicholas Fish at the Skipton Fund. The letter I received regarding receiving the £20,000 stated that they weren't accepting liability. I also received income top-up payments and fuel payments. I receive £341 a month from the EIBSS.
74. I was declined the second stage payment of £25,000. A biopsy was done on my liver. I was told that my liver function was fine and that was why I didn't receive the second payment.
75. I applied for support under the Special Category Mechanism because my health is continuing to decline. I sent the paperwork to the Doctor on 22/10/2019. It has taken an awfully long time for the Doctor to send it on. I have been told the EBISS received the form on June 3<sup>rd</sup> 2019. I am currently waiting for a response.
76. I feel guilty for claiming money, because some people are affected worse than me. However, I need more support because my health is declining.
77. I agree with the recommendations from the working party; I believe compensation should be enacted for widowers. I want them each to own a house and not be in debt.
78. In a situation like this, I believe it is fairer to pay everybody the same.
79. I believe a payout for my life-changing infection would help me, especially for future things like mobility issues. I would be able to get a bungalow with ground-floor access, with a wheelchair which I believe I'll need in the future.
80. More money would also allow to reduce the hours I work which would mean I was less exhausted, have a higher quality of life and be able to take better care of myself.

### Section 8. Other Issues

81. I have tried to obtain my medical records from the Army but without success, as I think I went through the wrong channels. I hope the Inquiry will be able to request them on my behalf.
82. I believe that somebody knew there was a chance the blood being used was infected. Somebody made the decision to use the blood despite the risk, particularly with the blood taken from American prisoners and needle-users.
83. I believe Government departments are all for statistics and risk factors. You can make information say whatever you want through statistics, to make any hypothesis work. I wonder if somebody advised the decision makers there was a risk. I would if they thought it was easier to put the haemophilia community – a small section of society at risk rather than risking the entire country not having enough blood.
84. I imagine someone decided we, the Haemophilia community was worth the 'risk' of the possible collateral damage. I believe is wholly unacceptable to choose to place the haemophilia community at that known risk and then ignore us. It was a terrible decision they made. They must apologise.
85. I think everybody would like an apology. The money is pointless for people who are dead. I want an apology and an admission of guilt.

### **Statement of Truth**

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

Signed GRO-C M. J. RODDIS

Dated 07/07/19