

Witness Name: C CROWLEY

Statement No: WITN3396001

Exhibits: 0

Dated: July 2019

## INFECTED BLOOD INQUIRY

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### FIRST WRITTEN STATEMENT OF COCO CROWLEY

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I, Coco Crowley will say as follows:-

#### Section 1. Introduction

1. My name is Coco Crowley of GRO-C, France.  
My date of birth is GRO-C 1982. I am married and have a two year old son. I am currently a stay at home mum. I have an older sister and a younger brother.
2. I make this statement in relation to my mother, Anna Fothergill, who was born on GRO-C 1948. She was infected with Hepatitis C as a result of receiving contaminated blood products. She is now clear of Hepatitis C. My mother has made her own statement to the Inquiry at witness number WITN3221001.

3. My husband and I used to live in London UK and have recently relocated to France. Living near my mum means that we are now able to help her when she needs us.
4. This witness statement has been prepared without the benefit of access to my mother full medical records.

## **Section 2. How infected**

5. My mother was infected with Hepatitis C as a result of being treated with blood products when she gave birth to me at Hammersmith Hospital in the UK in 1982.
6. I refer to my mother's statement for information on how she was infected, the circumstances surrounding her diagnosis and the information she was given.
7. In 2002 my mother went to live in France and it was there, soon after her move, that she was told that she had Hepatitis C. She called me to tell me about it. I was only twenty at the time and was incredibly shocked and worried about her. I was also in disbelief as to how this could have happened.
8. When her doctor in France discovered the infection, it was already at a high count in her blood. If she had carried on living in UK I think she would probably be dead. She lived with the infection for 20 years in the UK and was never told that she had it.
9. At the time, I did not realise the enormity of a Hepatitis C infection. It was only later, as my mother found out more, that I started to appreciate the severity of the condition.
10. I was not tested specifically as a result of my mother's diagnosis of Hepatitis C, but I had blood tests when my child was born which included a test for all forms of Hepatitis. My results showed that I was negative.

11. My brother was born 7 years after me. My mother was already infected by this time. I do not know whether he has been tested for Hepatitis C.

12. My mother had treatment for Hepatitis C over a number of years and cleared the infection around 2012.

### **Section 3. Other Infections**

13. I refer to my mother's statement for information on other infections.

### **Section 4. Consent**

14. I refer to my mother's statement for information regarding consent to testing and treatment.

### **Section 5. Impact of the Infection**

15. During my teenage years, I remember my mother suffering from gradually worsening depression. She seemed to lose the vigour she had always had. She was always tired. She lost weight. She saw her doctor regularly at the time and I believe she was prescribed Prozac.

16. She was unable to cope with her life in the UK and she had a nervous breakdown around 2000. Her relationship with my father broke down, they closed down their vintage clothing business and she moved to France in 2002, leaving us behind. This behaviour shocked everyone as it was so out of my mother's normal character. She had always been a very loving mother to suddenly abandon us, especially my younger brother who was only 10 or 11 at the time. It led us to believe she was extremely vulnerable and not in her right mind.

17. Towards the time my mother left us, she was very tired and depressed. She was no longer the mother I knew.

18. I was at university in Cardiff at the time. My brother was still at school, barely a teenager. My sister, who is 7 years older than me, had left home and was living in London.
19. We tried to stay in touch with my mother by telephone, after she moved to France. It was a year before I saw her again. It was a very hard time on the whole family. I went home as often as I could, to support my brother and my dad.
20. At the time we did not know that she had Hepatitis C. Finding out about my mother's infection and learning more about it has helped to explain to me some of her past behaviour and symptoms.
21. My mother received treatment for Hepatitis C in France. I refer to her statement in relation to the treatment she was offered and any difficulties she faced in accessing such treatment.
22. From conversations I had with my mother, I understood that the treatment she had was experimental. She was worried about whether or not it would work and what the side effects would be. She was going through treatment for Hepatitis C for many years. When she was undergoing treatment, she felt very unwell and she suffered from constant nausea. She experienced fatigue and she lost a lot of weight. She was always slim but became very underweight during her treatment. Since then she has not been able to get her weight back up.
23. My mother still suffers from fatigue and tiredness. She no longer has any real strength left in her and I find that she is only able to manage one thing a day and then she has to spend the remainder of the day resting. She is more susceptible to colds.
24. She rarely socialises as she is physically incapable. She has a few friends that she sees, but it always depends on how she feels. She often turns down invitations to go out or visit friends. She used to be a busy and energetic

person but now she needs a lot of rest. If she does too many things in one day, she ends up having to take the entire next day to recover.

25. After my mother left for France, she was less present in our lives. I have lost a lot due to my mother not being around. It was very difficult for her to come and visit us because she was so tired and weak. We went for long periods without seeing her and she missed out on a lot of events in our lives, such as my graduation from university.

26. After my degree, which was in Law with French, I moved to London to do the Bar Course. While there I visited my mother as often as I could, taking flights from Stanstead Airport. I never really had good quality time with her because she was always so tired. If we went shopping in the morning, she would need to rest for the remainder of the day. Things were particularly difficult during the time she was undergoing treatment for Hepatitis C as she was also dealing with nausea and being unwell. It was hard for her and it was hard for us.

27. Sometimes I feel resentful towards my mother and upset that she was unable to be there for me, but at the same time I am torn as I know it was not her fault and that there was a reason she was unable to cope. My mother was infected when I was born and this makes me feel somewhat responsible. I know I should not feel this way, but I do.

28. I still worry about my brother. He was so young when our mother left and after she left he went through a difficult patch at school. I think it has been hard for him to reconnect with my mother, GRO-D  
GRO-D She has only managed one visit since his now 1 year old child was born.

29. My father was concerned about my mother and upset about what happened. As a single parent, he did the best he could to cope and to look after us.

30. When she was in the UK, my mother ran a business with my father selling vintage clothing and also her own designs. They shut down the business following the breakup of their relationship. She gave up working on her

designs when she moved to France. This makes me sad for her because she was so talented and she had loved working on her designs when she was in the UK. I think she may have worked for a bit after her move but I am not sure. She has not worked for a long time and is now retired.

31. When my mother left the UK, I was at university. I was very upset and it affected my studies. I managed to push through and finish my course but I believe I would probably have performed better if my mother had not moved away.

#### **Section 6. Treatment/care/support**

32. I refer to my mother's statement for information regarding treatment care and support.

33. I was not offered any counselling or psychological support in consequence of what happened to my mother.

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

34. I refer to my mother's statement for information on financial assistance.

35. Neither I nor my siblings have ever received any financial assistance as a result of my mother being infected with Hepatitis C.

#### **Section 8. Other Issues**

36. It has been very difficult for me to come to terms with the fact that my mother's Hepatitis C infection was not detected throughout the time she lived in the UK. She had Hepatitis C for 20 years and it was only discovered when she moved to another country, France.

37. This caused me to lose faith in the UK healthcare system. I worry a lot about healthcare and I question what I am told by doctors. I wonder about what other things have been done in other areas that we do not know about.

38. I would like to know when the hospital found out that my mother had been given infected blood and why she was not told that she had sustained or was at risk of having sustained Hepatitis C.

Anonymity

39. I do not want to remain anonymous and I do not want to give oral evidence to the inquiry.

**Statement of Truth**

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

Signed.....

GRO-C

COCO CROVILEY

Dated

24 July 2019