

Witness Name: Maria Martin  
Statement No: WITN1927001  
Exhibits:  
Dated: 19.05.2021

## **INFECTED BLOOD INQUIRY**

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### **FIRST WRITTEN STATEMENT OF MARIA MARTIN**

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

1. My name is Maria Martin. My date of birth is GRO-C 1995. My address is known to the Inquiry.
2. I make this statement in relation to my Nan Evelyn May Martin, who contracted hepatitis C as a result of receiving infected blood. My Nan passed away on 1st March 2013. I make this statement as an affected individual.
3. My mum Ellen Martin provided a full witness statement to the Inquiry as an affected individual on behalf of a deceased individual, her mum and my Nan Evelyn. Mum's witness number is W1928.
4. I make this statement as an affected individual in relation to the impact on me of my Nan receiving contaminated blood. Mum has dealt with Nan's background, history and review of the medical records in her witness statement. I ask IBI to consider my witness statement alongside my Mum's witness

statement. I will not cover any of the issues that mum has covered; this statement is to set out the impact on me as a granddaughter of the infected person.

### **Section 5: Impact**

5. My mum and I moved in with my Nan in 1997, when I was around 2 years old. We moved out in about 2000 but then moved back in 2004 because she wasn't coping very well by herself. We lived with her until 2011.
6. Living with my Mum and my Nan was like having two mothers, or sometimes like having a mother and a sister. We were all close but me and my Nan were very much together, even if the two of us were having a debate or an argument, if mum came in and took either side we would then turn on her. The three of us living together was never complete harmony.
7. I was a mini me of my Nan, I liked doing the things that she liked doing. She loved to read, not long after I started to read, I realised that I could read as fast as her. We would have races and we would threaten to tell the each other the ending. The prime example was Harry Potter, when I was halfway through she told me that Dobby dies at the end.
8. I never knew my nan when she was well, but before she got really ill, Nan was always out or at her friend Mary's house on a Friday and Saturday night. On a Saturday during the day we would go out together, sometimes to the beach, or to Dreamland amusement park in Margate, she always wanted to do something. At Dreamland she would always say why shouldn't I do so and so? When she was 65 she rode one of the rodeo bulls, and fell off. She wanted to do it so we got her up there.
9. She would drag me round charity shops; mainly I was there to hold things. Sometimes we would go out with Mary, she would stick Nan's scooter in the

back of the car, and we would go on a day out to Herne Bay, or Deal, or somewhere else close by. Whenever Nan could get out she would.

10. Even though there were good times, it was sometimes destroying growing up with her. I did not have a normal family unit, I lived with my mum and my Nan. But my Nan was ill, she was not like other people's Nannies. Other kids would not have to sit with their Nan and help her with her tablets every Friday, put cream on her legs because they were red raw, or have to help her to the bathroom. As soon as I could walk, I was helping her. I hated seeing her cry. It wasn't just my nan who was ill either, my grandad suffered a stroke in 2004 and never recovered properly due to lack of help from social services and a loss of his own will power.
11. When I was in Year 8 a youth worker referred to me as a young carer because one of my friends had blabbed to her about what I did for my Nan. The Youth Worker encouraged me to take some respite. I did not see what I was doing as being a young carer, I had watched Children in Need and I knew what that meant. I did not like being called a young carer and I hated people saying that they admired me, it was just my life.
12. From a very young age I wanted to know everything that was happening with my Nan and with her health. I knew that at some point she was not going to be around anymore and as I grew up this terrified me. I was not told everything all the time, and as I was incredibly close to her I could not understand why I was not being told certain things, I felt that I deserved to know. Age has given me perspective on this, I am glad I did not know everything because what I knew and what I did was too much for my child brain to deal with. From the age of about 6 or 7 years old I demanded to be told everything but, in a way, hearing these things made me an adult when I was still a child. I grew up in an adult world with very adult topics, and I would get in trouble at school for acting older than my years. It is only through growing up I now understand the implications of learning and seeing all that I did at such a young age.

13. I was a very angry child. I now know, this was for a number of reasons but I think a majority of this was because of seeing Nanny being so ill and finding this difficult to understand and to express my feelings. Growing up with someone who is always ill can be very confusing, I never felt it was okay to say I didn't feel well or couldn't do something because Nan was definitely worse off and therefore I could not complain. However, I was very accident prone as a child.
14. I did have counselling when I was in primary school and in my early teens, and grief counselling when nan passed in my late teens. When I was in primary school I had anger management counselling where they asked me to draw my feelings out with a red crayon. I threw the red crayon at them, they never understood what my life was like, but then again neither did I.
15. We would visit the Haemophilia Centre and Kent and Canterbury frequently for Nan, for me or for my mum. My mum and I both have haemophilia A but for many years we were told we were carriers.. The Haemophilia Centre became a little bit of a form of support. There were parties there and my nurse, Della was always there for me. Della knew I was interested in medicine, as I was always around it, so would let me watch when she took blood from nan and kept me busy through all the closed door meetings Dr Mark Winter had with my mum and nan.
16. I did not like going to school because I did not like leaving my Nan. This started from year 6 onwards. Sometimes she would say that she needed me at home because she knew that I did not want to go in. There were times when I did go to school and she would become ill and go to hospital and the school didn't tell me, they never understood with nan a trip to hospital did mean life or death. I would just lose it when this happened. I did get into trouble at school sometimes. Not many people at the school, I felt knew what was going on at home, all they saw was a child who hated going to school and got angry but was also very intelligent. In all my classes I got the top grades even throughout secondary school. This puzzled my teachers as my attendance was so poor.

Only a few teachers throughout secondary school understood my situation and they accommodated for that.

17. Because I didn't like going to school my Nan would find other ways to teach me. Once at school we were learning about the Romans and so she took me to Rome, and to Egypt when we were learning about the Egyptians. I learnt first-hand about these topics. I have come to learn these trips were funded through charities for people like my nan, with Hep C. My nan attended University lectures and courses on mathematics and the universe. The professor very kindly let me attend as well on occasion and on the field trips to see the night sky. I was doing university level algebra with the professor whilst my peers were struggling with GCSE maths. I failed my maths exam at GCSE level on purpose so I could stay with my maths teacher another year. When I did pass, I passed with full marks.
18. My attendance at school was really bad, but my grades were good, and I took my GCSEs a year early. Nan was really unwell when I took my A Levels but I managed to get an application in for University on the day that the applications were due. I was offered an unconditional place at the University of Hertfordshire to study law. Since leaving university I have found a job as a paralegal working in a law firm.
19. I am now a fee earner, and I hold cases in both asylum and adult social care in a wide variety of areas, including judicial review applications, age assessment challenges, and Court of Protection proceedings relating to deprivation of liberty, and financial deputyships. I help provide training to the client in relation to practice, procedure and law around Human Rights Act assessments and age assessments. I am gaining experience of effectively defending pre-action challenges to decisions relating to unaccompanied asylum seeking children, 21a Mental Capacity Act 2005 challenges and conducting legal matters efficiently, advising and instructing counsel in Court of Protection and in the High Court and Upper Tribunal of the Immigration and Asylum chamber. I am

studying for my LPC and Masters and hope to fully qualify into this area. The hope is I will one day be the lead lawyer of the asylum aspect of my team.

20. I was with my Nan so much when I was growing up that I did not spend much time with kids my own age. I became a bit of a recluse, all of the things that other kids were doing or were worried about seemed insignificant to me, I felt that I had bigger things to worry about. I still am very happy in my own company. When I left school in the summer of 2013 after my nan's passing, I had my party year like everyone else but when I got to University I just got on with my work. All the going out and parties didn't really interest me, I felt that I had been there and done that. I became the mum of the dorm and looked after everyone else. I started to find who I was and what I was called to do. As a carer, daughter and granddaughter I had not yet had this opportunity to find out who I was.
21. Sometimes I experienced the stigma around Hep C when I was with my Nan, there were times that I hugged and kissed her and people would pull faces or say something. They just did not understand. This would really upset Nan. Her close friends knew that they couldn't catch it from her, she explained it to them fully and the people that mattered looked it up themselves. Even when I went to University I faced people's ignorance when I tried to explain what had happened to my Nan. It was difficult to find people who understood.
22. Nan was upset that the rest of the family would not talk to her because she had not died quick enough or if they said something to me and Mum about her having Hep C. Nan was intelligent; she knew what people were saying about her.
23. In 2011 my mum and I moved out of Nan's house and to Ashford. I hated being away from my Nan and would go and see whenever I could but as she got sicker, her personality changed, and these visits grew less often in the 6 months before her death.

24. I hated visiting Nan in hospital, I did not like the hospital, and I didn't like seeing her in there. Nan was in hospital so often and as she always got better I started not visiting her every time she was in there, as she always bounced back. The day before she died I had a hair appointment in Ashford. Mum phoned me and said she thought I ought to leave my hair appointment. She said that Nanny wanted to talk to me. I could hear that Nan wasn't really with it, she said that she loved me and then she said bye-bye. She never usually said bye-bye. That was my last conversation with her. I went straight to the hospital but when I got there she couldn't talk anymore. She could hear me but she just could not talk back.
25. After Nan died, I had to have grief counselling. This helped me understand more about the life I called normal. It helped me see and understand the impact my nan had upon my life. So much so that her passing caused me such grief it is suspected this is what caused my fibromyalgia.

### **Section 8: Other Issues**

26. The people responsible need to listen to the damage that they have done. The decisions that were made about infected blood has ripples, it ripples to mum, to me, to what I do in my life, to my unborn children. It will always have an effect.
27. I have recently found out that Dr [GRO-D] the man who was my nan's confidant and appeared medical advocate knew of the blood contamination issue way before my nan ever got Hep C. To my knowledge my nan did not know of Dr [GRO-D] involvement, nor that he was at Guys Hospital where she may have received the contaminated blood. To find this out, know how close he was with my family and that he had any involvement in this has shook me greatly.
28. I don't just want an apology or recognition of what has been done. The lives of many have been ruined. I would like to know what those people are going to do to make sure it never happens again.

**Statement of Truth**

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

Signed ..... 

GRO-C

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Dated .....19.05.2021.....