

Witness Name: Christian Olszewski

Statement No. WITN7217001

Dated: 17<sup>th</sup> October 2022

## INFECTED BLOOD INQUIRY

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### FIRST WRITTEN STATEMENT OF CHRISTIAN OLSZEWSKI

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I provide this statement in response to a request under Rule 9 of the Inquiry Rules 2006 dated 5<sup>th</sup> September 2022. I adopt the paragraph numbering in the Rule 9 request for ease of reference.

I, Christian Olszewski will say as follows:-

1. **Introduction**

1. My name is Christian Olszewski. My date of birth is GRO-C 1972 and my address is known to the Inquiry.

2. At the present time I am separated from my wife and have two children. I work as a Plumbing and Heating Engineer and have recently started my own business.

2. **How Affected**

1. I make this statement in support of my Dad, Antony Olszewski who became infected with hepatitis C after receiving contaminated blood at the Neath Port Talbot Hospital, Neath, Port Talbot.

2. Before Dad had his motorbike accident in 1986, he was a very active, hard- working sociable person and I looked up to him as a role model.
3. My dad and I were close before he had his accident, but afterwards our relationship deteriorated. I am happy to say that in more recent years we have rekindled our relationship and have become close once more, and we see each other every day.
4. My dad was travelling home from work at the Port Talbot Steelworks on the 10<sup>th</sup> February 1986 on his motorbike when he was involved in a collision with a train (a more detailed account can be found in my dad's witness statement WITN2522001). Both of his legs were injured in the accident and his jugular vein was ripped as well as many other injuries. He was taken to Neath & Port Talbot Hospital where he was given approximately 36+ units of blood. It was on this occasion that he was given infected blood.
5. My dad was taken to the Neath and Port Talbot Hospital as an emergency admission therefore, I believe that it would have been impossible for him to have been given information about the risk of being exposed to infection before he went into surgery.
6. Through the transfusion(s) and possible blood product(s) my dad received during his operation, he was infected with hepatitis C.
7. My dad did not find out that he had chronic hepatitis C until he went to donate blood in 1998. Three days after he donated blood, he was contacted by the blood drive and subsequently visited by a person from the Blood Bank in Cardiff who informed him that he had been infected with hepatitis C.
8. I was approximately 12 years old when my mum and dad explained to me about hepatitis C and how Dad had become infected.

9. I cannot comment on what information was provided to my dad about his infection or whether the information was adequate, but my dad's statement submitted to the Inquiry (WITN2522001) contains this information.

3. **Other Infections**

1. To my knowledge, my dad did not receive any other infection(s) other than hepatitis C.

4. **Consent**

1. I am unable to comment on this section, please refer to my dad's witness statement at WITN2522001 for further detail.

5. **Impact**

1. As one of the eldest children of the family, I can recall the physical effects on my dad after his accident.
2. I remember him being very down and depressed and his moods were very changeable and erratic. His weight would fluctuate, and he was very lethargic and fatigued. It was normal for him to be like this for days or weeks sometimes. He was normally a fit and healthy man but he changed to be a shell of his former self. It was hard for me to see him like this as I had always looked up to him as my role model.
3. Because of my dad's mood swings and erratic behaviour, we argued a lot [GRO-D]  
[GRO-D] On reflection, I think my age was also a contributory factor, in that, I was an adolescent in my late teens. Our relationship suffered a lot at this time. My mother would have to step in on these occasions, as the arguing [GRO-D] would sometimes occur in front of my younger siblings, which must have been difficult and upsetting for

them and Mum. It became difficult to keep the family together and consequently I left the family home.

4. I am unable to provide information regarding further medical complications/conditions resulting from his infection and his treatment but my dad's statement WITN2522001 provides the relevant details.
5. As I have previously explained, because of my dad's mood swings, I left home at the age of about 16 to live in a bedsit, as I could not cope with life at home anymore. Unfortunately, I chose to take a different path GRO-C which got me in trouble with the police. I was rebelling.
6. I feel that I missed out during my teenage years. We all missed out on spending time as a family on such occasions as birthdays and Christmases and even holidays. Before Dad's accident we would go on holiday to Butlins or Pontins but all that changed after his accident. After that, we did not have any holidays for about 20 years.
7. I can recall in my teenage years that my parents split up because my mother could not cope any more with my dad. She had to do everything for him. She was exhausted looking after him and us. I felt sorry for her. Mum and I spent some time in a Women's Hostel until such time as they reconciled.
8. During Dad's illness he was unable to work and so money was tight for the family. I remember Mum and I cooking stew for the family. We would live on this for about five days.
9. Over time, Dad and I have rekindled our relationship. Since I have got older, I appreciate why my dad was how he was after what he had gone through.

10. During my dad's illness, I chose not to tell anyone about it. Around the time Dad was ill, I remember the AIDS campaign coming on the television warning people about AIDS. I believed that people perceived people infected with hepatitis C and HIV as dirty. I bottled up my feelings about it.

11. I believe that my performance in school was affected through Dad's illness. I was a bright student and in the top band before my dad became ill. I would constantly worry about him when he was unwell. I feel I could have achieved much more had I not had that distraction.

12. My behaviour in school sadly deteriorated and I was expelled. GRO-C  
GRO-C In hindsight, I should have gone to University, I was certainly bright enough, but I just wasted my time at school. I think I was looking for an alternative to my difficult home life. GRO-C

13. Eventually, I was fortunate enough to get myself and my life back together and train to be a Plumbing and Heating Engineer. I have recently started my own business.

6. **Treatment/Care/Support**

1. I am unable to comment on this Section as I do not have this knowledge.
2. No counselling or psychological support has ever been offered to me personally.

7. **Financial Assistance**

1. I am unable to comment on this Section.

8. **Other Issues**

1. There is nothing that I wish to add to this section.

**Statement of Truth**

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

Signed.

GRO-C

Dated

17/10/22