Witness Name: Claire Denise Boardman

Statement No: WITN7236001

Exhibits: 0

Dated: November 2022

INFECTED BLOOD INQUIRY

FIRST WRITTEN STATEMENT OF CLAIRE DENISE BOARDMAN

I, Claire Denise Boardman, will say as follows:-

Section 1. Introduction

1. My name is Claire Denise Boardman. I am divorced with two children, James and Alex. I was born on GRO-C 1963, and I live at GRO-C GRO-C

2. I make this statement as the sister of Alastair John Britton (born on GRO-C GRO-C 1959) who was infected with the Human Immunodeficiency Virus (HIV) and Hepatitis C from contaminated blood products. He died on 4th July 1993.

3. This witness statement has been made without the benefit of access to my brother's medical records. My mother, Thelma Britton, has provided a witness statement to the Inquiry [WITN1813001]. When I refer to historic

matters the information has been obtained either directly from my mother or from her statement.

Section 2. How Infected

4. My brother, Alastair, had a severe form of haemophilia A, diagnosed in 1960, at the age of ten months. I am informed by my mother that at this time they were told that most severely affected haemophiliacs did not survive much beyond their teens and sometimes not that long.

5. Alastair's treatment as a child involved receiving whole blood, and my mother has informed me that my brother was reportedly the first child to have received Factor VIII. My parents were asked by Dr Rosemary Biggs if they could give this to Alastair after a major thumb bleed had not responded to a whole blood transfusion. This was at the Churchill Hospital in Oxford.

6. My mother suspected that, as Factor VIII could not be manufactured 24/7 at the UK production plant (BPL), the limited supply that went into NHS circulation was prioritised for babies and young children under 5.

7. My brother would use Factor VIII at home. I remember the various treatment vials that were kept in our fridge, which my mum would inject him with when necessary.

8. I am not sure of the exact date when my brother was told of his Hepatitis C and HIV infections or the time that he told my parents of his infection. I do

remember that he took my mother and father out for dinner and once he ensured that they were inebriated, told them about his infections and that he had been told that he only had 6 more years to live.

9. I do not know if my brother took blood products after that. My mother, when looking after him at his house later on, noted that she never saw any treatment vials in his fridge.

Section 3. Other Infections

10. I do not know if my brother received any other infections other than Hepatitis C and HIV.

Section 4. Consent

11. I do not know if my brother was tested or treated without his knowledge or consent.

Section 5. Impact

12. It is not possible to describe the full extent of the effects the infections had on my brother's physical and mental well-being as he did not readily share details of his health to our family. I surmise that as a child, when your parents have fought tooth and nail to save you, you become reluctant to burden them any further. His reluctance to open-up was always, to me, enough to show that his infections had affected him profoundly.

13. The medical complications that Alastair had as a young child meant that he was constantly in and out of hospital. As a result, his education was substantially disrupted, which forced my parents into hiring private tutors to help him catch up with all the lost time in the classroom.

14. Against all the odds, Alastair did extremely well in his public examinations and achieved a degree from Oxford Brookes. He became an accountant and held down a very respectable job, with a good salary. He bought a fantastic house on the GRO-C with his then girlfriend Julie.

15. Not only did he have a good job, but he also became very interested in buying and selling stocks and shares. He bought a boat to moor at the bottom of his garden and a Porsche, which had to be specially adapted for him to drive. He was very successful, and we were all incredibly proud of what he had achieved, against all adversity. Not only had Alastair survived his teens he was now a thriving adult, enjoying life to the best of his ability and coping with all that such a serious condition threw at him. He loved his job, his family, his boat, his car and his many friends.

16. I know that he never really told anyone of his infections, only his closest friends and close family friends were privy to that information. He did this out of fear of being ostracized, but fortunately no-one at his workplace ever caught on. He could work from home and any questions arising from him

doing so could, thankfully, be waved away with the excuse that he was a haemophiliac and that he had suffered a bleed.

17. Whilst I was able to observe how he was physically affected in the last few years of his life, most of the information I have regarding his general health came from my mother who looked after him, even in adulthood.

18. My brother was an otherwise healthy man, until the last few years of his life where my mum had to look after him more and more whilst his girlfriend (who later became his wife) worked. His skin became pale, and he lost a considerable amount of weight. I remember he suffered from a broken hip that never mended and he would get sores in his mouth, coupled with stomach problems. His health deteriorated and by 1990 he was essentially bed-ridden, which also caused further health issues. This lasted until his death in 1993.

19. His illnesses, with haemophilia and the infections he received from his treatment, shaped the lives of my parents. My parents were very active in exploring avenues of treatment for Alastair.

20. The diagnosis of any disease of a child is devastating to any parents, but to be told that the likelihood of that child not reaching their teenage years was catastrophic. However, after the initial shock, my parents researched and found out all they could about every possible avenue of treatment and what they needed to do to ensure that Alastair had every chance in life.

21. My mother cannot remember exactly when they discovered Peanut Flour, but it was mentioned in an American scientific magazine as being a possible breakthrough in helping blood clot. My parents imported this flour, at great expense, from America to see if it could help. I have seen a copy of a letter my parents wrote to our MP asking for the Peanut Flour to be put on a prescription, however this was unsuccessful.

22. My parents became very involved in the Oxford Haemophilia Society, taking on the roles of Chairman and Secretary, raising money for research and sharing ideas about treatment and ways to protect joints and preventing bleeds in haemophiliacs, which was an invaluable contribution.

23. My mother nursed Alastair through every bleed, rarely leaving his bedside, sleeping in a chair by his bed when he had a bleed. She made knee pads to put into specially made pockets in his trousers; she watched every move he made whilst trying to give him as normal a childhood as possible. My mother is a born carer and was so knowledgeable about my brother's condition that she often had to fight with doctors who were not always as familiar with treatments and the best methods of dealing with bleeds.

24. There were continual disagreements between the orthopaedic doctors and the haemophiliac specialists, but Mum was always there to intervene and was often called upon for her opinion. They learned that she was a very

useful source of knowledge and a force in her own right. This was her son for whom she wanted the best possible treatment.

25. As a family, we were of course restricted as to what activities we could participate in, but Alastair was a typical little boy, doing things that any fit and healthy little boy would want to do. Alastair was not wrapped up in cotton wool, but my parents dedicated all their time to ensuring he was as safe as possible.

26. Holidays were always taken in Dorset as they couldn't risk a holiday abroad with Alastair. My parents were so grateful to have the Oxford Haemophilia Centre nearby to where we lived, and they were not prepared to take the risk of travelling to another country with inadequate knowledge of Alastair's condition. We used to go to the same cottage owned by a farmer, year after year, until one year we couldn't go as Alastair had a bad bleed. My parents were upset that the family we had rented the cottage from for many years, insisted on full payment but they understood their reasons too. We never went there again. I remember having to go to Exeter hospital if Alastair had any problems whilst we were on holiday. This happened more than once when we were on holiday, and we also had to cancel many trips and planned days out throughout my childhood.

27. Alastair loved sports of every description but of course he couldn't risk injury, so he was prevented from participating in sports at school and in the community. My father spent hours with us in swimming pools as it was

deemed to be a relatively safe activity for my brother. Alastair loved competition and he found that he could participate in the game of chess which enabled him to show his competitive nature. He was extremely good at it and played for the school team, the county and in postal chess all over the world.

28. My parents made many sacrifices to ensure Alastair was given every chance of living beyond his predicted life span. My father was offered a job in the US, which was an amazing opportunity. After much discussion and research, my parents decided that they could not risk taking Alastair out of this country and away from Oxford's world renowned centre for haemophilia. This was a huge sacrifice for the whole family, but one that needed to be taken.

29. It also affected my two sons, James and Alex, who had a great relationship with Alastair. Alastair taught my eldest son James to play chess, which James remembers with great fondness and Alastair loved and adored seeing them play when we visited or had family functions. Alastair loved children but he was prevented from having them once he had received his death sentence through his infections. My two boys were deprived of their only uncle; James was six and Alex four when Alastair died.

30. Alastair's unnecessary death has had a huge affect on my family. My parents battled to keep him alive, dedicating so much of their lives to his welfare, treatment, and care. Of course, they have missed out on so much

of his life. He died at 34 years of age, with the last few years my parents seeing their beloved son dying before their very eyes. We all felt so helpless in that this was a battle we couldn't help him with.

31. Mum had fought every health battle with him and saved him from near death situations on several occasions with swift action, knowledge and determination. This was a battle no one knew how to deal with, at the time.

32. At Alastair's funeral, his Godfather, a great family friend and Best Man at my parent's wedding, read put a poem which my son James had written. I saw my father cry for the first time at Alastair's funeral; he was never the same person after Alastair died. He used to discuss business with him and exchange ideas, talk politics and history. They were very close, and Dad missed Alastair terribly.

33. My Dad became quite introverted and it was difficult to get him to enjoy life again. In his grief, he didn't support my mother in the way I thought he should. He worked mainly from home as a Corrosion Consultant, giving courses to students all over the world. The courses were essentially the same, but he had to make them specific to certain groups or facilities. Sadly, after Alastair's death, my father would spend a considerable amount of time up in his study on his own, even though his workload lessened as he became semi-retired and did not have a busy work schedule. I think this was the way Dad tried to deal with his grief.

34. He spent a lot of time with both of my sons after Alastair's death and I believe he treated them as a replacement for his lost son. He developed a very close relationship with both of my sons and enjoyed their company immensely. As they got older, he was able to discuss and debate many common interests with them, as he had done with Alastair.

35. Mum always says good morning to Alastair's photograph, but she feels she let him down when he needed her most because she simply couldn't cure him or take him to someone who could. You are not supposed to outlive your children and this is something my parents should not have had to endure.

36. It also affected me. In addition to the pain of watching my brother's health deteriorate, I also suffered from not having time with him, such as when my brother was not able to attend my wedding because of a bleed at the time but we had to accept that we had to make sacrifices and that life would not be straightforward.

37. My family had to deal with many stressful times when Alastair was ill. As a baby I developed, what they thought at the time, was shingles. On many occasions I had go to family members, friends or neighbours when Alastair needed to go hospital, or he needed constant attention at home. This virus still affects me when I am stressed.

38. Now, after his death, I have been deprived of having my brother for half my life, possible nephews and nieces and someone to help me cope with an extremely difficult divorce after my now GRO-C I have also had to cope with looking after my parents on my own.

39. My father had Motor Neurone Disease and needed 24/7 care, much of which was provided by my mother, in her late 80's and her 90th year before he passed away in January 2021. I have had to fight a CHC appeal on my own, on behalf of my father, as my parents simply couldn't do it themselves. My father could no longer use a computer and my mother has never used one, so it was down to me to do all the necessary research, put the appeal together, attend all meetings and communicate with all relevant parties.

40. This has been a hard battle, and one I have had to do on my own. I contracted Covid in March 2020, before any vaccines had been developed and I was seriously ill, but I still had to battle the appeal and try to help my parents as best I could whilst being confined to my home as we all were at the time. It has taken many hours of research, writing letters, asking medical experts for advice and support, filling out endless forms and attending meetings, however, after many months of battling, I heard I had won.

41. My father passed away before we got the final result. I would have appreciated my brother's help in this; his input would have been invaluable. I have sorted out my father's Estate, sorted out all my mother's finances,

her welfare, dealt with GRO-C and I am currently about to close the sale of her house so that she can come and live with me.

42. Of course, this would have been much easier if it could have been shared with my brother. I have also had to deal with my late Uncle and his health problems prior to his death in December 2021. I had to deal with trying to clean his house before he could be sent home from hospital and after his death I had to communicate with and help the Executor of his Estate before the house was then sold which was again my responsibility. All of this had to be done whilst suffering from Long Covid and all the associated health problems. There was no one else to do it or help with it. My son, James, now lives in Australia and my youngest son, Alex, lives and works in London.

43. I also suffered a scare after the birth of my first son, James. When I was a teenager, I had tests carried out that indicated that it was fairly unlikely that I was a carrier of haemophilia. However, when GRO-C GRO-C GRO-C I immediately rang the consultant at Oxford Haemophilia Centre who said that I should try not to worry and that I should GRO-C GRO-C The evening before I went to Oxford GRO-C I heard on the television that haemophiliacs were then the second largest group of people with HIV. This was such a stressful time.

44. Thankfully both my boys GRO-C but I had a difficult experience when I was expecting my second child, asking the Consultant if I could have a test to determine whether the child was a boy or a girl. I explained that the day James GRO-C was the worst day of my life and that by knowing if the baby was a girl, I need not worry but if it was a boy then I could prepare myself properly. The Consultant said it was a bit late to be worried about that. This was disgraceful and I was treated like a stupid little girl. When she visited the ward after Alex was born, she looked at him and said "Oh! A boy. You had better make sure you don't drop him on his head then". GRO-C

GRO-C

45. I also suffered financially at the time. The year after Alastair died, my now ex-husband was offered a job in the US. I was uncertain as to whether we should even take this opportunity as I would be taking my parent's grandchildren away from them so soon after losing their son. It was a difficult decision, but my parents said that they had missed out on the opportunity to go to America and didn't want the boys, or me, to miss out on such a wonderful experience. It was not an easy thing for me to agree to, knowing my parents would be without their remaining family. We would probably have stayed in America, possibly permanently, after the initial four years, had it not been for this.

Section 6. Treatment/ Care/ Support

46. I am unaware of any medical support or counselling that my brother received.

47. I know that no-one else in my family has been offered any support.

Section 7. Financial Assistance

48. Alastair signed a waiver against legal action in the 90s and may have been a part of the HIV litigation in the early 80s. However, I do not know if he received any money for this.

49. Neither I nor my parents received any financial assistance. I am unsure if Alastair's wife received anything.

Section 8. Other Issues

50. Whilst money cannot take away the pain of the loss that my parents and I have suffered, were compensation to be paid out I believe that at the very least my parents would be entitled to receive it as they spent so much of their lives keeping Alastair alive. My parents felt awful because his death was out of their control, and they tried everything they could to prevent it. Mum would sit for hours and hours by his bedside and she couldn't do anything for him. Whilst it wouldn't affect our loss, it would at least ease any financial burden my mother, who is now 92 and a widow, may carry.

Anonymity, disclosure, and redaction

51. I do not wish to apply for anonymity, and I understand that this statement will be published by the Inquiry.

Statement of Truth

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

Signed GRO-C

Dated 29th November 2022