

Witness Name: Raymond John Briggs

Statement No.: WITN7326001

Exhibits: **WITN7326002 - 004**

Dated: 01 November 2022

INFECTED BLOOD INQUIRY

WRITTEN STATEMENT OF RAYMOND JOHN BRIGGS

I provide this statement in response to a request under Rule 9 of the Inquiry Rules 2006 dated 05 October 2022.

I, Raymond John Briggs, will say as follows: -

Section 1. Introduction

1. My name is Raymond John Briggs. My date of birth is GRO-C 1936
and my address is GRO-C
GRO-C Kent GRO-C
2. I am retired and a widower. I live alone. I am assisted in my day-to-day living by my close family friend and unofficial carer, Louise Bell.
3. I intend to speak about my infection with hepatitis C ("HCV"), for which I was diagnosed in 2020. I am giving this information to the best of my memory and knowledge.

4. The anonymity process has been explained to me and I wish for my name to remain on my statement.

Section 2. How Infected

5. I served in the army as a gunner for the Royal Artillery. I completed my national service in 1955.
6. I met my wife, Patricia Lily Briggs, and we married in 1959.
7. In 1977, I underwent a hip replacement operation at the Royal London Hospital (then known as the "London Hospital"). This was fine at first, however it soon began to cause me a lot of pain.
8. In 1981, I had a second operation at the London Hospital to repair the prosthetic hip. They found that the original prosthetic hip had fallen to pieces.
9. This second operation, on 06 April 1981, was called a "Girdlestone operation". I enclose as exhibit **WITN7326002** a letter summarising my treatment before, during and after the second hip operation in 1981.
10. I was on skeletal traction for 5 weeks after the operation. My right leg is now 3 inches shorter than my left leg as a result of this operation. This was a serious and lengthy operation involving the removal of the damaged prosthetic hip and the replacement of the head of the femur. **WITN7326002** describes the procedure in greater detail. I was in hospital for 6 weeks.
11. Aside from these two operations, the only other invasive procedure I have received was to remove my thyroid gland in the mid 1980s. I was diagnosed with prostate cancer in 2004 and underwent successful radiation treatment. I continue to receive injections every 12 weeks in relation to this.
12. My wife was diagnosed with liver cancer in 1989. Her condition worsened dramatically and she died just ten weeks after her diagnosis

with cancer. I do not believe my wife's cancer is connected in any way to my HCV diagnosis. I can say that my wife never had any invasive operations or blood transfusions for any reason.

13. I was diagnosed as a type 2 diabetic in 2017. I enclose my GP patient summary as **WITN7326003**.
14. In early 2020, I attended my GP surgery for blood tests in connection with my diabetes. I believed this to be routine blood tests connected to my diabetes.
15. A week or so later, I received a letter in the post informing me that I had tested positive for HCV. I didn't know what this meant, I had never even heard of hepatitis. This was during the first covid 19 lockdown.
16. Soon after this, I received a phone call from Emma Lloyd, the hepatology clinical nurse specialist at Queen Elizabeth The Queen Mother Hospital, Margate. Emma explained to me what HCV is and how it affects the liver. I understand that this consultation was done over the telephone because of the Covid-19 lockdowns in 2020. I have never actually met Emma Lloyd to this day.
17. Emma said I must have received a blood transfusion at some stage and asked me whether I had ever had any invasive procedures or operations. I told her about the two hip replacement operations in 1977 and 1981 respectively. Emma then said that I would have received a blood transfusion during one or both of these operations. She explained that some blood transfusions were infected with HCV, which was the cause of my infection.
18. I remember asking Emma if I could infect others and she said it would be very unlikely. She explained it was transmitted by blood and she knew I lived on my own, so she thought it highly improbable that I could infect anyone else.

19. I had a scan after my diagnosis that showed I have cirrhosis of the liver. I began a 12 week course of Epclusa treatment in summer 2020. I took one tablet a day for the 12 weeks and these were delivered to my house, owing to the Covid-19 situation at the time. I experienced no side-effects whatsoever.
20. After completing the treatment, I went to my GP for a blood test. I believe these results were then sent to Emma Lloyd. Emma phoned me and said that I had cleared the HCV infection. I have enclosed as exhibit **WITN7326004** a letter from Emma Lloyd showing that I had hepatitis C virus related cirrhosis and that the HCV was successfully treated in November 2020.
21. I continue to have a liver scan every 6 months to monitor my liver condition and cirrhosis. Emma told me that cirrhosis sometimes turns into cancer. I don't properly understand what cirrhosis means, I just know that it isn't good.

Section 3. Other Infections

22. I do not believe that I received any other infections through infected blood. Emma told me that I had not tested positive for HIV, or any other type of hepatitis.

Section 4. Consent

23. I do not believe that I have been tested or treated without my consent.
24. I was not explicitly told I was being tested for HC or anything else, I just believed this to be routine blood tests in connection with my diabetes.

Section 5. Impact

25. I am able to look after myself at home. I have Louise, my unofficial carer and long-term family friend, who visits regularly and looks after me.

26. I didn't knowingly have HCV for very long. After I was diagnosed, I was cleared within a year. I did not experience any side-effects with the treatment.

27. Even with hindsight, I do not believe that I suffered any HCV related symptoms.

28. At my age, I don't get too worried about things like cirrhosis. I don't know how much longer I have left to go.

Section 6. Treatment/Care/Support

29. I have not faced any difficulties in obtaining treatment, care or support in consequence of my HCV infection.

30. I was not offered counselling or psychological support in consequence of my HCV diagnosis.

Section 7. Financial Assistance

31. Earlier this year my GP, Dr Taylor at Bank Street Surgery, Faversham, said I could claim financial support because I got HCV from infected blood. She gave me a phone number and told me to phone if I wanted to claim.

32. I phoned this number and spoke to a woman. I don't know the name of the organisation, nor the name of the person I spoke to, although I think she is concerned with the payment schemes for infected blood. She said she was getting the ball rolling and she is phoning me again this week.

33. The woman on the phone encouraged me to apply for my medical records. I obtained these from my GP practice, some of which appear as

exhibits in this statement and I am waiting for a response from the Queen Elizabeth The Queen Mother Hospital.

34. The Inquiry investigator has informed me that he will contact Louise to confirm if she is aware that it is the English Infected Blood Support Scheme ("EIBSS") that I am in touch with.

35. Prior to Dr Taylor informing me, I had no knowledge of the financial support schemes available.

Section 8. Other Issues

36. I have nothing further to add.

Statement of Truth

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

Signed: GRO-C _____

Dated 1/11/2022