

Witness Name: John Leeming

Statement No: WITN7427001

Exhibits: 0

Dated: October 2022

## INFECTED BLOOD INQUIRY

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### FIRST WRITTEN STATEMENT OF JOHN LEEMING

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I, John Leeming, will say as follows:-

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

1. My full name is John Alfred Leeming. I was born on GRO-C 1950, and I live at GRO-C Kent GRO-C
2. My aunt, Ivy Dale (born GRO-C 1917), was infected with the Hepatitis C Virus (HCV) through a contaminated blood transfusion. She died on 16<sup>th</sup> June 2017, aged 99.
3. This witness statement has been prepared without the benefit of access to my aunt's full medical records.

## **Section 2. How Infected**

4. My aunt had a blood transfusion at a London Hospital following an operation some time in the 1970s or very early 1980s. I remember that she was then living in London with her second husband, Dougie Lemon, and he died on 18<sup>th</sup> May 1982. I believe she had lung cancer and the operation was a partial lung removal.

## **Section 3. Other Infections**

5. I do not think that my aunt was infected with anything other than HCV.

## **Section 4. Consent**

6. My aunt did not expect a blood transfusion given to replace blood lost during an operation to be infected with a virus.
7. In my aunt's latter years, she was blind. She had a TV, but it was never turned on. She liked to listen to the radio, she followed the news, and she was very astute. It really upset her when she found out that the Government and the hospital authorities knew of the risk to patients when contaminated blood products were used on them. She couldn't believe it. She said *'they knew, how could they do that?'* 'Honesty is the best policy' was a phrase she often used and lived by. Her thoughts were that she felt 'hoodwinked'. She said that she felt 'hoodwinked' and that she hated being 'hoodwinked'. She believed that an injustice had been done to her.

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

8. Aunt Ivy was born in Sunderland, the second of four siblings. Edna was the eldest sibling, then came Ivy, then Val and the youngest sibling was my father, the only brother Joseph Ivy was very close to my father and his five children. She didn't have any children of her own.
9. Aunt Ivy and (her sister) my Aunt Val were extremely elegant and very glamorous ladies. They were both very stylish, well dressed and well groomed. She used to enjoy a glass of wine (or two). She (and husband Dougie) would always go out for a drink with my father when they came to visit him. She believed that life was for the living.
10. After becoming infected with HCV everything changed. She was no longer able to have a drink and could barely eat. I remember taking her out for a bar meal not long after she turned 70. I bought her a glass of wine that I didn't know she couldn't have until she told me that she wasn't allowed to drink it. Moreover, she hardly ate anything. Aunt Ivy was never overweight, but she lost a lot of weight and became very frail. She had what I believed to be some age-related health issues, but she most certainly had liver problems that she wouldn't have had but for what was done to her. Her legs were swollen, and her stomach was distended. Aunt Ivy lost interest in her appearance, and she lived on little more than liquid supplement drinks over the last couple of years of her life. My auntie said she felt ill most days and I didn't think that she would live for as long as she did. Before she died, she said that she had been 'in God's waiting room for the last 30 years' and that he (God) hadn't called her yet.
11. My auntie was always very vexed about the contaminated blood issue, especially when more news was coming out about the cover up. A few years before she

became very ill, she asked me to pursue it after her death. She wanted her voice to be heard.

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

12. I do not know if Ivy had treatment, care and/or support. She didn't speak of it and she wasn't the sort of person to be questioned. She would only tell you what she wanted to tell you and then she moved on. My father had the same trait.

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

13. Ivy was a Skipton Fund recipient. She had a savings account named Skipton Fund account with a balance of £4,257.50 we found after she died.

*THE FUND WAS MARKED. HERITAGE C*

GRO-C

#### **Anonymity, disclosure and redaction**

14. I do not wish to remain anonymous, 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.....

2/ November / 2022