Witness Name: Hayley Robjant
Statement No: WITN7430001
Exhibits:
Dated: October 2022

INFECTED BLOOD INQUIRY

FIRST WRITTEN STATEMENT OF HAYLEY ROBJANT

I, Hayley Robjant, will say as follows:-

Section 1. Introduction

1. My name is Hayley Robjant. I was born on GRO-C 1984, and I live at GRO-C GRO-C I live with my partner and our two children, who are aged 14 and 11.

2. I make this statement as the daughter of Keith Robjant (born on GRO-C GRO-C 1961) who was infected with Hepatitis C Virus (HCV) as a result of receiving contaminated blood products. He died on 9th January 2020.

3. This witness statement has been written without the benefit of access to my late father's medical records.

Section 2. How Affected

4. My father had haemophilia A and he was classed as severe.

5. He was treated with FVIII. I was always aware that Dad was being treated with FVIII and blood products. I think he injected 3 to 4 times a week as he had spontaneous bleeds. He had target bleeds in his joints, mainly his elbows.

6. My father was very open about his haemophilia. My Nan was a carrier and me and GRO-C are also carriers. GRO-C. It was very common knowledge in my family.

7. The FVIII came in a glass vial with a brown lid, although he also had some vials with green lids which I believe were an experimental treatment. He used to inject into either his hand or his arm. There was a needle bin in the house which we were always told not to touch.

8. I helped him from the age of 5 onwards, so from around 1989, and I remember having to make up the FVIII for him.

9. My Dad, my mum, myself and my three siblings grew up in South London. We lived in GRO-C until around 1990. I am the oldest followed by my sister, Charly, my brother Billy and finally my sister Sidney.

10. Dad was treated in St Thomas' Hospital in London. I remember missing a lot of school because I had to attend hospital appointments with him when he had more severe bleeds that could not be treated at home.

11. Growing up I was always told not to use Dad's razors. I remember Dad would only ever kiss us on the head or cheek. I never knew growing up why this was, but as I have grown older I believe this was due to his HCV infection.

12. In 1995 my mum was diagnosed with cancer. I would have been around 10 or 11 years old at the time. My mum cleared breast cancer but kept going to the GP with further symptoms. The GP didn't look into her symptoms properly and it turned out she had stomach cancer. It was this that killed her.

13. During the late 90s I used to have to stay at my friends a lot while mum and Dad went to hospital appointments for my Mum's cancer treatment. It was the only way I could get to school the next day as Mum and Dad were not able to take me. I remember my mum would warn me not to tell anyone that Dad had haemophilia in case my friends didn't let me stay anymore.

14. My mother died in 2005. My Dad also lost his mum (my grandmother) in the same year so it was a lot of bereavement for him to cope with. He only had the support of his kids, as his family were not really around during this time.

15. My Dad broke down in tears while the two of us were sitting by my mother's hospital bed, a few months before her death in 2005. I think the stress and anxiety of the entire situation was too much for him to handle alone. Dad told me that he wouldn't be here for much longer as he had HCV. He then went on to explain to me what had happened.

16. I believe that my Dad found out he was infected during a routine hospital visit, I believe sometime in the early 90s. A nurse asked if he was on any treatment for his HCV infection. He was confused and told the nurse that they must be mistaken. The nurse asked some doctors to speak with my Dad and they confirmed to him that he had HCV. The doctors also confirmed that it was likely he had been infected for quite some time. He always described being told that he had HCV as a very casual conversation. As if he was just ordering a takeaway or something. There was no real warning that he was going to hear some life changing news, the nurse had just dropped it into conversation as though it was common knowledge.

17. I don't think Dad found out about his HCV infection until this conversation with the nurse. I don't think my mum or Dad knew anything about this beforehand. My mum was quite OCD about cleanliness so if they had known that my Dad had HCV in the 80s then I do not think either of them would have agreed to have children together out of fear of passing along the infection. I also don't believe my Dad would have risked infecting my Mum if he had known about his infection.

18. I think my Dad was already infected by the time I was born. The more research I do the more comes to light about the situation. I think it's safe to assume that he had HCV from as early as his late teens. He had me at 23 and I think he must have had HCV at that time.

19. He was so surprised when he was told he had HCV. If he had been warned about HCV as soon as the contaminated blood products had been discovered he would have stopped taking the FVIII treatment immediately so as not to increase his risk of infection from contaminated products.

20. I believe my Dad was offered treatment for his HCV in 1995, however he refused this as it was around the same time that my Mum was diagnosed with cancer. He decided that mum should have her chemo treatment so he

had to be as healthy as possible so he could look after my mum and us kids. He didn't believe that the treatment would cure the HCV anyway so he didn't want to take the risk of undergoing treatment that would make him feel worse without any guarantee that it would actually cure him. His priority was his family.

21. I do not know if he was warned about the risk of infecting others with HCV. I would have thought that Mum would have gone to be tested for HCV once she found out, since she had 4 kids with Dad. I do not know if she ever did get tested though.

22. My Dad had a liver transplant in 2008. I was pregnant with my eldest child at the time and I remember receiving a call from my sister to say that a liver has become available so Dad will be undergoing the transplant procedure that evening. I stayed up all night waiting for news but my waters broke at 6am the next morning. My daughter was born later that day.

23. My Dad underwent his transplant at Kings College Hospital in Denmark Hill, London. My sister went to the hospital with him stayed with him for a week while he recovered there. As soon as I could visit him I did and I got to introduce him to his new granddaughter.

24. Once he had the new liver, he no longer had to take blood products as his new liver could produce the right clotting factors. However even after his transplant Dad's health continued to decline, I believe due to the HCV infection. As a family we had to move from GRO-C to GRO-C Dad could no longer handle stairs due to his painful joints so we needed a bungalow. I moved out into my own place at this time but was still close by to help my Dad and my family when needed.

Section 3. Other Infections

25. I do not think that he was infected with anything other than HCV.

Section 4. Consent

26. I do not believe he ever gave his consent to any of the tests he underwent. He was not told when he was first infected with HCV, so suggests he was tested for it without his consent.

Section 5. Impact

27. I believe my Dad went through a major meltdown, from the point he was told he had HCV in 1995. Growing up I just thought he was a grumpy father but looking back now I understand why he was so sad all the time. He was told he had this horrible disease while his wife was dying and he had 4 kids to look after. It must have been hard to know that he had a death sentence.

28. Towards the end of his life my dad became a recluse. He wouldn't get excited about anything and he was miserable all the time. He stopped seeing his friends as often and would rarely leave the house.

29. His skin was yellow for a long time. When he had a liver transplant he had some of his colour return to him, but then when his kidneys failed he went grey.

30. He was always poorly. He complained a lot about stomach cramps, not eating right, headaches. He was six foot tall and broad, but as he grew sicker he was barely bigger than me and I'm a size 10. He was very skinny

and could barely walk up the stairs. Hence why we moved to GRO-C

31. Dad worked at The Daily Express while I was growing up but he left this job when I was about 11. This would have been around 1995/1996. I am assuming he had to tell them that he was infected with HCV but I do not know for certain. I believe he left quite suddenly. He may have given up due to the effects of the infection. A close friend told me that the infection made my Dad stop working, so I can only assume that the infection took a toll on him to a large extent.

32. The Daily Express was a good job back in those days and seemed to promise a long career. I believe he had a pension with The Daily Express. I do have paperwork but will need to go back through all of this. When he left this job though it clearly had a financial impact on us as a family as he had always been the main breadwinner. I am told he was a cab driver for a brief period after leaving the Daily Express but I do assume he had to give this up because he was too ill. I do not remember him going to work so assume he gave up work altogether due to his illness.

33. My siblings and I have had to be carers from a very young age. We have missed out on jobs, family memories and family holidays. I sometimes hear people complaining about not having a third holiday this year and I just realise that they have no idea how bad things can be.

34. I can't imagine what my Mum must have been going through. Not only was she sick and dying, but her husband was also sick and likely to live a short life too. But she had the four of us kids to worry about and no doubt she worried about what would happen with us when she and Dad died.

35. We used to have a lot of family holidays but when dad lost his job we were also going away maybe every 3 years rather than once a year as normal. Then when Mum was diagnosed in 2005 we stopped going abroad altogether and could barely manage local vacations due to her illness.

36. I failed my GCSEs and I didn't sit 4 of them. I had to retake English and maths in sixth form because I had missed exams due to attending hospital appointments with Dad. The impact on my education therefore delayed me starting work and impacted on the type on job I could do. I now work for myself. GRO-C is also a haemophiliac so GRO-C have a lot of hospital appointments and I have found that being elf-employed offers me a degree of flexibility that a permanent employee role would not. It is not easy though and I worry about money a lot.

37. I had to leave the family home as I couldn't see my dad as sad as he was. I moved out in 2005 shortly after my mum died, but I moved back in later for roughly a year after this to help care for my Dad. I couldn't handle seeing him decline so quickly so I moved to where I live now in GRO-C instead of going to GRO-C with the rest of my family.

38. It has all had a large impact on my brother. Billy went into full self-destruct mode. GRO-C Towards the end of Dad's life, there would times when it was just Dad and Billy alone at home.

GRO-C

39. Sidney really struggled as well. She was kicked out of 3 schools and had to go to a specialist school for troubled children. GRO-C GRO-C She is not in a good place and has not been in a good place for years. I believe this is because she lost her mum very young and then lost her father due

to an illness that could have been avoided.

40. I had to sit down with her and Billy and explain mum's death to them in 2005. Billy and Sidney were around 15 and 14 at the time. I also took this time to explain Dad's HCV infection to them. I had to tell them that Dad would likely not live for much longer. Sidney could not cope with death and GRO-C I think she is trying to hide from it all.

41. Charly struggled a lot and I know she still does. She was a fulltime carer for dad towards the end of his life and that must have been so difficult for her to cope with. I believe she has already provided the Inquiry with a statement of her own.

42. I had to take on a lot of the burden of the family and between myself and Charly we tried to step into the role mum used to have.

43. My dad went through a mental breakdown after mum died and he did all he could to replace the loss of my mum. My dad remarried but his new wife was barely around. She would only visit him on weekends and would spend the weekdays elsewhere. My dad knew his new wife through mutual friends and so she knew the situation with him and his illnesses. GRO-C GRO-C GRO-D GRO-D

44. My Dad drank for a year after Mum died. GRO-D GRO-D GRO-D In the end we had to sell our family home GRO-C I am not in contact with her anymore, nor is any member of my family so far as I am aware. It was very messy after my dad died GRO-D GRO-D

45. It upsets me that she gets this £100,000 interim payment GRO-D GRO-D My sister and I had to go through this and we have nothing to show for it. Another family – not a blood relative of ours – has benefited from the loss of our father.

46. I have spoken to a lot of his friends and even his close friends did not know he was infected with HCV. I think only a handful of his friends knew he was infected but my dad kept it all very secret. I have no doubt that he felt shame for having HCV. Speaking to his friends now, they all assumed he had liver cancer as he had told them he needed a liver transplant but not the reason behind this. They all knew he was a haemophiliac but not about the HCV infection.

47. I believe my nan knew that my dad was infected as she made comments about it when Mum died.

Section 6. Treatment/Care/Support

48. I know Dad could never get holiday insurance. When we went abroad on holiday we would always be on edge. He was not given life insurance. When mum died her insurance paid off the mortgage for my dad but no one would insure my Dad.

49. Dad received dental treatment at St Thomas' so I don't think he had issues accessing other health services or treatments.

50. Dad had counselling for around 2 years before he died but I believe he paid for this privately. I doubt my father knew he could get counselling through the Haemophilia Society, otherwise he wouldn't have paid for it all privately.

51. I have never been offered counselling.

52. Roughly a year ago I phoned the Haemophilia Society seeking support for my brother as I didn't know where else I could go for help. I was told that I could get access to counselling through the Society. My brother refused this but it has helped me find additional support for my own struggles. I had previously been paying for counselling privately but I am now able to get counselling through the IBI following my phone call to the Haemophilia Society. I have made an application and am waiting for the response.

Section 7. Financial Assistance

53. I know my dad had a payment from the Skipton fund. I believe this was around £30,000.

54. I know he received payments from EIBSS. I believe his wife now gets these payments but I am still reviewing his bank statements to work out just how much he received from them.

55. I think the Haemophilia Society kept him up to date with what schemes he could access and what support he was entitled to.

56. I did not know about any of this financial support until Dad died. It was only when going on through his bank statements after his death that I saw these payments.

57. He used to also receive PIP.

Section 8. Other Issues

58. My father made a will in 2015 which expressed his wishes to leave his estate to his children only, not to his wife. As far as I am concerned the interim payment should have been paid to his estate and thus to his children, not his wife. This would have been in accordance with his final wishes.

59. I want justice for Dad and my family. I am half expecting to get a call any day to say that GRO-C GRO-C It was not just my Dad who was infected, my whole family has suffered because the doctors did not tell Dad the truth as soon as they knew he had HCV.

60. I want to see justice done for my father and my family. The medical profession has neglected those in need and people should all have been informed as soon as a risk was known. It sickens me that they continued using the contaminated product for years even when they knew the risk. They failed to tell people that they had these horrible diseases and these people could have gone on to infect others. It's horrible to think about. I want justice for all those infected and affected and for those who made these decisions to be held accountable.

61. No amount of money could bring my father back. But the interim payment being paid to a woman who was only married to my Dad for 6

years, just hurts. GRO-C GRO-C My family and I had to care for him and watch him die, and we should be entitled to some sort of compensation for his. Especially when his will states that he wants his children to be looked after GRO-C

62. I would like to see the IBI check that any compensation goes to those who were actually affected by it all, not just because they were next of kin. So children who had to care for their dying parents or friends who had to watch their friends die from their infections. I am glad that payments are being made to people who have been affected but I don't think the entire plan has been well thought through.

63. I do not know how this has been going on for nearly 40 years and nothing has really been done. I feel very let down by the medical profession. I feel the medical profession failed my mother and then went on to fail my father by infecting him with HCV and not telling him.

Anonymity, disclosure and redaction

I do not wish to apply for anonymity and 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: ... 28.11.2022 ...

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