

The Infected Blood Inquiry (Redacted)

7 October 2022

Friday, 7 October 2022

(10.00 am)

(Proceedings delayed)

(10.16 am)

SIR BRIAN LANGSTAFF:

First of all, an apology to those who have been waiting. There were logistical matters to be sorted out, a document to be scanned into the system, but we're now ready to start and welcome all of you to the Inquiry, three of you witnesses and one of you, Gemma, being a supporter for your Mum.

In a moment or two I am going to invite Mary to ask you to take the oath. We have, in a room aside, another witness who is anonymous, and let me say that I will swear him in, but first you are used to me by now making restriction orders to protect the anonymity of those who are giving evidence, and on this occasion we have on the panel Mrs BF and, in a side room, Mr BG, as they will be known to the Inquiry, and in each case I need first, before we start, to make a restriction order.

As before, those of you who haven't been here, please remember if you are taking any photograph or are anywhere where, for instance, your mobile phone in camera mode might catch someone, please just be very careful because they should not be identified or

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the Inquiry and at all times thereafter unless otherwise ordered, and I may vary or revoke the order at any time during the Inquiry by making a further order.

Those two orders then are made. The identities of those individuals are protected. Let us begin then by swearing -- asking you each to take the oath before Ms Fraser Butlin asks you the questions. Mr BG will be joining us, will he not, for the panel discussion?

MS FRASER BUTLIN: Indeed. I will be asking him questions after I have asked Mrs BF questions, so it may be worth having him sworn at the same time as the panel.

SIR BRIAN LANGSTAFF: I will swear him in immediately after Mary has sworn in each of our panel witnesses. Mary.

MRS BF (sworn)**WENDY WOODS (affirmed)****ROBERT ELLINOR (affirmed)****SIR BRIAN LANGSTAFF:** Let us have Mr BG then.

Mr BG, can you hear me?

THE WITNESS: Yes.**MR BG (sworn)****Questioned by MS FRASER BUTLIN****MS FRASER BUTLIN:** Thank you, sir.

Robert, if we can start with you. In 1960 when

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identifiable. It takes quite an effort for many to come to the Inquiry, and we really have to respect that, and you have done throughout.

The first restriction order then in respect of Mrs BF, ladies first, is this, that the name and address of witness W 0855 and any other identifying information, such as the witness's image or a description of their appearance, cannot be disclosed or published in any form unless express permission has been given by me or by the solicitor to the Inquiry acting on my behalf.

Witness W0855 must be referred to only as Mrs BF (Bravo Foxtrot). This order remains in force for the duration of the Inquiry and at all times thereafter unless otherwise ordered, and I may vary or revoke the order by making a further order during the course of the Inquiry.

Now, Mr BG, (Bravo Golf). The name and address of witness W5228 and any other identifying information such as the witness's image or a description of their appearance cannot be disclosed or published in any form unless express permission is given by me or by the solicitor to the Inquiry acting on my behalf.

Witness W5228 must be referred to only as Mr BG.

This order remains in force for the duration of

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you were about 5 years old, you had an accident at home.

ROBERT ELLINOR: I did.**MS FRASER BUTLIN:** You fell, hitting the edge of a brick wall at what you have described as "full force".**ROBERT ELLINOR:** Yes.**MS FRASER BUTLIN:** You sustained some fairly serious injuries. What were they?

ROBERT ELLINOR: I received a big cut on the top of my head and then I damaged my nose and my forehead, and I kind of remember that I had a big turban because I had lots of stitches at my head. Of course the stitches have now -- the scars are now reduced.

MS FRASER BUTLIN: It also affected your sinuses --**ROBERT ELLINOR:** It did.**MS FRASER BUTLIN:** -- and had some impact on your hearing.**ROBERT ELLINOR:** It did.**MS FRASER BUTLIN:** You had ongoing problems after that with facial pain and hearing difficulties.**ROBERT ELLINOR:** I did.**MS FRASER BUTLIN:** So in 1970 you underwent facial cranial reconstruction surgery.**ROBERT ELLINOR:** Yes, I did.**MS FRASER BUTLIN:** Then you had a second surgery in October 1973 to do some further reconstruction work.

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1 **ROBERT ELLINOR:** Yes, I did .
 2 **MS FRASER BUTLIN:** On that occasion there were
 3 considerable complications in the operation .
 4 **ROBERT ELLINOR:** Yes.
 5 **MS FRASER BUTLIN:** What can you tell us about what
 6 happened ?
 7 **ROBERT ELLINOR:** I can tell you about what happened
 8 afterwards . Obviously, during the operation I can't
 9 really tell you too much. I know that after the
 10 operation -- it seemed to take a very, very long time
 11 and after I'd kind of woken up , I was talking to my
 12 Mum and saying , "What happened ?" And she said , "Well,
 13 during that time you had to have a blood transfusion
 14 because you had lost a huge amount of blood ."
 15 I would like to just go slightly back.
 16 During the time from when I hit the brick wall
 17 until -- up until the first operation, I used to
 18 routinely get nosebleeds. So a couple of times the
 19 ambulance came to the house and took me away to the
 20 local hospital. So nosebleeds were something that
 21 were quite common for me. The second operation
 22 I remember I had some very large packs put into my --
 23 the first operation they were relatively small packs
 24 but the second time they were enormous , and I didn't
 25 really understand why and then , about three or

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1 because he kept seeing me , for one reason or another ,
 2 and lots of infections, and he came to see me daily.
 3 I don't know why but he seemed very, very concerned
 4 about me.
 5 **MS FRASER BUTLIN:** But you did recover after that --
 6 **ROBERT ELLINOR:** I did .
 7 **MS FRASER BUTLIN:** -- and life went back to normal ?
 8 **ROBERT ELLINOR:** Yes.
 9 **MS FRASER BUTLIN:** Between then and when you found out
 10 that you had hepatitis C, were you ever contacted by
 11 anyone about the transfusion or followed up in any way
 12 at all ?
 13 **ROBERT ELLINOR:** No, and I could kind of understand that
 14 because I lived ten years in the United States and
 15 then 30 years in Singapore , so my medical records
 16 would have been -- under the basis that medical
 17 records get destroyed , I could understand why they
 18 couldn't find me.
 19 **MS FRASER BUTLIN:** Then how did you first come to know
 20 that you had hepatitis C?
 21 **ROBERT ELLINOR:** Oh, in 2015 I was working on a pretty big
 22 project to build an underground metro system in
 23 Singapore , and part of that work was to do testing and
 24 we had to take a team of Fire Service people to Spain
 25 where they had a kind of a practice tunnel , if you

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1 four days later then , to remove them , I had to have
 2 another general anaesthetic to remove them , and
 3 I ended up staying in the hospital for quite a long
 4 time.
 5 **MS FRASER BUTLIN:** You were in hospital you think for
 6 about two to three weeks .
 7 **ROBERT ELLINOR:** Yes.
 8 **MS FRASER BUTLIN:** Then a few months after the surgery you
 9 became very unwell .
 10 **ROBERT ELLINOR:** I did .
 11 **MS FRASER BUTLIN:** Again, what can you tell us about that ?
 12 **ROBERT ELLINOR:** Well, at that time , in 1974 -- '73/'74,
 13 people didn't talk about hepatitis , they talked about
 14 jaundice and I think that's a fairly common theme for
 15 most people that have suffered from it.
 16 I remember being very yellow and my eyes were
 17 very yellow . My skin was really not very nice . But
 18 I had terrible stomach pains and back pain . And
 19 I lived in a kind of post-war council house, so , you
 20 know, when you were really sick , your mum moved your
 21 bed from upstairs to downstairs , and I ended up
 22 staying in the living room -- it was the TV room
 23 basically , with the fire -- for quite a long time.
 24 Then when that happened, the doctor -- bear in
 25 mind, this doctor I'd known him for a long time

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1 like, and we set up and we did a lot of work inside
 2 the tunnel . That was for about nearly six weeks.
 3 During that time I really started to notice that
 4 things were not quite right in my body, terrible aches
 5 in my legs, back to the stomach pains again , but the
 6 thing that was happening to me that was probably more
 7 prevalent than anything was that I was losing huge
 8 amounts of weight. I'm not a big guy. I'm tall but
 9 I'm pretty skinny. I'm 68 kilos . So to lose another
 10 15 kilos was quite ridiculous. So yes, that was one
 11 of the biggest things that happened to me .
 12 **MS FRASER BUTLIN:** You were needing to urinate at night
 13 a lot --
 14 **ROBERT ELLINOR:** A lot.
 15 **MS FRASER BUTLIN:** -- and it was very dark .
 16 **ROBERT ELLINOR:** Yeah. You know , we're working in
 17 Singapore , running and managing a team of people . We
 18 had a lot of people that were Muslim , and they
 19 routinely would drink -- sorry , not drink during the
 20 Ramadan period , and so it was almost common to have
 21 pictures of what urine is supposed to look like.
 22 I know this might sound a bit funny , especially --
 23 I don't know if they do it in ladies' toilets but in
 24 men's toilets we have little signs , and it goes from
 25 light to dark. Mine went very dark, almost black .

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1 **MS FRASER BUTLIN:** You were still unwell in 2017 and at
 2 that point you went to the doctors .
 3 **ROBERT ELLINOR:** My wife made me go, I have to confess.
 4 Men are not very good at taking care of their
 5 bodies -- I think women are much better at it -- and
 6 she got tired of me constantly needing to urinate.
 7 I mean, it was not just old man syndrome of two or
 8 three times a night, this was about every hour. This
 9 was like irritable bladder , you know. It was like
 10 what's going on with my body ? She finally said,
 11 "Enough. You have to go to the doctor's . This is
 12 annoying me . I'm trying to do my job , I'm a teacher,
 13 a kindergarten teacher ", and she said , "You just have
 14 to do something ."
 15 So I went to the local kind of equivalent of
 16 a GP. Now, please understand , in Singapore we don't
 17 have an NHS. Everything that you do has to be paid
 18 for, normally by your company and your employer 's
 19 insurance system , so you go to that managed business
 20 to go and -- go to see the doctor. So , yes.
 21 **MS FRASER BUTLIN:** That doctor took blood tests --
 22 **ROBERT ELLINOR:** Yes.
 23 **MS FRASER BUTLIN:** -- did blood tests and told you that
 24 you were positive for hepatitis C ?
 25 **ROBERT ELLINOR:** No, not exactly. The doctor was a very

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1 **ROBERT ELLINOR:** For me, interferon had something to do
 2 with AIDS , I think. I didn't really know what
 3 hepatitis C was anyway and he explained it to me that
 4 I would need to take this medicine but it seemed like
 5 was it the right medicine for me at that time?
 6 I didn't feel that unwell. I mean, okay, I had lots
 7 of cramps and pains in my stomach but I could cover
 8 that over. I could take Ibuprofen and all the other
 9 over-the-counter things that would make it go away.
 10 But, yeah, it just had a stigma attached to it.
 11 The biggest thing of all that he mentioned , he said
 12 that, "Oh, yes, I have a friend in India that can get
 13 you this medicine relatively kind of off brand but it
 14 will still cost you \$100,000", which was about
 15 £50,000 . Quite frankly , I didn't have that kind of
 16 money and certainly , as a man, it wasn't money that
 17 I was going to spend on my health care, it was more
 18 needed for my family at the time.
 19 So yes, I just put it to one side , frankly .
 20 I buried it. I took his -- he wrote me a prescription
 21 for an RNA test , which I really didn't know what that
 22 was at the time and -- to go and get a genome test ,
 23 which I also didn't know what he was talking about.
 24 So I took the file, I took it home with a smile on my
 25 face and I put it in a filing cabinet and I buried it.

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1 keen, I would say , sharp doctor. He was kind of a GP.
 2 And he then wrote me a note -- he took the blood
 3 samples. Then he wrote me a note. He said , "Please
 4 go and see this other specialist gastro guy , within
 5 our group of hospitals, group of medical ", and he sent
 6 me to see a man called Dr Monga. Dr Monga then , by
 7 that time , had the blood tests and he sat and
 8 explained to me what the results were. I had high
 9 numbers that weren't right , AFT -- ALT levels that
 10 were not right.

11 He then did the little prick test, blood test,
 12 take a sample, and it was showing positive. So being
 13 the way that the doctor's offices are there he then
 14 sent me to the next room where they did an ultrasound
 15 test and showed that my liver was fatty.

16 Now, at that time , I will confess that , you
 17 know, working in business in Asia it involves quite
 18 a lot of alcohol use, so I thought maybe , "Never mind ,
 19 it's not that, it must be alcohol use". So I kind of
 20 put that to one side.

21 **MS FRASER BUTLIN:** Dr Monga told you about interferon and
 22 ribavirin as a treatment .

23 **ROBERT ELLINOR:** He did .

24 **MS FRASER BUTLIN:** What was your sort of thought about
 25 that?

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1 Every now and again , when I felt really ill over the
 2 next couple of years , I would dig it out and take
 3 a look at it, just to remind myself that possibly
 4 I was hep C positive, yes .

5 **MS FRASER BUTLIN:** Part of the context as well was that
 6 you were due to return to the UK about three years
 7 after that .

8 **ROBERT ELLINOR:** Yes, I was .

9 **MS FRASER BUTLIN:** What were your concerns about , if you
 10 were hepatitis C , what impact that would have on your
 11 job in Singapore ?

12 **ROBERT ELLINOR:** In Singapore , it would have really been
 13 very difficult because , as I've explained , the company
 14 provides you insurance and you need to have some kind
 15 of insurance. It would have also meant explaining to
 16 my wife why my company has taken away my insurance
 17 because , to be honest with you , I didn't tell anybody.
 18 The only people that knew about it was me and
 19 Dr Monga , that was it. So it could have meant me
 20 losing my job .

21 The other thing that was happening at that time
 22 was my platelet count was decreasing quite
 23 considerably and one of the measures that you have to
 24 do every year after you pass 62 in Singapore is to
 25 take a medical check. So since I was a project lead ,

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1 I needed to go to site and one of the issues there is,
 2 if you have an accident -- you know, these are process
 3 platforms and they are up in the air and you fall
 4 40 metres down, maybe you die but, also, the issue
 5 with blood loss will be a big problem.
 6 So they don't like platelet counts. So the
 7 form -- "Are you fit to work?" and there's a note
 8 there that says -- in the one of the medical reports
 9 it says "Low platelet count, please put a mark by it".
 10 So they didn't measure for hepatitis at that
 11 time in that because that report goes back to my
 12 company and that report then ties it to the insurance,
 13 whereas the private test that I had done -- so
 14 I separated them. That's how I did it really.
 15 **MS FRASER BUTLIN:** You have just said you didn't also tell
 16 your family.
 17 **ROBERT ELLINOR:** No.
 18 **MS FRASER BUTLIN:** Why was that?
 19 **ROBERT ELLINOR:** Shock, I think. Shock and stigma.
 20 Like I said, when he told me, I related hep c to
 21 HIV, especially when there was -- when he talked about
 22 the interferon and ribavirin treatment, I didn't know
 23 how to explain to them. My children were -- already
 24 left and come to university in the UK anyway, so it
 25 was just me and my wife. But yeah, I -- honestly, I

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1 the time that I did that, I went to the GP -- that was
 2 August 2021, and then in August 2021 the doctor that
 3 I talked to -- and I will say that he -- didn't
 4 actually go to see him -- said, "Okay, please come and
 5 get a blood test". And he asked me why and I said,
 6 "Because I believe that I might be infected with
 7 hepatitis C". He said, "Okay, so you come to see the
 8 phlebotomist and she will take some samples". Well,
 9 unfortunately by that time he'd left. So now I have
 10 another doctor and that doctor looked at my results
 11 and he wrote a -- what do you call it, a kind of
 12 letter to -- a referral letter.
 13 **MS FRASER BUTLIN:** Referral.
 14 **ROBERT ELLINOR:** That got lost in the system. Then talked
 15 to another doctor, because by that time that second
 16 doctor had now left, so now it's a third doctor, and
 17 she -- sorry, one step before that, may I, because
 18 I need to thank somebody sitting there.
 19 The results that I had came to me through the
 20 patient access NHS website, and the results that I had
 21 seemed to suggest that my viral load was very high.
 22 I didn't know what to do. So I wrote a very nice
 23 letter to The Hepatitis C Trust saying, "To whom it
 24 may concern, I think I might have hepatitis C", and
 25 I was responded to by very nice lady, sitting there,

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1 didn't really know how to do it and I -- a little bit
 2 later we talk about how she eventually found out,
 3 which was really a bit -- quite shocking.
 4 **MS FRASER BUTLIN:** You returned to the UK in June 2020.
 5 **ROBERT ELLINOR:** Yes.
 6 **MS FRASER BUTLIN:** And sought a GP appointment. You
 7 eventually registered with a GP in August 2021 because
 8 of Covid.
 9 **ROBERT ELLINOR:** August '20 I was able to actually go
 10 to -- I was in the process of -- you know, when we
 11 came back, obviously we came back in the middle of
 12 Covid 1 and Covid 2, as they call it. We were the
 13 first batch of Priti Patel's quarantine people that
 14 came from overseas, so we had to isolate.
 15 So the first thing I wanted to do was re -- kind
 16 of resurrect our doctor's registration where we live d.
 17 So I did that, went there, but the system had
 18 completely changed so it took some time.
 19 By that time we're now into lockdown 2, so
 20 things just got extended further out. So by the time
 21 that I actually got a blood test to get what was in my
 22 mind the official diagnosis -- because I knew but
 23 I never -- didn't know -- I only had a prick test, so
 24 I didn't have RNA test, so I don't know my viral load,
 25 I certainly didn't know what genome type I was. So by

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1 called Samantha May, who then pointed me in the right
 2 direction. She said, "I can't give you a clinical
 3 diagnosis but it rather seems that you -- based on
 4 your viral load, that you do actually have
 5 hepatitis C."
 6 So then I went back to, I think -- talked
 7 to Sam. I went back to the doctor, now the third
 8 doctor, Dr Shehata, and talked with her and I said,
 9 "Look, I'm pretty sure that I have hepatitis C.
 10 I don't want to become a burden on the system".
 11 I said, "If my viral load is this high, does it make
 12 sense to get me treatment now rather than later?"
 13 Please hurry. I really want to take the medicine and
 14 see if I can get cured".
 15 So she then wrote a referral letter to the
 16 hospital, which was then lost again. I then went back
 17 to Mid Sussex Council and talked to their referral
 18 service, who immediately wrote a message then saying,
 19 "Okay, please, Mr -- the East Surrey Hospital, please
 20 do something for this guy" and they then wrote and
 21 told me -- sent me an appointment. So by now that's
 22 now December 2021.
 23 That's kind of the sequence of events there.
 24 **MS FRASER BUTLIN:** Then you went to your appointment at
 25 the hospital.

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1 ROBERT ELLINOR: Yes.
 2 MS FRASER BUTLIN: What were you told then?
 3 ROBERT ELLINOR: Erase everything that you already know
 4 and start again. So it was kind of funny because
 5 a friend of mine said to me that -- he said, "You
 6 know, they will probably start again", and they did.
 7 And then the series of tests then, I have to say, was
 8 amazing because it seemed like every day I was going
 9 to the hospital, I had a pile of orders for bloods
 10 like this high (indicated), they were just one after
 11 the other and then started things like ultrasound and
 12 CT scan and another ultrasound and that took me
 13 through Christmas 2021.
 14 By that time, I got a phonecall one evening,
 15 slightly embarrassing phonecall for me, anyway. The
 16 doctor, the young registrar underneath the doctor,
 17 called me on my mobile phone in my car and my wife was
 18 sitting there and I was sitting here and he said "Oh,
 19 Robert, I can confirm you have hepatitis C", like it
 20 was some like Christmas gift.
 21 MS FRASER BUTLIN: This was on speaker phone because you
 22 were in the car.
 23 ROBERT ELLINOR: Yes, and considering -- I must have --
 24 I know -- sorry, no, I must have -- I have
 25 an incredible wife who was very, very understanding

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1 of our journey. You have to be" -- at the time she
 2 explained it in a way and my recollection of it was
 3 that it seemed like I had to be put forward as
 4 a recommendation to take the medicine because she
 5 explained that the medicine was very expensive and the
 6 way that it was kind of put to me was that there was
 7 a panel decision.
 8 Now, the problem Minister that I was having
 9 because of Covid 2 and the high peak of Covid 2, there
 10 were no spaces to measure what genotype I was. So it
 11 was sent originally to Sussex Hospital in Brighton
 12 then eventually it was then changed and sent to
 13 another testing agency, independent testing agency,
 14 I think, and it came back as genotype 1a. At that
 15 point then they could then prescribe the actual
 16 medicine for me. So again, just one delay after
 17 another, primarily caused by the pandemic, to be
 18 honest with you.
 19 But she sat me down, did the FibroScan for me,
 20 explained what was going to happen to me in the next
 21 few weeks and months and years, and she's just been
 22 amazing. She's so helpful to me, explains everything.
 23 We sit through, we look at the results each time. The
 24 day that she called me about my SVL level was
 25 fantastic. She was I think -- I honestly believe she

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1 and we went back home and she thought -- I kept
 2 reading all these papers and she thought I was just
 3 being -- what do you call it, when somebody is so
 4 involved in their medical life -- being a bit paranoid
 5 about what was wrong with me, and I said "Now you
 6 understand why I was looking. The good news is I'm
 7 getting tested".
 8 Then the hospital then referred me to
 9 a fantastic lady called Karen Street, who was my hep c
 10 lady.
 11 MS FRASER BUTLIN: She was a hepatitis specialist nurse.
 12 ROBERT ELLINOR: Specialist nurse, yes.
 13 MS FRASER BUTLIN: From then you had more tests and
 14 a FibroScan but you also got started on a 12-week
 15 course of Zepatier.
 16 ROBERT ELLINOR: Yes.
 17 MS FRASER BUTLIN: You speak very positively about the
 18 hepatitis nurse specialist.
 19 ROBERT ELLINOR: I do.
 20 MS FRASER BUTLIN: What particularly was so good in her
 21 treatment of you?
 22 ROBERT ELLINOR: I think when I walked through the door --
 23 she has a very strong Irish accent, which is very cute
 24 and she told me about how this was going to be
 25 a journey for us and she said "This is the first day

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1 was happier than I was. I think she was amazing.
 2 When she called -- the telephone rang and it was
 3 quite -- it was quite interesting because it was the
 4 same day that the investigator --
 5 MS FRASER BUTLIN: The Inquiry member.
 6 ROBERT ELLINOR: Yes, the Inquiry member had interviewed
 7 me, so I literally finished interviewing with him,
 8 came out, there was a message on my telephone "Please
 9 call Karen", and it was the same day.
 10 MS FRASER BUTLIN: You had cleared the virus?
 11 ROBERT ELLINOR: No, at that point my viral dropped from
 12 20 million to 43 and I remember asking her, "You mean
 13 4,300, 43,000?"
 14 "No", she said, "43". So in half the time the
 15 viral load had gone to almost nothing.
 16 MS FRASER BUTLIN: Having finished the treatment your
 17 viral load is --
 18 ROBERT ELLINOR: Now zero. SVL12 was zero -- not zero,
 19 unmeasurable, I should say. Sorry.
 20 MS FRASER BUTLIN: You obviously had a lot of support from
 21 the hepatitis nurse specialist. Were you also offered
 22 any more formal psychological support at any point?
 23 ROBERT ELLINOR: I was, I was. I'm a pretty positive
 24 person. I think we've met a couple of times, so you
 25 can see that I'm a fairly positive person. Although

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1 there are times when -- I don't know if it's the
 2 appropriate time to talk about it but the, kind of,
 3 ongoing things, the things that I'm now left with .
 4 It's okay the virus has gone but what about all the
 5 things that accumulated over time and that I'm left
 6 with?
 7 So, for example, I can't close my hand and
 8 there's other -- I was described by the rheumatologist
 9 at the hospital the other day as 67 years old but
 10 having a body of a 78-year old internally. So I'm
 11 very worried about the future, to be honest with you.
 12 **MS FRASER BUTLIN:** Do you want to tell us anymore about
 13 what the ongoing physical impacts have been?
 14 **ROBERT ELLINOR:** I started with, you know, terrible cramps
 15 and joint pains and that's when I first started to
 16 notice that the virus was sort of really starting to
 17 come out in my system because, prior to that, I was
 18 a climber, I'm a runner, I'm a diver, I'm pretty
 19 healthy but I've noticed that since -- really since
 20 2015, that things have started to fall apart a bit.
 21 That could be just age, I guess, I suppose.
 22 The problem for me with hepatitis C it's too
 23 easy to write things off. Grumpy: well, if you're
 24 only sleeping about three hours a night, of course
 25 you're grumpy. Everybody is. I think most people

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1 exactly well known in Singapore. Never heard of it.
 2 Really had never heard of it until the very first time
 3 when I contacted with The hep c Trust, and they told
 4 me about the Inquiry and told me about the EIBSS. So
 5 I gathered together as many of my own personal
 6 documents that I could and I scanned all those and
 7 I sent them with my application. So I sent them,
 8 first of all, by email. But what I did -- I come from
 9 a contracting world so copied myself and then sent
 10 them a screenshot of all the zip files that I had sent
 11 to them.
 12 The EIBSS called me and said, "Oh, we need
 13 additional information from you". So I asked them,
 14 "What would you like?" I'd had a shoulder operation
 15 in Singapore. "Do you need information from the
 16 National University Hospital in Singapore?" Because
 17 if it does, I'm going to have to pay for that, it's
 18 going to be a bit of a trek to be able to do it. They
 19 said, "No, no, no". Then they told me -- they said
 20 they didn't need any documents. I said, "But hang on,
 21 you just called me to tell me that you needed
 22 documents and now you're saying, well, you don't need
 23 them." I said, "Have you actually looked at what I've
 24 sent?" And I really feel, even now, that they didn't
 25 really look at the PDF files that I sent. I really

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1 would be anyway. So it's during -- it's something
 2 funny is that during the time of actually taking the
 3 medicine, I felt much better but, since that time,
 4 some of the effects have all started to come back
 5 again.
 6 I have -- the guy was feeling my fingers the
 7 other day, he said "You have nodules", I have nodules
 8 in my toes, I have problems with my L3 and L4 spine.
 9 So I've been taken care of by the Queen Victoria
 10 Hospital in East Grinstead for -- really for
 11 physiotherapy for my hands, my back. You know,
 12 I mean, almost everything frankly. But they are --
 13 again, they are being very good to me.
 14 **MS FRASER BUTLIN:** You applied to the EIBSS for financial
 15 assistance.
 16 **ROBERT ELLINOR:** I did.
 17 **MS FRASER BUTLIN:** You sent with your application a bundle
 18 of documents.
 19 **ROBERT ELLINOR:** I did.
 20 **MS FRASER BUTLIN:** You were then asked for further
 21 documents. So you phoned the EIBSS to query that.
 22 **ROBERT ELLINOR:** I did.
 23 **MS FRASER BUTLIN:** What happened in that conversation?
 24 **ROBERT ELLINOR:** When I first made my application --
 25 please understand that the EIBSS or the Inquiry is not

22

1 don't believe they did.
 2 **MS FRASER BUTLIN:** Your application was refused, and
 3 I just want to look at the refusal letter, at
 4 WITN7082005, please.
 5 If we just pick it up in the middle:
 6 "Unfortunately, your application has been
 7 declined.
 8 "Applications can only be authorised where there
 9 is evidence that, on the balance of probabilities, an
 10 applicant has been chronically infected with
 11 hepatitis C through treatment with NHS blood or blood
 12 products in England prior to September 1991.
 13 "You have provided evidence that your
 14 hepatitis C has become chronic.
 15 "There is no evidence of a transfusion being
 16 administered during your rhinoplasty operation. Our
 17 assessors believe the need for a transfusion for this
 18 type of operation is very low.
 19 "Our assessors also noted occupational exposure
 20 during the 30 years you spent in the Singapore Police
 21 Force could also be a risk factor. Police officers
 22 face elevated risk of acquiring blood-borne diseases
 23 such as hepatitis C from accidental needle stick
 24 injuries. Your dual exposure to Hepatitis and
 25 Hepatitis B supports this."

24

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1 Now, you accepted in retrospect the description
 2 you used on your application form of having had
 3 a rhinoplasty rather than craniofacial reconstruction
 4 didn't sufficiently capture how serious the surgery
 5 had been.
 6 **ROBERT ELLINOR:** No, it didn't.
 7 **MS FRASER BUTLIN:** But have you ever been a member of the
 8 Singapore Police Force ?
 9 **ROBERT ELLINOR:** No. I can't be because I was never
 10 a Singapore citizen.
 11 **MS FRASER BUTLIN:** Could we turn to WITN7082006, please.
 12 Within your bundle of documents that you had
 13 submitted, it included a letter, this letter, and
 14 a form that followed, and it says in terms :
 15 "2. As you have been certified medically fit to
 16 drive, you may continue to drive until your next
 17 medical examination. We will notify you of the need
 18 to attend your next medical examination when you are
 19 approaching your next age limit under the law.
 20 "3. If you are a foreigner, you may continue to
 21 drive until your driving licence expires or until your
 22 next medical examination, whichever is earlier.
 23 "4. Should you at any time be diagnosed to be
 24 unfit to drive by a medical practitioner, you are
 25 required to return your driving licence to the Traffic
 25

1 It's the email at the bottom:
 2 "Dear Jess thanks for the information today .
 3 Appreciate that you are sending back my original
 4 application. Was hoping that I might get back the
 5 original assessment so I can understand why my
 6 application was denied. In particular I want to
 7 understand why had assessor thought I had worked for
 8 the Singapore police Force from the original
 9 information I submitted with my application. Can
 10 I have these documents please or is this included with
 11 the application documents you are sending back to me?"
 12 If we go to page 3, at the bottom, you got
 13 effectively a standard response saying:
 14 "We have arranged for your application and
 15 postal evidence to be returned to you as requested.
 16 "An appeal may be considered if you feel our
 17 decision on the medical application was not justified
 18 on the evidence you provided."
 19 You then responded -- at the top of this page,
 20 please:
 21 "... I think there has been a misunderstanding.
 22 I didn't ask for my application to be returned, what
 23 I asked for was an explanation from the review of my
 24 application as to why my most [probable] cause of
 25 infection was due to my 'employment' as a Singapore
 27

REDACTED VERSION

1 Police."
 2 Then the document continues with a medical
 3 report.
 4 You have explained in your statement that this
 5 is a standard letter in Singapore confirming that you
 6 were permitted -- you were fit to drive in Singapore .
 7 **ROBERT ELLINOR:** Yes. When you reach the age of 62 you
 8 have to have a medical examination, eye test, heart
 9 check, this kind of thing .
 10 **MS FRASER BUTLIN:** After your refusal of your application ,
 11 you then sought your medical records .
 12 **ROBERT ELLINOR:** Yes.
 13 **MS FRASER BUTLIN:** But they had been destroyed .
 14 **ROBERT ELLINOR:** Yes.
 15 **MS FRASER BUTLIN:** You then tried to obtain more
 16 information from the EIBSS about why your application
 17 had been rejected.
 18 **ROBERT ELLINOR:** I did .
 19 **MS FRASER BUTLIN:** You were told your application form
 20 would be returned to you .
 21 **ROBERT ELLINOR:** Yes.
 22 **MS FRASER BUTLIN:** You replied, and I just want to look at
 23 that correspondence.
 24 WITN7082 010, starting on page 4, please,
 25 Lawrence.
 26

1 policeman. Can you please help me with this question ,
 2 as explained in earlier correspondence that I have
 3 never been a policeman and the way I could have been
 4 infected is through a blood transfusion given to me by
 5 the NHS in 1973.
 6 "As to additional evidence as you are aware my
 7 medical records have been destroyed. This has been
 8 confirmed by North Bristol Trust by email which was
 9 forwarded to EIBSS. Would like to have the
 10 explanation as to why EIBSS think that I was infected
 11 as a policeman to include with my further evidence for
 12 my appeal. "
 13 Then if we go back to page 2, there is an
 14 apology for the confusion that's been caused and then
 15 they said this:
 16 "Your concerns surrounding the medical
 17 assessor's opinion on your hepatitis C stage 1
 18 application and the evidence received have been noted .
 19 EIBSS have reviewed the application and agrees that
 20 there is no mention of you working within the police
 21 force in Singapore, which would carry risk of
 22 infection with hepatitis C on the balance of
 23 probabilities.
 24 "This assessor's opinion will be disregarded ,
 25 and we will be submitting your application for
 28

The Infected Blood Inquiry (Redacted)

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1 a separate opinion."
 2 That was 30 September.
 3 Thank you , Lawrence .
 4 Then three days ago you were told that your
 5 application to the EIBSS had been accepted and was
 6 successful ?
 7 **ROBERT ELLINOR:** Yes.
 8 **MS FRASER BUTLIN:** Thank you .
 9 **ROBERT ELLINOR:** You're welcome.
 10 **SIR BRIAN LANGSTAFF:** Did they , by any chance , know that
 11 he was due to give evidence here ?
 12 **MS FRASER BUTLIN:** Sir, I wouldn't know .
 13 **SIR BRIAN LANGSTAFF:** Have you any reason to think they
 14 did?
 15 **ROBERT ELLINOR:** I'm sorry, I didn't hear the question .
 16 **SIR BRIAN LANGSTAFF:** Yes. Do you have any reason to
 17 think that they knew that you were going to give
 18 evidence here?
 19 **ROBERT ELLINOR:** I don't believe so. I certainly never
 20 told them anyway .
 21 **SIR BRIAN LANGSTAFF:** That's all I wanted to be clear
 22 about.
 23 **MS FRASER BUTLIN:** Wendy, you gave birth to your third
 24 daughter , Gemma , who is sitting next to you , in 1981 .
 25 **WENDY WOODS:** Mm-hm .

29

1 like you have when you have a baby.
 2 **MS FRASER BUTLIN:** The ultrasound scan .
 3 **WENDY WOODS:** Ultrasound, that's right -- and I went for
 4 that and I didn't get anything until I received
 5 a letter to say that I had hepatitis C .
 6 **MS FRASER BUTLIN:** Just tracking back , in terms of that
 7 very first blood test that triggered the referrals,
 8 why did you have that first blood test at the GP?
 9 **WENDY WOODS:** I still can't remember why , what I had it
 10 for because , I mean , I hadn't had -- I'm not the type
 11 of person who's had anything else. I don't go to the
 12 doctor's unless I have to. So I don't know why he
 13 said that that was fatty and then turned out to be
 14 hepatitis C .
 15 **MS FRASER BUTLIN:** As far as you and the family can
 16 recall , you think it was just a routine blood test --
 17 **WENDY WOODS:** I think so .
 18 **MS FRASER BUTLIN:** -- that flagged that your liver
 19 function was abnormal .
 20 **WENDY WOODS:** Must have been .
 21 **MS FRASER BUTLIN:** Initially what were you told about the
 22 probable cause of the fatty liver before it was
 23 hepatitis C?
 24 **WENDY WOODS:** They rejected it and said that I'd --
 25 **MS FRASER BUTLIN:** When you first saw the doctor and they

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REDACTED VERSION

1 **MS FRASER BUTLIN:** You required an emergency caesarean
 2 section ?
 3 **WENDY WOODS:** I did .
 4 **MS FRASER BUTLIN:** You woke up and saw that you were
 5 receiving blood .
 6 **WENDY WOODS:** I did .
 7 **MS FRASER BUTLIN:** From that time on did you ever
 8 receivable any other blood transfusion?
 9 **WENDY WOODS:** No.
 10 **MS FRASER BUTLIN:** From 1981 until you were diagnosed with
 11 hepatitis C, did anyone contact you at all about that
 12 transfusion or follow you up in any way?
 13 **WENDY WOODS:** No, no .
 14 **MS FRASER BUTLIN:** Had you moved house many times in that
 15 window ?
 16 **WENDY WOODS:** Yes.
 17 **MS FRASER BUTLIN:** How many times had you moved ? A lot?
 18 **WENDY WOODS:** Mmm.
 19 **MS FRASER BUTLIN:** Can you tell us how you then came to
 20 find out that you were infected with the hepatitis C?
 21 **WENDY WOODS:** I went to have a blood test , obviously, and
 22 they sent me to this doctor at West Suffolk Hospital
 23 and he examined me and he said he thought I had fatty
 24 liver and then , the next thing I knew , I had an
 25 appointment to have a scan, whatever they call it,

30

1 said you had a fatty liver , I think they said they
 2 thought it might be something to do with your
 3 diabetes .
 4 **WENDY WOODS:** Yes.
 5 **MS FRASER BUTLIN:** Is that right?
 6 **WENDY WOODS:** Yes, yes .
 7 **MS FRASER BUTLIN:** Then you were tested and , as you say ,
 8 the first thing you knew about having hepatitis C was
 9 a letter through the post .
 10 **WENDY WOODS:** Mm-hm .
 11 **MS FRASER BUTLIN:** Can we look at that letter ,
 12 WITN3812003:
 13 "I saw you in the GI clinic because you have
 14 some abnormal blood tests regarding the liver. I had
 15 explained to you that the most probable explanation of
 16 that is an underlying fatty liver disease due to your
 17 diabetes and being overweight. Unfortunately, the new
 18 bloods have revealed that you have another factor that
 19 contributes to the blood's abnormality and affect the
 20 liver. It is called chronic hepatitis C and is
 21 actually a viral infection of the liver , which needs
 22 some specific treatment."
 23 It indicates that it is generally quite
 24 an effective treatment. But what were your feelings
 25 when you received that letter telling you that you had

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1 hepatitis C?
 2 **WENDY WOODS:** Shock. I didn't realise. When I went into
 3 it, I realised that all the things I'd had -- the
 4 complaints and that I'd had earlier were to do with
 5 the hepatitis C.
 6 **MS FRASER BUTLIN:** Immediately after that letter, what
 7 discussions did you have with doctors about having
 8 hepatitis C?
 9 **WENDY WOODS:** The only one I went to see at Ipswich
 10 Hospital and she was very, very good and she told me
 11 that I'd definitely got hepatitis C and that I should
 12 report it because, you know, that was an infection
 13 that they gave me, sort of thing, in the blood
 14 transfusion.
 15 **MS FRASER BUTLIN:** I think you say in your statement that
 16 was a hepatitis nurse specialist.
 17 **WENDY WOODS:** Yes, she was, yes. She was very good
 18 because I had to travel to Ipswich from [redacted].
 19 The first time, I did go to see her but, at the time,
 20 I was looking after my husband, who was on the oxygen
 21 24/7, so I was his carer, and I had to get somebody to
 22 sit in with him because I couldn't leave him. And
 23 from then on -- I had a blood test in the Ipswich
 24 Hospital and then, from then on, she sent me all the
 25 things that I needed through the post, and she also

33

1 **WENDY WOODS:** It did.
 2 **MS FRASER BUTLIN:** What particularly frightened you?
 3 **WENDY WOODS:** Well, I think when you get something like
 4 that you just think -- you feel sort of dirty and
 5 think people will think -- so I didn't tell anybody.
 6 I only told the children -- you know, my children and
 7 that. I mean, I didn't sort of discuss it with my
 8 husband or anything like that.
 9 **MS FRASER BUTLIN:** You also say in your statement you were
 10 worried about the possibility that you might have
 11 infected other people?
 12 **WENDY WOODS:** Yes, I was, yes. I had to be careful that
 13 I didn't cut myself and bleed so when I was with my
 14 daughter and my grandchildren. [... redacted ...].
 15 My husband had to have some blood tests, just to make
 16 sure. And you was always careful when you were
 17 preparing anything that you didn't cut yourself and
 18 touch them and infect them.
 19 **MS FRASER BUTLIN:** I think you had a fear that, because it
 20 had taken so long for you to be diagnosed, you might
 21 have unknowingly infected someone --
 22 **WENDY WOODS:** Exactly.
 23 **MS FRASER BUTLIN:** -- in that time-frame. Was there
 24 anything particular about that time-frame you were
 25 especially worried about?

35

REDACTED VERSION

1 put me on a tablet that they delivered to the door.
 2 **MS FRASER BUTLIN:** That was the Eplclusa treatment.
 3 **WENDY WOODS:** Yes. I had that for three months.
 4 **MS FRASER BUTLIN:** She did everything for you by phone and
 5 post at that point?
 6 **WENDY WOODS:** She used to keep in touch with me on the
 7 phone every week to see I was all right and
 8 everything. She was very, very good.
 9 **MS FRASER BUTLIN:** Did she provide you with an opportunity
 10 to talk about the infection and the effect it had on
 11 you as well?
 12 **WENDY WOODS:** Yes, I did speak to her about it, yes.
 13 **MS FRASER BUTLIN:** Just thinking a little bit more about
 14 that, did anyone talk to you about whether you'd
 15 had -- sorry, did anybody offer you any formal
 16 psychological support at that point?
 17 **WENDY WOODS:** No.
 18 **MS FRASER BUTLIN:** In hindsight, do you think that might
 19 have been something you would have wanted to take up?
 20 **WENDY WOODS:** I don't know because, as I say, I was
 21 looking after my husband, so I had that job to do so
 22 I really didn't sort of dwell on this, you know,
 23 having the hepatitis C.
 24 **MS FRASER BUTLIN:** You have talked in your statement,
 25 though, that the infection did frighten you.

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1 **WENDY WOODS:** Well, I worked with children and I didn't
 2 know I had it, obviously, so I could have infected
 3 anybody, couldn't I, in that time?
 4 **MS FRASER BUTLIN:** Can you tell us what your physical
 5 health had been like between having the transfusion
 6 and being diagnosed with hepatitis C?
 7 **WENDY WOODS:** I had -- when I could be walking along the
 8 street and all of a sudden I had this sort of -- like
 9 I was going to pass out, and I just had to stop and
 10 sit down wherever I was and I was white and, you know,
 11 I mean, shaking and things like that. I had that.
 12 I had brain fog, which was really bad, and
 13 I went to the doctor's and they even sent me for
 14 a scan because I thought I had a brain tumour. I was
 15 sure I had a brain tumour, you know, because
 16 I couldn't remember anything. Just symptoms that
 17 I had then, I'm now able to tie them in with the
 18 hepatitis C.
 19 **MS FRASER BUTLIN:** You also had quite significant fatigue.
 20 **WENDY WOODS:** I did, definitely. Always tired, yes,
 21 I was.
 22 **MS FRASER BUTLIN:** Can you tell us what that was like?
 23 **WENDY WOODS:** You just didn't seem to have any energy at
 24 all. You know, you just wanted to sit down and sleep.
 25 **MS FRASER BUTLIN:** You also had skin itching and a feeling

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1 of things crawling ?
 2 **WENDY WOODS:** Yes, I did , very bad , and I thought that was
 3 probably me -- to do with something I'd eaten . And
 4 you just -- I mean, I just couldn't even sit down on
 5 a chair. It was just horrible . It just felt like
 6 there was a load of ants crawling on me .
 7 **MS FRASER BUTLIN:** You also had thyroid problems ?
 8 **WENDY WOODS:** Yes.
 9 **MS FRASER BUTLIN:** And you have diabetes ?
 10 **WENDY WOODS:** Well, it's diet-related. I don't take any
 11 pills or anything like that .
 12 **MS FRASER BUTLIN:** During the investigations for those
 13 health concerns over the years, did anyone talk to you
 14 about whether you had had a blood transfusion in the
 15 past when they were investigating any of that ?
 16 **WENDY WOODS:** No, not that I knew of . Not that I can
 17 remember, no.
 18 **MS FRASER BUTLIN:** Since having the treatment , what's your
 19 situation now?
 20 **WENDY WOODS:** At the moment I -- they say I'm all right.
 21 I haven't had any blood tests until -- which seems
 22 funny -- I had -- Wednesday before I came up here ,
 23 I had a letter from my doctor to say I've got to go
 24 for a hepatitis blood test at the hospital and this --
 25 I was supposed to have this a year ago , and I didn't

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1 that this is the case ."
 2 That you had been infected through treatment
 3 prior to September 1991 .
 4 "Our medical assessor also states that in
 5 addition to there being insufficient evidence ,
 6 [hepatitis C] genotype 2a is rare in the UK and so it
 7 makes it more unlikely that the infection was acquired
 8 from a blood transfusion if given."
 9 Thank you.
 10 So in terms of your medical records, first of
 11 all, you , with assistance from Gemma , tried to get
 12 hold of your records.
 13 **WENDY WOODS:** We did .
 14 **MS FRASER BUTLIN:** In terms of your own medical records ,
 15 you found there was a gap ?
 16 **WENDY WOODS:** Yes, there was .
 17 **MS FRASER BUTLIN:** And the gap ran from the end of
 18 March 1981 to the day after Gemma's birth .
 19 **WENDY WOODS:** Mm-hm .
 20 **MS FRASER BUTLIN:** But everything else was there .
 21 **WENDY WOODS:** Yes.
 22 **MS FRASER BUTLIN:** So there was just this gap in the
 23 records?
 24 **WENDY WOODS:** There was .
 25 **MS FRASER BUTLIN:** There was then the day after her birth

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REDACTED VERSION

1 get the letter until Wednesday .
 2 **MS FRASER BUTLIN:** What can you tell us about what's been
 3 happening with your follow-up ? What's been the
 4 difficulty?
 5 **WENDY WOODS:** I haven't had any follow-up . I haven't had
 6 any help , really. I've just carried on. I'm just
 7 hoping that I'm all right and everything else .
 8 **MS FRASER BUTLIN:** Because once you'd finished the
 9 treatment, everything just seemed to then --
 10 **WENDY WOODS:** Stop.
 11 **MS FRASER BUTLIN:** And you have been working to try to get
 12 hold of people to have a proper follow-up ?
 13 **WENDY WOODS:** Exactly , exactly , which -- the hospital said
 14 they didn't want to see me anymore. They 'd put it
 15 through to the doctor . And, like I say , I haven't had
 16 any blood tests or anything until I got this letter on
 17 Wednesday to go to have a blood test.
 18 **MS FRASER BUTLIN:** You applied for financial assistance
 19 from the EIBSS and your first application was refused .
 20 **WENDY WOODS:** Mm-hm .
 21 **MS FRASER BUTLIN:** If we can look at that refusal letter .
 22 WITN3812006, please.
 23 We see the standard paragraphs , and then this:
 24 "The supporting medical information submitted in
 25 your application did not provide sufficient evidence

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1 obviously reference to you having given birth .
 2 **WENDY WOODS:** Mm-hm .
 3 **MS FRASER BUTLIN:** You also contacted , then , West Suffolk
 4 Trust about whether they had blood records; is that
 5 right?
 6 **WENDY WOODS:** Mm-hm .
 7 **MS FRASER BUTLIN:** Do you recall why you asked about blood
 8 records in addition to your own medical records?
 9 **GEMMA WOODS:** Can I speak ?
 10 **WENDY WOODS:** Can she speak?
 11 **SIR BRIAN LANGSTAFF:** Have a quick word and then answer
 12 the question.
 13 (Pause)
 14 **WENDY WOODS:** Oh, that was just to see if they had any
 15 transfusion records for me.
 16 **MS FRASER BUTLIN:** I think Gemma did a lot of this for
 17 you ?
 18 **WENDY WOODS:** She did do it all for me , so ...
 19 **MS FRASER BUTLIN:** We have a letter from West Suffolk
 20 which it would be useful to put up .
 21 **SIR BRIAN LANGSTAFF:** I think it might be an idea if we
 22 swear Gemma in so that she can help her mum -- if
 23 Gemma is happy with that?
 24 **GEMMA WOODS:** That's fine by me , if it will help, yes.

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1 **GEMMA WOODS (affirmed)**
2 **MS FRASER BUTLIN:** I will address my question to both of
3 you and whoever can help most is welcome to answer.
4 Do you have any recollection of why you sought
5 the transfusion records rather than the medical
6 records, why that came to mind?
7 **GEMMA WOODS:** Just -- I think just purely because I know
8 Mum had recollection of having a blood transfusion and
9 my sister had recollection of going to see her in the
10 hospital and seeing the bags of blood there and having
11 to leave quick because it made her feel ill.
12 So because we were hitting such a brick wall
13 with medical documents from the GP, it was just a case
14 of where else can I go to find something. So I did
15 contact them to see if they had any records and
16 ultimately they didn't.
17 **MS FRASER BUTLIN:** If we just put the letter up.
18 WITN3812002, please.
19 It says this:
20 "The Blood Safety and Quality Regulations 2005,
21 under regulations 8 and 9, advised that blood
22 establishments and hospital blood banks must retain
23 data needed for full traceability of blood component
24 transfusion for at least 30 years from the point of
25 receipt of the blood component. Therefore, the West

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1 one, but it certainly wasn't, you know, limited to any
2 other country. The UK has people with genotype 2 in
3 there.
4 And I also watched some of the Inquiry. I think
5 you had somebody on here who was talking of genotypes
6 and things, and even they said, you know, it's not
7 impossible to get it.
8 So it was a case of trawling the internet,
9 finding any links or information I could get to sort
10 of disprove their theory that there's no way it could
11 have happened in the UK, and went from there really.
12 **MS FRASER BUTLIN:** You submitted what you've described as
13 a very substantial pack of documents to EIBSS --
14 **GEMMA WOODS:** Yes.
15 **MS FRASER BUTLIN:** -- explaining why genotype 2a did not
16 mean it was not necessarily from a UK blood
17 transfusion.
18 **GEMMA WOODS:** Exactly, yes, and that as well as other
19 evidence of past medical things that could have been
20 attributed to having hep c and -- you know, just
21 things like that. I think we did find one tiny bit of
22 evidence of where someone had written, you know,
23 "A large blood loss during surgery", or something.
24 I think that was the only thing that kind of equated
25 to the fact Mum lost a lot of blood and, therefore,

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REDACTED VERSION

1 Suffolk NHS Foundation Trust has kept all records
2 since 2005 and will continue to do so for up to
3 30 years.
4 "In addition, we advise that the Trust's
5 electronic records for blood components began in 1988.
6 We have carefully checked our electronic records and
7 can confirm that you have not received a blood
8 component in the period you have stated."
9 But of course 1988 postdates the birth.
10 **WENDY WOODS:** Mm-hm.
11 **MS FRASER BUTLIN:** Thank you.
12 You decided then to apply again for financial
13 assistance, and you put some material together to
14 challenge the issue of the genotype 2a.
15 **WENDY WOODS:** Yes.
16 **SIR BRIAN LANGSTAFF:** What did you do in relation to that?
17 **GEMMA WOODS:** Well, I mean, initially it was a case of
18 what does that mean? What is, you know, a genotype
19 and things? And that's when we again contacted The
20 Hepatitis C Trust for some more help and they were,
21 you know, fantastic in helping us with that. I looked
22 it up. I think I used -- Google was my best friend,
23 pretty much, and I looked it up to see what this
24 genotype thing was going on about and I finally
25 realised that, yes, the one that Mum had was a rarer

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1 could potentially have had a transfusion. But yeah,
2 the stack of documents was certainly -- it was
3 trawling through all the records and highlighting bits
4 and bobs and -- yeah.
5 **MS FRASER BUTLIN:** What you tried to do was to build an
6 evidence base of the other health difficulties your
7 Mum had had over the years --
8 **GEMMA WOODS:** Yes.
9 **MS FRASER BUTLIN:** -- that, looking back, you could
10 attribute to the hepatitis C?
11 **GEMMA WOODS:** Yes, very much so, and there was a lot of
12 them, more than I think we even realised. So yes, it
13 was definitely -- it was time-consuming but obviously
14 it was beneficial. Because for them to send that
15 letter and just say -- you know, it's kind of
16 suggesting that Mum got the infection from another
17 means, which we know was not true, so ...
18 **MS FRASER BUTLIN:** And the application was then accepted?
19 **GEMMA WOODS:** It was, yes.
20 **MS FRASER BUTLIN:** Wendy, from your perspective, when that
21 first application was rejected, what were your
22 feelings about that?
23 **WENDY WOODS:** Well, I was angry, to be honest with you.
24 I was really angry because I thought: what are they
25 saying, I've been somewhere and had a blood

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1 transfusion? I know I've had one , you know , sort of
 2 thing. So -- so that was why we turned round and
 3 fought it again, to get it through. But the
 4 doctors -- we had trouble with the doctors to get all
 5 the information. You know , they didn't want to --
 6 because obviously you take a long while , because the
 7 pile was a bit like that (*indicated*) to get through ,
 8 but in the end we just kept on and on and on and, in
 9 the end , we fought it.
 10 **MS FRASER BUTLIN:** Thank you.
 11 Mrs BF, you had a daughter in 1974 and required
 12 a caesarean section .
 13 **MRS BF:** That's right, yes .
 14 **MS FRASER BUTLIN:** You then had a son in 1976 .
 15 **MRS BF:** Yes.
 16 **MS FRASER BUTLIN:** The plan for that delivery was for you
 17 to have a vaginal delivery .
 18 **MRS BF:** I had hoped so and I had been given hope up to
 19 three weeks -- well, when I first saw the consultant ,
 20 actually , three weeks before I was due to deliver .
 21 **MS FRASER BUTLIN:** But on the day , the doctor said you had
 22 to have a caesarean ?
 23 **MRS BF:** Yes, when I was admitted , he said "Who left you ",
 24 and I had just previously told the nurse I was over
 25 the moon because I could have a trial at having

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1 **MS FRASER BUTLIN:** Your understanding is that the blood
 2 was ordered in advance of the caesarean section .
 3 **MRS BF:** Possibly. I don't honestly know that but it
 4 possibly was because , you know , the form s seemed to
 5 suggest that, yes, that they had the blood standing
 6 by.
 7 **MS FRASER BUTLIN:** You have some concerns about having the
 8 transfusion and whether you really required it. Can
 9 you tell us about that?
 10 **MRS BF:** Well, on my notes they said I'd lost one unit ,
 11 500 ml, is it, of blood but I was given two
 12 transfusions. So that was double what I had lost but
 13 when I had my daughter I didn't have any blood
 14 whatsoever and I lost more , according to the notes.
 15 **MS FRASER BUTLIN:** So your concern , I think -- correct me ,
 16 please , if I've got this wrong -- is that with your
 17 daughter you had lost more blood and received no
 18 transfusion ?
 19 **MRS BF:** No.
 20 **MS FRASER BUTLIN:** With your son , you had lost some blood
 21 but you'd been given twice amount that you had lost ?
 22 **MRS BF:** Yes, that's the way I read the notes, yes.
 23 **MS FRASER BUTLIN:** A few weeks after the birth of your son
 24 you became unwell .
 25 **MRS BF:** Yes.

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REDACTED VERSION

1 a normal delivery at then he said "Oh, who left you ",
 2 and I think she saw my face drop a bit and he realised
 3 what he'd said . But he strongly recommended that
 4 I had a caesarean section , even though I really didn't
 5 want one .
 6 **MS FRASER BUTLIN:** You were offered an epidural .
 7 **MRS BF:** Yes, I was, yes .
 8 **MS FRASER BUTLIN:** There were then a series of errors ,
 9 which meant you had a general anaesthetic for the
 10 caesarean section .
 11 **MRS BF:** The general anaesthetic was my choice , in the
 12 end, because he'd left a junior doctor to call the
 13 anaesthetist to come and see me and explain about the
 14 tube, because I had had an epidural with my daughter
 15 and I had been quite unwell with it. But I had been
 16 in labour for quite a long time by that time , so --
 17 but because the anaesthetist never got the message and
 18 he never saw me, he said , when I was on the operating
 19 table, well, you can talk to me now , and I said "Well,
 20 I really can't make the decision now , I'd just better
 21 have a general anaesthetic ".
 22 **MS FRASER BUTLIN:** Your memory is of waking up and then
 23 what?
 24 **MRS BF:** I just saw a bag of blood there and I was quite
 25 surprised .

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1 **MS FRASER BUTLIN:** What happened?
 2 **MRS BF:** I ran a temperature. It sort of felt flu-like.
 3 I can just remember , actually , struggling to breast
 4 feed the baby when I was in bed. I can't remember
 5 precisely how long it lasted but possibly a day or
 6 two and then I recovered. I didn't see the doctor
 7 about it, I didn't know what it was, I just presumed
 8 it might be some virus .
 9 **MS FRASER BUTLIN:** You said in your statement that from
 10 then you were constantly exhausted .
 11 **MRS BF:** Yes, I was very, very tired .
 12 **MS FRASER BUTLIN:** Can you tell us about the impact of
 13 that on you .
 14 **MRS BF:** When the children were small I just felt
 15 exhausted almost all the time but then we were quite
 16 strapped for cash. I mean, it was a time when
 17 interest rates were going up through the roof and the
 18 oil crisis and that sort of thing, so I did get work
 19 as well in a bar , in a pub , in the evenings.
 20 But later on , I got part-time teaching work --
 21 I don't think that's in my statement actually -- and
 22 I really never felt that I could go full time . I just
 23 didn't have the confidence that I would be able to
 24 teach as I taught before I had the children.
 25 **MS FRASER BUTLIN:** In the early '90s, you went to see the

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1 GP?
2 **MRS BF:** Yes.
3 **MS FRASER BUTLIN:** On a number of occasions, I think.
4 **MRS BF:** About different things, yes.
5 **MS FRASER BUTLIN:** On one particular occasion, you went
6 because you were finding things so tiring and so
7 challenging.
8 **MRS BF:** Yes.
9 **MS FRASER BUTLIN:** You were offered antidepressants -- you
10 were given antidepressants.
11 **MRS BF:** Yes, yes, yes.
12 **MS FRASER BUTLIN:** What did the GP say about that? What
13 was the discussion around that with you?
14 **MRS BF:** Well, she just said I can't keep papering over
15 the cracks and "You should have counselling", and sort
16 of offered antidepressants. And the antidepressants
17 sort of helped, in that I just felt more relaxed,
18 I think, about things but it didn't go any further
19 than that with that particular GP because that was
20 really just on the cusp of the time when hepatitis C
21 was starting to be discovered as a virus in its own
22 right, you know, a damaging virus in its own right.
23 **MS FRASER BUTLIN:** You continued to have bouts of
24 depression throughout your life.
25 **MRS BF:** Yes.

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1 with in any particular way?
2 **MRS BF:** Originally, I sort of thought that it was shoes,
3 that they just weren't fitting properly. I don't
4 think I asked until I got numbness in my ankles.
5 **MS FRASER BUTLIN:** Then 2006/2007 is when you think Anita
6 Roddick was speaking out about hepatitis C.
7 **MRS BF:** Around that time. It might have been slightly
8 earlier, I'm not exactly sure of the date.
9 **MS FRASER BUTLIN:** When you had that appointment with the
10 GP and you asked about Anita Roddick, you have
11 described the GP being quite dismissive.
12 **MRS BF:** Yes, he was.
13 **MS FRASER BUTLIN:** How did that make you feel?
14 **MRS BF:** Well, I thought it was an irrelevant question
15 really, but I didn't know any differently. You know,
16 I didn't know -- I didn't know much about hepatitis C
17 at the time and I just accepted what he said.
18 **MS FRASER BUTLIN:** The numbness in the toes had spread up
19 through to your ankles --
20 **MRS BF:** Yes.
21 **MS FRASER BUTLIN:** -- and you were then diagnosed with
22 peripheral neuropathy.
23 **MRS BF:** Yes.
24 **MS FRASER BUTLIN:** Did anyone at that point discuss any
25 possible cause of the peripheral neuropathy?

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1 **MS FRASER BUTLIN:** You then developed numbness in your
2 toes.
3 **MRS BF:** Yes.
4 **MS FRASER BUTLIN:** What can you tell us about that and how
5 that developed?
6 **MRS BF:** Well, when I saw the GP about that -- I sort of
7 think we've sort of skipped a bit, really.
8 **MS FRASER BUTLIN:** Please fill in the gaps.
9 **MRS BF:** Can I go back?
10 **MS FRASER BUTLIN:** Please do.
11 **MRS BF:** In between the first doctor we referred to, she
12 retired and I moved on to another doctor.
13 Anita Roddick announced on the television -- I think
14 this is further on in my statement, isn't it,
15 actually -- that she had received a blood transfusion
16 back in the early '70s, and I thought "Oh", and that
17 she had hepatitis C, and it was a sort of warning and
18 I asked a GP about it and he just said "Who's Anita
19 Roddick", and he didn't even answer the question.
20 Then it was further on, about 2009, I think,
21 when I started to query about the numbness in my feet.
22 **MS FRASER BUTLIN:** So I think in your statement you say
23 you had the toe numbness in the late '90s.
24 **MRS BF:** Yes.
25 **MS FRASER BUTLIN:** It slowly progressed but wasn't dealt
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1 **MRS BF:** No, I was sent to see a consultant about it and
2 she did all the tests. She did do blood tests but
3 they didn't show up anything that showed that there
4 was any inflammation. That was according to the
5 letter that she sent the GP.
6 **MS FRASER BUTLIN:** Do you know whether hepatitis C was
7 specifically tested for at that point?
8 **MRS BF:** No, I had no idea.
9 **MS FRASER BUTLIN:** You had a hip replacement in 2008 and
10 again, the other hip, in 2012.
11 **MRS BF:** That's right, yes.
12 **MS FRASER BUTLIN:** You saw neurologist in -- sorry, before
13 we go there, the 2012 hip replacement, you had some
14 problems with bruising?
15 **MRS BF:** I've always had problems with bruising. It just
16 doesn't -- it didn't clear up and now I have varicose
17 eczema.
18 **MS FRASER BUTLIN:** But the surgeon after your second hip
19 replacement referred you to a haematologist.
20 **MRS BF:** Before I had the operation the night before,
21 I was suddenly telephoned by the hospital to say
22 please would I go in because something was low in my
23 blood and I needed vitamin K -- it was a drip that
24 they put in. When I went the next morning they didn't
25 have the -- I think they took a blood test to check
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1 and it was -- I was due to have the operation, sort of
 2 first thing on the list, but they couldn't do that
 3 because it came back that the nurse had done the wrong
 4 tests.
 5 So they quickly did them again and there was no
 6 difference. I was still low in whatever it was that
 7 they were checking for. I think it was aPTT, is it?
 8 **MS FRASER BUTLIN:** aPTT and prothrombin were prolonged,
 9 I think.
 10 **MRS BF:** Yes, that is right.
 11 **MS FRASER BUTLIN:** Because of that, I think were then,
 12 after the op, referred to a haematologist to explore
 13 whether there were any issues.
 14 **MRS BF:** Yes, I wasn't referred specifically. The
 15 consultant who did the hip operation said that he had
 16 sent the blood samples off to the consultant and --
 17 the blood consultant, and would the GP please follow
 18 it up.
 19 **MS FRASER BUTLIN:** But thereafter nothing happened.
 20 **MRS BF:** No. I asked the GP when I saw him for a check up
 21 and he looked and he said "Oh, it's not necessary".
 22 **MS FRASER BUTLIN:** Then in 2018, you saw the neurologist
 23 again because the neuropathy had spread up to your
 24 knees.
 25 **MRS BF:** Yes, yes.

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1 **MS FRASER BUTLIN:** You had a raised mark on your liver.
 2 **MRS BF:** I had -- I saw another GP, I think it was about
 3 irritable bowel, and she took just a standard blood
 4 test, and when that came back it showed that I had
 5 some inflammation of the liver and she just said,
 6 "We'll do another blood test in six months' time"
 7 because she said it could just be as a result of viral
 8 infection but she wasn't thinking about a really
 9 serious virus like hepatitis C, I don't think.
 10 **MS FRASER BUTLIN:** You had the further test about
 11 12 months later. Why was there that --
 12 **MRS BF:** Sorry, can you repeat that?
 13 **MS FRASER BUTLIN:** You had the further test of the liver
 14 markers in about 12 months afterwards.
 15 **MRS BF:** Yes. I think that was another routine test that
 16 she did. She was a GP. It was a different GP again
 17 and she liked to do routine tests on her older
 18 patients, and I asked her -- brought it up because
 19 I had seen, you know, a trainee in between and she
 20 looked and she said, "Oh, it's still up".
 21 And then I said, "You know, but I had had this
 22 blood transfusion and I had heard that it could be
 23 connected with hepatitis C", and she said, "Ah, she
 24 said, "I don't like unanswered questions". She said,
 25 "We'll do a specific blood test". She said, "It's

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1 **MS FRASER BUTLIN:** What were you told at that point?
 2 **MRS BF:** They didn't know what was causing it, basically.
 3 The main question in my head was could I still drive
 4 and he checked the strength of my response and said,
 5 yes, I could still drive, because at that time the
 6 DVLA had withheld my licence.
 7 **MS FRASER BUTLIN:** Tracking back little bit, 2017 you saw
 8 a new GP and you raised concerns about hepatitis C.
 9 **MRS BF:** Yes, I raised it again with a different GP.
 10 **MS FRASER BUTLIN:** Why did you raise it again in 2017?
 11 **MRS BF:** I can't remember. I'm sorry. I really can't
 12 remember, to be honest.
 13 **MS FRASER BUTLIN:** Do you recall what response you got
 14 when you raised it?
 15 **MRS BF:** He said, "Oh, it's very unlikely".
 16 **MS FRASER BUTLIN:** You have described it as being largely
 17 dismissed again in 2017.
 18 **MRS BF:** Yes, definitely, yes.
 19 **MS FRASER BUTLIN:** Then later on in 2017, you had
 20 a routine test for irritable bowel and had
 21 a colonoscopy.
 22 **MRS BF:** Yes.
 23 **MS FRASER BUTLIN:** At that point you were told your liver
 24 markers were raised.
 25 **MRS BF:** No --

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1 easy to find out".
 2 **MS FRASER BUTLIN:** You had the test?
 3 **MRS BF:** Yes.
 4 **MS FRASER BUTLIN:** What happened then?
 5 **MRS BF:** She phoned me up about three or four weeks later
 6 and said, "I'm ever so sorry to tell you you've got
 7 hepatitis C".
 8 **MS FRASER BUTLIN:** And that was early December 2018.
 9 **MRS BF:** I think so, yes.
 10 **MS FRASER BUTLIN:** Over 42 years after your transfusion?
 11 **MRS BF:** Yes.
 12 **MS FRASER BUTLIN:** You received a phone call about your
 13 diagnosis.
 14 **MRS BF:** Yes.
 15 **MS FRASER BUTLIN:** What were your feelings about being
 16 told over the phone?
 17 **MRS BF:** I thought it was a bit harsh. But, on the other
 18 hand, if I had been sent a letter and asked to go in,
 19 I would probably have been worried. So, you know,
 20 it's, I suppose, six of one, half a dozen of the
 21 other.
 22 **MS FRASER BUTLIN:** What was the impact for you on your
 23 mental well-being of the diagnosis?
 24 **MRS BF:** I was scared. I was really worried, yes.
 25 **MS FRASER BUTLIN:** Can you help us any more about what you

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1 were particularly worried about?
 2 **MRS BF:** I was worried about infecting -- having infected
 3 other people , and particularly the family. I was
 4 worried about the prognosis for the rest of my life,
 5 really, and what sort of end I would have .
 6 **MS FRASER BUTLIN:** You have described in your statement
 7 you felt like a bio-hazard at home .
 8 **MRS BF:** I did. I did at point -- yes, I can remember
 9 even going for a walk at one point and cutting myself
 10 on a bramble and then going back and actually cutting
 11 the bramble and putting it in the hedge so nobody else
 12 would maybe trip over it and be infected .
 13 **MS FRASER BUTLIN:** What did the GP advise you, once you
 14 had the first diagnosis?
 15 **MRS BF:** She was supportive in that she said , "If you want
 16 to talk to me , you know , you can phone me at any
 17 time", but she said , "I can't answer your questions
 18 because I don't know very much about this disease ".
 19 She referred me urgently to a specialist and she also
 20 advised me to contact The Hepatitis Trust if I had any
 21 questions .
 22 **MS FRASER BUTLIN:** What happened with that urgent
 23 referral?
 24 **MRS BF:** Oh gosh . I had a letter from the hospital to say
 25 if I hadn't heard in ten days I was to phone them .

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1 **MS FRASER BUTLIN:** What impact did that conversation with
 2 the registrar have on you?
 3 **MRS BF:** I was upset because -- I was frightened because
 4 I thought I'd been given this disease by the National
 5 Health Service and that they shouldn't withhold
 6 treatment. I felt there was a moral right to
 7 treatment , that I shouldn't have to wait until I was
 8 seriously ill. I couldn't see the logic in it,
 9 actually, because that would be far more expensive to
 10 them.
 11 **MS FRASER BUTLIN:** You were then told , I think , that your
 12 appointment wouldn't be until the end of March 2019 .
 13 **MRS BF:** Yes.
 14 **MS FRASER BUTLIN:** During that wait you started to
 15 research things more online .
 16 **MRS BF:** Mm-hm .
 17 **MS FRASER BUTLIN:** What effect did that have on you?
 18 **MRS BF:** I was scared again by what I had read . I found
 19 it quite informative on the effects that hepatitis C
 20 could have on you and I also researched other sources
 21 of finding the cure , because I realised that you could
 22 actually buy the medication but you then did have to
 23 have a specialist to help you or to monitor you when
 24 you took it.
 25 **MS FRASER BUTLIN:** You were told that the March

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1 And I hadn't heard, so I phoned them , and I was given
 2 an appointment and it was very close to Christmas
 3 in 2018 . And when I looked at the heading , I sort of
 4 thought I'm not quite sure this is right . But,
 5 anyway, I went for the appointment and it was a
 6 registrar and she said , "I'm ever so sorry but you've
 7 been directed to the wrong department for" -- I can't
 8 remember now .
 9 **MS FRASER BUTLIN:** For hepatology , I think ?
 10 **MRS BF:** Yes, hepatology -- and she said , "I will refer
 11 you". I mean, she did examine me and she did find
 12 that the liver was showing signs of inflammation , and
 13 she said , "I will refer you to the hepatitis
 14 specialist and I'll have all the tests done so that
 15 when you do see her everything can go ahead smoothly ."
 16 Then I asked her about treatment and she said ,
 17 "Oh, I don't think you'll be eligible for that".
 18 I said, well, I thought I had a right to it and, if
 19 I had a right to it , I wanted it. But she didn't say
 20 anything to that .
 21 **MS FRASER BUTLIN:** Did she explain why she didn't think
 22 you would be eligible?
 23 **MRS BF:** No. I think the inference was that I just simply
 24 wasn't ill enough . And I did wonder whether it was my
 25 age.

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1 appointment would be with a registrar.
 2 **MRS BF:** Yes.
 3 **MS FRASER BUTLIN:** What were you told about why that was?
 4 **MRS BF:** Because I'd already had the previous appointment ,
 5 I'd already had -- I'd seen somebody . And I said ,
 6 "But I haven't seen the specialist " and they were
 7 saying, "No, but, you know , you've actually seen
 8 somebody , so now we just have a follow-up on it".
 9 **MS FRASER BUTLIN:** So what did you do about that?
 10 **MRS BF:** Well, I said to them -- I asked whether I could
 11 see the consultant , and she said , "Well, if you really
 12 want to see her , it will be months ahead you'll have
 13 to wait". So I was quite upset and I went to the GP
 14 and -- and she was crosser than I was , really ,
 15 I think .
 16 **MS FRASER BUTLIN:** And you were then moved to the
 17 consultant's list ?
 18 **MRS BF:** Yes, she wrote and she asked for the appointment
 19 to be brought forward , which wasn't possible . But
 20 finally in April -- I didn't know I was going to see
 21 the consultant. When I got there I was quite
 22 surprised that she said , "I've switched you to my
 23 list".
 24 **MS FRASER BUTLIN:** You have said in your statement you
 25 found that appointment with the consultant very

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1 helpful.
 2 **MRS BF:** Yes, it was .
 3 **MS FRASER BUTLIN:** Can you tell us what the consultant
 4 discussed with you that was particularly helpful?
 5 **MRS BF:** Well, she said I could have treatment , to start
 6 with. I think she sort of -- she took me through ...
 7 I don't know. She was reassuring, put it that way.
 8 **MS FRASER BUTLIN:** You have described in your statement
 9 that she was reassuring and informative .
 10 **MRS BF:** Yes.
 11 **MS FRASER BUTLIN:** And she explained what was happening .
 12 **MRS BF:** Yes.
 13 **MS FRASER BUTLIN:** She also picked up on the peripheral
 14 neuropathy, which she hoped might improve once you'd
 15 been cleared of the virus .
 16 **MRS BF:** Yes.
 17 **MS FRASER BUTLIN:** Was that the first time someone had put
 18 the connection together?
 19 **MRS BF:** Yes, absolutely -- oh, the registrar before, that
 20 I saw before, she also made the connection, the one
 21 that -- well, it wasn't her department .
 22 **MS FRASER BUTLIN:** The consultant, as you say, also said
 23 you could start treatment, and you did start treatment
 24 two months later, and you took Maviret for eight
 25 weeks.

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1 a teacher?
 2 **MRS BF:** I did, yes .
 3 **MS FRASER BUTLIN:** Can you help us with how that came
 4 about and how much, with hindsight, you think that may
 5 have been linked to the hepatitis C?
 6 **MRS BF:** I think it -- I think it was possibly linked
 7 because of the sheer exhaustion of the work and I did
 8 notice that other members of staff, although obviously
 9 they were tired and stressed as well, seemed to deal
 10 with it better and that I had more absence to sort of
 11 just recharge, really, to recover from sort of minor
 12 illnesses.
 13 When there were extra things after school,
 14 I used to really think "Oh no, I've done enough, you
 15 know, I have done my day's work, why have I got to do
 16 this?"
 17 I never used to feel that way and I just used to
 18 sort of think it was my age. I'm not so sure any
 19 longer.
 20 **MS FRASER BUTLIN:** Since having the treatment, what's your
 21 physical health been like?
 22 **MRS BF:** It has been better, yes. I still suffer from
 23 neuropathy and struggle a bit with that but I just --
 24 there's more of a feeling of well-being. You know,
 25 I used to wake in the night sometimes feeling very hot

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1 **MRS BF:** Yes.
 2 **MS FRASER BUTLIN:** The results from that have been
 3 positive, I think, in terms of --
 4 **MRS BF:** Yes. Yes, they have, and the liver damage that
 5 I had, which was mild to moderate, has now -- well,
 6 from a year ago it's -- it's dropped a point.
 7 **MS FRASER BUTLIN:** You've told your immediate family about
 8 the infection but not many others. Can you help us
 9 with why that is?
 10 **MRS BF:** I'd moved on since then, I have to say. I don't
 11 know. I just didn't -- it was partly because I was
 12 a local teacher and I was worried about upsetting
 13 parents. You know, that they might think: oh my
 14 goodness, if a child scraped a knee or something like
 15 that, this lady has been dealing with it.
 16 I don't know. I just didn't particularly feel
 17 that I wanted to sort of explore that side of it at
 18 that particular time. I have told a few friends
 19 since, and I have been quite concerned that there was
 20 one who said to me that she'd -- she's not a friend
 21 but an acquaintance -- that she had had a blood
 22 transfusion that same time, and I said, "You should
 23 get checked", and she said, "Oh no, I'm fine", and
 24 that concerns me.
 25 **MS FRASER BUTLIN:** You retired early from your work as

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1 and nauseous and that's never happened, and I had
 2 a limited appetite. Before I could eat so much and
 3 then I couldn't eat any more and it used to worry me
 4 when I went out for meals, and things like that, that
 5 I had to leave food, which doesn't happen now.
 6 **MS FRASER BUTLIN:** You applied for financial assistance
 7 from the EIBSS ?
 8 **MRS BF:** Yes, I did .
 9 **MS FRASER BUTLIN:** You said in your statement the process
 10 was quite straightforward for you --
 11 **MRS BF:** Yes, it was .
 12 **MS FRASER BUTLIN:** -- and your application was accepted .
 13 **MRS BF:** Yes, it was because I was fortunate in that the
 14 Bristol Health Authority had just kept all my records,
 15 and I don't know why. They didn't give me any -- they
 16 didn't give me any hope that they would have them and
 17 then he phoned me up and said "I'm just very pleased
 18 to tell you that I have found your records" and they
 19 were there .
 20 **MS FRASER BUTLIN:** I think you've said that he seemed to
 21 be as surprised as you were that he'd found them .
 22 **MRS BF:** Yes, he was. He really didn't think that they
 23 would have kept them .
 24 **MS FRASER BUTLIN:** Thank you.
 25 Sir, I'm conscious of the time and the need for

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1 the stenographers to take break . I wonder if now is
 2 a good time to take our morning break.
 3 **SIR BRIAN LANGSTAFF:** Yes, it would be. Let us take
 4 a break then until 12.15 and , if Mr BG can hear this ,
 5 you will understand that we will get to him
 6 immediately after the break .
 7 **MS FRASER BUTLIN:** Immediately after the break we will
 8 hear the evidence of Mr BG, yes .
 9 **SIR BRIAN LANGSTAFF:** So 12.15.
 10 (11.43 am)
 11 (A short break)
 12 (12.14 pm)
 13 **MS FRASER BUTLIN:** Mr BG, before we start , can you see and
 14 hear me?
 15 **MR BG:** I can, yes.
 16 **MS FRASER BUTLIN:** You have received transfusions on two
 17 occasions , firstly when you were born in 1969. What's
 18 your understanding of what happened then?
 19 **MR BG:** To the best of my knowledge I only basically know
 20 what my mother has told me. When I was born, I was
 21 very, very poorly as a child. From what my Dad tells
 22 me, I was in hospital for over three/four months
 23 really quite poorly with jaundice. This is only what
 24 my Dad has told me. That's all I've got to rely on
 25 and basically that's all that I know.

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1 It's WITN5228002.
 2 Most of it is redacted because it's part of your
 3 medical records , but the bit we want to look at isn't ,
 4 and it's at the bottom of the page . The entry --
 5 thank you -- is dated 9 January 2006 , and it says:
 6 "Liver function test. Report abnormal. No
 7 further action. Source lab. File non-coded. The
 8 patient informed status was set to 'Patient does not
 9 need to be informed ' at the time of import to
 10 system 1. Discuss alcohol intake next time."
 11 Thank you , Lawrence .
 12 What's your recollection of the discussion you
 13 had with the doctor in 2006 about abnormal liver
 14 function tests?
 15 **MR BG:** I wasn't actually aware of it. I've only actually
 16 discovered that on going through my medical records.
 17 At that point in time, I wasn't even aware that there
 18 was a problem with my liver -- it was actually much
 19 later on that I was notified -- and it was in -- on
 20 three separate occasions that -- on yearly basis, as
 21 check-ups , that it come back with abnormal .
 22 **MS FRASER BUTLIN:** You've gone through your records and
 23 exactly the same entry is found in 2009 and also early
 24 2019.
 25 **MR BG:** Yes, that's correct, yes .

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1 **MS FRASER BUTLIN:** You understand from your Mum and Dad
 2 that at that time you had a transfusion?
 3 **MR BG:** That's correct, yes .
 4 **MS FRASER BUTLIN:** Then in [redacted] 1991, when you were
 5 about 22, you were involved in a serious road traffic
 6 accident.
 7 **MR BG:** That's correct? Yes .
 8 **MS FRASER BUTLIN:** You were bleeding heavily when you
 9 arrived at the hospital .
 10 **MR BG:** Yes.
 11 **MS FRASER BUTLIN:** And your recollection is that you
 12 received a blood transfusion on that occasion.
 13 **MR BG:** Yes, I did. I wasn't initially aware that I did
 14 have a blood transfusion. It wasn't up until talking
 15 to the consultant that he actually notified me that
 16 I had had a blood transfusion .
 17 **MS FRASER BUTLIN:** You were in hospital then for about
 18 two weeks with various injuries, including
 19 a head injury, broken collar bone, broken leg .
 20 **MR BG:** Yes.
 21 **MS FRASER BUTLIN:** You were seen by the GP on a number of
 22 occasions but in 2006 you had some blood tests done.
 23 **MR BG:** That's correct, yes .
 24 **MS FRASER BUTLIN:** I just want to look at that record so
 25 that we've all seen what's written.

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1 **MS FRASER BUTLIN:** You were then taken into hospital in
 2 December 2019. What was the issue you had at that
 3 time?
 4 **MR BG:** It was like before Covid was about and it was
 5 like -- Covid-like symptoms. I was rushed in. But
 6 when I was took in, one of the paramedics did ask my
 7 partner if she had noticed that I was looking awful
 8 yellow .
 9 **MS FRASER BUTLIN:** You were noticed to be jaundiced and
 10 you had lymphoedema as well .
 11 **MR BG:** That's correct, yes .
 12 **MS FRASER BUTLIN:** When you were in the hospital, you were
 13 tested for hepatitis C .
 14 **MR BG:** Yes.
 15 **MS FRASER BUTLIN:** How were you told that you did indeed
 16 have hepatitis C?
 17 **MR BG:** I was actually informed by telephone and it was
 18 actually at a later point in time that they did
 19 actually discuss it with me, but it was just a quick
 20 telephone conversation and then they said they would
 21 have to see me .
 22 **MS FRASER BUTLIN:** How did you feel about the way in which
 23 you were told?
 24 **MR BG:** I wasn't really happy about it because I knew
 25 nothing about hepatitis C or what it did or anything

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1 like that , and to actually inform me in that way ,
 2 I think it would have been better to actually let me
 3 know a bit about what was actually going to actually
 4 happen to me .
 5 **MS FRASER BUTLIN:** And what's happened with your treatment
 6 since then?
 7 **MR BG:** Basically I've just started seeing my consultant
 8 again because it's been over two years since I were --
 9 actually cleared the hepatitis C virus , and I had to
 10 actually contact my local MP to actually give me some
 11 help to see a consultant .
 12 **MS FRASER BUTLIN:** Just before we get to that more recent
 13 history, you had the phone call to say you had
 14 hepatitis C. You say in your statement it then took
 15 quite a long time until you actually got to see
 16 a consultant and start treatment and have a proper
 17 discussion; is that right?
 18 **MR BG:** No, that was actually pretty quick. I'm referring
 19 to -- like, from the point of the hep c being cleared
 20 up to seeing a consultant , not with regards to -- with
 21 what you're talking about .
 22 **MS FRASER BUTLIN:** So you had the treatment and how did
 23 you find that?
 24 **MR BG:** I had to wait quite a long time because they told
 25 me that it had to go in front of a panel in Sheffield

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1 it was very helpful , to be honest .
 2 **MS FRASER BUTLIN:** That was June 2022 ?
 3 **MR BG:** Yes.
 4 **MS FRASER BUTLIN:** And you then did get an appointment at
 5 the hospital ?
 6 **MR BG:** Yes, I've had two appointments since and further
 7 tests and things like that , that I never had done in
 8 the past.
 9 **MS FRASER BUTLIN:** Can you tell us or what can you tell us
 10 about the impact mentally , on your mental well-being ,
 11 of being diagnosed?
 12 **MR BG:** Well, firstly , there's my partner and my children ,
 13 I were worrying about them all the time , if I'd
 14 infected them whilst not knowing about the infection
 15 and things like that. I did attempt suicide . I got
 16 myself in that much of a state where I just felt
 17 everything was hopeless and how I were going to die
 18 anyway, so ...
 19 **MS FRASER BUTLIN:** You were referred to mental health
 20 services when you were in the hospital but since then
 21 you haven't had any real success in accessing any
 22 mental health services .
 23 **MR BG:** Not at all, no. None whatsoever. I do try to get
 24 my GP to refer me but it's always about waiting lists
 25 and things like that.

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1 and the treatment would cost £55,000 and unfortunately
 2 not everybody did get it. So I was actually waiting
 3 for quite a long time to actually say whether I would
 4 get it or whether I wouldn't get the treatment.
 5 **MS FRASER BUTLIN:** Was the treatment successful in
 6 clearing the hepatitis C?
 7 **MR BG:** Yes, it did clear the hepatitis C but it has left
 8 me with chronic liver disease .
 9 **MS FRASER BUTLIN:** What have you been told about your --
 10 the situation with your liver?
 11 **MR BG:** The consultant I see says normally it would base
 12 it -- normal doctors would base it on numbers but he
 13 bases it as A, B, C, and he says the stage I am at
 14 is B, and he says I will need a liver transplant .
 15 **MS FRASER BUTLIN:** And you have described just a moment
 16 ago difficulties then in having further follow-up .
 17 What can you tell us about what's happened ?
 18 **MR BG:** I waited -- once I'd cleared the hepatitis C
 19 virus, I waited nearly three -- over two years, sorry,
 20 to actually get an appointment and the only way
 21 I actually got the appointment was via my local MP .
 22 **MS FRASER BUTLIN:** You wrote to the MP and he said he
 23 would investigate .
 24 **MR BG:** That's correct. That was with -- I think it was
 25 one of your advisers that said I should try that and

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1 **MS FRASER BUTLIN:** Have you told anyone about your
 2 diagnosis?
 3 **MR BG:** I come from a [redacted] village and everybody
 4 knows everybody and -- no, definitely not. It's not
 5 something that I'd even consider , to be honest with
 6 you, because of the stigma attached to it. You
 7 mention hepatitis, people just assume that it's HIV
 8 and all the bad things that are associated with that
 9 and ...
 10 **MS FRASER BUTLIN:** You've since applied for financial
 11 assistance. You tried initially to apply to the
 12 English scheme.
 13 **MR BG:** That's correct, yes .
 14 **MS FRASER BUTLIN:** What were you told when you applied
 15 there ?
 16 **MR BG:** Because my infection -- one of them could have
 17 occurred in Scotland, they said that it was nothing to
 18 do with them and I would need to make a claim through
 19 the Scottish Board .
 20 **MS FRASER BUTLIN:** And you have now made that application
 21 to the Scottish scheme but you're waiting to hear ?
 22 **MR BG:** That's correct, yes.
 23 **MS FRASER BUTLIN:** Thank you.
 24 I want to move now to some more thematic
 25 discussion with all of the panel. Mr BG, please

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1 contribute and we will hear your voice , even though
 2 nobody can see you .
 3 **MR BG:** Okay.
 4 **MS FRASER BUTLIN:** I want to start by exploring some
 5 issues about the time it took from the transfusion to
 6 each of your diagnoses.
 7 Mrs BF , you reflect in your statement about
 8 a lack of understanding of hepatitis C within the
 9 medical profession ?
 10 **MRS BF:** Yes.
 11 **MS FRASER BUTLIN:** Would you like to say anymore about
 12 your perception and what your view is of that?
 13 **MRS BF:** What I want to come out of this Inquiry is that
 14 doctors are trained to be much more aware of this
 15 disease because at least three GPs said to me, you
 16 know , "This can't be ". I spoke to one retired GP that
 17 nothing -- it was just socially but he said -- almost
 18 said "No, you couldn't be hepatitis C positive because
 19 it's only through Factor VIII that you can get it" and
 20 I thought "Here we go , here's another one ", you know.
 21 Sorry, I've lost the question now .
 22 **MS FRASER BUTLIN:** I was just asking for your view and
 23 perception of issues around lack of understanding
 24 within the medical profession .
 25 **MRS BF:** Yes, I have found that even consultants , they say

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1 totally refuses to talk about hepatitis C. He's got
 2 my medical notes sat in front of him. He never, ever
 3 mentions it. It's always me that mentions it to him
 4 and it's just as if he doesn't want to talk about it
 5 in any way.
 6 **ROBERT ELLINOR:** Similar experience .
 7 **MS FRASER BUTLIN:** Could you just sit forward slightly ?
 8 **ROBERT ELLINOR:** Similar experience. As I mentioned
 9 earlier, I've never actually seen the GP because the
 10 original one swapped and then the next one swapped
 11 and, by the time I got to the third one , it was
 12 already after I'd spoken to Sam and I said --
 13 I basically told them "I think I have hepatitis C ".
 14 But once that was done and the referral letter was
 15 written, they don't really want anything to do with
 16 you and, like the other member talk ed about, there's
 17 no awareness. It's really shameful , actually. But
 18 I live in a small town , so it's possibly to be
 19 expected .
 20 **MS FRASER BUTLIN:** Wendy, you have reflected that that
 21 impacts your confidence in the GP in relation to
 22 doctors , generally .
 23 **WENDY WOODS:** Definitely .
 24 **MS FRASER BUTLIN:** Do others on the panel feel similarly
 25 or have you not had that experience , of it impacting

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1 they can't answer questions like the IBS , when
 2 I spoke -- he said "Well, it could be but I don't
 3 know. You know more about it than I do ". So I just
 4 really wish that there was a lot more awareness of
 5 this illness and the fact that there is now a cure and
 6 that it isn't -- it's only spread through blood
 7 contact. It isn't spread in any other way; so it
 8 hasn't quite got the fear context , perhaps , that HIV
 9 has got.
 10 **MS FRASER BUTLIN:** Wendy, Robert, Mr BG do you have any
 11 thoughts on this issue?
 12 **WENDY WOODS:** I didn't know for 38 years, which is what --
 13 because I was obviously -- I didn't know that I had
 14 it. But I haven't got a lot of faith -- that has
 15 (unclear) my faith in doctors really and truly . If
 16 I go to the doctors now and I ask -- and I don't go
 17 away feeling confident .
 18 **MS FRASER BUTLIN:** That's because --
 19 **WENDY WOODS:** That's because of this, yes .
 20 **MS FRASER BUTLIN:** Because you had been so many times
 21 before you know diagnosed ?
 22 **WENDY WOODS:** Exactly , exactly .
 23 **MS FRASER BUTLIN:** Mr BG, I think you were about to join
 24 the conversation .
 25 **MR BG:** I feel that it's lacking because my local GP

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1 your confidence in them ?
 2 **MRS BF:** It's definitely impacted my confidence . And
 3 I find exactly the same thing , that there's never any
 4 reference at all to hepatitis C. It's as if it's --
 5 "Oh, it's been there, it's gone " and that's it. You
 6 know, "We don't go there, nothing else is going to be
 7 related to it whatsoever " and" -- no, it's almost
 8 a conspiracy of silence .
 9 **ROBERT ELLINOR:** Mine's been a crash course in
 10 hepatitis C . You know , it's exactly a year ago this
 11 week that I talked to Samantha May, so I can't really
 12 comment very well about GPs. Generally , for me,
 13 they've been very receptive to what I've asked them to
 14 do, but knowledge, very poor.
 15 **MS FRASER BUTLIN:** In terms of your current treatment
 16 pathways, I think a number of you were very positive
 17 about the nurse specialists and how important they
 18 were. I can see all four of you nodding. But I think
 19 you have all also had difficulties with the treatment
 20 pathways and access to clinicians, access to doctors.
 21 Do you have any reflections on why those pathways have
 22 been difficult?
 23 **MRS BF:** I think there's often a breakdown of
 24 communication. All the way through my life , I can see
 25 in the NHS breakdowns in communication that bring

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1 about these anomalies . And the fact that, you know ,
 2 it's so -- once a computer has said , "This is how it
 3 goes", nobody wants to argue with it and nobody wants
 4 to look at what the information that's been input into
 5 that computer is . They just want to look at the
 6 output and say , "Well, sorry, this is it, this is how
 7 it is, go away and stop being a nuisance".
WENDY WOODS: That's the way I feel. I feel the same .
MS FRASER BUTLIN: Do you want to tell us a bit more about
 10 why and what your perception is?
WENDY WOODS: Well, like I say, I've just lost all faith
 12 in it, you know ? I mean, like, if -- where I live , if
 13 you go to the doctors , you never see the same doctor
 14 anyway . And if you want to talk about anything, they
 15 just sort of brush you off , you know , and say , "It's
 16 gone, you're fine" and that's it.
MS FRASER BUTLIN: So perhaps a perception that once the
 18 hepatitis C treatment is completed --
WENDY WOODS: Exactly. They don't want to know .
MS FRASER BUTLIN: -- it doesn't need to be addressed
 21 anymore ?
WENDY WOODS: Exactly . Exactly . It's forgotten about .
MS FRASER BUTLIN: In terms of accessing and -- access to
 23 doctors and consultants when you were going through
 24 the treatment pathway , I think you all experienced
 25

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1 called -- really helped me with was about my children
 2 and my wife because , having said (audio distortion)
 3 the bag of medicine , you need to really kind of make
 4 sure that things are separated because it's a blood
 5 borne virus. So she was very helpful in writing
 6 a letter [... redacted ...]
 7 [... redacted ...] . In another case , the one in
 8 [redacted] , I talked to her the other night about it .
 9 She thought that it was not really an issue.
 10 [...~redacted ...] I talked to Sam about it in the
 11 past, "Is it to do with money or is it to do with
 12 [...~redacted ...] but just the questioning about why.
 13 "Well, my Dad was diagnosed with hepatitis C. "
 14 "Oh, well, you probably don't have it."
 15 [... redacted ...] That's a big thing .
MS FRASER BUTLIN: But I think you are picking up some
 17 concerns about the need for some people to justify
 18 having the test --
ROBERT ELLINOR: Yes.
MS FRASER BUTLIN: -- when they are going to a GP and
 21 asking for it?
ROBERT ELLINOR: Yes.
MS FRASER BUTLIN: Finally , in terms of the EIBSS
 23 applications . I think three of you have had
 24 a struggle. What are your views of the process you
 25

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1 difficulties.
 2 Wendy, do you have any reflections on why there
 3 were difficult ies?
WENDY WOODS: Oh, I just don't know. I had to go from
 4 [redacted] to Ipswich Hospital , because they didn't
 5 deal with it in [redacted] hospital, so I had to go
 6 there. But, I mean, the nurse that I had there was
 7 marvellous. She was on the phone all the while and
 8 ringing me up, seeing how I was getting on with the
 9 tablets and sending me all the blood tests. I mean,
 10 I could go to [redacted] to get the blood tests but
 11 she'd have to send me all the files and -- and I can't
 12 thank her enough, you know , she was really, really
 13 brilliant.
MS FRASER BUTLIN: Mr BG?
MR BG: When I actually asked my local MP to look into it,
 17 I did ask for a detailed report of what the failings
 18 actually were and they put that down to a lack of
 19 communication and a breakdown in communication , and
 20 that was the only support that they actually give to
 21 justify it.
MS FRASER BUTLIN: Robert, do you have any reflections?
ROBERT ELLINOR: Yes. Hepatitis C for me was -- like
 23 I said, it was very new but the one thing that the
 24 nurse practitioner -- I think that's what they're
 25

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1 have had to follow?
MR BG: When I initially put my forms in to my local GP,
 2 they actually lost them and it took them over
 3 six months to actually admit that they'd lost them and
 4 then I had to get some more filled out and taken back
 5 to the consultant.
WENDY WOODS: We had that. We filled in the form wrong or
 7 they filled the form wrong .
GEMMA WOODS: They filled the form in wrong, yes .
WENDY WOODS: So we had to go through all that process
 11 again .
GEMMA WOODS: They don't make it easy at all.
WENDY WOODS: Definitely .
GEMMA WOODS: It's -- I don't know. It's like , with most
 15 things, you have to just prove you're not lying all
 16 the time . And, you know , who would lie about having
 17 a virus such as hepatitis C? You know , you might get
 18 the odd one or two but it's something that 40 years
 19 later you find out about and that's a massive shock
 20 and a massive thing to go through anyway , and then you
 21 have to jump through hoops to fill in masses of forms
 22 to be told that you're lying , basically , and that she
 23 must have got it in another country somewhere and, you
 24 know, it's just a constant fight. It's a lot.
 25 I didn't mind doing that because I thought it

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1 was important but there must be lots of other people
 2 who don't have the ability to do that and would
 3 receive the letter and just end it there.
 4 **WENDY WOODS:** Which I would have done, because I wouldn't
 5 know where to start.
 6 **MS FRASER BUTLIN:** I think you've said that if Gemma
 7 hadn't picked this up for you --
 8 **WENDY WOODS:** Oh, definitely.
 9 **MS FRASER BUTLIN:** -- you would have just filed the letter
 10 and said, "Well, there we go?"
 11 **WENDY WOODS:** Well, I would have done, because I just
 12 wouldn't -- I definitely wouldn't know where to start.
 13 **ROBERT ELLINOR:** The original application talks about --
 14 I think some of the people here have had access to
 15 their medical records and -- despite some of the
 16 pieces being missing, but for me the application form
 17 talks very clearly about: you must apply for your
 18 medical records. As soon as you get or apply for your
 19 medical records and you get a rejection, I think that
 20 was within about two or three days of sending the
 21 document to EIBSS I got the rejection, and I remember
 22 writing to Susan Stretch from The Hep C Trust saying,
 23 "Am I done?" Because if you can't prove anything,
 24 like you said, it just gives you this feeling that
 25 you're lying. And why would you lie? There's no need

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1 I was reassured that the NHS isn't going to see that
 2 money anyway and you should go ahead and apply.
 3 **MS FRASER BUTLIN:** Sir, those are the questions I have for
 4 the panel. Before I invite the panelists to say
 5 anything further they would like to say, do you have
 6 any questions for them?
 7 **SIR BRIAN LANGSTAFF:** No, I don't, thank you.
 8 **MS FRASER BUTLIN:** Then, Mr BG, is there anything else you
 9 would like to add?
 10 **MR BG:** No, I don't think so.
 11 **MS FRASER BUTLIN:** Robert, is there anything else you
 12 would like to add?
 13 **ROBERT ELLINOR:** I -- like some of the other people here,
 14 I think hep C awareness is really, really important.
 15 So, in my case, I've joined together with The Hep C
 16 Trust to do more of that and eventually, end up on the
 17 helpline for The Hep C Trust. So I want to thank the
 18 Inquiry for doing what they're doing and I really
 19 appreciate and hope that the final report will help
 20 not just me but other people. Thank you for all the
 21 work.
 22 **MS FRASER BUTLIN:** Wendy?
 23 **WENDY WOODS:** No.
 24 **MS FRASER BUTLIN:** Gemma?
 25 **GEMMA WOODS:** I don't think -- I mean, I might just want

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1 to lie.
 2 But the then denial or rejection by the EIBSS in
 3 my case, which was well publicised this morning,
 4 I think it's quite ridiculous. So I did get the
 5 feeling that the auditors, if you want to call them
 6 that, are external from EIBSS -- I'm not sure -- but
 7 when I spoke to the lady at EIBSS on Tuesday -- on
 8 Wednesday, she remembered my case, she remembered me
 9 not being a policeman or being a policeman and ...
 10 So the process seems to have a conflict of
 11 interest from the beginning, because you're asked to
 12 provide your records but your records are in trust
 13 with the NHS, but they destroy them. There must be
 14 many, many people in the same boat as me that had
 15 their documents destroyed or -- yeah, I mean, they
 16 just flat out said based on the eight-year rule it's
 17 destroyed, gone.
 18 **MS FRASER BUTLIN:** Of course, Mrs BF, you had your records
 19 and, with the records, the process was then
 20 straightforward?
 21 **MRS BF:** Yes, I was just very lucky, I suppose, in that
 22 the Bristol Authority happened to keep my records and
 23 the consultant was very keen for me to make the
 24 application. Because originally I sort of thought
 25 I don't want to take money from the NHS, and then

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1 to add one little bit about the doctors records. It
 2 seems in our case that initially even asking for the
 3 medical records of Mum was deemed, "Well, why do you
 4 want those? We're not giving you those".
 5 And they are her medical records, and that was
 6 an initial fight. So I know it was going to be
 7 difficult from that process but I just wish -- you
 8 know, it's not as if I'm asking for anyone's records,
 9 I'm asking for your own, kind of thing. I just wish
 10 it was a bit -- made a bit easier for people who are
 11 going through something like this, that's shocking in
 12 the first instance anyway. You should be helped not
 13 hindered, basically.
 14 **MS FRASER BUTLIN:** Mrs BF, is there anything else you'd
 15 like --
 16 **MRS BF:** I just want to thank the Inquiry for the amazing
 17 work that it's done and how it has raised the profile,
 18 and how it's actually managing to get us all
 19 compensation and make things, you know, as well as
 20 they can be.
 21 **MS FRASER BUTLIN:** Sir?
 22 **SIR BRIAN LANGSTAFF:** Well, I wish that it had made
 23 awareness even greater. The accounts which you have
 24 given, all of you, show that there's still quite a lot
 25 of work to be done. You, in particular, Mrs BF, have

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1 said that what you want to come out of this Inquiry is
 2 doctors to be more aware --
 3 **MRS BF:** Absolutely .
 4 **SIR BRIAN LANGSTAFF:** -- of the disease.
 5 **MRS BF:** Yes.
 6 **SIR BRIAN LANGSTAFF:** Can I thank you for , as it were,
 7 bringing us right up to date, bang up to date pretty
 8 much, because your infections in each case except ,
 9 I think, for yours arose or were identified , I should
 10 say, for the first time during the course of this
 11 Inquiry and, in your case, first day in the UK in the
 12 course of this Inquiry .
 13 **ROBERT ELLINOR:** Yes.
 14 **SIR BRIAN LANGSTAFF:** So it's very recent and our terms of
 15 reference take us from the start of the NHS right up
 16 to today, and so it shows that there may yet be
 17 matters for me to consider at the end.
 18 But I want to thank each of you. The fact --
 19 I often say it, and sometimes people -- when you
 20 repeat things, they lose their force, but it's not
 21 easy giving evidence. The fact that two of you have
 22 chosen to be anonymous but have still given evidence
 23 is a testament to you and your desire to help others.
 24 I've noted that in, I think, each of your cases, one
 25 of the worries you have had is not so much a worry for

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1 heard the evidence could fail to appreciate the
 2 importance of what we've heard, to understand the
 3 order in which we've heard it, and to see the
 4 significance of beginning and ending with the personal
 5 accounts, the very personal accounts, we have heard.
 6 During the course of the Inquiry, 230 people who
 7 have been infected or affected have given evidence in
 8 person and some roughly 3,500 people have given
 9 written statements or spoken to the Inquiry's
 10 intermediaries. Let me say something to each of you
 11 who has given evidence, whether oral or written, or
 12 contributed their perspective through intermediaries.
 13 I include those whose voices have been heard
 14 here through those who have survived them.
 15 I'd like to recognise you and them all for the
 16 contributions and to thank those who have enabled them
 17 to be made. Each of you has helped to place another
 18 piece in the jigsaw puzzle about what happened and
 19 why, sometimes with testimony that has cast light
 20 where no other documents or witnesses are available
 21 and often by providing depth and definition on
 22 experiences common to far too many families across the
 23 length and breadth of each of the four countries of
 24 the United Kingdom.
 25 This evidence cannot have been easy to give.

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1 yourself having been told of the infection, though it
 2 was, but for others who might have infected
 3 inadvertently along the way, and that shows the
 4 spirit, the public spirit which you have also shown by
 5 being here on this panel.
 6 So I think you deserve our full appreciation.
 7 Thank you very much.
 8 I just want to say something, so if you don't
 9 mind, each of you -- this doesn't apply to Mr BG, who
 10 is obviously somewhere else, but if you just stay
 11 there for the moment.
 12 What I want to say to you is this. We've
 13 reached another significant milestone for this
 14 Inquiry. Today's evidence is the last oral evidence
 15 that we're timetabled to hear about what happened and
 16 why, with the exception, that is, of the two days next
 17 week that necessarily had to be rescheduled for the
 18 late Queen's funeral.
 19 I promised at the outset that this Inquiry would
 20 begin and end its oral evidence about what happened
 21 and why with a testimony of people infected and
 22 affected. That promise has been honoured, save for
 23 the rescheduled two days.
 24 In my view, that has proved to be the right
 25 thing to do for this Inquiry and, indeed, no-one who's

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1 I'm very grateful to all of you who have given
 2 evidence and the way in which your -- and I mean the
 3 people here -- your individual and collective support
 4 has made it so much easier for so many to give
 5 evidence so effectively.
 6 Let me also say this: at the outset, I said
 7 I intended this Inquiry would be one in which all
 8 witnesses would be treated with respect. I'd like to
 9 pay tribute to you and to all of those who have sat
 10 listening in the hearing room, not only to evidence
 11 which you may have endorsed but to evidence which you
 12 may have found uncomfortable or challenging, for the
 13 way in which you have enabled each witness to give the
 14 best evidence they felt able to give. In short, not
 15 just for the support -- so valuable -- which you have
 16 given to so many but the respect and sometimes
 17 restraint which you've shown throughout to all.
 18 The task I'm challenged with is not an easy one
 19 but, my goodness, you have made it easier. Thank you.
 20 In November, we will turn our attention to
 21 possible recommendations with witnesses -- you can sit
 22 down.
 23 **MS FRASER BUTLIN:** Thank you.
 24 **SIR BRIAN LANGSTAFF:** Turn our attention to possible
 25 recommendations with witnesses on topics such as what

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1 more can be done to find people infected and , as yet ,
 2 undiagnosed. You will appreciate that there are quite
 3 a number of witnesses to schedule and we will publish
 4 this timetable on the Inquiry website next week.
 5 In the meantime , we meet again on Thursday next
 6 week for the evidence of Professor Tedder , rescheduled
 7 as it has been for the late Queen's funeral.
 8 So it's Thursday at 10 am. Thank you once
 9 again.
 10 **(Adjourned until Thursday, 13 October at 10.00 am)**

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(24) GEMMA WOODS: - ahead

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(25) AIDS - balance

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(26) bang - care

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(30) GI - hope

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(31) hoped - I was

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(36) prognosis - risk

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(37) risk... - specialist

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(38) specialist... - there

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