

Witness Name: David Keenan

Statement No.: WITN0990001

Dated:

## **INFECTED BLOOD INQUIRY**

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### **WRITTEN STATEMENT OF DAVID KEENAN**

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I provide this statement in response to a request under Rule 9 of the Inquiry Rules 2006 dated 4 September 2019.

I, David Keenan, will say as follows:

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

1. My name is David Charles Keenan. My date of birth is GRO-C 1945 and my address is known to the inquiry. I am a retired Metropolitan Police officer, having joined the Police Force in October 1964. I live in GRO-C Essex with my wife. I have two adult children. I intend to speak about my experience as a blood donor in London in the early 1970s, including what was known to the medical profession at the time regarding the safety of blood products.

## **Section 2. How Affected**

2. Whilst living in GRO-C in 1967 I became a blood donor for the Blood Transfusion Service in Edgware. During one of these visits I was asked if I would consider taking part in a Plasmapheresis programme for Factor VIII which they were running at the Edgware Centre. This would involve the withdrawal of whole blood, the removal of the clotting factor, and the return of the remaining blood.
3. I began donating blood under the Plasmapheresis programme in 1970. In the first week of the programme a unit of blood would be donated. They would then spin the plasma in order to separate the red blood cells from the plasma. The plasma was then spun to extract about a table-spoon quantity of factor VIII. In the second week another unit of blood was taken and the first unit was returned minus Factor VIII. The donor would be required to return within 7 days for the next donation or the cycle would start again from the beginning. I recall they were very strict about this element of the programme. This process continued until 12 donations had been made, with the 12th unit of blood returned to the donor in week 13. There would be a 4-week break before the cycle could begin again. They were, at that stage recruiting anyone prepared to take part in this 13 week programme.
4. I continued donating blood until I left the Metropolitan Police Force on the 17 December 1971, whereupon I transferred to Essex Constabulary and in consequence moved house. In total I must have completed around 3-4 cycles. I do not remember any of my colleagues at Golders Green Police Station being involved in this programme at Edgware Centre. However, I do remember there were several people taking part in the process at any one session, usually around six men and women. I would see different people each time I attended to donate blood.

5. The medical professionals overseeing the process explained that the reason Plasmapheresis was introduced was because the NHS needed factor VIII. The Edgware centre was supplying the Haemophilia centre within the Royal Free Hospital. I am unsure whether this programme was being run elsewhere in the Country at that time. If a patient had an operation, they could require up to 40 units of blood. Ordinarily, units of Factor VIII would be made up of a number of people's blood and would produce only about a teaspoon quantity of clotting factor. This would be used instead blood. The doctor at Edgware, whose name I cannot now recall, explained that this was being imported from the US and was obtained from the homeless, prostitutes, prisoners and drug addicts and the blood was tainted. The blood was not screened for any possible infection before being deposited into a large stainless-steel tank. Any one contaminated unit of blood would then taint the entire vat.

### **Section 3. Other Issues**

6. I contacted the inquiry was because I found it baffling that in the late 60s and early 70s it was known to the medical profession that contaminated blood was being imported from America. The doctors overseeing the process explained that Plasmapheresis was introduced specifically because imported products were known to be contaminated. It is well known that the blood transfusion service in the UK is composed of volunteers rather than paid donors and is rigorous in terms of screening products. Each time I went for a donation, they asked the same questions about my medical history and whether I had any changes in my health or personal life or had any tattoos. This is why I find it difficult to understand why products continued to be imported in the 1980s and why the NHS didn't continue with the processes they had in place in Edgware. By 1975 I'd donated blood on more than 50 occasions and by the time I finished I'd given blood more than 100 times.

**Statement of Truth**

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

Signed GRO-C

Dated 10/10/19