

Witness Name: TA Wratten
Statement No: WITN1619001
Exhibits: WITN1619002-5
Dated: August 2019

INFECTED BLOOD INQUIRY

FIRST WRITTEN STATEMENT OF TIMOTHY ADRIAN WRATTEN

I, Timothy Adrian Wratten will say as follows:-

Section 1. Introduction

1. My name is Timothy Adrian Wratten and I was born on [GRO-C] 1985. I live at [GRO-C] Kent, [GRO-C] I live with my partner of 15 years, Gemma Holding, and we have two children who are [GRO-C] aged 14 and [GRO-C] aged 8. We run our own removals company which has been established for 6 years. My mother, Jacqueline Wratten, has also provided a witness statement for the Inquiry.
2. I make this statement as an affected person in relation to my late father, Peter Colin Wratten, who was born on [GRO-C] 1956 and died on 20th January 2011 as a result of receiving contaminated blood products. **Exhibit WITN1619002** is a copy of my father's death certificate confirming that the cause of death was due to multiple organ failure, Hepatitis C cirrhosis, ruptured oesophageal varices- stented and Haemophilia.
3. **This witness statement has been prepared without the benefit of access to my father's full medical records.** My father went to see a liver specialist, Dr Muller, at Kent and Canterbury Hospital in or around 2004, and was told

that he would need to be tested for Hepatitis C. My father asked why they needed to test him for Hepatitis C because they already knew that he was infected and had told him of this fact in 1996. The reason given was that the liver specialist, Dr John Devlin, at Kings College Hospital, London could not find anything in my father's medical records which mentioned Hepatitis C.

This strongly suggests that a number of my father's medical records, including all of the information and testing in relation to Hepatitis C, have been removed.

Section 2. How Affected

4. My father had mild Haemophilia and received Factor VIII concentrate from 1977 to 2010 although it is possible that his use of Factor VIII concentrate commenced prior to 1977. **Exhibit WITN1619003** is an extract from my father's UK National Haemophilia Database Records detailing the dates and usage of Factor VIII concentrates between the above dates.
5. My father was treated at the Kent and Canterbury Haemophilia Centre and he also attended the Thanet District Hospital, mainly for dental treatment.
6. His consultant was Dr Mark Winter who was based at both the above hospitals. He also saw Dr Muir at the Thanet District Hospital.
7. My father was infected with Hepatitis C as a result of receiving contaminated Factor VIII concentrates between 1977 and 1983. **Exhibit WITN1619004** is a copy of a letter dated 1st October 1996 from Dr Winter, Haemophilia Centre Director, to Dr Hayes, General Practitioner, which confirms this.
8. My father was not provided with any information regarding the risks of receiving Factor VIII concentrates. I believe that my father would have refused treatment with Factor VIII concentrates, given that he only had mild Haemophilia, if he had been aware of the risks.
9. My father was told that he had contracted Hepatitis C by Dr Winter at the Kent and Canterbury Hospital during a routine clinic appointment on 1st October

1996. **Exhibit WITN1619004** refers. My mother accompanied my father to this appointment. Dr Winter discussed the likely history of the Hepatitis C, the possibility of treatment and the fact that my mother should be tested for Hepatitis C. The letter states "*I spoke to his wife and she agreed to have a test to rule out the unlikely possibility of sexual transmission*".

10. Unfortunately following this meeting neither my father nor my mother understood or fully appreciated the severity of Hepatitis C.

11. It was not until 2001, when I was aged 16.5 years that I found out that my father had contracted Hepatitis C. I was extremely shocked and it was scary because even in 2001 my parents were still not aware of the significance of this virus.

12. I started researching the virus in earnest when I was around aged 18. I spent the next few years deepening my knowledge about Hepatitis C so that I was fully appraised and in a position to be able to advise my parents about the virus.

13. In particular, I remember being shocked that my parents had no idea about the risks of transmission. I remember that my father, brother and I all shared the same razor, which was kept in the family bathroom. I remember being so concerned about this that I raised it with my GP on more than one occasion and on each occasion he assured me that there was no risk. It is shocking to think of the risks to which my brother and I were unwittingly exposed to.

Section 3. Other Infections

14. My father was advised, in or around 2001, that he had been put at risk of contracting vCJD.

Section 4. Consent

15. I strongly believe that my father was tested for various viruses, to include Hepatitis C, Hepatitis B and HIV, without his knowledge and therefore impliedly without his consent. **Exhibit WITN1619003** confirms that my father was tested for HIV on 02/04/1985, 15/04/1985 (twice) and 27/10/1989. As far as I am aware my father was not advised that any of these tests had taken place.

16. There was only one occasion on which my father was told that he was being tested for HIV and this was when he was provided with a letter to show to his employers which confirmed that he was not infected with HIV. At this time so many Haemophiliacs were assumed to also have HIV and treated badly as a result. Unfortunately, I cannot recall the date on which my father was tested, with his knowledge, for HIV.

17. I also believe that my father was treated with a Hepatitis B vaccine without his knowledge and therefore without his consent.

18. I strongly believe that my father and his two brothers were used for the purposes of research. In my view, three brothers in the same family all of whom had Haemophilia and Hepatitis C presented medical professionals with perfect research subjects.

19. One of my father's brothers had a mild form of Hepatitis C whereas the other brother, like my father, had one of the worst strains of Hepatitis C. My father's brother with the mildest form of Hepatitis C did not receive any treatment for his Hepatitis C.

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Section 5. Impact

23. When I was aged 7, I remember my father as a happy and chirpy man who used to work during the week and teach at Maidstone College at the weekends. My father was employed as a computer aided design (CAD) technician and when I was a little older I remember going to Maidstone College with him one day and thinking how knowledgeable and inspiring my father was; it was fascinating seeing my father teaching the students and I felt so proud of him and happy that he let me be a part of this.

24. My father was infected with Hepatitis C before I was born. He was not told of his infection until 1st October 1996 and I was not told about his infection until I was aged 16.5 years.

25. I do think that my parents should have told me about my father's infection earlier. My father knew about his infection when I was aged 11, at which time I had just started secondary school so I presume that he did not want to burden me with this news at such an important stage of my life. However, my firm view is that I should have been told about his infection in 1996.

26. Children are cleverer than their parents give them credit for. In an ideal world I should have been sat down in a room with my family, medical professionals and social services whilst the news was conveyed to me. The whole family

should have been offered counselling. However, such a scenario was never going to take place.

27. I do recall my father actually attending one counselling session and I remember that he swore at the counsellor and then embarked upon a stage of heavy drinking. My father was a private man and quite rightly did not want his whole life on show.

28. I noticed my father becoming more and more withdrawn and not engaging in social or family situations. He began to act very strangely and suffered with mood swings. In fact it was not until close to his death that I was aware that he had also developed encephalopathy.

29. In terms of my father's drinking the differences I noted were at first subtle. The social drinking and the glass of wine which occasionally accompanied dinner developed into a few more glasses and then he progressed to spirits. Hepatitis C caused my father to drink excessively. I remember that I used to confiscate his alcohol when he was drunk. His argument for continuing to drink was that Dr Winter had said that it was ok for him to have a drink. I can well appreciate that Dr Winter would advocate this in order to mask what was really going on with my father's health.

30. Hepatitis C also caused my father to develop depression. As a child I had no idea what depression was but I was aware that my father wanted to stay indoors and he appeared sad and melancholy.

31. My father also developed some very strange obsessive rituals which have deeply affected me to the present day. I remember that whenever my mother, brother or I returned to our home after a day out, a trip somewhere or just to school, my father used to make us take all of our clothes off in the hallway so that we were stark naked and then we would all have to shower or bath immediately. I was always the last one to perform this daily ritual. All of our clothes were then placed into the washing machine for immediate washing. Basically this happened from when I was aged about 7 or 8. It was not normal for me to see my mother and brother naked every day. I think it was

a cleanliness thing in that my father felt dirty and therefore did not want any dirtiness from outside to come into the house. At the time I did not think about it too much but it definitely developed into an issue as time went by.

32. One particularly vivid and upsetting memory occurred when I was playing outside in the garden as a child. I remember needing the toilet but my father said that I would have to wait until I had undressed and showered. I could not wait any longer so I ended up wetting myself. My father said "*I am going to fucking hit you with this broom*". Internally I thought that I did not care and I blamed myself. However, I did realise that this was not really my father. Rather, Hepatitis C had created a monster.
33. I remember that our holidays were curtailed and day trips to places like Butlins took place because my father could have a drink there and if something happened to him we were in a safe community where help would be readily available.
34. Another upsetting memory I have is of my mother being out at a work do one evening and returning to the house fairly late in the evening, which of course was entirely reasonable and to be expected. My father, who had been at home drinking, questioned her as to why she had returned home late from a work do. My father then angrily picked up an ornament from the window sill in the lounge and launched it in the air. My mother apologised to my father for being late. My father accused my mother of not caring about him or the family and said that my mother only cared about work.
35. Another time I remember going to my mother's work one day and upon our return to the house, my father had locked us out of the house. We had to spend the night at the house of my mother's boss.
36. I also remember being scared one day because my father had thrown the dinner plate with all of his dinner, cooked by my mother, onto the floor. My father used to smash things but he never physically hurt us. I think I was aware that he was going through very bad times.

37. I recall that when my brother was aged about 15 my mother used to take him out a lot and I was left at home with my father on a fairly regular basis. I remember asking my father for biscuits one evening and he said I was not allowed any because I had already had my dinner. I therefore went upstairs to bed and he followed me and slammed some biscuits down in front of me and said "*have the biscuits then*".
38. On another occasion, when it was just my father and I in the house, I remember thinking that I would go downstairs and see what my father was doing. I knew that he would be drinking but I was not prepared for what I found. My father was lying on the floor having fallen out of his armchair and hit the back of his head on the fireplace. I was aged 12 at the time and I tried to help him up. I said "*you are bleeding*". He said "*don't fucking touch me*". I fetched him a towel and I remember being very upset. I remember swearing and shouting as well and I was still doing this when my mother and brother arrived home. In hindsight, this sort of situation angers me as I needed information regarding how to deal with both my father and blood spillages in order to protect myself.
39. My father used to hold down a regular job as a draughtsman and he used to play squash. When he was in his 30s he was of a slim build, just like me. He used to be able to run rings around me and my brother. However, Hepatitis C put paid to all of this.
40. My father gradually became overweight and everything started to go downhill for him. I remember that the children at school used to tease me about my father's fat belly. They used to say "*your father is a fat bastard*". It was all very upsetting and I had no idea why my father had become so obese. Things were changing all the time and not for better.
41. My father managed to work up until 2005 until he had to leave on the grounds of ill health. The Hepatitis C had really taken its toll by this time. Dr Winter told my father that if he did not stop working he would be dead. I believe that my father was to stop his career to get treatment for Hepatitis C but the treatment never materialised.

42. Once my father had packed up work, things did become a little more difficult financially but he did manage to pay the mortgage off before he was forced to give up work. My mother was still working at this point. She used to help Uncle John on his market stall at the weekends. However, this did not last long because whilst she was at work, I had returned home to find my father lying on the floor. I had therefore telephoned my mother and she had returned home. Shortly after this, she gave up work altogether to care for my father. Money then became very tight and we survived on benefits and had to very much tighten our belts.
43. As a family we never discussed my father's infection. We also never shared it outside of the family. Nothing was ever discussed. It was a taboo subject. I remember speaking to my mother's brother-in-law about campaigning and getting things out in the open and she was really unhappy about this and told me that my mother would be penalised if I spoke out. I felt really unhappy and depressed about this; it felt like I was being forced to keep quiet all over again.
44. Eventually I thought I don't give a damn about what anyone thinks and that is when I gained my momentum with the campaigning. Speaking out was the best thing that I ever did. My mother had not even told some of our immediate family and I think some of them had considered that I was a child having a bad day on several occasions when they had seen me. They now know the truth and could finally see how my family had suffered over the years.
45. In fact another worrying chain of events occurred as a result of my father's infection. My mother used to work in a nursery school and had actually been bitten by some of the children on a number of occasions; it was not just an isolated event. However, my mother did not tell her employer's about my father's Hepatitis C. My mother could well have contracted the virus from my father over the years. As far as I am aware the only time she was tested for the virus was in 1996 which produced a negative result. However, that was only a snap shot of one particular day; likened to perhaps obtaining your bank

balance on a particular day. I blame the NHS and the Government for not advising my parents about the severity of Hepatitis C which ultimately meant that my mother, somewhat unwittingly, put children and others at risk of being infected.

46. I remember that in or around 2005 I planned to give my father part of my liver due to the declining state of his own liver. However, my offer was declined by medical professionals because I was deemed too overweight in 2005. I was upset and annoyed about this; not least because had my parents told me about my father's infection when they first found out I could have made better plans for my health in order to assist my father when his health required such assistance.

47. I have recently had to attend Kent and Canterbury Hospital for my son and partner. These visits brought back some really painful and difficult memories. Last year I attended this hospital with my son and I literally froze when I got to the foyer. I remembered sitting in a chair in the foyer aged 14 whilst my father was in hospital there. These feelings totally threw me.

48. **GRO-C** is currently undergoing tests for an undiagnosed bleeding disorder and to my dismay was assigned to Kent and Canterbury Haemophilia Centre. Now the tests are underway I can't seem to get away from this hospital. Whilst I am sat in the waiting room **GRO-C** I tell myself that I can deal with it and then all the memories come back of being there with my father and of seeing Dr Winter.

49. Although I have not sought professional help, I have definitely suffered with extreme stress and depression as a result of what happened to my father. It was hard to put pen to paper to prepare this statement; preparation of the same has meant dragging up some painful thoughts and memories.

50. One particularly sad and vivid memory I have of my father's last moments in Kings' College Hospital, in London, was that he had an oxygen mask strapped to him so that he could not remove it. I remember sitting with him and then

leaving the room to take a break and when I returned they had sedated him and placed him in an induced coma.

51. Over the course of the next few days I remember asking medical professionals about this induced coma. I was told that, due to his encephalopathy, he may not come out of the sedation. I was both furious and devastated. How dare they place him under sedation in an induced coma without asking the family for permission. My poor father was led to believe that he was getting a liver transplant.

52. When my father was going to be taken off the ventilator we all stayed at the hospital. Our family slept on the hospital floor because there were no other options or facilities that were made available to us. I remember holding my father's hand and I felt the last beat of his heart and then everything went quiet.

53. I never got to say goodbye to him and that was the last time I ever saw him. Furthermore, my partner was pregnant at this time and we never got to tell him this wonderful news.

54. It was so inappropriate and upsetting how the medical professionals treated my father after death. I went to the Chapel of Rest the next day to sit with him and I was told that I should not be touching him or be close to him due to his Hepatitis C. I was told that his body could secrete the virus and put others at risk of infection.

55. My mother and I then stayed in London to register my father's death. I remember hearing sirens and bolting down the street. I could not deal with it and struggled to eat or care for myself at this time.

56. GRO-B

57. I believe that my grandfather's passing was due to the stress of what happened to my father and the rest of our family. He had a massive heart

attack and sadly passed away. My grandmother had predeceased him by about 7 or 8 years.

58. My eldest son, [GRO-C], turned 14 this month and I don't know where the time has gone. I am very proud of [GRO-C] and of the young man that he has become. [GRO-C] spent about 3 months of his life living with my mother and father and he assisted my father with daily tasks and his medication. It was also very reassuring for me to know that my father and [GRO-C] had a great relationship and that having [GRO-C] with him would keep my father focused and happy.

59. My youngest son is called [GRO-C] and his birth gave me both renewed strength and focus. If [GRO-C] had not been on the radar I may have ended up going off the rails.

60. What happened to my father still affects me today. The contaminated blood scandal has taken up so much of my life and eats away at me on an almost daily basis. My life is passing me by at an alarming rate but I will not rest until I obtain satisfactory answers.

Section 6. Treatment/care/support

61. My father never received any treatment for his Hepatitis C. **Exhibit WITN1619004** refers to the fact that Dr Winter discussed treatment with my father. This may have been the case but I believe that Dr Winter never intended for my father to have any treatment for his Hepatitis C. It was like dangling a carrot in front of my father and always moving it a little further away from him to ensure that, no matter how hard he tried, he would never reach the carrot.

62. My father was also fobbed off in relation to having a liver transplant. Initially he was told that he was not sufficiently poorly to warrant it and then later on he was told that he had to lose weight and then he was told that he was too poorly to undergo the transplant so he never received one.

63. I remember that when I was a child my father was given an isolated private room at the Kent and Canterbury Hospital whilst undergoing a liver biopsy. I wonder whether this was due to the medical staff being concerned about the transmission of his Hepatitis C.

Section 7. Financial Assistance

64. My father received both the Stage One and Stage Two Payments from the Skipton Fund.

65. My mother and father also received a couple of grants from the Skipton Fund to carry out adaptations to their kitchen and bathroom. As far as I am aware my parents had to supply quotations for this work, together with supporting medical evidence. I believe that the process was protracted.

66. For the period 2011 to 2014 my mother was declined any support from the Skipton Fund. Had my father died a month later than he did my mother would have been entitled to ongoing support.

67. For the period 2014 to 2018 my mother received £155 per month as a top up payment from the Skipton.

68. My mother now receives about £850 per month from the England Infected Blood Support Scheme (EIBSS).

69. I personally have received no support from the Skipton Fund or the EIBSS. I have tried to argue a number of points with them in this regard to include the fact that children who were dependants of those who passed away should be entitled to support but unfortunately I have not managed to make any headway with them and continue to struggle financially.

Section 8. Other Issues

70. I do a lot of campaigning which started when I first made contact with Tony Farrugia and I am really proud of "*The Fatherless Generation*". However, pursuant to paragraph 2.9 of the Notice of Determination in the Award made to my solicitors preparation of this statement does not cover investigative work. I would like to give evidence on such matters and am unable to do so in this statement.

71. **Exhibit WITN1619005** is a letter dated 29th March 2015 which I wrote to David Cameron (however I was not able to send this due to my brother-in-law not wanting the family to get into an awkward situation). The letter states "*the whole ordeal has been soul destroying to my family...it has been a very difficult time we lost our dad and 2 uncles all within a 5 year period due to the deadly virus...this all hurts very much especially knowing of so many families in the same situation but more to the point knowing we will watch them suffer in the same way in which we have, it's wrong on so many levels to the point it brings tears to your eyes.....is it not wrong to have to sleep on a hospital floor with our family getting told sorry your dad is bleeding everywhere inside and there is nothing more we can do for him. Then waiting for my dad's body to completely shut down, holding his hand sitting there feeling his body struggling and then that last heart beat, then complete silence. My eyes are actually full of tears which are now running down my face whilst writing this, I lost a very special person in my life, that will never change*".

72. I want justice and I want to know why evidence has been destroyed and why it has taken so long to get a Public Inquiry. I also want to know why Dr Winter is such an inhumane person.

73. I was only a child when I found out about my father's infection and I have had to live through this for the majority of my life. I have been mentally scarred.

74. This tragedy must never ever happen again.

75. I want those responsible to be given custodial sentences and if they are in the medical profession I want them to be stripped of their General Medical Council (GMC) status.

Anonymity

76. I do not want to be anonymous and I wish to give oral evidence to the Inquiry.

Statement of Truth

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

Signed

GRO-C

Dated

22/09/2019