

Witness Name: Nigel Hamilton
Statement No: WITN2340001
Exhibits: **WITN2340002-WITN2340013**
Dated: 12th March 2019

INFECTED BLOOD INQUIRY

FIRST WRITTEN STATEMENT OF NIGEL PETER HAMILTON

I provide this statement in response to a request under Rule 9 of the Inquiry rules 2006 dated 13th November 2018. I adopt the paragraph numbering in the Rule 9 request for ease of reference.

I, Nigel Peter Hamilton will say as follows:-

1. Introduction

1. My name is Nigel Peter Hamilton. My date of birth is GRO-C 1960 and address is known to the Inquiry. In 1965, my twin Simon and I were diagnosed mild haemophilia.
2. I was first suspected of having haemophilia in 1965. I refer to Exhibit WITN2340002. This is a letter dated 5th August 1965 from Senior Registrar R.A McNeill to Dr Harris which states that I am to be referred to a Haematologist over concerns that I have a 'tendency to bleed', this was the first time that it was detected I may have a bleeding disorder.

3. I was born and brought up in Belfast. I have a twin brother Simon GRO-C
GRO-C Each of us haemophiliacs with moderate clotting deficiency.
4. It was not known until 1989 in correspondence dated 24th August 1989 between my Haematology Consultant in the Royal Victoria Hospital ('RVH'). Dr Elizabeth Mayne and her counterpart in Newcastle Royal Infirmary Dr Peter Jones that I discovered my haemophilia was actually moderate to severe as specific research into the extended family indicated it had been inaccurately judged to be mild. I refer to Exhibit WITN2340003 which presents the letter I describe above.
5. I obtained a primary Degree in Social Sciences and Politics at Coleraine University and later studied for a PhD although due to extended working conditions did not complete this. My work history is as follows. In 1987 I began a career in sales within Ireland/UK Haulage and Transport developing in 1990 to Transport and then Regional Manager with the same firm.

2. How Infected

1. I was infected when undergoing my eye procedure in 1976 at 14 years old, a fact confirmed by Dr Bassindine, Hepatologist Consultant at the Freeman Hospital in 1990 while I was under release from the Royal Infirmary, Newcastle -upon-Tyne. I refer to exhibit WITN2340004, a letter dated 23rd November 1994 from Dr Elizabeth Mayne addressed to me which confirms that I have 'type 3' Hepatitis which is commonly known as Hepatitis C ('Hep C').
2. Simon and I were both diagnosed as mild haemophiliacs in 1965 at the RVH. I refer to Exhibit WITN2340005, a letter dated 15th September 1965. This is a letter from J.M.Bridges to Senior Registrar R.A. McNeill that confirms both Simon and I are mild haemophiliacs. Simon and I were 5 years old in 1965.

3. GRO-C My grandfather suffered from haemophilia and died in Whiteabby Hospital in 1967 from an inter-muscular injection wrongly administered. Two of our cousins now both deceased from Hep C and liver complications were also haemophiliacs. They both died in the mid 1990s.
4. I discovered that I had contracted Hep C in 1991. I refer to Exhibit WITN2340006, this shows a letter dated 17th August 1989 from Consultant Peter Jones to the Medical Records Officer at Belfast Royal Infirmary in which Mr Jones requests my haemophilia records after I had moved into the local area.
5. I was not told that this virus was in my system from 17th September 1976 when I was just 14 years old, so finding out this news in 1990 was a huge shock. I had to take time off work, some 6 months after starting treatment for the Hep C virus at the Freeman Hospital, Newcastle-upon-Tyne. No-one thought to explain to either myself or my parents that my blood and liver tests in the months and years following a cosmetic eye straightening procedure, indicated elevated levels consistent with an irregular liver condition. This has left me astounded to this day and totally changed the direction of my life in an extremely traumatic way.
6. As a very young child, I had the sort of minor problems one might associate with my condition. However as early as 1965 I suffered a serious injury to my left eye causing considerable trauma to the opus and this required several years of specialist care and recovery through patch and rest treatment.
7. My eye recovered to a degree, but the sight was seriously impaired, and the eye was severely squinted. Against this backcloth, I required factor VIII for a number of minor injuries which resulted from impact injuries but nothing which caused any major problems just a copious number of very obvious bruises and bleeds resulting from typical boyhood activities. I refer to Exhibit WITN2340007. This refers to a letter dated 23rd June 1965 from surgeon J.A Corkey to Dr Harris which states at the time they were not sure how bad my

eye had been damaged and they could not tell how much of my pupil had been dilated.

8. I had a few health issues subsequent to my eye injury when I was four years old and also, around that time, I was badly burned in a kitchen accident in an aunt's kitchen when a frying pan was knocked from the cooker and collided with my face, showering me in hot burning fat. This required a number of months in RVH on the children's ward and the recovery proved very successful leaving me no residual burns or facial blemishes.
9. As a haemophiliac I had to have dental treatment at the School of Dentistry at the RVH as local dentists were loathed to treat us. Especially given the threat of HIV and Hep C knowing in the 70's and 80's concerns were being expressed in medical circles about the danger of an epidemic threatening from blood borne viruses with particular concern at the prospect of causing bleeding through oral treatment. As a result, we were treated by the Specialist Primary Care Dental unit in the RVH.
10. When we were 11 years old both my twin Simon and I had to undergo dental spacing which required extractions and our first real encounter with factor VIII IV drop and injections to contain serious and contracted bleeding episodes resulting from the procedure. Hospitalisation took several weeks before release and created in itself complications identifying the severity of our bleeding condition.
11. As a result of the aforementioned eye injury, I had a squint in my left eye which had improved but remained a social nemesis I continued to be conscious of and frequently reminded of by classroom bullies and the curious who taunted me with "Squinty and Cock-eye". Not flattering comments to a boy ever more conscious of this cosmetic flaw. When I was around the age of 14, I was keen to have the squint corrected because when attending Belfast Institute my friends were joining a social group of girls from Methodist College and Victoria College and I did not want to be any different having had to encounter a number bullies and comments from the primary school pupils

while at Glengormley Primary and had continued when to the Royal Belfast Academical Institution ('RBAI'). I became more aware of my condition and felt the correction of my squint would make me less self-conscious and more "normal and accepted" both to my peers and the opposite sex whom I had become more aware of. I refer to Exhibit WITN2340008, this contains a letter dated 6th August 1976 from Dr Peter Jones Registrar at the RVH addressed to Dr Harris which states that I was given the blood product Kryobulin after my eye correcting operation.

12. Consultant Haematologist Elizabeth Mayne at the Royal Victoria Hospital in Belfast, said that the squint could indeed be corrected. I refer to Exhibit WITN2340009 which contains a letter dated 25th June 1976 from Dr Mayne to my mother. Dr Mayne states in the letter the eye correcting surgery is to go ahead in July 1976. I went ahead with the procedure on the 13th July 1976.

13. I was not aware of any risks or concerns that might have accompanied it nor was I nor my parents made aware of any risk of blood borne viruses associated with contaminated blood or blood products. Dr Elizabeth Mayne was the Director for Haemophilia at the Royal Group of hospitals and was recognised as a leading specialist in Bleeding conditions and Haematology.

14. As far as I was concerned, the operation was a success. The squint was corrected. I got on with my life, growing up, passing exams and obtaining professional qualifications, catching up on my individual ability to project myself and grow into manhood. I felt more normal, more complete.

15. During the initial scare of the AIDS virus back in 1984 Northern Irish haemophiliacs and those requiring blood products under Dr Mayne's directorate were requested to attend an important meeting and we gathered in a hexagonal room at RVH. There were over 50 people there and I attended with my brother Simon and others some of whom I recognised from clinic appointments.

16. Dr Mayne came in flanked by the Registrar Frank Jones and the Outpatient Sister Kaye Farrell. She explained that a new and dangerous virus had been identified which could be carried in blood and blood products. She told us that we all needed to be tested and that we had the choice to have our blood tests confirmed positive or negative and to enable us to make a decision as we were told the choice was ours she and her staff left us she requested that we remain alone as a group to discuss the rationale we each wanted to adopt.
17. From my recollections the door was locked behind them as they retired. After 15-20 minutes they returned and began to take individuals for blood tests. Even at that time with little knowledge of this virus, we were given to choose to be informed of our individual status – positive or negative.
18. I found this a very dangerous and unusual decision as the potential consequences of knowing or not knowing seemed cavalier. In my opinion and that of many others we had to be informed if we were infected, we did not have a choice. I never forgot this meeting although it became less an issue for me as I was negative and my main threat came from Hep C, an infection we were not advised of at that meeting even though from this narrative I had been infected since 1976. I did not have any knowledge, nor was I given it by anyone on the health specialist team that looked after me.
19. I had not been told that I now had the embryo of a vicious and deadly life taker in my blood stream that was ticking since entry to explode and destroy me. Taking my health down like a deliberately relentless sniper, dedicated to end my life with a cold and callous accuracy that would put me down and keep me down.
20. During my life to that point, I had received the following blood products Cryobulin Cryoprecipitate, Cyclokapron, Hemophil factor VIII, Retro factor VIII Edinburgh factor VIII and DDVAP. These had been administered when prescribed and had in some cases continued to infect me with Hep C and hepatitis B. Before the aforesaid eye operation, I was on factor VIII primarily for impact injuries to both muscle and joint impacts and recurring bleeding

episodes. This was not a regular occurrence but often enough. Boys will be boys.

21. In my later teenage years and in University, I had some other injuries. I had a bad knee injury which bled into my lower left leg and joints occurring from a fall from rocks while shore fishing and necessitated factor VIII treatments and a plaster requiring a period of physiotherapy. I also suffered several ankle bleeds again necessitating factor VIII treatments. Factor VIII injections were the recognised a prescribed treatment for our bleeds and this was consistent practice for haemophiliacs within our directorate clinic and the National Health Service per say – a mainstay provision treatment for haemophiliacs and sufferers of Von Willebrand's.

22. The factor VIII product originated in the USA and other European countries. While each director had the opportunity to choose their source American produced product extracted from a great number of units of blood was selected because of price and the shortage of home-produced UK blood. It was gradually replaced as the contamination and infection of blood and blood products became known to the medical professionals and the product providers Bayer and other pharmaceutical companies. Pricing their products out under licence at exorbitant prices and therefore not merely by chance but by provision tested complicit in the worst scandal to affect the NHS.

23. As I moved into, and made my way through the world of employment, I did not recognise that I had any particular problems beyond the need for some care as a result of my moderate haemophilia. However, as I became older, I was aware of becoming more easily fatigued and tired bound by colds and lethargy. I was though working hard and assumed I was getting run down.

24. I had a wife and four sons. GRO-D my wife who I had met at University in Coleraine and subsequently married while starting my PhD and my four sons GRO-D whom I loved passionately. Therefore, I put it down to just being very active and stretched. I would work hard in the week and weekends would be virtually wiped out.

25. In and around 1995 I had an oesophageal tear and received factor VIII treatment and an oesophago-gastroduodenoscopy to identify my bleeding. My family were living in Newcastle at that time but as I was in Scotland where I had been at my company's Scottish depot in Cairnryan closing the depot and preparing to open its replacement in Glasgow within days.
26. My business was to retire several staff and it was agreed that my depot Manager and I would take our staff out for a meal in Stranraer to show our gratitude and present several gifts to the retirees. Then the following day I would travel to Belfast and go on to several valued customers in Cork and Waterford. On the evening of the meal I had become violently ill and whilst being sick tore my oesophagus.
27. I was not aware of it until travelling in Ireland and was convinced I had caused an injury given the violent vomiting I had experienced in the North-West Castle Hotel. It was so shocking in its intensity that I called for the hotel doctor to examine me. He advised me to go to my hospital unit as soon as possible. As I was travelling in Ireland, I made my way to RVH and Dr Mayne had an investigative procedure carried out, bloods taken and confirmed the injury consistent with me swallowing blood and feeling faint and lightheaded. I was offered a procedure in the RVH but instead elected to have it done in Newcastle where my family resided and could be nearer my family.
28. On being discharged I was being released after three days as an inpatient, I was asked to wait in a small room, which I would describe as something akin to an Edwardian broom cupboard. A lady doctor walked in with a great number of medical files and introduced herself as Doctor GRO-D a Clinical Consultant Hepatologist based at the Freeman Hospital, this was a facility I had never heard of. She candidly asked me if I had heard of hepatitis, I replied I had heard of hepatitis a and b.
29. The Consultant told me that she had had my files passed over from Belfast, and I had been infected with Hepatitis Non-A-Non-B, recognised as Hepatitis C.

30. I asked how she knew and that I hadn't, that someone had made a mistake and started nervously laughing. Dr [GRO-D] wiped the incredulity off my face and told me that the file showed quite definitively that I had it since I was a teenager, indeed precisely since I had had the cosmetic eye operation when I was 14 in July 1976. I asked her if they were my files and she showed me a record of blood readings and which confirmed that the higher that the reference range was abnormally high and indicated the date.

31. To say I was devastated could not describe my feelings in that instant I was lost in my own thoughts, racked by the fear that I had unknowingly given my wife and sons this filthy deadly virus.

32. I contacted Dr Mayne and saw her in Northern Ireland. She confirmed that when I had the cosmetic eye operation I had been infected through the factor VIII that had been used at that time. She was able to show it to me and track it quite clearly. This was a difficult meeting and one I had demanded take place and we were faced with challenging issues which I needed answered and one that she was reluctant at first to concede to.

33. I travelled over to meet her urgently with my need to resolve. I still to this day cannot understand why I was not told that the blood product was at risk of being infected and at what stage she knew there was something wrong. The lack of information was breath-taking and left me feeling that I was like a Guinea Pig, blood being taken, record kept, observations recorded while the whole time I knew nothing of the experiment.

34. I had to go and tell my wife what I now knew. I had to tell her that she needed to have a test as did my four sons. I had to ask her to trust me that I had not known of this until that very incident. Unfortunately, my wife found it hard to believe that I had not known. The trust and bond between us totally broke down. My marriage was over. [GRO-C]

[GRO-C]

35. At this time, I was working in a part-time job with Mars Confectionary in NI and living in a recently mortgaged house smaller than our family home, it was all I could afford and necessary for the holiday stay of my sons.
36. I was on Interferon treatment for six months to restrict the by now recognised liver and spleen damage caused by years of Hep C and Hepatitis B infection. This particular medication was causing aggravated side effects. I was beginning to act irrationally with flu like symptoms and mood swings. To say life was punishing was to put it mildly but at least challenging with heavy colds and other symptoms which made me feel very fragile and unwell daily. I could not get to sleep, and I usually slept for a few hours only even though my work and commitment to visit my family in England at weekends and holidays were often making me feel exhausted.
37. During the initial course of this treatment which caused frequent mood changes, aggression and loss of memory I was released from my firm because of concerns by my newly appointed boss that I had the HIV virus.
38. When I resumed work, six months later in 1992 I was head hunted to a management position within the logistics industry and managed national and international transport for two large paper mills in the North West of England. Following a seven month period I was successfully employed as Sales & Marketing Manager for Norse Irish Ferries sailing between Liverpool and Belfast.
39. This position was relinquished after two years in 1994 as a result of developing ill health, lethargy and tiredness, and repeating persistent colds. In the immediate period I attempted part-time work and eventually in 2001 recovered sufficiently to run for election to Council in Northern Ireland where I was then living and held the position for ten years during which time my health again deteriorated. I fell seriously ill and was hospitalised for Hep C driven cirrhosis and a severe stomach bleed in 2009.

40. After some months I undertook contract consultancy for an international recruitment firm being offered full time employment and achieving a Senior Management position and linking employment recruitment and Government training for offshore industry recruitment and training with both Northern Ireland and Republic of Ireland Governments. Undergoing a number of regular unparalleled hospital tests and appointments with Haematology and Hepatology at the two Belfast Hospitals – The RVH and Belfast City hospitals.

3. Other infections

1. In December 2017 I was told I had liver cancer in the right lobe following an MRI.
2. In 2004, I was advised that I was one of a number of patients who had received factor VIII treatment from blood donated by people who later developed vCJD and was therefore hit emotionally and psychologically by another hammer blow.
3. Those suffering from haemophilia and Von Willebrand's Disease who received treatment pooled from this UK sourced factor concentrates between 1980-2001 should be considered 'AT-Risk' of vCJD for public health purposes and special precautions taken. I refer to exhibit WITN2340010 which contains a letter dated 20th September 2004 from Consultant Haematologist Dr Frank Jones to me stating that I was at risk to having been exposed to vCJD and that I should not donate blood, organs or semen.
4. I was one of those patients and again here was marked by the beast and a whole new regime of staff protection much like that used to protect them from contamination saw me being treated as a special case with staff masked up and medical kit once used discarded or sent for high power cleansing. I was of course recognised the need to follow protocol but as you can imagine it was both soul destroying and embarrassing to have to sign documents and watch nurses, dentists and other medical staff mask up and kit up to deal with

me. This experience was both humiliating and angered me. I felt like someone infected in the Dustin Hoffman movie "Quarantine". I mean it was very obvious that no one was taking any risks around me.

4. Consent

1. I believe that myself and many others were treated without our knowledge and consent. I recognise that I am not alone many have suffered and had the course of their lives irrefutably changed without their consent or knowledge. From the time the decision to give them blood or blood product they like me had been doomed. I was never given full or adequate information that these blood products contained such deadly viruses.
2. Answers to questions I have never been granted. Shrouded by the secrecy of medical record access and the omissions and prejudicial choice of those who charged with my health, only shared and arbitrarily answered the questions they wanted to answer.
3. Those who made the calculated decisions that pointed the gun in my face and placed me in a game of Russian roulette without my consent or knowledge owe me answers and reasons for making my life the way it has been against a backcloth of destructed collapsing health.

5. Impact

1. It can be seen that I have held a number of high-level management positions. I have attempted to climb back into a strong financial position even though my continued deteriorating health detracted seriously from the opportunity to achieve this, leaving me to fall into a financial vacuum only partially eased by having to humble myself and succumb to vagaries of the welfare system. Not compassionate nor understanding *leviathan*, to keep my head partially above water as it became obvious, I was totally deprived of achieving that goal. It was like a shock wave that I couldn't recover from and reluctantly came to accept.

2. I have come through this now, but I continue to deal with the impact every day of my life. I continue to be fatigued in wound pain and experience headaches and days when I need to rest up, exhausted for no apparent reason. I need to pace myself carefully to ensure that I give myself life longevity. I have to have a very strict regime of diet, I must limit myself to just the occasional glass of wine habitually a low or non- alcohol type.

3. I am not working at the moment and recognise now that I am the victim of ageism and healthism, but I am hopeful that my old boss, Brendan Carlin will offer me something if Brexit doesn't create its own issues. I am doing some research into Brexit issues with a UK based employment agency providing temporary employment agency for European work contracts in petrochemical, pharmaceutical and heavy engineering and construct sectors and have once again begun to engage with Government officials to find a way through the Brexit maze.

4. I do though resign myself to a much lesser and less challenging role to any I have held in the past. Too much time and youth has been lost to start again and head toward senior management, so I really feel trapped and in good health for the first time in years.

5. I was an active hardworking man who took pride in his career. I had everything, a good job, a wife, and four wonderful sons. It all fell apart as a result of being infected with Hep C. Everyday since then, has been a constant struggle emotionally spiritually and physically. There have been times when I have been gravely ill and close to death.

6. I believe I will never be able to live the full and fulfilling life I should have had. I found that after a near nervous breakdown following the break down in my marriage [GRO-D]
[GRO-D] I either had to continue to fight and lose my mind from the distraction of the terrible loss of all I loved and cared for, or recognise that putting the battle to try and regain a committed relationship with my sons

GRO-D

GRO-D

7.

GRO-D

8. The whole thing driven by my declaration that I had Hep C, something I consciously did not know nor was I informed of when I had liver function irregularities after my eye procedure in 1976 and the years in between.

9. She simply couldn't cope with it and turned rapidly from my partner to a woman I didn't know who, driven by the fear of infection, GRO-D
GRO-D Where I lost my family because of this virus has haunted me over the years. I fear nothing...nothing but the loss of my family that has been the destruction of my mind and my emotions.

10. Of course the continuing and debilitating destruction of my health from virus to cirrhosis from cirrhosis to liver cancer from liver cancer to the resurrection of life from the gift of a new liver and the restoration of my health, will never give me back the time I have lost with my sons, nor my wife nor will it restore a healthy bank account the balance of which would have been a solid and continual career path not torpedoed by a deadly aggressive and vicious virus whose sole objective when in my system has been to destroy my ability to live a normal, fruitful, fulfilling life and have that with my family around me.

6. Treatment/Care Support

1. In 1995 I started an initial course of Interferon monotherapy. Again in 1998 I was put on Ribavirin Dual Therapy. This was the second attempt by the Consultant team to kill the Hep C and I relapsed post treatment.

2. I underwent over 5 months of urinary infections which were attributed to the treatment and was extremely fragile and began to fall out with my employer who mistook my repeated sick requests as malingering and laziness. The [GRO-D] who worked at the Mars factory at the time did not like me, she thought I was just lazy, which is something I was most definitely not. I did not feel that I could tell her I had Hep C as I had done with the transport company I had previously worked for. I was managing chocolate products at the Mars factory and it was made clear by the [GRO-D] that she wanted me gone. The pressure from her, the travelling in my job and the total lack of support made the outcome inevitable and I resigned.

3. In a short space of time, having been told that I had Hep C and I had had it since being a teenager, my life had become a shadow of its former being, it had fallen apart. I lost my family and my career and found even temporary part-time work very difficult to hold onto. I felt like I was a dead man walking. I was emotionally wiped out and devastated.

4. I had, what I would describe as a nervous breakdown. For a few days I took solace in alcohol but realised this was not the action of an innocent man, a victim of circumstances outside his control and became determined to once again fight the odds and climb back from the potential abyss. I was fighting to maintain my relationship with my children [GRO-D] and had to ensure my mortgage was paid monthly and I could get to see my children [GRO-D]
[GRO-D]

5. Gradually I managed to pull something of my life together. I threw myself into work again I decided that I had to give something back for just being alive and after a year of attending branch meetings I stood in the Local Council elections but narrowly came second in a two runner bi-election, the other contestant was a lady fighting to retain her deceased husbands seat a previous Mayor of the borough and a well-respected man.

6. When several months later the scheduled election was called, I successfully contested it and won one of six seats. I held that seat for four years, topping the poll through a diligent and dedicated constituent workload and commitment to my constituents. I went on in 2007 to hold the office of Mayor and return to the benches in 2008.
7. In 2010 I suffered a severe Variceal Bleed in my stomach. I was rushed to Belfast City hospital. This was followed up by banding eradication of varices a process which continued for months and into several years prior to my successful anti-Hep C treatment in 2015.
8. I had been working very hard and long hours in my council capacity and was attending a pre-election meeting in the Belfast City Council when I realised that I had not eaten but felt extremely bloated and in stomach pain. Upon leaving the meeting and traveling to a friend's house close to my Council offices in Newtownabbey to enjoy a meal and work on a marine strategy consultation document. I felt that I was going to be sick and recognising that without eating since breakfast and the bloated stomach and pain I was very worried and asked him to watch that I wasn't violently ill.
9. It took me some time to recover from this. I could not be as active as I had once been and as I wanted to be and with an election only weeks away my Consultant Haematologist, Gary Benson confronted me with the stark reality that to stand for election inside the next six months would be dangerous for me in my condition and to avoid both stress and physical exertion if I wanted to survive.
10. It was obvious that I would have to reluctantly stand down and recuperate. With a heavy heart I realised there was too much at stake and advised my party that I would not be running, something I have great regret over as I loved the challenge, the cut and thrust of political intrigue but above all the opportunity to help people less articulate and unaware of the system who needed a gate keeper and friend to help them through.

11. It was some months after this that I was approached by Brendan Carlin, a constituent and friend who offered me an opportunity to establish a training programme for engineering candidates with Government funding and for his business, candidates he could both vet and employ when qualified for the offshore oil & gas sector.
12. The project became a job and a career, and I began over 4 years work reaching into Senior Management and a healthy salary and respect among my peers. But following the sudden discovery of small bilateral aneurysms in October 2015 and a bleed from brain Cerebellopontine Cavernoma tumour I was back off work and for four months restricted to bed and home. I refer to exhibit WITN2340011, this contains a letter dated 19th November 2015 from Consultant Neurosurgeon Thomas Flannery to Consultant Haematologist Dr Gary Benson. The letter discusses the side effects I experienced upon finding out I had bilateral aneurysms and discussion of me potentially having surgery for this.
13. The DVLNI rescinded my driving licence and I was again in isolation. This was a very difficult period as I had to retrain myself to strengthen a weakness in my lower lip which had fallen slightly and causing me to slur my speech. I had arranged to return to work in January of that year and resume my role with the recruitment firm when my haemoglobin hit the deck and it was identified that the liver problems were now getting considerably worse I had put on an inordinate amount of weight and began to become bloated up to 17 stone and in around 2014/15 I had to have 5 litres of fluid removed as a result of my health.
14. My health was now taking its toll. I was a shadow of the man I'd been in the earlier years and recognised that I was very ill and not getting any better. After battling on during my employment with Brendan attending hospital appointments weekly and being given dispensation to have over 20 procedures while in full time work, I could not go back to work and while my job with the firm was frozen for me, I have not returned and have been off work for over 4 years. Naturally, the job is no longer there. Even when my

driving licence was restored it was only after repeated objections and through the support of Dr Gary Benson and my GP and even then, it was a 3-year medical licence as opposed to a normal one. I had had a clean licence for over 15 years and remain so.

15. I was told my liver was badly scarred. In December 2007 a scan identified I had now developed cirrhosis and what Government classed as stage two Hep C. The damage done over the years since I was infected in 1976 had taken its toll and not being made aware until 1990 gave the virus free range to attack my body and cause severe impact on the function ability of my liver and spleen. While the Government had taken a forced initiative to offer financial support it was recognised across the board as being both paltry and derisive and did nothing to establish confidence in the minds of those like myself victimised by this viral disaster.

16. I had gone over the years from a healthy active boy into a shadow of a man, inflicted into a life hospital dependent and bound by a weekly diary of appointments and procedures. I could not work successfully even if I wanted to. To work required a high degree of flexibility to work around the numerous hospital appointments. By this stage I was spending the majority of time under the aegis of the Hepatology Unit at the RVH and while my haemophilia had been secondary it became necessary for the by now established weakness in my blood clotting level to have become exacerbated and I became daily dependent on factor VIII which by this time had become an essential element of my daily routine.

17. I was suffering from a continual lethargy and abdomen pain which focussed on the liver and spleen regions and made my life and movements difficult. I had lost control over my bowels and daily would due to the medication and liver functioning issues foul myself as I had no warning of my need to go to the toilet. So I was often hugely embarrassed and had to bring a pair of trousers and underwear with me where ever I went to work, if I was occasionally out socially or ironically even at the hospital.

18. In 2016, I was placed on the liver transplant list and began the slow process of climbing into a position where I was going to receive an available liver. This led to me having to undergo a number of medical and psychology tests to determine if I was healthy enough and a suitable candidate to undergo the transplant itself. These tests were carried out in the RVH in Belfast and City Hospital Belfast over seven months and culminated in a visit and overnight stay in Kings College Hospital in London. This visit presented final tests to be carried out and an opportunity to meet with senior consultant staff responsible for determining my candidature. Following the phase of this process I was successfully moved onto the Transplant list.

19. The need to ensure that my Hep C was negative was essentially a critical part of the Transplant equation and placing me on my fourth anti-Hep C treatment course to resolve the negativity of the virus so damage to a vulnerable second liver would not risk damage and infection. I refer to exhibit WITN23400012 which contains a letter dated 7th December 2015 from Dr Neil McDougall to my GP Dr O'Connor which explains how the fourth round of treatment programme would run and what would happen following my treatment. This final and successful treatment – which was scheduled began in 2016, was a combination Therapy combining three drugs taken orally and over a 24-week period.

20. This was successful although brutal, requiring blood transfusions weekly and giving me extreme tiredness and lethargy, I did not experience many other side effects bar the reduction in my platelets which induced light bleeding in my gums and teeth. I was restricted to my home for this period purely because of physical weakness and vulnerability to infection. My recovery at conclusion was slow but steady. I had been receiving emotional support from the Haemophilia Social Worker Patricia McGrath and Dr Gary Benson whose attentive encouragement helped establish a positive attitude in my mind trusting that this might be a solution to my virus.

21. In 2017, my previous employer had asked if I was able to take up some important work in Antwerp and Rotterdam managing several contracts on the

continent on the ground as the face of the company and liaising with contractors, suppliers and customers alike. While I clearly found this very challenging physically, I felt it extremely rewarding getting me back into the business world and restoring confidence and the company's in my ability to carry out the tasks set jointly in the project. This was a glimmer of hope - that virus free but seriously damaged my body was rallying to my need to be useful and fulfilled. Travelling every other week and driving long distances and providing a practical face for the company, gave me something to live for and target my own personal progress.

22. In December 2017, I was told I had liver cancer in the right lobe following an MRI in September of that year. Results indicated that the cancer was still capable of treatment. Certain procedures could be taken to manage it until a suitable liver became available for transplant. This was indicated to me at a consultation with the chief Hepatologist Dr McDougal and on the day the company were having their Christmas Dinner and a weekend in Edinburgh

23. On arriving at the restaurant and joining my colleagues I had to tell them that I had been informed that cancer had been diagnosed. After all that I had been through it was almost ironic that the development of cancer was actually the only thing that would enable a transplant even though my liver was only up to 20% functioning and several months previously it was indicated at a consultation with Dr McDougal that it was looking less likely that I would receive a transplant even though I would remain on the list for the indefinite future.

24. As a result of this, I had to go to Kings College London where on the 12th February I had a liver transplant. The call came at 1.30 am on the 12th February 2018. I made my way with friend and brother to the Air Ambulance base in Aldergrove and flew to Stanstead. We then went by ambulance to Kings College in London. I went down at 8.30am and after a nine hour procedure I was taken for two days to the post operation unit for close monitoring and observation and pain management.

25. When I was brought round, I was taken down to the Todd ward and remained there for 2 weeks before being brought back in an air ambulance from Aldergrove to Belfast RVH and the joint care of Kings College Hospital, RVH Hepatology and City Hospital Haematology. I was released early within six days and returned to hospital after attending the following Frida Liver clinic as a result of an infection. While in Kings College Hospital and again in the RVH I experienced a feigned rejection, but it did not materialise. During the course of steroids, I began and continue to have Diabetes although I no longer need to inject insulin. I was released from hospital finally after a further 4 weeks and returned home to begin the rest of my life. A lucky survivor.

7. Financial Assistance

1. As a result of receiving contaminated blood I have faced financial hardship. I would predict that total salary loss and pension losses to be in the region of around £500,000.
2. In addition to the above I had a flourishing career that was taken away from me.
3. I have received money from the Skipton fund and currently receive monthly payments from BSO.

8. Other Issues

1. I know I will never get justice and never be able to have the years lost, the opportunities missed and the resolution to the many unfulfilled dreams compared to those untainted by this virus and its debilitating and destructive consequences.
2. I am one of the lucky ones I am here to witness these questions being asked and experience the answers feeble and inadequate as they may be. Justice, know I will never have justice, but closure is possible, and some standard of

secure life might be available to me if the decisions made are accountable and owned.

3. All that has been lost and no price will bring it back. I now have the opportunity to tell my story and share the harrowing experiences I have miraculously managed to face down. I am entitled to answers and these I hope will come from the Infected Blood Inquiry.
4. I have a number of documents which I would like the Inquiry to have a view of. I refer you to exhibit WITN2340013 which contains the following documentation;
 1. A letter dated 20th July 1965 from Surgeon J.A Corkey addressed to my GP Dr Harris. The letter discusses my eye and questions the extent to which my eye had been damaged.
 2. A letter dated 27th August 1965 from J.M.Bridges to Registrar R.A.McNeill. The letter states that myself and my brother Simon are 'probably mild haemophiliacs'.
 3. A letter dated 11th November 1965 from Surgeon J.A Corkey addressed to my GP Dr Harris. The letter discloses that I now have a squint.
 4. A letter dated 16th March 1976 from Consultant Haematologist Dr Elizabeth Mayne to Ophthalmologist Professor Desmond Archer. The letter discloses that I now have a 'severe squint'. Dr Mayne requests in the letter that Professor Archer instructs someone to look at my eye.
 5. A letter dated 24th March 1976 from Professor Desmond Archer to Dr Mayne. In the letter Professor Archer states that he would be happy to see me on the 26th April 1976.
 6. A letter dated 13th May 1976 from Professor Archer addressed to Dr Mayne. Professor Archer states in the letter that I am anxious to correct the squint

with surgery. The letter goes onto state that further assessments will be carried out to determine if surgery could take place.

7. A letter dated 25th June 1976 from Dr Mayne to Professor Archer. Dr Mayne thanks Professor Archer in the letter and states that she is going to write to my mother to make plans for my stay at the hospital.
8. A consent form dated 13th July 1976. The consent form is from RVH and consents for my eye operation to take place.
9. A letter dated 19th January 1988 from Dr Mayne to the Chief Medical Officer of Standard Life Assurance Company. The letter sets out my health in 1988 and the severity of my haemophilia.
10. A letter dated 24th August 1989 from Dr Mayne to Dr Peter Jones of Newcastle Haemophilia Centre. The letter references the fact that my medical records have been forwarded on to Newcastle Trust and provides a brief summary of my medical history.
11. A letter dated 23rd January 1991 from Senior Registrar to Dr Mayne A Kyle to an unknown recipient. The Left hand side of the letter does not state an address. The letter states that I am to vaccinated against Hepatitis B and contacted once the vaccine is at the clinic.
12. A letter dated 23rd January 1991 from Dr Mayne to myself. The letter states that I am to receive the Hep B vaccination. The letter further states that 'all Haemophilia Directors of the UK have made it policy to vaccinate anyone who is negative'. The letter then goes onto state that the chance of me becoming infected is 'remote'.
13. A letter dated 11th March 1991 from Consultant Haematologist Peter Hamilton to Dr Reynolds, my GP in Northumberland. The letter states that I do not require a Hepatitis B vaccination. The letter informs Dr Reynolds that I have hepatitis core antibody which means that I had Hepatitis B in my body in the past. The letter goes onto state that I require a liver biopsy. Lastly, the letter

states that a discussion will need to take place between myself and my wife in which contraception and sterilization is discussed.

14. A letter dated 26th March 1991 from Dr Mayne to Dr Hamilton. The letter discusses that I GRO-C

15. A letter dated 30th August 1991 from Surgeon K Farrell to Dr Bassendine. The letter encloses liver function test results. However they are not explicitly stated on the letter.

16. A letter dated 27th October 1992 from Dr Mayne to Professor Archer. The letter discusses the fact that I require further correction for my squint.

17. A letter dated 27th October 1992 from Dr Mayne to Dr Bassendine. The letter discusses my blood level count.

18. A letter dated 2nd February 1993 from Dr Mayne to Abbey Life Assurance Co. This letter provides a summary of my health in 1993.

19. A letter dated 22nd November 1993 from Dr Mayne to the Chief Medical Officer at Irish Life Assurance. The letter provides confirmation that I was positive for Hep C.

20. A letter dated 23rd November 1994 from Dr Mayne to me. The letter states that that I have type 3 Hepatitis.

21. A clinical note dated 23rd December 1994. The note discusses the fact that I have been receiving hepatitis counselling sessions.

22. A letter dated 7th March 1995 from Dr Mayne to Dr Michael Callender. The letter states that Dr Mayne requests that Dr Callender sees me. She informs Dr Callender that I have been under going ultrasounds.

23. A letter dated 3rd April 1995 from Dr Callender to Dr Mayne. The letter states that I did not respond well to Interferon treatment. The letter suggests that I am given an alternative Interferon treatment.

24. A clinical note dated 3rd April 1995 by Dr Callender. The note states the term '+ve? 1979' which implies that I was tested positive for Hep C in 1979.
25. A letter dated 3rd April 1995 from Dr Callender to Dr Mayne. The letter discusses treatments for Hep C as I became very unwell when I first tried the Interferon treatment.
26. A letter dated 18th September 1995 from Dr Callender to Dr Mayne. The letter proposes that I prescribed another round of Interferon but that it is prescribed differently. The letter then considers Viraferon treatment as an alternative if the Interferon is ineffective.
27. A letter dated 5th March 1996 from Dr Ami Calwell to Dr Elizabeth Mayne. The letter discusses funding relating to my Interferon treatment and how this funding had been stopped. Dr Calwell requests information about the treatment I am going to require and that he will be requesting funding from the Northern Ireland Health Board.
28. A letter dated 3rd September 1996 from Haematology Department Secretary C Diamond to Myself. The letter states that an appointment has been arranged for me to see Dr Mayne at the Haemophilia Centre on Friday 20th September 1996.
29. A letter dated 20th September 1996 from Haematology Department Secretary C Diamond. The letter states that I am due to see Dr Mayne on 18th October 1996.
30. A letter dated 31st October 1996 from Dr Mayne to Dr Calwell. The letter states that I have started a new Interferon treatment.
31. A letter dated 21st November from Registrar Orla McNulty to Dr Calwell. The letter states that I am coping well with the Interferon treatment.

32. A letter dated 29th November 1996 from Dr Davison to Dr McNulty. The letter informs Dr McNulty that my current round of Interferon treatment is going well and that I am responding well to this.
33. A letter dated 12th December 1997 from Registrar Orla McNulty to Mark Warcup of Mitchell Dodds & Co in Newcastle. The letter tells Mr Dodds that I am a haemophiliac who suffers from Hep C and that I have recently been experiencing bleeding gums.
34. A letter dated 7th January 1998 from Dr Mayne to Dr Callender. The letter requests that an appointment is arranged for me to have a liver biopsy. The letter also states that I have now become resistant to the Interferon treatment.
35. A nursing report dated 16th January 1998. The report reads that I am 'Polymerase Chain Reaction assay positive' and that 'Hepatitis C Virus genotype 3a identified'.
36. A letter dated 29th June 1998 from Dr Gary Benson to the Department of Work and Pensions ('DWP'). The letter sets out a summary of my health during that period. The letter also requests that the DWP increase my Disability Living Allowance.
37. A Hepatitis C treatment programme extract dated August 2004 from RVH Belfast. The Treatment programme states the medication I was to receive during this time.
38. A letter dated 22nd September 2004 from Consultant Haematologist Dr Frank Jones to Dr Caldwell. The letter informs Dr Caldwell that I fall within in a category that is 'at risk' in terms of vCJD transmission. The letter states that I should not donate blood, tissues or organs.
39. An extract from hospital notes dated 2nd September 2005 to 28th October 2005. The extract references the continuous bleeding problem I had with my gums.

40. An extract from hospital notes dated 2nd November 2005 that continue to 6th December 2005. The extract states I am receiving regular factor concentrates due to my bleeding gums.
41. An extract from Belfast City Hospital notes dated 21st November 2005. The note states that I am having cramping pains in my stomach.
42. A letter dated 22nd June 2009 from Dr Gary Benson to Dr Smyth. The letter states that my appointment with Dr Benson has been cancelled due to the vCJD risk.
43. A letter dated 24th August 2009 from Dr Gary Benson to Dr Paige. The letter states that Dr Paige should contact Dr Benson regarding me carrying a vCJD risk.
44. A letter dated 2nd May 2012 from Dr McDougall to Dr Rodgers. The letter states that I have been experiencing bowel upset from PPI therapy.
45. A letter dated 9th May 2012 from Dr Gary Benson to Dr Rodgers. The letter states that I have been suffering from recurrent bleeds in my gums.
46. A letter dated 13th November 2012 from Dr Benson to Dr Rodgers. The letter states that I have not required factor VIII recently.
47. A discharge letter dated 9th October 2015 from Dr L O'Connor to Dr Gary Benson. The letter states I had severe hypertension when admitted to hospital.
48. A letter dated 24th November 2015 from Dr Benson to Dr O'Connor. The letter states that I had experienced a bleed which was most likely caused by an aneurism.

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

Signed.

GRO-C

Dated 12 March 2019



Shot on S11 lite
Glonee Dual Camera