

Witness Name: Bruce Edward Norsworthy

Statement No.: WITN3143001

Exhibits: WITN3143002-WITN3143003

Dated: July 2021

## INFECTED BLOOD INQUIRY

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### WRITTEN STATEMENT OF BRUCE EDWARD NORSWORTHY

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I, Bruce Edward Norsworthy, will say as follows:-

#### Section 1: Introduction

1. My name is Bruce Edward Norsworthy and my address is GRO-C  
GRO-C and my date of birth is GRO-C  
1943. I am now retired. I was previously married to Mavis Norsworthy, but I have since remarried.
2. I provide this statement on behalf of myself and Mavis Norsworthy. This statement is made in relation to our son, Richard, who passed away on 28 April 1989.

#### Section 2: How Infected

3. Our son, Richard, was born on GRO-C 1964. He was diagnosed as a haemophiliac in around April 1965 at the Hammersmith Hospital, London by Dr Robinson. Richard was a severe haemophiliac with less than 1% of Factor VIII.

4. At that time Cryoprecipitate had not been invented and so Richard used to have an intravenous infusion of Factor VIII. Richard was a very active little boy and Mavis and I had to keep a special eye on him to ensure that he did not injure himself. Around this time, we made quite a few trips to Hammersmith Hospital so that Richard could be treated. These trips continued until Richard was four years old, at which point he went on to home treatment with the help of our local GP.
5. I used to collect the Factor VIII, which at the time was in bags as it was not a concentrate, from Hammersmith Hospital. I also used to pick up dry ice to keep it frozen in a thermos flask and had to make a lot of trips back and forth to the hospital. I was working at the time and then later in my career I was away travelling and so it was mainly left to Mavis to give Richard his treatment. As Mavis was a nurse she was well-equipped to do that.
6. I do recall that after that we progressed to the freeze dried Factor VIII we were able to travel to Cyprus and Richard was eight years old at that point which would have been in 1972. During the holiday Richard became very jaundiced and lethargic. He recovered after a few weeks.
7. During the early years of Richard being given these products I had been travelling a lot at the time. In around 1978/79 I was working in America and a colleague, whose wife worked in triage in Waterbury Connecticut Hospital, Dr Armbruster, told me that they were getting all kinds of things coming through, especially the hepatitis variants and to be watchful, but there was nothing much we could do about it and Richard was having Factor VIII dry concentrate all the time and he was administering it himself, not on a prophylactic basis, but pretty well when anything started as a bleed.

8. During this period we had not been provided with any advice or information in relation to any risks of giving Richard these treatments. This was of course before the AIDS problem had arisen.
9. In 1982 or 1983, at the time the HIV issue was at its height, Richard, who would have been around 18 or 19 at the time, had an arthrodesis of his ankle and was being cared for by Dr Savidge in the Haematology Department at St Thomas's. We had a consultation with Dr Savidge prior to Richard having his operation. At that consultation Dr Savidge said to us *"If you're worried about AIDS, just forget it"* and with that reassurance we went ahead with his arthrodesis operation.
10. Richard was still very active, he played cricket, contrary to mine and Mavis' wishes, but he enjoyed it so much. Fortunately, nothing ever happened. He was pretty good at looking after himself until he had a lot of extra Factor VIII when he had his ankle operation.
11. I do not know if he became infected then, or whether he had already been infected, but it was after Richard had that operation when we were notified that he was HIV positive. We were not even aware that a test was being carried out. We were living in Shropshire and Richard was living at home and going to work daily. One evening when Mavis was preparing the evening meal, we received a telephone call from Dr Michael O'Shea at the Haematology Department at Shrewsbury Hospital. He informed us over the phone that Richard was HIV positive which was a pretty awful blow. There was no face to face consultation and no request to attend the hospital to discuss it.
12. We were not provided with any leaflets or information about HIV I know that Dr Savidge also told Richard not to worry and said that if he wanted to have sex with his girlfriend he could, it was that bad.

13. Mavis and I are not aware of when exactly Richard was infected and therefore do not know if we should have been informed sooner about his condition. Richard had received regular blood products right the way through his life until he died. As a result of Richard's severe haemophilia he was always giving himself products.

### **Section 3: Other Infections**

14. I am not aware that Richard was infected with anything other than HIV as a result of being given infected blood products.

### **Section 4: Consent**

15. I am not aware that Richard was ever treated without our consent or tested with our consent, or when Richard was older, his consent.
16. When Richard started to become ill there were no treatments available for AIDS. However, when Mavis and Richard were in Slough Richard was given some antibiotics by Dr Savidge. There had been a report that someone in America had taken it and they had been cured. Doctors here were trying it. I believe it was Fucidin, but I do not know if that is right. Richard took this for two to three months but it had no effect whatsoever.

### **Section 5: Impact**

17. Before being diagnosed with HIV Richard was a very happy, outgoing lad. He had lots of friends and he participated in more or less anything that he could. He had a penchant for certain music and he formed a group with his mates playing guitars. He was a member of the Shrewsbury Operatic Society and he liked acting and fooling about really, just like any other young man of his age.

18. At the time we were informed that Richard had HIV he had a girlfriend and I am aware that her parents put pressure on her to finish the relationship, which she did.
19. Richard had lived at home until he moved down to London for his job. We jointly bought a house in Slough for him to live and Mavis used to go down during the week and they would both return home at weekends when it was possible.
20. Richard continued working for as long as he could and his employer, Lloyds Bank, were brilliant with him. Early in 1988 Richard started to become ill. Dr Savidge was the consultant looking after him. Richard had developed non-Hodgkin's Lymphoma and the doctors then started to treat that.
21. Richard was given chemotherapy and also some type of cortisone treatment which he was on until about Christmas of 1988 and thereafter I think they stopped it. When Richard was poorly he used to have tremendous night sweats and the loss of weight was really bad. He would then be put back on to his steroid treatment and he would pick up for a short while. We could see the effect of the cortisone treatment on him and he would improve slightly, but by Christmas 1988 there was no further benefit from it and he was taken off it. After this they just gave Richard some chemotherapy tablets, which of course did not have any effect because the AIDS had such a hold on him by then. Richard was very weak at this point and he was then forced to leave his job, sell his house and return home. I believe that he had a very good future with Lloyds Bank, but it all came to a grinding halt.
22. I do not believe that there were any treatments that Richard ought to have been given as at the time, it was just too early to get the combinations of drugs that subsequently helped victims of AIDS. I do not think there were many

antivirals at the time Richard died. Mavis has always said that if he could have hung on just another 18 months, two years, he might be with us today.

23. When Richard came back from London he did continue to work at the local bank in Shrewsbury, but he then became too ill to even do that. We then nursed him at home. Mavis' sister came and helped Mavis and she stayed with us for three months, until Richard died. Richard's death certificate notes his cause of death as Hodgkin's disease [WITN3143002].
24. Richard's HIV did not impact his dental treatment. He had, as a child, had some teeth taken out and he went into the children's hospital at Liverpool for that as we were living in Chester at that time. Richard grew up having regular dental treatment and it was our neighbour who was his dentist and he never had any further extractions. I do not think there had been any issue in relation to Richard's HIV with our dentist, John Sparrow, but Richard had pretty good teeth.
25. HIV had a huge impact on Richard's social life. Most of his social activities stopped before he went down to London because he lost contact with his friends, his girlfriend had abandoned him under pressure from her parents and I think that hit him quite hard because he loved her and we thought they were going to make a go of it, but obviously because of the stigma around HIV, her parents had obviously persuaded her to terminate the relationship. In relation to other physical activities Richard became too weak to take part in them.
26. Richard's education was not affected by his HIV, however when he was 18 he did not get all of the A Levels he needed and so he did an extra year and went to Shrewsbury Tech. Richard then decided to go to work for Lloyds Bank and he attended the Bank Training Centre and at that stage he was relatively healthy. I do not think that we knew that he was infected at that time, although he might have been.

27. The Factor VIII was working and Richard was self-administering when he needed it and it was all going well until the bombshell hit.

*Impact on Mavis and I*

28. There is an impact of your life anyway when you have a child with haemophilia because your lives are not the same. The pressure was there from the beginning because your freedom of having a child with haemophilia is paramount really because you always have to think about what you are doing, you cannot even go out for a day or a holiday without you having to make special arrangements to make sure you will be near to a hospital. Richard got to the age where he started to think about his career and he took over the responsibility of his haemophilia care and so for a short time, Mavis and I were released from that, but it was only for a short time because he became ill again.
29. As parents we never stopped worrying about him, but it also affected our lives in another way because we were advised not to have any more children and we then decided to adopt a daughter in 1968, which was quite a big decision to make at the time.
30. I was a chemist, but worked in sales for industrial chemistry to do with electroplating and printing circuit manufacture. I worked for an American company based in Connecticut and was a senior marketing director which meant that I was required to go visit our subsidiaries in Europe and keep them up to date with the latest developments. This inevitably involved a lot of travel and time away from home.
31. Mavis also worked and when the children were small she used to work on the nurse's bank so that she only worked when they were at school. As the children got older Mavis worked more hours. Mavis worked on the surgical ward at Crosshouses and then later she worked at the Nuffield in Shrewsbury

as a Staff Nurse. After Richard died Mavis then went to work in a nursing home for a while.

32. When Mavis was in Slough looking after Richard she worked in a Doctor's surgery on a semi-part time basis. Mavis worked part time a lot of the time due to me working away which meant that she had to be independent. Mavis worked her hours around the children as they grew up and the only period she did not work was when we first moved to Chester when the children were small and we had no relatives nearby and I was working.
33. When we brought Richard home from Slough I was still trying to keep going with work. It had not yet got to a stage when I needed to be at home. When Richard became really ill, Mavis' sister came up to stay with us, she had also been a nurse, and they both looked after Richard together. In the last few weeks of Richard's life I then took time off work. The company I worked for let me have around two months off. I was fortunate that the company paid me in full as compassionate leave.
34. Due to the stigma at the time around HIV we did not tell anyone. We had a nice circle of friends and we did not disclose it. That was Richard's wish, he did not want anyone to know and we respected that. Richard wanted to carry on as long as he could, as normally as possible. We had not even told Elizabeth, our daughter, until right at the end when she came home to be with us all when Richard died.
35. The impact on both myself and Mavis, whilst it did not ruin our lives, it came close to it. We went about our lives, but it had an awful ruinous effect. Mavis does remember that a lady from our doctor's surgery, came and asked if we wanted counselling, but Mavis had said no as she felt that the family support around her was enough. We were members of The Haemophilia Society and we used to receive their bulletins, but neither Mavis nor I remember that we

notified The Haemophilia Society that Richard had died. We tried to keep it as private as possible.

36. Mavis and I both agree that in the end Richard's death from HIV led to us breaking up, that was the end result of the whole tragedy. It was a very tragic time and left us in a ghastly state and our lives were in pieces.

#### **Section 6: Treatment/Care/Support**

37. I do not recall ever having any issues in obtaining treatment for Richard as a result of his HIV.
38. There was no counselling offered when Richard was diagnosed with HIV. The only counselling offered was that from our GP surgery, which at the time we turned down as we felt the support of the family was enough.

#### **Section 7: Financial Assistance**

39. We received two payments from the Macfarlane Trust. The first payment was in the sum of £20,000 and the second payment was in the sum of £23,500 [WITN31423003]. I do not recall having to apply for this, the money seemed to have been given to us automatically and I believe that was because it was The Haemophilia Society's remit to help with that. At the time haemophiliacs could not get any life insurance or mortgages and so the government said that they would make these payments. We had to sign a form to say that we would not try and get any more money.
40. We were suffering from that grief of the loss of our son and we really wanted to get it over with as quickly as possible so it was a line of least resistance and whatever the sum was to put it on the death of your son, it was peanuts anyway. We therefore just signed the form.

41. We did not apply for any other funds from any other trusts.

### **Section 8: Other Issues**

42. Richard was such a fantastic child, his attitude towards the whole thing was absolutely brilliant and taught us a lot of things about forbearance. We are all proud of our children, but I think Mavis and I feel extra proud of Richard because of the stand he made and also I think it showed in the wonderful friendships that he had. Even today Mavis is still in touch with a couple of his school friends that she hears from every Christmas and we know how they all felt about him.
43. I think the authorities that continue to put money over health should be vilified. They knew that these blood products were coming in cheap from America. They knew the sources of the donors were prisoners and down and outs who were paid to donate their blood. That was all public knowledge. I learnt a lot from my friend in America about the whole process. It was appalling and whichever government it was, they cancelled the formation of the Lister entity to have blood products entirely within the UK. That was cancelled for budgetary reasons and the consequence was thousands and thousands of people have lost their lives because of these products coming from the which were contaminated.
44. There needs to be further retribution to those people who made those decisions on what was supposed to be the National Health Service which is actually the national killing service.
45. Mavis and I remember The Haemophilia Society lobbying the government for so long about stopping imports from America and increasing the production of Factor VIII in this country.

### **Statement of Truth**

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

Signed .

GRO-C

Bruce Edward Norsworthy

Dated.....

28-8-2021