

Witness Name: Lillian Venet

Statement No: WITN3268001

Exhibits: None

Dated: July 2019

## INFECTED BLOOD INQUIRY

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### FIRST WRITTEN STATEMENT OF LILLIAN VENET

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I, LILLIAN VENET will say as follows:-

#### Section 1. Introduction

1. My name is Lillian Venet and I live at GRO-C, Manchester, GRO-C. I was born on GRO-C 1942. I am a widow and have retired. I have a son who lives with me and a daughter who is married with children.
2. I provide this statement in response to a request under Rule 9 of the Inquiry Rules 2006 in respect of my late mother Annetta Ingleby, born GRO-C 1916 who I believe died on GRO-C 1983 as a result of receiving contaminated blood transfusions and/or blood products. I am aware my brother Laurence Alan Ingleby has also provided a witness statement to the Public Inquiry (WITN2759001).
3. This witness statement has been prepared without the benefit of access to my late mother's full medical records. Although I have tried to retrieve her medical records, I have been informed that they have been destroyed under the 30 year rule.

## **Section 2. How infected**

4. My mother started to become unwell in the early 1980s. She was suffering from issues with her stomach and was generally not feeling herself. Prior to this she was always in very good health. When my mother first began to feel unwell she had recently bought a new fridge that had a water dispenser. At first, she believed that it was the water that was the cause of her illness.
5. My mother's illness persisted and as a result she underwent some tests at her local GP surgery. Consequently her doctors believed that the cause of her illness was an issue with her gall bladder and they determined that she needed surgery as a result. However, once they had started the operation they realised they were wrong and her gall bladder was fine, so they decided not to go ahead with the procedure.
6. My mother was then referred to Dr GRO-D, a physician at Crumpsall Hospital, which is now called the North Manchester General Hospital. Dr GRO-D carried out extensive tests to work out what was causing my mother to feel so unwell. At this point my mother had been ill for quite some time. She was finally diagnosed with Mastocytosis which is a rare blood condition.
7. My mother was only ever treated at Crumpsall Hospital and was only under the care of Dr GRO-D from this point onwards.
8. She also had an issue with her blood clotting and as a result of her conditions, my mother required monthly blood transfusions and I believe a clotting factor from 1980 until her death on 14 May 1983. Occasionally she also required cauterisation of her throat in order to stop bleeding.
9. I remember on one occasion, when I collected my mother from the hospital after she had received a blood transfusion, she told me that they were putting a filter on her blood. She was actually told there was contamination and they had to fit a filter in the circuit. I specifically remember her saying that the

doctors had told her there was '*something wrong with the blood*' that they had given her; however, I never thought much of it at the time.

10. The doctors did not know how to treat my mother because they did not really know what was wrong with her, so they were trying different things. We were told there were only around 6 people in the UK with the rare illness that my mother had.
11. I now know that they were giving her chemotherapy, even though she did not have cancer but they were trying to do something to help her. It was an experiment I should imagine. I remember she lost her hair as a result of the chemotherapy which she found hard to deal with, as her appearance was very important to her. She became so fragile compared to the woman she had been before.
12. The chemotherapy provided to my mother was in the form of tablets. I did not know at the time that she was on chemotherapy and I actually only found out recently from my brother Laurence. I only knew that she was given medication in the form of tablets and that she was very unwell after she began taking them. I do not believe my mother knew that she was receiving chemotherapy either. It was a very tragic thing to happen to her.
13. The chemotherapy started quite shortly after the blood transfusions began. I believe it was to '*jump-start*' red blood cell production, but I am not sure how long she was on chemotherapy.
14. I believe that my mother received infected blood between 1980 and 1983. I would drop her off and collect her from the hospital when she received blood. My mother's condition was continuously getting worse. I did not see any improvement from any of the treatment provided to her. She was not herself anymore and her personality changed.
15. When the news came out about contaminated blood it seemed to align completely with what happened to my mother after she received blood. I believe that she was given contaminated blood that contained the HIV virus

which would explain her extreme change in health after she began to receive blood transfusions. At the time I didn't know anything about HIV but because of the fact she was given blood and her subsequent illnesses, I can only say I believe she had HIV.

16. My mother passed away on the GRO-C 1983 at the age of 66. Her death certificate, previously exhibited in Exhibit WITN2759002, states that her cause of death was a combination of renal failure and mastocytosis.

### **Section 3. Other Infections**

17. My mother had no other infections that I am aware of.

### **Section 4. Consent**

18. I do not believe my mother was treated or tested without her knowledge or consent. She never mentioned it. However I am not sure whether she knew much about any of the treatment that she received.

### **Section 5. Impact of the Infection**

19. Before she became unwell, my mother was a beautiful, gregarious, talented, smart, happy and hard working lady. She was a musician and was very sociable.
20. After my mother started to receive blood transfusions she became what I can only describe as very old in a very short period of time. She lost a lot of weight in the space of a few months. She transformed from a strong woman to a small woman. She seemed to lose half her body weight and became very thin, old and fragile.
21. My mother became very thin very quickly as she lost her appetite. She developed loose bowels and would often have lesions on her face. Her immune system became compromised and she developed pneumonia.

22. Mentally my mother just became a quiet person. She was no longer the gregarious person that she had been. Her personality became subdued.
23. I remember my mother started to develop lesions on her face as a result of her illness. These lesions were red and straight, they looked like lines rather than spots. The Doctors asked her to go to Crumpsall Hospital so I drove her there. They asked me to take her which I did. I believe that there was a meeting of GP's at the hospital. They never told me why my mother needed to go to this meeting. When we got there they did not let me into the room that they were in. Apparently, she was invited to sit on a stage and they asked her questions in relation to her lesions and her illness. I still did not realise at the time what this all meant.
24. The lesions did eventually go. I was so horrified with what was happening to my mother that I just listened to whatever the doctors told me to do. I assumed they were trying to help us but I was never given much information in regards to what was actually going on.
25. I remember on one occasion my brother went to visit my mother. When he arrived he realised that she was very unwell, so he called an ambulance and she was taken to hospital. This was the beginning of the end.
26. While in hospital, the doctors gave her a throat cauterisation. My brother, who is a pharmacist, witnessed how much pain my mother went through in the process. Realising that she was coming to the end of her life, he asked the nurse not to do it and to effectively '*let her go*'. From what I gather, one of the Doctors ignored his request and went ahead with the procedure regardless. She was screaming and in agony. She thought the Doctor had given her an operation. She died shortly after this.
27. The impact was awful. My mother was also a grandmother and she was very involved in my children's lives and my life; we were a close family. My children were young when my mother passed away; they were in their early teenage

years. I feel like they missed out on a lot due to my mother's death. My brother also has children and his children have missed out too.

28. My father had passed away 10 years before this all occurred and at the time my mother had her own flat which is where she lived. Towards the end of her life she came to live with me. I did not understand what was happening really. A lot of my family had passed away from cancer, so I assumed it was something related to this. I might have been naïve but nothing was explained to me.

29. It was horrible watching what happened to my mother. There is not a day that goes by where I don't think about her and the horrors that I witnessed. I don't know whether she would still be alive if she had never received this blood. I only '*put two and two together*' when I started to see the news about the blood from America and remembered what my mother said to me in regards to filtering her blood.

30. She was working up until she became ill but quickly became too unwell to continue. Before stopping work, my mother managed a retail store that my husband owned. She had a boyfriend and she had a lot to look forward too. Unfortunately this all fell apart when she became unwell.

31. My mother supported herself on her pension when he could no longer work, so there were financial implications to her as a result of her illness.

32. My mother could have had a nice life and as a result of all that transpired she didn't; it was cut short.

#### **Section 6. Treatment/care/support**

33. I am not aware whether my mother faced any difficulty in obtaining any treatment.

34. My mother was never offered counselling in relation to her illnesses. Neither I, not my brother, were offered any counselling in relation to my mother's illness or her subsequent death.

### **Section 7. Financial Assistance**

35. As far as I am aware my mother never received any financial assistance.

### **Section 8. Other Issues**

36. I remember my brother rang Dr GRO-D at one point and said that he believed my mother had passed away as a result of being infected with HIV. Laurence told me that Dr GRO-D simply replied '*I can not disagree*'. Laurence is a pharmacist and he had seen the effects of HIV and AIDS first hand before. He had seen the same symptoms in his own patients that he saw in our mother.

37. If they had managed to cure my mother's mastocytosis I believe that she may have lived a long life. I believe that the blood she received through her transfusion infected her and didn't allow this to happen.

38. I actually rang the GP surgery and asked if they still had the medical records for my mother. They told me they had all been destroyed. I found this to be strange as my mother had such a rare medical condition.

39. I want justice for all that occurred. My brother and I have been left in the dark since 1983 in regards to this whole ordeal.

### **Anonymity**

40. I do not wish to remain anonymous.

41. I want 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... *10/7/2019* .....