

Witness Name: George Bird

Statement No: WITN416201

Exhibits: MACK0001177-002

Dated 31 August 2021

Infected Blood Inquiry

Written Statement of George Bird

I provide this statement in response to a request under Rule 9 of the Inquiry Rules 2006 dated June 2021.

I, George Bird will say as follows: -

Section 1. Introduction & Professional History

1. My name is George Bird my address is c/o Police Scotland, PO BOX 2460, Dalmarnock, Glasgow, G40 9BA.

2. I was employed as a police officer by Lothian and Borders Police from 21st June 1982 to 30th March 2013. I became employed by Police Scotland from 1st April 2013 after the Scottish Police Forces merged and retired from the police service on 30th November 2013.

Between August 2007 and September 2008 I was the Lothian and Borders Police Chief Constable David Strang's Staff Officer. I held the rank of Chief Inspector. My duties involved the running and administration of the Chief Constables Office.

3. I was not involved in operational or investigative matters and have had no involvement in previous Inquiries relating to this issue.

On 6th July 2021 I received correspondence from Sarah Asker of the Infected Blood Inquiry. The correspondence included many items, one of which, "MACK0001177_002 – Letter of acknowledgement to Mr Pringle's original correspondence dated 13th December 2007" concludes "Chief Inspector George Bird, Staff Officer to the Chief Constable". I have no specific recollection of this letter given a remove of 15 yrs.

As the signature has been redacted I cannot confirm if I indeed did sign this letter or if it was endorsed per procuracionem and signed on my behalf.

I would be able to identify my signature if visible.

I have no further knowledge, information nor recollection of, nor was I involved in, any subsequent decisions or actions taken by any other person in relation to this matter.

Section 2. Background – Allegations against Professor Ludlam

4.
 - a. No involvement.
 - b. No prior knowledge.
 - c. No further contact.
 - d. No knowledge of any further involvement of Chief Constable David Strang in this matter.
5. No involvement of 2003 enquiry. From documents sent to me Detective Superintendent Heath appears to have been employed by Strathclyde Police and not Lothian and Borders Police.
6. No previous knowledge of 2003 enquiry till documents received from Sarah Asker.

Section 3. 2007 – 2008 Investigation into allegations made against Professor Ludlam

7.
 - a. No further involvement.
 - b. No knowledge of how decisions were reached in relation to the investigation.
 - c. No further involvement with the 2008 enquiry.
8.
 - a. No involvement of decision to allocate the enquiry.
 - b. No knowledge of any further involvement of Chief Constable David Strang in this investigation.
 - c. No further communication with Mike Pringle or the Crown Office in this matter.
 - d. No role or further involvement.
 - e. No knowledge where decision to pursue investigation rested.
9. No involvement in 2008 investigation.
10. Did not attend any such meetings.
11.
 - a. No knowledge of who decided this.

Section 4. 2003 enquiry conducted by Detective Superintendent Heath

12. No knowledge of, or involvement in, 2003 enquiry. From documentation sent to me by Sarah Asker, Detective Superintendent Heath appears to have been employed by Strathclyde Police not Lothian and Borders Police.
13.
 - a. No knowledge of how such decision was made.
 - b. No knowledge of how, or if, findings were cleared or by whom.
 - c. No knowledge of Chief Constable David Strang's involvement or otherwise in relation to this matter.

Section 5. Request for documents

14. Do not hold or have access to any relevant documentation and am not a serving police officer.
15. Cannot with certainty say what the policy was in detail in relation to the registering, recording and retention of police notebooks etc. From memory, Lothian and Borders Police policy in relation to notebooks was that they were issued and registered by Divisional Administration teams. When complete notebooks were returned to Divisional Administration teams for secure storage and retention. Divisional Administration teams would undertake periodic audits. My recollection of the policy is that notebooks were retained for 5 years unless there was good reason to retain longer. The Lothian and Borders Police policy may be retained by Police Scotland as a legacy document. I

am unaware what the policy of Police Scotland is in relation to this matter.

Statement of Truth

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

Signed

GRO-C

Dated

31/8/21