

Witness Name: L M Howgate-Gray

Statement No: WITN4453001

Exhibits: WITN4453002-3

Dated: October 2022

INFECTED BLOOD INQUIRY

FIRST WRITTEN STATEMENT OF LORRAINE MICHELLE HOWGATE-GRAY

I, Lorraine Michelle Howgate-Gray, will say as follows:-

Section 1. Introduction

1. My name is Lorraine Michelle Howgate-Gray and I was born on **GRO-C** 1972.
I live at **GRO-C** Leeds, West Yorkshire **GRO-C**
2. I make this statement as the affected wife of Mathew James Machen, who was born on **GRO-C** 1971 and passed away, aged only 32, on 29th July 2003. He was infected with both HIV and Hepatitis C via contaminated Factor VIII concentrates.
3. Our daughter, Amelia Howgate-Gray, has also provided a witness statement to the Inquiry under witness number **WITN4454001**. Amelia was only aged 2 when her daddy passed away.
4. **This witness statement has been prepared without the benefit of access to Mathew's full medical records.**

Section 2. How Affected

5. Mathew had severe Haemophilia A and was treated with Factor VIII concentrates.
6. He was treated at the Sheffield Children's Hospital (SCH) from 1972 until the latter part of 1987 and at the Royal Hallamshire Hospital (RHH) in Sheffield from the latter part of 1987 to 1992.
7. As far as I am aware, neither Mathew nor his parents were given any advice or information regarding the risk of infection from Factor VIII concentrates.
8. Mathew was infected with HIV and Hepatitis C at the SCH.

HIV

9. We have a few dates for Matthew's infection with HIV. According to his mother's statement to the police on his death Ann Machen states he was told when he was 14 that he was HIV positive. During this period Matthew's school were becoming increasingly concerned and asked for him to have a test. This coincided with the hospital calling him in for a test.
10. In or around August 1987 Mathew was asked to attend the SCH and was told, by a consultant, that he had to have an HIV test which duly took place. He was initially told that the result was negative but some time later he was summonsed to the SCH where he was told, by a consultant, that clinicians had misread his results and he had, in fact, tested positive. Mathew was accompanied by his mum at these appointments as he had only just turned 16.
11. His GP, Dr Tree-Booker stated in his statement to the Coroner that Matthew was HIV Positive in August 1987. It was also noted that he had chronic liver disease and his growth had slowed down prematurely.
12. I don't believe that Mathew or his parents were given sufficient information to enable them to understand and manage HIV. I was aged around 15 at the time

and recall that AIDS was all over the television and the tabloid press. However, I do not think Mathew or his family immediately appreciated the severity of what he had been infected with; I think it crept up on them having initially presented more as an unknown quantity.

Hepatitis C

13. The medical records indicate that Mathew's first positive Hepatitis C test was in August 1993 when he would have been aged 22. However, I started going out with Mathew in 1991 and immediately became heavily involved in his hospital care and treatment; attending every single hospital appointment with him. Around this time (1993-1995), the main focus was his left shoulder replacement, due to take place at Addenbrooke's Hospital (AH), in Cambridge, which I pushed very hard for. I can categorically confirm that, in relation to the Hepatitis C, no clinician ever sat Mathew down and discussed or explained anything, including treatment, in relation to the same. Rather, it was momentarily touched upon as an "*unimportant secondary infection*".

14. Mathew was the first ever haemophiliac to have a liver biopsy which took place in November 1978 when he was only aged 7. This was a really horrific thing for Mathew to undergo at such a young age. This confirmed that he had Chronic Persistent Hepatitis and the results were communicated to Mathew's parents. At this time, Hepatitis was either referred to as such or as "*Non- A Non-B (NANB) Hepatitis*".

Section 3. Other Infections

15. Mathew received a letter in or around 1994/1996 to advise that he had been put at risk of vCJD. I remember us both laughing (in despair) thinking "*how many more ways were they going to try to think of to kill Mathew*". I don't have a copy of the letter anymore as it has been misplaced following numerous house moves.

Section 4. Consent

16. I believe that Mathew was tested for HIV prior to August 1987 without his or his parent's knowledge and therefore without consent.

17. I would also suggest that Mathew was tested for NANB Hepatitis without his or his parent's knowledge and therefore without consent. I can also confirm that Mathew was not told that he was going to be tested for Hepatitis C. I also refer to paragraph 11 above of my witness statement.

18. Mathew was treated with Factor VIII concentrates without his or his parent's informed consent.

19. I strongly suspect that Mathew would have been used for research purposes either with or without his parent's knowledge and consent. Mathew's mother GRO-C along with the majority of her generation, effectively "*worshipped the ground upon which the medical professionals walked*". She would not dream of questioning a doctor; to her a doctor was someone in authority and moreover, someone who was always right.

Section 5. Impact

20. I hold the resolute view that Mathew's infection with HIV and Hepatitis C led him to take his own life on 29th July 2003.

21. I attach a copy of a letter dated 11th September 2003 from Dr D A Tree Booker, GP, to Mr D Hinchcliffe, Coroner, which confirms that Mathew was told that he had AIDS with a limited life expectancy on 25th July 2003. Although Mathew was well aware that HIV could kill him, I believe that this was the first time a clinician had affirmatively told him this was what was going to happen to him. This letter also details the fact that he was suffering with mood swings in 2003 and was under the care of a psychiatrist. This letter is attached at **Exhibit WITN4453002**.

22. I don't believe that Mathew ever came to terms with the fact that he had been infected with HIV and Hepatitis C. He tried his absolute hardest to live a full

and joyful life but he was prone to spells of melancholy, suffered with severe depression and self-medicated with alcohol.

23. Looking back at our life together, it is a credit to both of us that we somehow managed to have a fairly good social life and enjoyed the spent time with friends and both sets of parents. However, privately Mathew was tormented by his infections and the thought of dying. The thoughts of dying were magnified in 2001 when Mathew witnessed, first hand, how a terminal illness could strip away the life in a person. This person was my mother who tragically lost her fight with lung cancer at the age of 50. I had moved into my mother's house for the last few weeks of her life and Mathew was horrified at her brutal demise.
24. At the same time that my mother was dying, I was expecting our daughter, Amelia, who had been conceived via natural conception. It was an extremely stressful time because both Amelia and I were at risk of developing HIV. My pregnancy was therefore classed as *"high risk"* and I had to have a caesarean section and I was not allowed to breastfeed.
25. During my pregnancy with Amelia I experienced some very hostile behaviour from the GRO-D She was extremely rude and cold towards me. I attended appointments with her alone because Mathew was always working. She purposely tried to exclude me from any antenatal classes by not informing me that they were taking place. She was also very rough with me during physical examinations. I remember that I attended one appointment with blue nail varnish on and she said *"you have to take that muck off your nails before you go in to have your baby"*. All of our interactions were horrid and involved her making incessant derogatory comments towards me. Luckily, I was able to ensure that she did not come to my house to do any post-natal checks. In hindsight, I wish I had taken matters further in respect of her behaviour and care towards me but I was already under a great deal of stress due to the high risk pregnancy and the fact that my mother was terminally ill at this time.
26. In terms of stigma, I rarely disclosed that Mathew had HIV because I was aware that a lot of people would have reacted negatively to such news. I also kept

quiet as to the reasons behind my caesarean section and if people asked, I would say that it was as a result of experiencing complications with the baby.

27. Mathew experienced stigma and I remember that when we first used to stay with GRO-D they would move his toothbrush away from theirs. GRO-D also asked me whether the dog could catch HIV from Mathew. Such behaviour was upsetting for Mathew but we supported each other as best we could.

28. I first met Mathew in 1990 and we got together in January 1991 whilst we were both living in halls of residence at college. I did not find out about his HIV until Mathew's sister and her husband came to visit him in or around May 1991. They came into my room with Mathew, and said "*we have something to tell you*". They invented a story which was that Mathew had only just found out about his HIV infection because they were trying to make up a plausible explanation for why he had not told me sooner. However, Mathew and I had always used protection and I could not have given a damn about his status. I realised soon after that Matthew's story was a lie. This had a profound impact on our relationship and contributed eventually in the relationship failing.

29. In terms of Mathew's physical health, I would describe him as "*fairly disabled*". He had very severe Haemophilia and was then saddled with two aggressive and life threatening viruses on top of that. It was pretty horrific really. He had Osteoarthritis in his left knee. By May 1992 he needed a knee replacement, which sadly never happened.

30. In May 2001 Matthew's platelet count had fallen to 8, possibly a result of the HIV anti-viral medication. On the 1 March 2000 his platelet count was at 139 but this fell to 30 by 16 March 2000. It was around this time that we were trying to conceive Amelia. Matthew stuck to a rigid anti-viral regime. He had previously tired them and suffered severe side effects. It is insulting for doctors to write 'poor adherence to anti-virals' and not go on to say how bad the side effects were. They also caused other problems such as Anaemia and Thrombocytopenia. Complications of this include severe organ damage and

death. In September 1998 Matthew had symptoms suggestive of Irritable Bowel Syndrome which was a result of the anti-viral medication. He suffered a number of other ailments which affected his day to day life.

31. The severity of Matthew's haemophilia cannot be understated. I met him when he was 19 years old and within the next year his knee was described as 'severe arthropathy of left knee.' He walked with a pronounced limp and still managed to work in a tough profession. He worked as a pig farmer which was physically demanding and involved long working hours, usually six days a week. Sadly his health was relatively poor and had many periods in hospital. Due to this he frequently lost his job due to time off which impacted on our accommodation as we were in 'tied accommodation'. We lived in three different houses in Suffolk during a four year period. We eventually decided to come back to Yorkshire in 1996 and Matthew managed to work 3 years in his last role. Sadly due to his HIV and haemophilia he was so ill he was hospitalised due to blood poisoning and I was told he was very ill. His employers forced him to use his holiday allowance to cover his stay in hospital. His employer told him that they knew what was wrong with his health and he either jumped or would be pushed. At this point he left the company.

32. However, sadly our relationship was not destined to last and the first time Mathew left me was in October 2001 which was only a couple of months after my mother had passed away. He got up one day and decided that he was going to walk out on Amelia and me and off he went to his mother's house. To say I was devastated was an understatement; I was in bits. It also felt like a massive kick in the teeth as I had risked my life to have a baby with him and potentially put my own and our baby's health at risk in doing so.

33. We reconciled in January 2002 but unbeknown to me at the time, he had met his new partner, who I shall refer to as GRO-C in February 2002. We were together until May 2002 before he walked out on me for the second time, but not before telling me that he hated me, was finished with me and no longer loved me. I did not find out that he had been having an affair until a few months

after he left. I was completely beside myself and utterly heartbroken. I literally felt that my life had ended.

34. I strongly believe that his actions and behaviour were all caused by the infections and the immense difficulties these brought to his life. Mathew had his eye turned by a beautiful young girl who was new, affectionate and devoted all of her time to him. He would have been incredibly flattered by her attention. I, on the other hand, was consumed by grief for my mother at the same time as trying to care for our new baby, Amelia. I felt that I had effectively pushed Mathew straight into **GRO-C**'s arms.

35. Our divorce followed soon after and was so acrimonious that I had to discard some of the letters because I did not want Amelia to see these and realise the true extent of some of the pettiness. At one point, Mathew asked his solicitors to write to me to accuse me of indoctrinating Amelia which could not have been further from the truth. When we had been together, we both decided that we would get Amelia baptised and would say the Lord's Prayer every night. Mathew then tried to turn this around and use it against me.

36. Once Mathew and I had split up, he saw Amelia for 24 hours twice per week. He would have her on Wednesday evening and bring her back at teatime on Thursday and he would also have her on a Saturday night through to Sunday teatime.

37. The Decree Nisi came through on 22nd July 2003 when **GRO-C** was away and the final step in our divorce was to then await the Decree Absolute. Mathew knocked on my door on 25/26 July 2003 and told me that he had full blown AIDS and asked if he could come home. At this point I was nearly 4 months into a new relationship with someone I had been seeing since the March of that year. I told him that I was not prepared to get back together with him again as he had left me so cruelly on not one, but two occasions. I could not risk the heartache or any further upheaval so I sent him on his way.

38. About 4 or 5 days later I heard the gate outside my house click open followed by a knock at the door at 2am in the morning of 30th July 2003. It was Mathew's

sister and her husband who had come to tell me that Mathew had passed away. I let them in and said *"what has he done"*. When they told me I was shocked and astounded.

39

GRO-D

to witness something so terrible

40. The next day Mathew's mother and father told me that they had hired a van and were emptying the content's of Mathew's house. I asked them to bring me everything that belonged to Amelia; Mathew had nothing for her at his house so I had lent him everything he needed for her. I think they brought her things to me the same day and I remember having to speak to the coroner to give Mathew's mother and father permission for their funeral directors to take the body and to allow them to arrange the funeral. Mathew's mother was claiming that she was next of kin but it was in fact me because we were still married at the time of his death because the Decree Absolute had not been granted.

41. I remember there being a huge amount of controversy regarding the fact that my new partner was going to be driving me to the funeral. Mathew's brother

GRO-C

I arrived at the funeral and GRO-C

remained in the car during the service. Mathew's auntie waved at me and requested that I sit at the front with the family, which was also where GRO-C was sat. I decided to sit at the back with Amelia and two of my friends. I remember that there was a large photograph of Mathew on display at the funeral and when Amelia saw it she said *"Daddy"* which brought everyone to tears.

42. During the burial, we were all given roses to throw into the grave. GRO-C said to me *"after you"* and I said *"no, after you"*. I think we ended up throwing them in at the same time.

43. I found the whole occasion extremely difficult and I declined Mathew's father's invitation to attend the wake which was being held at a local pub. I just needed to get home. I had not been consulted on any aspect of the funeral and it was painful to listen to one of the songs that had been chosen because unbeknown to them; it was our make up song following our first split.

44. It was also hard because Amelia was not given anything, not even Mathew's wedding ring, which would remind her of her father in the years to come.

GRO-C

45. I allowed the custody arrangements for Amelia, in respect of Mathew, to be continued so that Mathew's parents and family could see her.

46. I never gave myself time to grieve for Mathew and for our life together; both for the good and the bad times. He had cruelly walked out on me on two occasions and, as already stated, I felt that this was a real kick in the teeth particularly since I had risked my life and any future baby which was conceived, to have a baby with him.

47. I then embarked upon a new relationship with the partner who drove me to Mathew's funeral and we married in 2007. This relationship was really good for a number of years. However, when this relationship broke down in November 2015 and went horribly wrong, to the extent that I had to obtain a restraining order and move away, I hit rock bottom. The relentless domestic violence I had suffered for so long had worn me down and I struggled to cope going forwards. However, unbeknown to Amelia and me, further difficulties and heartache were only just around the corner.

48. My second husband died on 15th January 2016 which was almost too much for Amelia and me to bear, let alone process. His death was completely unexpected. He had experienced a sudden shortness of breath and had had a fast pulse when he presented to his GP on the afternoon of 14th January 2016. He was therefore rushed to hospital but by the middle of the night he was dead. He died of Diffuse Alveolar Damage. Amelia and I only found out about his passing because she happened to stumble across a post on Facebook.

49. Amelia was beyond devastated as my second husband had been her Daddy since Mathew had died. Losing a second Daddy at the age of 14 massively affected her. Amelia had already been struggling with psychological problems following the death of Mathew and had been under the care of the Child Mental Health Team from the age of 4. Thankfully, Amelia is much better now but it has been a long and difficult road for her; and for me to witness. She has been suicidal, self harmed and been hospitalised in connection with the same.

50. It was then my time to really grieve and I grieved for the loss of Mathew and for the loss of my second husband. I got to the point where I realised that hating Mathew was self defeating and that I had to forgive him in order to move forward.

51. I had no family support because on both occasions GRO-C other family members took the view that I had already parted company with these men and therefore there was effectively no grieving to do. The only thing that

GRO-C

52. I have been single now for 5 years and for the first time in my life I can really say that I truly love myself. I have managed to find the inner strength and courage to turn my life around and Amelia has had to be equally strong in our quest for better lives. However, it has been tough and we also had to live in our car for a few months when we were evicted from a property because we were told that our dogs were no longer allowed at that property. However, I am thankful and amazed that we are both still alive today and have come so

far. I also feel incredibly blessed that Amelia and I have such a wonderful relationship and still live together.

53. I had to have a very difficult conversation with Amelia when I broke the news to her that her father had committed suicide and naturally she asked a lot of painful and searching questions. She wanted to know about the HIV and how Mathew had come to be infected and when I told her, she was really upset. I am not sure how old she was; she could have been as young as 7.

54. Mathew was the most amazing and bravest person I have ever met, and am ever likely to meet. I could not have admired him any more than I did. He was profoundly disabled and was dealing with the most unimaginable mental torture yet he held down a job on a pig farm for years which must have been high up there on the list of physically demanding jobs. He never let his disabilities or his infections stop him from doing things and I believe that he would have been able to jump out of a plane if he had set his mind to that task.

Autopsy Report

55. I attach a copy of the Autopsy Report at **Exhibit WITN4453003**. This report confirms that Mathew took his life, by hanging, on 29th July 2003. There are a number of very serious errors in the report which I list below:

- (a) Mathew was told that he had HIV at the age of 14 which is incorrect as he was told when he was aged 16;
- (b) The state/functioning of the liver was recorded as normal: histological examination of the liver was normal and the liver (1320g) was normal. These findings are entirely at odds with the contents of **Exhibit WITN4453002** which confirms a diagnosis of Chronic Persistent Hepatitis following a liver biopsy in November 1978, Chronic Liver Disease in August 1987 and Hepatitis C infection: PCR positive at high titre and LFT's intermittently abnormal in February 1997.

(c) 123 mm surgical scar on his right shoulder which is incorrect because the shoulder replacement surgery was to the left shoulder as evidenced by medical records. I also used to have to change gear for Mathew when he was driving as he could not use his left shoulder to enable him to do this without incurring significant pain.

56. I was extremely shocked and disappointed by the errors contained with the report and I would urge the Inquiry to look into this.

Section 6. Treatment/care/support

57. I refer to the contents of paragraph 23 above of my witness statement in relation to poor treatment I received which I believe was as a result of Mathew's HIV infection.

58. Mathew was referred for counselling in 2003. This was in my view 20 to 30 years too late.

59. I have had three lots of NHS therapy. I saw a child psychologist for help managing Amelia's grief and we also had family therapy before 2015. In 2017 I funded my own private sessions.

Section 7. Financial Assistance

60. I had a number of positive encounters with Ann Hithersay at the Macfarlane Trust (MFT). She really did help Mathew and me out and I am aware that he received a lump sum payment from the MFT of £20,000 in or around 1989/1990 which I believe was followed by a further payment of around the same figure at a later date.

61. The MFT also helped us out in 1992 when Mathew and I were living in Anglesey and were both unemployed and claiming benefits. The application procedure in relation to obtaining grants was stressful and invasive often involving disclosure of bank statements and the like. The stress was caused by the change of criteria

each time a new person took over. On one occasion I was told I could claim for support with vet fees and the following time I was told they would not fund pet costs. I remember that we usually had to submit about three quotes for anything and if money had not been so tight, I am sure that we wouldn't have bothered with the MFT. I would liken the feeling of asking the MFT for help to what begging must feel like. I also remember that I had to go to the office of the AIDS charity, Terence Higgins, Leeds to be given a payment for Amelia's school uniform one year.

62. However, the MFT were extremely good when I had to obtain a restraining order against my second husband in 2015. They helped me to obtain a tenancy with Amelia and I will be forever grateful to them for their support at this very difficult time in my life.

63. Following Mathew's passing, Ann Hithersay told me that she had given the Bereavement Payment to Mathew's mother and father. This should not have happened as I was the next of kin and therefore entitled to that money.

64. My initial understanding is that the Skipton Fund (SF) did not make any payments in relation to Mathew's case. However, purely by chance, I discovered that this was not the case and that a payment had, in fact, been made. GRO-C

GRO-C Due to my concerns I have asked the SF to look into this matter and I understand that the files have now been retrieved from storage and are awaiting someone to consider the same which was supposed to be in mid May of this year although due to Covid 19 this date has been pushed back.

65. I tried to claim the Widows Payment from EIBSS but my application was unsuccessful because one of the conditions was that Mathew and I had to be living together which we were not doing. However, we owned a property jointly at the time which was held and maintained as the family home for the three of us; something which the MFT was fully aware of.

66. I have also asked EIBSS for the Stage 1 Payment in respect of Hepatitis C but they have asked for medical proof that Mathew had Hepatitis C because they hold the view that he only had HIV. I am currently pursuing this and intend to send them a copy of **Exhibit WITN4453002**. I am also awaiting further medical records which I intend to send in support of my application. I have a solicitor who is assisting me with my claims against both the SF and EIBSS.

67. As far as I am aware, Mathew received about £44,000 in compensation from the HIV Litigation which concluded in 1991. I believe he signed a waiver and that what he was being asked to do was very shady.

Section 8. Other Issues

68. Mathew had an older sister who [GRO-C] and a younger brother [GRO-C] His brother is [GRO-C]

69. I believe Mathew should still be alive today [GRO-C] I believe the mental impact and strain of carrying his illnesses combined in his last two years and caused him to rethink his whole philosophy of life.

70. I want this Inquiry to ensure that the people who made decisions regarding both blood and blood products to face criminal proceedings. You can dress it up in whichever way you like but, in my view, these people are murderers. They have lied through their teeth and changed the course of Mathew's life forever. They have brought Mathew's parents great sadness and unrelenting heartache. They have ruined a very large part of my life and poor Amelia has been left idolising a man who she hardly remembers.

Anonymity

71. I do not want to apply for anonymity and I have a burning desire 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.....18-10-2022.....