

Witness Name: Annette Dawn Brown

Statement No: WITN6434001

Exhibits: WITN6434002 - 6.

Dated: 17 November 2021.

## INFECTED BLOOD INQUIRY

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### WRITTEN STATEMENT OF ANNETTE DAWN BROWN

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I provide this statement in response to a request under Rule 9 of the Inquiry Rules 2006 dated 30 July 2021.

I, Annette Dawn Brown, will say as follows: -

#### Section 1. Introduction

1. My name is Annette Dawn Brown. My date of birth is [GRO-C] 1964 and my address is [GRO-C] Staffordshire, [GRO-C] I am retired. I am married to my husband, Stuart Brown with whom I have two daughters aged 24 and 27. Previously, I worked for Lloyds bank, and more recently as a housing officer for the local housing association. I left work to take care of my elderly parents.
2. I intend to speak about a distant relative, Peter Edris Dimond, who was my mother's second cousin. He was the principal pharmacist at the Macclesfield Group Hospitals. I think he was based at Parkside Hospital in Macclesfield until his tragic suicide in 1973, aged 39. In particular, I intend to discuss the circumstances surrounding his death

and what this may elucidate about the state of knowledge regarding the safety of blood in as far back as 1973.

3. I can confirm that I have chosen not to have legal representation and that the Inquiry Investigator has explained the anonymity process to me. My family and I are not seeking anonymity.
4. I can also confirm that the Inquiry Investigator has explained to me the 'Right to Reply' procedure, and that if I am critical of a medical professional or organisation, they will have the right to reply to that criticism.
5. I wish to acknowledge that naturally as time passes, memories can fade. I have been able to provide approximate timeframes for matters based on life events and the newspaper cuttings I have produced. However, these timeframes should be accepted as 'near to' rather than precise dates.

## **Section 2. Role of Peter Edris Dimond**

6. Peter Dimond was my mother's second cousin. He was quite a bit older than her but lived nearby, so they used to meet up quite regularly. She tells me that he was a very gentle man and they got on well.
7. Peter was a competent climber and walker. He used to go climbing all over the world.
8. A couple of years before his death, he started work as the principal pharmacist for the Macclesfield hospital group. He was involved in the procurement of drugs including blood and or plasma, for the hospitals in Greater Manchester.
9. In the two years prior to his death, Peter worked at the Parkside Hospital, at Victoria Road Macclesfield SK10 3JS, which has since

closed. The Hospital's previous names were: Cheshire County Asylum (c.1871-c.1920), Cheshire County Mental Hospital (c.1920- 1947), Parkside County Mental Hospital (1948. reference).

10. With the introduction of the National Health Service in 1948, management was transferred to a Hospital Management Committee, under the overall control of the Manchester Regional Hospital Board. In 1970 the Parkside HMC was merged with the Macclesfield and District Group HMC to form the East Cheshire Hospital Management Committee. Whilst it was originally a psychiatric hospital, my mother tells me that during his time there, it also offered other services. Peter worked in the pharmacy department.

### **Section 3. Knowledge of Issues Surrounding Blood Safety**

11. I contacted the Inquiry after my mother and I saw the hearings from the Infected Blood Inquiry on the news. We were discussing how awful it was. She told me how in the days leading up to Peter's death in 1973, he had communicated his concerns to her about blood 'plasma'. I was initially dubious as to whether our story would be relevant but I thought that Peter's circumstances could be part of a bigger picture about the state of knowledge regarding blood safety at this time.
12. My mother can distinctly remember Peter referring to blood and or plasma, albeit, she cannot be certain of the precise nature of his concerns. I doubt that there will be any minutes about his complaints raised from that long ago. It is possible that he suspected that blood was unsafe and he was being pressured by his seniors to keep quiet.
13. Shortly before his death, my mother tells me that Peter visited his cousin William Stearne, known as "Bill". My mum talked to Bill, who sadly is now dead. He said that one day he was with Peter until the early hours, he describes Peter as being distraught about whatever it

was he had raised at the hospital, particularly as his concerns were dismissed and nothing was being done about it.

14. To reiterate, there remains a considerable degree of ambiguity around the precise nature of Peter's concerns. Particularly as, in a letter from Bill to the coroner in 2008 (which I will discuss in more detail in **Section. 4**) he mentions the "Devonport Enquiry", which investigated the contamination of infusion fluids manufactured by Evans Medical Ltd of Speke, Liverpool. The company manufactured medical supplies and pharmaceuticals from 1925 until 1998.
15. The Enquiry took place in 1972. It transpired that from 1970 onwards, there was an issue with the autoclaves on bottles of dextrose solution at Devonport Hospital and other bottles of dextrose used for intravenous infusions. The fault resulted in improper sterilization and the contamination of the fluid, which led to a number of patient deaths.
16. In light of this, Peter's concerns may indeed have been related to the contamination of infusion fluids. As a pharmacist, he would have been privy to the circumstances surrounding the Enquiry. Nevertheless, Bill may have merely been referencing this as part of a holistic picture of the safety of pharmaceutical products at the time. Moreover, my mother is certain that Peter discussed 'blood / plasma' with her with much agitation in the days preceding his disappearance.

#### **Section 4. Death of Peter Edris Dimmond**

17. In November 1973, Peter told his mother that he was going walking in the Lake District or North Wales. He was a keen climber and also taught climbing. Peter was not married and he lived with his parents. When he didn't return, a massive search began. I exhibit an extract from a newspaper at the time **WITN6434002**, reproduced below:

*'Massive search for man missing in Snowdonia: More than 700 climbers, walkers, police and specially trained tracker dogs took part yesterday (Wednesday) in the biggest ever search mounted in the Snowdonia area of North Wales, for [GRO-C] man Mr Peter Dimond, who was reported missing from his semi-detached home in [GRO-C] [GRO-C] on Saturday after leaving home two days earlier. Yesterday's search was the third day in which rescue teams and climbers had scoured the Snowdonia National Park around Lake Ogwen in the Ogwen Valley near Capel Curig. Mr Dimond, aged 39, has lived in [GRO-C] many years and before taking up a job as a pharmacist at Parkside Hospital, Macclesfield, worked for Altrincham General Hospital in their pharmacy. He left home – [GRO-C] where his mother and father Mr and Mrs Dimond live – last Thursday morning saying he was going walking either in the Lake District, or North Wales, and added he would be home by Saturday. When he did not return friends started looking for his car, a Singer Vogue and it was eventually found in a car park on the Shores of Lake Ogwen. Cheshire Police issued a description and statement saying that they understood Mr Dimond had been "very depressed" on Thursday. By Wednesday experienced climbers said their hopes were waning. A friend of his, Mr Geoffrey White (37) an engineer from [GRO-C] and a member of the St. Helens Mountain Club of which Mr Dimond was a member, said that an experienced mountaineer would not normally go out on his own rock climbing at this time of year. Rescue co-ordinator, Dr. Tony Jones, who also called in helicopter assistance from the RAF, said that by Wednesday 60 percent of the 50 square miles of search areas had—'*

Unfortunately, the end of the newspaper clipping has been cut off and so the end of the sentence is not legible.

18. I also exhibit below an extract from The Echo, dated 20 November 1973 at WITN6434003. The majority of extracts exhibited in my statement were kept in Bill's collections, before being handed over to me by my mum's cousin. I found one newspaper article on the internet.

*'Hunt Widens For Walker: Forty teams of searchers, totalling between 300 and 350 men were out in Snowdonia early today looking for a missing Cheshire pharmacist. Mr Peter Edris Dimond, of [GRO-C] [GRO-C] has been missing since last Thursday/ His gold colour Singer Vogue car has been in a lay-by in Dyffryn Ogwen since last Easter when 500 people searched for Hertfordshire boys who were found safe and well. Searchers have no idea in which Mr Dimond, an experienced fell walker, left whether to climb the rocky peaks around the Tryfan or the more gentle slopes of the Cameddau, most of which are over 3,000 feet high'*

19. I also exhibit an extract from The Liverpool Echo, dated 23 November 1973 at WITN6434004, also reproduced below:

*'Climbers seek lost pal: A group of St. Helens mountaineers plan to spend the week-end searching Snowdonia if the most experienced member of their club has not been found. Twenty members of the St. Helens Mountaineering club took part this week in the bid to find Mr. Peter Dimond, of [GRO-C] Cheshire. The club's former chairman, Mr Eric Watkins, of [GRO-C] said: "It's a complete mystery how Mr. Dimond could have disappeared. "It is very unlikely he tried any solo rock climbing. He is a very safety conscious person." Mr Watkins aged 39, added: "there is always the possibility of finding someone in a case like this."*

20. Peter was found five months later in April 1974 in the Snowdonia area. He was 39 years old. He had hidden himself in a crevice and overdosed on a large quantity of barbiturates. My mother mentioned that following his death he was investigated for theft of drugs, presumably those which he used to end his life, but they found nothing and he came out squeaky clean.

21. I exhibit an extract from The Daily Telegraph Reporter at the time **WITN6434005** below which notes that he was found by accident. His body was in a small entrance that nobody would have found unless they were an experienced climber. He had propped himself up. As a pharmacist, he would have known exactly the quantity to take and the outcome.

*'Chemist Hid Himself in Cave to Die: Nearly 600 climbers searched 200 square miles of the Snowdonia National Park above the Ogwen Valley but failed to find a chemist, Mr Peter Dimond, 40, who had gone missing. Mr Dimmond, a hospital pharmacist, of [GRO-C] [GRO-C] Cheshire, had "made himself comfortable" inside a cave in a little known part of the area and taken a "massive overdose" of barbiturates, it was said at his inquest at Caernarvon yesterday. His body was found five months later by Mr George Bridge, of [GRO-C] [GRO-C] who was curious to find the caves he had heard existed above Ogwen Valley. He said: "the body was inside a cave and one would have to be two feet away to spot it. No one unaware of the existence of the cave would think of looking there" – 20 tablets—Police said that the body was covered with a polythene bag. A pullover was behind Mr Dimond's head in the form of a pillow. A Home Office pathologist said that at first he thought Mr Dimmond had died from exposure, but further investigation showed that he had consumed about 20 barbiturates tablets - considerably above the normal dosage. Mr William Stearne, Mr Dimmond's cousin, of [GRO-C] Cheshire, said that Mr Dimmond had been concerned about professional problems resulting from reorganisation of the hospital pharmacy. The Coroner, Mr John Pritchard Jones, recorded a verdict that Mr Dimmond took his own life'*

22. Unfortunately, I do not have the coroner's report. Peter sought to take his life on the same day that he was scheduled for a third management meeting. I am not sure what this meeting was to entail; whether Peter was facing disciplinary action or whether he sought to raise his

concerns. However, he told my mother that after he'd raised his worries about blood /plasma, he was told to 'shut-up' by his superiors. He was quite agitated. That was the last time she saw him.

23. Both my mother and Bill have always believed that Peter was worried about his profession and that he felt guilty that there was something significant that was not being remedied or resolved. He poured his heart out to both of them. He couldn't face going to the third management meeting. Peter seemed to have been stuck in a bind; he could neither continue living with whatever knowledge he harboured nor could he whistle blow to his superiors.
24. This would also have risked him losing his job and harming his professional standing in the community too. I don't think he would have taken his own life if he felt he could have done something. It was the view of my mum that Peter's seniors must have been bullying him.
25. After the inquest into the death of Chief Constable for Greater Manchester, Michael Todd in 2008, Bill contacted the coroner, John Pritchard Jones. Although the Inquest was for different reasons there were similar traits, my mother thinks that it brought back the memories of Peter's death, compelling him to put his thoughts to paper.
26. I attach a photocopied extract of Bill's letter to the coroner at Caernarfon at **WITN6434006**, dated 15 October 2008. The extract was provided to me by his daughter, Lynn. It is believed that this was sent in 2008, although his daughter cannot be sure if he actually sent it. A copy was found in his records. I have reproduced the extract below insofar as it is legible. As it is only an extract and Bill is no longer alive to provide clarification, certain references are not entirely clear. I do not have the full letter although I believe it covers several matters:

*Hearing in your court of the death of my late cousin Peter Dimond,  
Principal Pharmacist at the Macclesfield Hospitals. I attended with his*



90-year-old father, Alf Dimond. I made it my business to attend and did say he had been concerned about the future of his profession. The then coroner said 'BUT it's ALL CONJECTURE'. I could NOT contradict. Although, only weeks before he had poured his heart out to me and my company's secretary wife, Joan. He died on the day scheduled for a third 'Management' (with a capital M) meeting. He had shown a letter (and reply) of his Member of Parliament. Anthony Barber, MP to the chancellor for the exchequer [for Edward Heath's conservative government between 1970-1974] 'I gather your problems are financial'. There had been an Enquiry into Evans (SPEKE) for intravenous fluids. Only 26 provable deaths. Dr Frank Hartley the Dean of the Faculty of Pharmacy at the University of London [1962 to 1976], had said three times was not enough. The lad of 26 was the ONE who should have known better. His "superiors" maintain they were already below Boots price. Hence no money for NEW (or reprised) autoclaves. Two with \_\_\_\_ missing gauges. (No sterility).

27. For points of clarification; Dr Frank Hartley was the Dean of the Faculty of Pharmacy at the University of London from 1962 to 1976. He was involved in two important related commissions: on the prevention of microbial contamination of medicinal products and the "Devonport" Enquiry into the contamination of infusion fluids which followed from a number of patient deaths. (Royal College of Physicians).
28. In the letter, Bill discusses how he had posited to the original coroner that in the days leading up to Peter's death, he was worried about the future of his profession. This can have one of two meanings; either that he was personally worried about the security of his job, in light of whatever complaints about blood/ plasma he had voiced to management, or alternatively, that he was concerned about the future of the industry, particularly given that his concerns appeared to have been muted by his superiors. Nevertheless, these were dismissed by the coroner as mere 'conjecture'.

## Section 5. Impact

29. Peter lived with his mother and father in [GRO-C] which sits on the outskirts of Manchester. He had no wife or children. My mum always said Peter was an extremely gentle man who was quiet and lived at home with his parents. His friends appeared to be all from the [GRO-C] community.
30. Peter's parents were undoubtedly devastated by his untimely death. Peter was an only child. His parents lost their only child. However, his mother was very old-fashioned. Suicide was not discussed openly. They were keen to preserve appearances above all else. Initially, she was in denial that Peter could have taken his own life. They were quite blinkered in that way. They survived another 13 years or so after his death as they were quite elderly when they had him.
31. Bill must have carried the sadness of Peter's suicide with him throughout his life, to have pursued an inquest several decades later. The only relatives on Peter's side of the family are Bill's children. Unfortunately, all the others have since passed away. His story has been forgotten except by my mother. However, she is now elderly and [GRO-C] She still remembers Peter fondly. She was devastated when she learnt of his death as she adored him. She tells me that he was a lovely and clever man.
32. Whilst Peter was only a distant relative, it upsets me to speculate upon his state of mind at the time of his death. He was only 39 when he went missing. He would have been 40 when he was found. He must have been very desperate to have ended his life in this way. Indeed, his death was unquestionably premeditated. He told his mother he was going climbing in one location only to be found in another area. He clearly didn't want to be found. It must have been a horrendous moment for the climber who discovered him.

## **Section 6. Other issues**

33. Peter has never been forgotten. I don't suppose we will ever know exactly what led him to end his life nor his exact state of knowledge about the safety of blood and blood products at the time. His concerns were certainly sufficiently serious to be raised to a management group. Whatever he was going through, caused him great turmoil.
34. It upsets me that his side of the story will never be told. If his concerns were related to the contamination of blood / plasma, they have been proven correct. In light of what we now know about the use of contaminated blood, I believe that it is important that Peter's story be heard. It is horrendous to think that the government may have known that blood was infected in the early 1970's yet continued to import products until the late 1980s.
35. I feel that I owe it to Peter's memory and to those not just affected by the contaminated blood scandal but also those implicated in the "Devonport Enquiry". I believe that all such events add to the timeline around the knowledge and safety of blood and related products.

## **Statement of Truth**

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

Signed                     GRO-C                    

Dated 17/11/2021.