

**DRAFT**

Witness Name: Jean Tamburrini

Statement No: 1

Inquiry Reference No: PI205MF

## **THE PENROSE INQUIRY**

### **Witness Statement of Jean Tamburrini**

I, Jean Tamburrini, say as follows:-

1. I am the widow of Victor Tamburrini. I am 50 years of age having been born on 6 October 1960. Victor was born on 27 April 1957 and died on 17 November 2004. The certified cause of death was (a) Liver Transplant Graft Failure and (b) Recurrent Hepatitis C. I do not know which Hepatitis C genotype Victor had.

2. I met Victor in 1987 and we married on 8 March 1991. When I met Victor he told me that he had previously been involved in a car accident and that he had sustained burns (7 September 1984). I was not aware what treatment he had been given at that time.

3. We moved into our flat in 1988. I recall coming home from work in the evenings and finding the lights out and that Victor was in bed. He was working in the fruit market as a porter at this time. The work was physically demanding and he was starting at 4.30am so I put his tiredness down to that.

4. Victor was paid off from his job at the fruit market in 1991, shortly after we married. This was a very stressful time for us as we were also going through IVF treatment. I recall Victor being unwell during Christmas 1991. We were staying with his sister at the time and he couldn't stop falling asleep. He told me that there was something not right with him but he didn't know what it was.

5. After he was paid off from his job in 1991, Victor got a number of temporary jobs working as a porter and deliveryman at the fruit market. This lasted for a few years. In 1994/95, Victor started working for his uncle in the manufacturing unit of a factory. This was hard physical work and Victor found it difficult to keep his energy levels up. He did this for around 10 months but had to stop as he couldn't manage the work any longer. In 1996, Victor began working in a public house as a barman. Around 1997 he became the bar manager there. At this time he was sleeping a lot and was lethargic and sluggish.

6. In 1998 Victor went to his GP as he was feeling unwell. He attended the Bridgeton Health Centre in Glasgow where he saw either Dr Jamieson or Dr Van Den Hoven. He was putting on weight and he had heartburn. He also had a poor appetite. We couldn't understand why he was suddenly putting on weight because he wasn't eating very much. He was upset about gaining so much weight and went on a slim fast diet to try and lose the weight. His ankles and abdomen were swollen and he was increasingly lethargic. We used to go to the gym together but he stopped going as he no longer had the energy. Victor continued to go back and forward to his GP before being referred to Glasgow Royal Infirmary (June 1998).

7. I was under the impression that Victor had been referred to the Glasgow Royal Infirmary because he had lumps on one side of his chest. Later that year he was admitted to hospital and an operation was done to remove the lumps (December 1998). I wasn't concerned about the lumps at the time as I thought that they were a side effect of the heartburn medication that he was taking and that it was a simple procedure to have them removed. I have since been informed that Victor had a double mastectomy. Following the operation, Victor was in hospital for about a week. Some sort of drain was inserted but I do not know what that was for. I don't think that I was aware that he had been given a blood transfusion. Victor was off work for a few weeks after the operation but made a good recovery. He lost a bit of weight and was able to go back to the gym for a while.

8. Around the year 2000, Victor began putting on a lot of weight around his tummy. He stopped going to the gym altogether as he couldn't manage it anymore. We went to Portugal in the summer of 2000. Whilst we were on holiday he was really grumpy and depressed. His ankles were swollen and he couldn't get his normal shoes on and had to wear slip on shoes.

9. In 2001 he attended an appointment at the dental hospital and was told that he needed to go and see his GP. He went and saw his GP and was referred to the Glasgow Royal Infirmary (June 2001). I do not know why the dentist told him that he needed to see his GP or why he was referred to the hospital. Victor never said why he was referred and at the time he didn't seem very worried about it.

10. Victor started going up to an outpatient clinic at the Glasgow Royal Infirmary quite a lot after that. He mostly went on his own as I was working during the day. Victor told me that the doctors were carrying out a lot of blood tests to try and work out what was wrong. We thought he had cancer.

11. After he had been up to the outpatient clinic a few times he told me that the doctors were going to do one more test. I didn't know what they were testing for. I went up to the hospital with him when he got the results of that test (26 September 2001) but he asked me to wait outside. When he came out he said that it wasn't as bad as we thought. He told me that he had Hepatitis C. I asked him what that was and he said he didn't know. We were just so relieved that he didn't have cancer. We had heard about Hepatitis A – I knew someone who had had it and made a good recovery – and knew it wasn't that serious. I had no idea how serious Hepatitis C was and I don't think that Victor did either. I don't know which doctor Victor saw at this time but I doubt that Victor would have asked the doctor any questions about Hepatitis C. He most likely would have buried his head in the sand about it.

12. After he was diagnosed with Hepatitis C Victor began attending the liver clinic at Glasgow Royal Infirmary where he saw Dr Stanley. I didn't attend the appointments with Victor and he never mentioned what was

discussed at the appointments. He was very depressed at this time. I assumed that they would be able to treat the Hepatitis C now that they knew what it was. I do not know if Victor was ever offered treatment or if treatment was discussed.

13. Not long after Victor was diagnosed with Hepatitis C, he was told that I would need to be tested. I arranged to be tested by my GP and was clear. He was also told that we could not share toothbrushes and that I was to be careful if he had a bleed and that he was to clean up any blood by himself. He was given leaflets about Hepatitis C.

14. In February 2002 (14 February 2002) Victor was referred to the Liver Transplant Clinic at the old Edinburgh Royal Infirmary. I went with Victor to his first appointment (25 February 2002) but do not know what happened as he was taken away for an assessment. *Was Victor admitted at this stage? For how long?* I couldn't understand why Victor was having a transplant assessment and I recall the transplant co-ordinator, Roseanne, asking me if I knew how serious Victor's condition was. When I said "no" she told me that he would probably need to have a liver transplant within the next few years.

15. After the initial assessment, Victor continued to go through to Edinburgh every month to attend the Liver Transplant Clinic. I went with him when I could but at that time I was undergoing tests of my own in Glasgow. I was later diagnosed with breast cancer on 31 December 2002. I know that Victor was having regular blood tests and that he had had a number of biopsies and scans but he never mentioned anything more to me about the appointments or what was discussed. *Was Victor admitted to hospital during this time?*

16. In the summer of 2002 Victor stopped working full time. He continued to go to work when he felt up to it but was unable to work a full day.

17. In October 2002 Victor's health started to deteriorate rapidly. He became very confused and his skin turned a terrible yellow colour. *Did Victor*

*have any other symptoms?* He was admitted to the Edinburgh Royal Infirmary mid October 2002 and put on the liver transplant list. He was due to be discharged on 25 October 2002 but the hospital phoned me that day and said that they had found a suitable donor. Victor had a liver transplant on 26 October 2002. The doctor said that the transplant had been an absolute success and that the new liver was really healthy. Victor made a good recovery and was only in intensive care for one night before he was transferred to the high dependency unit and back onto the ward. He was in hospital for about a month following the transplant (discharged 15 November 2002).

18. Following the transplant Victor lost a lot of weight and went back to his normal self. I was under the impression that the hepatitis had been cured by the transplant. I do not recall being told anything to the contrary. Victor continued to go back and forward to Edinburgh Royal Infirmary for regular check-ups (roughly how often?) after the transplant. I didn't attend the hospital appointments with Victor as I was having radiotherapy for breast cancer at the time and was tied up with appointments of my own in Glasgow. From October 2002 to February 2003, the doctors were concerned that Victor's body would reject the new liver and Victor was prescribed tablets to try to prevent rejection of the new liver. He wasn't given any treatment for the Hepatitis C. I do not know whether treatment was discussed with Victor at this time. The only time I recall treatment being discussed was after the second liver transplant in 2004.

19. On 27 August 2003, Victor's uncle celebrated his 40<sup>th</sup> wedding anniversary and Victor and I attended. Victor was looking really bad by this time. His yellow colour had returned and he was bloated. I finished my treatment in September 2003 and we decided to go on holiday to Lanzarote in October 2003. Victor was really ill whilst we were on holiday. He was sleeping a lot during the day and couldn't stay awake. He still had a yellow tinge and had developed red eyes. His ankles and tummy were swollen. When we got back from our holiday I took him to his next check-up at the Liver Clinic (06 November 2003) and it was decided that he needed to be

admitted for more tests (he was admitted on 20 November 2003). How long was Victor in hospital for? What happened from when Victor was discharged up until January 2004?

20. In January 2004 Victor deteriorated again. He became very confused and disorientated. He was really yellow. I phoned the Edinburgh Royal Infirmary and they told me to take him through to Edinburgh. He was admitted (13 January 2004) and assessed for a second liver transplant. The doctors told us that the hepatitis had started to attack the new liver. I was shocked to hear that the hepatitis was back as I had thought that it had been cured with the transplant. Following the assessment, Victor went back on the transplant list. Just before he was due to be discharged a young female doctor told us that they had found a donor.

21. Victor had a second liver transplant on 04 February 2004. The transplant operation did not go well. There was a problem and he had to go back into theatre. He was discharged at the end of February 2004 (28 February 2004). Following the second transplant he was very ill and became a totally different person (in what way? Was this after the transplant or after Victor began taking the antiviral medication?)

22. Victor started taking antiviral medication (Interferon and Ribavirin) shortly after the second transplant (29 March 2004). He used to inject himself in the thigh at home. He was given a leaflet about the treatment but I do not know if anyone spoke to him about the side effects of the treatment. I wasn't aware that there were any side effects and I do not recall being told about them. Did you notice any side effects from the medication?

23. In April 2004 my sister got married and we attended the wedding. Victor was really ill at that time. He had lost a lot of weight around his face and shoulders and his colour was terrible. He was tinged yellow.

24. By the time of my birthday on 6 October he had really deteriorated. He was getting really confused and disorientated. I thought he had developed

another infection. On 7 October 2004 I drove him to Edinburgh and he was admitted to Edinburgh Royal Infirmary. A few weeks after he was admitted, Professor Hayes stopped Victor's antiviral medication because the doctors thought it was killing him. Victor passed away on 17 November 2004.

25. Victor didn't tell anyone he had Hepatitis C apart from family and close friends. He was a very private person and would not have wanted anyone to know his business. As far as I am aware he did not suffer any stigma for having Hepatitis C.

26. Victor applied to the Skipton Fund and received a payment one week before he died. How much was the payment? Did he receive another payment at any time?

27. Victor did not have any tattoos.