



BRISTOL HEART INSTITUTE
UNIVERSITY OF BRISTOL

Bristol Royal Infirmary Bristol BS2 8HW



Professor G.D. Angelini, MD, MCh, FRCS
British Heart Foundation
Chair of Cardiac Surgery

14th October 1999



The Chairman
Bristol Royal Infirmary Inquiry
2 Temple Way
Bristol

Dear Mr Chairman


Response of James D Wisheart to the written statement of Professor G D Angelini dated September 1999 (Reference No: WIT 0073 0001-0019)

I would like to reply to Mr Wisheart's comment of inaccurate surgery on page 4 as follows:

It is not correct to say that I had never seen Mr Wisheart operating. In fact, on several occasions when I was operating in the next door theatre, perhaps when waiting for my case to be ready, I would pop in and take a look at what was going on in the other theatre. In particular, I remember one episode when Mr Wisheart was operating with his Senior Registrar on a patient in August 1995. As I was watching from the top of the table the surgeons experienced a major difficulty; the heart-lung machine tubing was suddenly filled with lots of air. The air was coming back into the heart-lung machine since one of the cannulae which had been inserted through the femoral vein was actually sucking air freely from one of the chambers of the heart which had been opened. This made it impossible for the perfusionist to perfuse the patient. For some time the patient was therefore receiving no blood through the heart-lung machine. The surgeons were unable to understand the nature of the problem which they had created and it was only after me literally shouting to them what to do, that they were able to implement measures which allowed the perfusionist to restart the extra-corporeal circulation.

This incident was reported as a major accident by Dr Bolsin. As a result of this the General Manager, Mrs R Ferris, initiated an investigation and statements were provided by Dr Bolsin, the anaesthetist, and Mr Downes, the perfusionist. I understand Mr Wisheart did not provide a statement. I also understand that Mrs Ferris was subsequently advised by Professor J Vann Jones as Clinical Director that, since Mr Wisheart had exercised his power as Medical Director, it would be wise not to ask any further questions. This incident was reported by Mrs Ferris in point 76 of her statement to the Bristol Royal Infirmary inquiry.

Yours sincerely



G.D. ANGELINI
Professor of Cardiac Surgery