

Witness Name: Dolores Vaughan

Statement No:WITN2809001

Exhibits:WITN2809002

Dated: March 2019

## INFECTED BLOOD INQUIRY

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### FIRST WRITTEN STATEMENT OF DOLORES VAUGHAN

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I, Dolores Vaughan will say as follows:-

#### Section 1. Introduction

1. My name is Dolores Vaughan. I live at GRO-C GRO-C and I was born on GRO-C 1967. I have one brother called Carlos Vaughan and I work as a UK communications officer for the police; I take 999 calls.
2. I provide this statement in response to a request under Rule 9 of the Inquiry Rules 2006. I am also aware that my brother, Carlos Vaughan intends to provide a statement to the Inquiry.
3. This witness statement has been prepared without the benefit of access to my mother's full medical records.

#### Section 2. How Affected

4. I am providing this witness statement in respect of late mother, Manuela Vaughan. She was born in Spain on GRO-C 1937 and came to the UK in the 1960s to work as a chamber maid in hotels. She married my dad Danny

Vaughan and had two children, my brother and me. They divorced when I was around 6 years old and my dad died when I was about 11 years old.

5. I believe that my mother was infected with HIV either from a blood transfusion during a double-mastectomy operation at St. Mary's Hospital, Paddington in or around September 1981 when I was 13 years old or during her subsequent 10 reconstructive operations.
6. In around August 1981 my mother was initially diagnosed at St. Mary's with a cancerous lump in her breast. She was told that both her breasts would have to be removed as she was a very large lady. My mother had the utmost faith in the medical profession and so agreed to the procedure.
7. It was during my mother's double-mastectomy operation on 25 September 1981 that the doctor's immediately inserted silicon implants in her. These were infected and after she was sent home, in or around 14 October 1981 her right implant burst. In around December 1981 I found her bed full of blood and she was rushed back to St. Mary's Hospital. She was referred to the Hammersmith Hospital where her left implant was removed.
8. In or around July 1982 she had plastic surgery at the West Middlesex Hospital to insert two more implants and she was given four units of blood. These implants were replaced around January 1984 again at the West Middlesex Hospital.
9. In total my mum had 11 operations and I refer to the Medical report from Dr Davies dated 30 April 1985 in exhibit WITN2809002. During these operations she was given a blood transfusion and I believe this is where she was infected with HIV. My mother told me the blood she received was from American prisoners, I believe she was told this by the hospital. However, I do not believe that she was given any information regarding the risks of this blood transfusion beforehand.
10. After the operation in September 1981 she did not receive any chemotherapy or any drugs and had started to question the initial diagnosis of breast cancer.

A further look at the biopsy by the Royal Marsden Hospital in or around January 1984 revealed that the lump that was removed was just a milk gland and she did not have breast cancer.

11. She first showed symptoms of HIV in 1989. Our GP, Dr Ibrahim, came to the house and saw that my mother had lost a significant amount of weight and looked particularly frail and so he sent her to St. Charles Hospital where she stayed as an in-patient.
12. Here, they looked through my mother's medical notes and saw that she had a blood transfusion at St. Mary's Hospital, and they then did an HIV test on my mother without informing her.
13. My brother and I went to visit my mother and I remember vividly going in and hearing her tell us that she had SIDA, which is HIV in Spanish. I ran out of the room and started crying and screaming in the corridor. I could not believe it. My brother went into shock and went into himself. My mother was distraught but was strong.
14. It was really disgusting how my mother was told about her HIV. She should have been given counselling and told of the implications of the infection and what the next stages were, with a full explanation of what to expect. No one spoke to my mother about HIV or its implications, any possible treatments or anything. She was given no guidance or support. No information was provided to her on how to avoid infecting me or my brother, or any one else.
15. In 1989, my mother requested that a nurse from St Charles Hospital come to help her and she used this opportunity to ask the nurse to tell us about the risks of infecting us, as me brother and I were very worried. I was refused an HIV test however and so my fears were never fully allayed. This was the only time someone spoke to us regarding the implications of the infection and the nurse confirmed that it could only be spread in certain ways.

### **Section 3. Other Infections**

16. My mother contracted shingles all over her legs, side and back.

#### **Section 4. Consent**

17. My mother was tested for HIV without her knowledge at St Charles Hospital and therefore without her consent.

#### **Section 5. Impact of the Infection**

18. My mother became severely depressed after being told of her infection. She spent a lot of time alone and just gave up on life really. She used to spend a lot of time on her own in her room just staring out of the window and she became very isolate. I was so worried that she was going to try and jump out of the window as we lived on the 30<sup>th</sup> floor of a tower block called GRO-C GRO-C. It was heart breaking to see such a strong woman become so frail.

19. My mother was discharged from hospital and put on AZT medication. My mother asked the doctor how long she would have to live and the doctor told her about two years.

20. My brother and I lived at home and cared for her. No one used to help us, not even from the hospital. We used to go to work in the morning and then come straight home after work and help her. She was doing better on the medication and was trying to stay as healthy as possible. She was eating healthily and going swimming too. She was able to look after herself more and had become significantly better. She had put some weight back on too.

21. She was on the medication for over a year before she started to complain that her stomach did not feel right in or around December 1990. She said she felt as if there was a hole in her stomach.

22. My mother went back to St. Charles Hospital and was admitted. As they knew she had HIV, she was therefore treated very badly and no one wanted to even touch her. I remember an occasion where she had wet the bed and she was left to lie in it because no one wanted to do anything. Eventually a doctor came down and said that they were trying to get her moved to an HIV specialist unit in London Bridge Hospital, which had the first ward for people suffering from AIDS. After I made a fuss about everything, she was moved within a few days and remained there until she died.
23. My mother kept on getting different infections throughout this period. She contracted pneumonia and her health deteriorated rapidly before her death on 15 March 1991 aged 53.
24. At the time she was told that she had HIV, our GP Dr Ibrahim, I believe, told us not to tell anyone about it due to the attached stigma. He was concerned that we would be run out of the estate should people find out. As a result, my mother only ever told her friend Maria, and my brother and I never told anyone.
25. This infection caused a significant strain on our family life as ever since finding out about my mother's infection, our life was centred on my mother trying to prepare us for her death. She taught my brother and me how to cook and how to deal with money and other general life stuff to look after ourselves and told us to always stick together.
26. My mother was a single parent and so we only had her as our support system and she only had us. It was difficult for us as my brother and I were still young and did not have anyone to speak to or anyone to help us. My mother was not even given any medication to take.
27. I would cry a lot of the time at home but I would make sure that my mother did not see me. I was constantly worried about becoming infected myself and my mother never wanted me or my brother to touch her just in case she infected us. I always used to put boiling water on my toothbrush as an extra

precaution. I did not know if we could become infected this way as we were never informed but this was just in case. I lived in constant fear that I had contracted HIV too as I was refused a test.

28. My mother only really had one friend, Maria, who lived downstairs in our block. She was the one that called our doctor, Dr Ibrahim, to come and check my mother and sent her to the hospital in 1989. My mother never went out and Maria was the only friend that came to visit my mother.

29. In the year before she died, my mother went back to Spain to see her family but she did not want us to come. I think she was going to say goodbye to her brothers and sisters. When she came back she became a little bit defensive and she distanced herself from my brother and me. This was strange and out of the ordinary for her. It was as if she was preparing herself for death and preparing us for her death.

30. I have not spoken to any of my family in Spain since and only one aunt came to my mother's funeral. My aunt went through my mother's belongings and wanted one of her rings. After she left I never spoke to my family in Spain again.

31. The stress caused me significant health issues. After my mother died I became very depressed and anxious and after telling my GP, he sent me to see a psychiatrist. I remember crashing my car and going to a unit in St. Charles Hospital and thinking to myself that I did not even care what happens to me anymore. I was crying constantly and explaining that I was not mad. The doctor reassured me that I was not mad, but that I just need help and counselling; however, I never received this counselling and I do not know why. I never bothered to chase it as I had lost faith and trust in the doctors.

32. My brother got me through my depression but then he moved out of the flat we lived in with my mother and he went to live with a girlfriend. That made me more upset as I felt alone in that flat with only my memories.

33. About 12 years ago, my brother emigrated to Spain, however in a different town to where my family is located. He had had a son and so wanted to get away from everything and all the horrid memories here.

34. This mental trauma continued to affect my health and about 10 years after my mother died, I was diagnosed with endometriosis, an auto immune disease. I have also been diagnosed with proctitis, lichen sclerosus and inflammation of the stomach lining. I believe the traumas that I have suffered in my life are now surfacing and causing these health issues.

35. About five years ago I met someone who wanted to have unprotected sex and he suggested that we go to a clinic and get tested. I spoke to a doctor who tested me quickly as I was so anxious to have the test and had been waiting a long time for it. I was told that I did not have HIV. Regardless though, I have always struggled getting into relationships and it hurts too much when I lose people.

36. Money was always tight as my mother could not work after her mastectomy due to the pain from the scarring. She was on disabled living allowance and was getting money from the government as she was not working.

### **Section 6. Treatment/care/support**

37. Mum never got any counselling but I believe that she would definitely have benefitted from this.

38. I only trusted our GP, Dr Ibrahim, as he looked after us well and that is why I went to the mental health unit myself after his recommendation when my mother died. My brother received no counselling.

### **Section 7. Financial Assistance**

39. My mother did not receive any financial assistance while she was alive.

40. When my mother died, I remember one of the head doctors approaching my brother and I, advising that we would be given money if we agreed not to sue the NHS in the future. We were alone and agreed without getting any advice as we were in a very vulnerable position and the money would have been critical for us. I believe we received £40,000 in 1991, which my brother and I split evenly.

41. I think the money came straight from the NHS. We did not have to fill out a form or anything. The lady who told us about it at the London Bridge Hospital just arranged it and we received a cheque after signing that we would not sue the NHS in the future.

### **Section 8. Other Issues**

42. My mother took the NHS to court for negligence after her incorrect breast cancer diagnosis, the unnecessary removal of her breasts and dangerous implants. When she was in court in around October 1986, however, we were unaware that she also had been infected with HIV and so the case should have been a lot bigger than it was.

43. The High Court at the time said that I had to be a witness for my mother and the memory of this has always stuck with me. I was questioned in 1986 when I was around 18 or 19 years old. Subsequently going through my own employment tribunals later brought back these memories for me and I had to take anti depressants from 2009 until 2013.

44. My mother received about £98,000 from suing the NHS in this matter. My brother and I were vulnerable and young at this time and so all the money that my mother won from this litigation she put into a trust for us, which we could only access when I was 33 and my brother 35 if we put it into property. We therefore bought a house together in [GRO-C]. My brother lived there and then married his girlfriend and so they paid me my half of the money and I used this to buy my own flat. When I sold this flat I used the money to buy a property in Spain and I rent a property to live in, in the UK.



45. I believe that it is important to understand that it is not just Haemophiliacs who were affected by this scandal. Many other people were caught up in this.

46. I want justice for my mother. I want everyone to know her story; who she was and what happened to her.

**Anonymity**

47. I do not wish to remain anonymous.

48. I do not want 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..... 17/3/2019.....