

Witness Name: Brian Hawkins

Statement No.: WITN2843001

Exhibits: None

Dated: 29th August 2019

INFECTED BLOOD INQUIRY

FIRST WRITTEN STATEMENT OF BRIAN HAWKINS

I provide this statement in response to a request under Rule 9 of the Inquiry Rules 2006 dated 5th November 2018.

I, Brian Hawkins, will say as follows: -

Section 1. Introduction

1. My name is Brian Hawkins. My date of birth is GRO-C 1958. My address is GRO-C GRO-C Edinburgh, GRO-C I live with my wife Marion Hawkins. We have lived here for 28 years. We have two children, Grant and Elaine, who both live away from home. I intend to speak about my wife's infection of hepatitis C, in particular the nature of her illness, how the illness affected her, the treatment she received and the impact it had on our family and our lives together.

Section 2. How Infected

2. Marion received a blood transfusion on GRO-C 1987 after our son Grant was born.
3. Grant was born at the Elsie Inglis Maternity Hospital, in Edinburgh, at around 4am. I had been there the whole night - so not long after he was born, I went home to sleep.
4. I called the hospital at roughly 11.30am. I got put through to the ward, I cant remember any names. I do remember when I got through to the ward all they said was Marion was in emergency surgery, they wouldn't tell me what is was about, they hung the phone up on me. My father died two weeks prior to this, I was very upset. I didn't know what to do, I called my mother who was a retired nurse. My mother called the hospital and obtained further information regarding Marion. I went down to the hospital to see for myself. Marion had suffered internal bleeding.
5. Marion was in the hospital for a fortnight after the surgery. She was only discharged as I was having to take time off my work at Kwik-Fit.
6. It was around about 13th December 1995 that Marion received a letter from the Scottish Blood Transfusion Service to advise she had been given a batch of infected blood that was contaminated with Hepatitis C. The letter said that this was not connected to the HIV virus. We had never heard of Hepatitis C before then.
7. I called my sister and her husband, who worked in a lab down south that worked on cancer treatments. My brother-in-law had to explain to us what Hepatitis C was.
8. Marion and I got our bloods checked the next day. Marion was called the day after when it was confirmed to that she definitely had the Hepatitis C

virus. I was given the all clear. We were told our daughter Elaine should be checked at our GP surgery, and they would inform us after the New Year if she had been infected with the virus or not. We called on Christmas Eve and advised that Elaine was clear of the virus.

9. Our GP is based at Ladywell East Medical Centre in Edinburgh.

Section 3. Other Infections

10. I do not believe Marion has been infected with any other viruses other than Hepatitis C.

Section 4. Consent

11. Marion has told me that she signed a form before she went into surgery, but she cannot remember what the form was for.

12. I do not think I was given enough information by the NHS as to the Hepatitis C virus. We had to speak to my brother-in-law about what it was in the first place.

13. Marion then had to then gather information from magazines and papers as to what the virus was and what would happen to her.

Section 5. Impact

14. Marion sought help from a private therapist who she saw every week. She was a friend of hers, called Roberta Lettice - it was not something we paid for.

15. Roberta was employed by the school that Marion worked for to come in and counsel children with eating disorders or bereavement. I found it

easier to talk to her than anyone from the hospital. As I had been at the school for so long, I think she knew a lot about me, which helped the process.

16. I have always been close with a number of my friends as I have grown up. I play golf with a number of them every week, and also go to the pub with them. I told all of them about Marion having Hepatitis C, and they have been a massive support to me.

Section 6. Treatment/Care/Support

17. In the February or March of 1996, Marion was told she had endometriosis. She was told that either she was to be on medication for the rest of her life, or could have a hysterectomy. She decided to have the hysterectomy.

18. Not long after this she had a blood test and was asked if she wanted to be considered for part of a clinical trial for the treatment of Hepatitis C. She decided that she did not want to start the trial until the hospital was ready to proceed, as at that time they were only in the research stage.

19. Marion went in for a liver biopsy on Grant's 10th birthday. She started on the trial not long after this – I think it was in 1997 - which was an injection of Interferon 3 times per week for 6 months, with 5 Ribavirin a day. The treatment was so new, that Marion had to pay for her prescription. When she went to get the prescriptions from our GP, Marion had to tell him what to write on the prescriptions as it was a new drug. She had to tell him what the drugs were for and how much she was to take.

20. The first time Marion took the Interferon she shook uncontrollably. I had to sleep on the couch to give Marion a peaceful night sleep.

21. After the 6 months of the treatment Marion had blood tests, and was told the virus was lying dormant in her liver.

22. After around a year later Marion was told the virus was back.
23. The second round of treatment was a larger dose of the Interferon and Ribavirin that lasted for a year.
24. Around the July or August of that year whilst having the second round of treatment Marion had a very bad day. She was driving along the City Bypass and wanted to crash her car. Had I known how she was feeling, I would have taken the car keys straight off of her.
25. Marion has told me and the kids that she does not wish to go through any more treatment for her Hepatitis C should it reactivate in her liver again.

Section 7. Financial Assistance

26. Marion was contacted by the Skipton Fund by letter, who advised her that she may be eligible for an award under the scheme. She received £20,000.
27. She was then awarded £30,000 2 years ago from what we think was the Scottish Infected Blood Support Scheme.
28. Marion gets £500 per month from we think the NHS – this was assessed as to how affected you are by the Hepatitis C in your work life. Marion was deemed moderately affected by it in terms of her work.

Section 8. Other Issues

29. There is nothing further I wish to add at this moment.

Statement of Truth

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

Signed

GRO-C

Dated

24/8/19.