



Witness Name: Alison Morris

Statement No.: WITN0759001

Exhibits: Nil

Dated: 15 April 2019

## INFECTED BLOOD INQUIRY

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### WRITTEN STATEMENT OF ALISON MORRIS

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I provide this statement in response to a request under Rule 9 of the Inquiry Rules 2006 dated 21 November 2018.

I, Alison Morris, will say as follows: -

#### Section 1. Introduction

1. My name is Alison Morris. My date of birth is GRO-C 1961. My address is known to the Inquiry. I intend to speak about my brother in law Jeffrey Stanley Morris who was infected with HIV and Hepatitis C (hereinafter referred to as 'HCV') from contaminated blood products.
2. In particular, I will speak about the impact that Jeffrey's illness and passing has had on the entire family and in particular my husband Gary Morris, who has made his own statement to the Inquiry.

## **Section 2. How Infected**

3. The details of this have been covered by my husband Gary in his statement.
4. Jeff came to see me in hospital when I had an operation. Jeff visited me once if not twice. He said to me very casually 'by the way I've been told I have HCV', this was in June 1994.

## **Section 3. Other Infections**

5. Other than the HIV and HCV, I am not aware of any other infections.

## **Section 4. Consent**

6. The details of this have been covered by my husband Gary in his statement.

## **Section 5. Impact**

7. Jeff lived for 10 years after being told he had HIV. In the last 10 years of his life he walked with a pronounced limp (as a result of a fractured hip which caused a twisted spine) but he never moaned about it.
8. He was nauseous all the time in the last 2 years and was unable to eat. He continued to suffer bleeds as a result of his haemophilia, and was never well enough to work. He could be ok for a few months and then he would have a bad bleed and be in and out of hospital.

9. He needed a lot of support from the family, he didn't want to die; he wanted to live and fought it all the way to the end. He tried to stay awake all the time, and his mum watched him day and night. He would stay awake because he thought he may die in his sleep. I used to go and see him during the day to give his mum a break. He would ask me to tell him about the kids to try and stay awake. We could only let him see them for short periods, as he was so frail. The longest he would have a nap for would be half an hour and then he would wake up again and he would stay awake.
10. Jeff was only able to eat packet ham and bottled water; this was all he could stomach. He was very ill and very frail mentally. He got quite paranoid and thought people were trying to poison him. We didn't know if the paranoia was a result of taking the drugs or if it was effects of the HIV getting worse.
11. Jeff was very shocked that he had been infected with HIV and he wanted his HIV status kept private, so that he could try and live a normal life. Therefore, we had to lie to family and friends.
12. We often went with Jeff if he needed Factor 8 in the hospital. He would have his treatment and then we would sit in the day room waiting for the treatment to start working. It was like a pub with no beer. There would be guys sitting watching telly and having a laugh. The room got emptier and emptier as the years went on. He lost a lot of friends.
13. After my father in law died in 1987, Gary was the person that everyone went to for help. Gary would be called on to sort out family issues at all time. The phone would ring at all hours and we couldn't ignore it in case it was an emergency with Jeff. Gary had to deal with everything alone. We didn't have friends to rely on or to share the burden with because we couldn't trust anyone with our sensitive situation. We were very isolated.

14. Our children, and my niece and nephew absolutely adored Jeff. He loved them and saw them nearly every day. They were all only little and so were mostly unaware of what was going on. Our daughter would go with him to the pharmacy or to the bank and her job was to open the doors for Jeff. He wanted to be as normal as he could be so he wouldn't use the wheel chair. They would snuggle up on the sofa together and he would read them all storybooks. He was a much-loved uncle.
15. After Jeff's death in June 1995, we couldn't celebrate joyous family occasions properly. We felt guilty if we enjoyed ourselves. People were asking questions and we just continued to lie to preserve our families privacy. I was worried that the children would be bullied if the truth came out.
16. We put our house up for sale 5 months after Jeff died and moved to another area. We were well known and people found out Jeff had HIV and we hadn't told them, we just wanted to make a fresh start where no one would know our past. We moved twice; never really settled down, and we moved back 8 years ago. The few people we do tell about Jeff look at us in disbelief.
17. When I first met Gary he was popular, partied a lot and was very outgoing. That ended when Jeff died. It's been hard to accept that it's never going to go away. It has still not been resolved and nobody has ever said sorry.
18. Before and after Jeff died we received loads of silent phone calls. We had over 20 silent phone calls; all hours of the day and night. We had to tell the children not to answer the phone. I bought a whistle and left it by the phone and then whenever the phone rang and no one spoke we would blow the whistle! We never found out who did this but it must have been someone we knew; who knew that we had to answer the phone in case we were needed.

19. People tampered with the flowers on Jeff's plot at the cemetery. Someone kept throwing them away. We gave up taking flowers and the children's notes to the cemetery. It wasn't easy to explain to the kids and so we just made an excuse not to go anymore. After this we never knew who to trust because we believed that it was someone we knew. This has a significant affect on your emotions and it creeps up on you through the years.
20. We really struggled with childcare and lived hand to mouth because Gary was at university and we had no savings left. Gary's Mum looked after our kids while I worked part time. She had to give her job up to look after Jeff and could no longer babysit for us. Our children were quite unsettled and I then had to give up my job to help look after Jeff and the kids. This had a huge impact on us financially. The only plus was that I was able to spend time with him in what turned out to be the last year of his life. I have a gap on my CV and employers always ask what I was doing during that year. I never knew how to explain the gap. I looked after the kids, both our kids and Jackie's while everyone was visiting him in hospital during his last months

## **Section 6. Treatment/Care/Support**

21. When I went to hospital for a thyroid operation, there was a breast cancer investigation at the same time. Many people were there as day patients and they received a great deal of advice and information leaflets. I remember sitting there furious because they were getting all this help and support and we didn't get anything from the NHS. Nothing. No practical or emotional help was ever given, and has never been offered. The family had to cope alone with the illness, losing Jeff, and the grief that went on for years afterwards. It was bizarre. I wondered if they were choosing not to help us.

## **Section 7. Financial Assistance**

22. Jeff received £20,000 from the Macfarlanes trust. He gave £1000 each to his mum, Jackie and Gary. This was in late 1989. He paid for Gary to learn how to drive and bought him a car. He knew that one day he wouldn't be well enough to drive himself. He went on at least two Caribbean cruises with the money he received and loved the holidays where he could just be himself.

23. When he left home he rented a flat. He had to apply for grants to furnish it and I'm pretty sure that was also through the Macfarlane trust. He bought a bungalow in early 1994 for about £50,000. He had to get a mortgage for that at that time, the banks gave mortgages to people who were on benefits for life.

24. After Jeff received his money from the Macfarlane trust, the CID came round to his house. This was because the money had been sent in a convoluted way and so it wasn't clear where it had come from. I think they thought he might have been involved in some type of money laundering.

## **Section 8. Other Issues**

25. I am hoping that I have conveyed what happened well. It has carried on ever since. We have never had a carefree time since this all happened.

26. If Jeff's parents were here they would want us to say that as parents, you bring up a disabled child as well as you can. They bought him up brilliantly and he was treated the same as everyone else. It just wasn't fair how things ended. My mother-in-law never got over the trauma of it and found life very difficult afterwards. She couldn't take any pleasure in anything.

27. During the last few months of Jeff's life, our finances were very tight. We were going back and forth to the hospital, spending a lot of money on petrol and hospital car parks. We were spending the same amount on our mortgage each month as travelling to and from the hospital.

28. If we had received an apology, it wouldn't have made it better but it would have been easier to deal with. We still haven't been apologised to. We appreciate the work of the Inquiry and just having people listen to us tell our story is much appreciated.

**Statement of Truth**

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

Signed GRO-C

Dated 15/4/19.