

Witness Name: Alison Marina Quarterman

Statement No: WITN0529001

Exhibits: WITN0529002-010

Dated: 7 June 2019

## INFECTED BLOOD INQUIRY

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### WRITTEN STATEMENT OF ALISON MARINA QUARTERMAN

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I provide this statement in response to a request under Rule 9 of the Inquiry Rules 2006 dated 11 February 2019.

I, Alison Marina Quarterman, will say as follows: -

#### Section 1. Introduction

1. My name is Alison Marina Quarterman. My date of birth is GRO-C 1966 and my address is GRO-C Isle of Wight, GRO-C. I am a self-employed book keeper and live with my husband. We have 2 sons who have since left home, and 3 grandchildren. I intend to speak about my deceased older brother Alan Ruffels and his experience after receiving blood products which infected him with Hepatitis C Virus (HCV). In particular, the nature of his illness, how the illness affected him and my family, the treatment received and the impact it had on him and our lives together.

2. There was a lot that I was not aware of about my brother's illness when he was alive. It was only after reading through his medical notes a couple of months ago that I learnt about the specifics of my brother's illness. A number of these documents have been included as exhibits and can be referred to where there are gaps in my knowledge.

## **Section 2. How Affected**

1. Alan was born on [GRO-C] 1958. We grew up in [GRO-C] and my brother lived with our family until he was sixteen years old. He clashed with our father because they both were very similar and could be fiery. Eventually the family decided it was best for him to move to live with [GRO-D] for a bit. I don't know much about the agreement between my parents and [GRO-D] as I was only 8 at the time. [GRO-D] was [GRO-D] and [GRO-D]. He decided to remain living with [GRO-D] and was living with her until his death in 1995, aged 37. I don't remember exactly but I think my cousin was fifteen when Alan died.
2. Growing up I remember my brother always being in good health. It wasn't until in 1987 when [GRO-D] noticed my brother's yellow eyes and took him to the hospital that he was diagnosed with autoimmune haemolytic anaemia. I am unsure how he got this disorder but I understand he had lots of tests at the time. My brother was very sick and often in and out of different hospitals, as can be seen from his medical summary. **WITN052902**
3. My family didn't know a lot about my brother's illness. He kept a lot to himself and only [GRO-D] went with him to medical appointments. I didn't know he had the autoimmune disorder until I requested his medical notes.

4. I learnt he was taking medication called Gammagard to treat his autoimmune disorder. I don't know much about the treatment but I understand it is a blood product and has something to do with blood plasma. It was through a batch of Gammagard that Alan was infected with HCV sometime during 1992 or 1993 before it was withdrawn. **WITN0529003** Until a couple of months ago I thought Alan was infected with HCV through a blood transfusion and my siblings still think this is the case.
5. After he was infected with HCV my brother's health deteriorated at an even more rapid rate. It was only in the last six months of his life that the whole family learnt Alan had been infected with HCV. **WITN0529004**
6. He was referred to Queen Elizabeth Hospital in Birmingham on 11 May 1994 and then accepted to be considered for a liver transplant on 24 May 1995. I don't think we realised how ill he was until then. He was too ill to get a transplant and was completely dejected. It was a gruelling time and we were back and forth visiting him as he was constantly in and out of hospital. **WITN0529005**
7. I remember he was jaundiced all the time, his stomach was always so bloated from his condition and the HCV, it was horrific to see. He was like a bag of bones with a big tummy from the bloating. From his medical notes at this time. **WITN0529006** I know he was put on a low salt diet and also had to restrict how much fluid he took on board. This was to do with his bloating stomach, which had to keep being drained off.
8. Towards the end, when he was in John Radcliffe Hospital, I was the only person from our family who could visit him as he had no immunity so we had to not be ill when visiting. I went to see him on GRO-C 1995 and remember he was chatting and talking. I wasn't meant to see him the next day but since no one else from the family was allowed I went again on the GRO-C His condition had completely changed by the GRO-C it

was as if he didn't recognise me and we were on a different planet. He died the next day on **GRO-C** 1995. **WITN0529007**

### Section 3. Impact

9. When my brother was healthy he loved playing cricket. Before he got sick he used to go to the cricket club every week and sometimes my sister and I would meet him to play bingo. This phased out as he got sicker and he stopped having a social life. My sister and I stopped going because we didn't want to go without him. He had lots of friends, they filled the church at his funeral. I hadn't realised he knew so many people.
10. He also had to give up his work as a builder's labourer because he was too sick. I remember he tried to go back to work when he was sick but by 1993 he decided he couldn't do it anymore. He didn't show that he was down, he always tried to remain cheerful and didn't show any unhappiness out in the open. When he went to the John Radcliffe Hospital in Oxford for operations to remove his spleen and gall bladder I did notice he seemed a bit down.
11. My children were quite young when their uncle died. My eldest was born in 1988 and the youngest in 1990. Alan used to drive and visit a lot at Christmas and I remember him coming to my children's birthday parties in the early 1990s. This also stopped as he got sicker. Everything fizzled out. He also stopped visiting my parents as the visits were too much for him. Towards the end it was us visiting him, usually in hospital because this is where he was most of the time.
12. At the time, I wasn't aware of the full impact my brother's sickness had on **GRO-D** as he was living with her throughout this time. She was semi-retired and acted as his carer. Now that I have read through his medical notes I can see the roller coaster ride she had, I include a nursing assessment dated 16 October 1995 by way of example. **WITN0529004** However, since she never shared anything with our family it was not

possible for us to help her. If she had shared the struggle with us, of course we would have stepped in to help. I think she suffered a lot but never said anything directly.

13. I know from my brother's medical notes that **GRO-D** was giving him daily injections and also took him to his hospital appointments, which were back and forth between both John Radcliffe and Queen Elizabeth hospitals. He was seen by a lot of different doctors. **WITN0529008** A lot of the time he would have been unable to drive himself. She would have had to be careful of infection and at her house he could only use one specific toilet after he was diagnosed. I know this because when we visited him at **GRO-D**'s we weren't allowed to use that toilet. She just said he had a blood problem.

14. After my brother's death **GRO-D** broke away from the family and it was testing to sort out anything to do with my brother. **GRO-D**

**GRO-D**

**GRO-D** She did come to my mother and father's funerals but stayed out of the way so I never saw her.

15. My whole family was in disbelief after my brother died. It happened at Christmas time when families should be getting together. His funeral was on 27 December and I remember it being snowy. We all go to visit the grave every now and then, but otherwise we don't really talk about it. It is hard because I go back there but don't want to bump into **GRO-D** so I feel like I am always looking over my shoulder.

16. My mum never accepted what happened to my brother and I think blamed **GRO-D** for a lot of it. She took it very badly, especially when he died. My dad was quite quiet about what happened. He visited my brother a lot and sometimes did the run to Queen Elizabeth Hospital as

well. After he died I think he kept his feelings to himself and never let anything out. My two older brothers were also quite quiet about what happened to my brother. My older sister was quite stressed while he was sick, especially when she went to Queen Elizabeth Hospital.

17. I am very cross and upset about everything that has happened. At first when my brother died, I felt so guilty for being alive and have felt this way for years. Every Christmas when the date of his death comes around, I don't want to go out or do anything, I can't cope with it.

18. I was the last person to see my brother before he died and this haunts me. In the days before he was dying he didn't seem able to speak to anybody. I saw him the day before he died and he didn't recognise me. It was like he was a different person. The day before that when I also saw him we had been doing the football pools together. I feel bad I never stayed with him at this time and like I left someone to die on their own.

19. I feel really bad that he went at such a young age. I still feel bad that we never knew anything at the time and looking back is hard. When you have someone die early in life, especially when it wasn't their fault it is hard to accept. It would be more acceptable if he had died in a car crash, but to be given a product and then die from that is not good.

20. Now that I have seen his medical notes, I feel like I wasn't there to support him when I should have been. For my own boys I am there 24/7. I would drop everything for them and be there. I feel like I wasn't there enough for my brother and I should have been. I didn't fully know what was going on so I didn't step in to help him. It was only when he was in his last year I remember going up and down to visit him in hospital.

21. It was awful to find out about everything by going through my brother's medical notes. It took me a long time to look at them. It felt like opening Pandora's Box – I didn't know what was going to come out. When I found out about how Alan was infected with HCV and read the letter [

**WITN052909** where full responsibility had been taken for the unlicensed product I just thought what the hell has gone on. The consultant immunologist at John Radcliffe hospital, Oxford, signed a document on 31 July 1992, which I have exhibited taking responsibility for the use of the unlicensed product on behalf of my brother. **WITN0529010**

22. I got paranoid after my brother died. I forgot what level he was on at the hospital and didn't want to be in the hospital because it freaked me out and reminded me of when he was in there. When my dad was ill at John Radcliffe Hospital I didn't want to go back and it was the same when my mum was ill.

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

23. I don't know much about the treatment my brother received at the time but I think most hospital staff were ok with him. I have noticed his name is misspelt in a lot of his medical records though.
24. I have never been offered any counselling in consequence of what has happened and I do not know if my brother was ever offered any. I do know he was getting despondent towards the end from reading his notes. I feel like a lot of things weren't said at the time which should have been.

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

25. The year following his death, my brother received £38,224.03 in his claim against Gammaguard, as well as £26,859.31 for loss of earnings. **GRO-C**

<b>GRO-C</b>
<b>GRO-D</b>

26. I am not sure if anything my brother received was part of a trust or a fund as the paperwork has gone, but to the best of my knowledge my brother was starting an application before he died and then because [GRO-D] was executor of his will she had to keep chasing it. I think he had also started a legal challenge before he died. I learnt this information through my solicitor who was dealing with my [GRO-D]'s solicitor [GRO-D]  
[GRO-D]

27. I can also recall my [GRO-D] parents and siblings were reimbursed for trips taking my brother to Queen Elizabeth Hospital in Birmingham.

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

28. It does concern me that I never knew about the infection risk. Nothing was ever said to me or my siblings about my brother's auto immune disease, let alone his HCV. No one tracked any risk of infection and we didn't realise or know. [GRO-D] let my brother come to my house where I had two small children with this infectious disease and she didn't tell us. He used to come to my house and play with my children. I know he is not a leper but precautions have to be taken like they do in hospitals. I think the hospital should have communicated with my family so that we were aware of the disease.

29. It has made me cross that the hospitals were not willing to help me find out about the Infected Blood Inquiry. The only way I was able to find out about how to contact the Inquiry was through searching myself. When I contacted John Radcliffe Hospital to find out information, they said they had not heard about it. I asked for details about who to contact and was put through to the blood department at Churchill Hospital in Oxford, who also did not know anything.



### Statement of Truth

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

Signed                     **GRO-C**                    

Dated   07/06/2019  

### **Exhibits**

1967-December 1995	Medical summary – treatment and Medical history	<b>WITN0529002</b>
24/03/1994	Letter re potential HCV infection	<b>WITN0529003</b>
16/10/95	Nursing assessment	<b>WITN0529004</b>
22/06/1995	Letter re patients' condition	<b>WITN0529005</b>
18/01/1995; 22/03/1995; 17/07/1995	Letters regarding patient's condition	<b>WITN0529006</b>
Undated – circa December 1995	Patient discharge summary	<b>WITN0529007</b>
02/08/1995	Letter listing doctors' names at John Radcliffe hospital, Oxford and list of hospitals attended	<b>WITN0529008</b>
25/02/1994	Letter re potential HCV transmission	<b>WITN0529009</b>
31/07/1992	Note regarding unlicensed product	<b>WITN0529010</b>