

Witness Name: Leila Ann Law

Statement No: WITN2181001

Exhibits: WITN2181002-004

Dated: 29th September 2020

INFECTED BLOOD INQUIRY

FIRST WRITTEN STATEMENT OF LEILA ANN LAW

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

I, Leila Ann Law, will say as follows: -

Section 1. Introduction

1. My name is Leila Ann Law. My date of birth is GRO-C 1959. My address is known to the inquiry. I intend to speak about my late husband Hugh Law, who was born on the GRO-C 1962 and his infection with hepatitis C, in particular the nature of his illness, how the illness affected him, the treatment received and the impact it had on him and our family. My husband died in February 2005.
2. I can confirm that I have appointed Thompsons solicitors to be my legal representatives. I can confirm that the Inquiry should send all correspondence regarding me to Thompsons.
3. I met Hugh (nicknamed Shug) in 1995 in a pub in Clackmannan, Scotland. Hugh had his own karaoke machine and performed karaoke

in local pubs. We were married in 1999. I had four children from a previous relationship and after I met Shug, he moved in with me and my children. We were a very happy loving family and my children adored him. My [GRO-D] and I felt very happy that in contrast, I had met a lovely, kind and loving man like Shug.

Section 2. How Affected

4. Shug had a really bad motorcycle accident in 1978/1979 when he was sixteen years old, which resulted in him being admitted to Wishaw hospital, Lanarkshire for nearly a year. He had serious leg injuries and at one point the doctors thought they would have to amputate his leg. During his admission, he had numerous operations and he told me that he had received a number of blood transfusions. Shug didn't tell me what the consultants' or doctors' names were.
5. Shug did not tell me whether anyone had ever informed him of the risks associated with receiving blood transfusions.
6. My husband Shug contracted hepatitis C through being given contaminated blood during one of his blood transfusions whilst he was in hospital.
7. I met Shug in 1996. [GRO-C]
[GRO-C] One day he took me out in his car for a drive. He parked and started to cry. He told me that the [GRO-C] he had hepatitis C. He told me that he had gone to donate blood at his workplace and had then received a letter advising him that his blood would not be donated, as he had hepatitis C. After this letter, he was referred to Dr Bramley, a consultant haematologist at Stirling Royal Infirmary.

8. I have reviewed a letter that Dr Bramley has sent to Shug's GP in 1997 which I exhibit as **WITN2181002**. I was at this meeting with Shug and this is not my recollection of the meeting. Shug and I went to see Dr Bramley together at Stirling Royal Infirmary. Dr Bramley told us that Shug had contracted hepatitis C by being given contaminated blood during one of his blood transfusions in 1978/79. He said the bloods that had been used had been imported from America but it hadn't been screened and that it had been contaminated. He said they could trace who got what blood and when they got it. Shug and I didn't really know what hepatitis C was. Dr Bramley said that it was an infection that could damage his liver and that the condition was life shortening. The letter talks about Shug historically being addicted to drugs. He was not addicted to drugs, and it makes me suspicious as to Dr Bramley's motivations for writing this down like this. I discuss Shug's medical records further in section 8 in paragraphs 35-37.
9. Dr Bramley didn't give Shug and me much information about how to manage hepatitis C. He did tell us that they knew in 1978 that people who had received blood transfusions had received contaminated blood and had contracted hepatitis and HIV. I do not understand why Shug wasn't informed sooner. He could have passed the infection on to others without knowing.
10. Dr Bramley told us that the risks of others being infected were minimal. I did ask him if I could be tested as well. He refused to test me on the basis that the test was too expensive. He reassured me instead saying that there was a less than 5% chance of me or any of my four children being infected, the chances according to Dr Bramley, were minimal. I went to see my GP, Dr McIntyre, and asked to be tested for hepatitis C though. She asked me if I had been having anal sex, I was so embarrassed.

Section 3. Other Infections

11. Shug contracted hepatitis C, he did not contract any other infection.

Section 4. Consent

12. I do not believe that Shug's blood was tested without his knowledge or consent however I do believe he was used as a guinea pig when it came to treating the hepatitis C.
13. Dr Bramley who is now retired, offered Shug treatment for his hepatitis C through a drugs trial that he was working on, which commenced in July 1999. He said that it was the first trial in Scotland of the drug, and that it would comprise of a twelve month course of interferon, self-injected, three times a week and ribavirin tablets, which he took, three times a day.
14. Dr Bramley told us that the side-effects of the treatment would be very severe. We were due to be married on the 28th May 1999 and we asked him to postpone the treatment until after the wedding. I remember this clearly because we were married on the Friday and on the Saturday it was the first Scottish cup final between Celtic and Rangers in ten years. Shug was a big Celtic fan and I am a huge Rangers fan. Our wedding pictures were in the local papers at the time. It was agreed that Shug would start the treatment in July 1999.
15. From starting the treatment, our lives were never the same again. Physically, Shug suffered with severe flu-like symptoms. His skin was constantly itchy and he would sweat profusely. He suffered with extreme nausea and insomnia. He was exhausted all the time due to him being unable to sleep. He suffered with extreme diarrhoea. I remember on one occasion he said he was going to have a bath. I nipped out to the local shop and returned about ten minutes later. When I got in I could hear Shug moaning from the bathroom. I shouted to him but he didn't answer. I went into the bathroom to find the bath had been run. Shug was naked on all fours on the floor of the bathroom. There

was diarrhoea all over the bathroom floor. Shug was trying to stand up but he was sliding in the diarrhoea. He was very agitated and upset. I managed to calm him down and eventually got him in the bath while I cleared diarrhoea up from the bathroom floor. Shug would often soil himself and the bedroom sheets whilst on the treatment. I remember he was always so embarrassed and I used to tell him he couldn't help it and it didn't matter.

16. I remember this trial very well, a full year we went through absolute hell. Shug was begging me to let him stop taking this medicine. I made him continue....how I wish I had just let him be. He was part of a guinea pig trial, which is what it was.
17. After the year was up, we were told that he had been cured of hepatitis C, one of the first patients in these trials. They discovered through this trial though, that a quarter of the dosage for half the time period had the same effect on patients. He had been overdosed with three times more medication than he had needed, for six months longer than he needed. When Dr Bramley gave us this information I was very angry, his attitude felt dismissive, he justified it by reminding Shug and I that it had been a trial.
18. Five short years later, Shug dropped dead at my feet, aged forty three. He had no previous health issues (or he wouldn't have been allowed on the trial to begin with) and had a full medical before he started the trial, which confirmed his clean bill of health.

Section 5. Impact

19. There were no real mental or physical effects on Shug having contracted hepatitis C until he started on his treatment.
20. Dr Bramley offered the treatment to Shug so he did not face any obstacles or difficulties in accessing it. He told us that six people had

been selected to trial the drug, Shug included.

21. Shug was treated with a trial drug that hadn't been used before so I don't believe there were any other treatments available to him at the time.
22. From taking the treatment Shug became a different man. He became severely depressed and would sit and cry all the time. We had been told by Dr Bramley that the treatment often caused patients to feel suicidal. I had been given a telephone number that was 24/7 to ring if Shug felt suicidal. I think the number was to ring the haematology department but I can't be certain. I didn't ever ring the number but I was constantly worried about Shug's mental health. Shug was very depressed when he was taking the treatment because he knew that when he injected the interferon the following day he would be very ill. He would repeatedly say "I'm injecting myself to make me ill and I can't do it". It is my belief that it was this treatment that contributed to his early death, this awful treatment that I would encourage him to take. The guilt I feel from having persuaded him to keep taking it, will never leave me. Whilst on his treatment Shug was so depressed that he was prescribed anti-depressants by Dr McIntyre from Alloa Health Centre.
23. There was no impact on Shug's treatment for any other medical conditions or dental care because of his infected status.
24. Before Shug started his treatment he was a sociable man. He had his own karaoke machine. He would run karaoke in local pubs. Shug had a great voice and he loved to sing for others. He became so ill whilst on the treatment, that he stopped singing. He became almost reclusive. His mental state did not improve even after the treatment stopped. He was severely depressed which dragged me down too and led to me also becoming depressed and being prescribed antidepressants.
25. My children told me that the happy go lucky mother they had once had, was gone. I used to be the life and soul of any party but Shug and I

ended up being reclusive.

26. Whilst on the treatment Shug would regularly attend Stirling Royal Infirmary to see Dr Bramley. He would have his blood taken to test his liver function. After his course of treatment, it appeared that it had been successful as the hepatitis C was not detectable. Dr Bramley tested Shug's blood again after six months and there was no sign of hepatitis C having returned. He told us that if the virus did not come back within two years Shug would be given the all clear. After two years, Shug was indeed given the all clear.
27. For the next five years after the treatment, Shug became very clingy and wouldn't do or go anywhere without me. We did still go to bingo, but Shug had certain seats that we had to sit in, because they were away from everyone else. He would also come with me when I went to visit my parents. On the 9th February 2005, whilst on such a visit Shug became unwell. He said he felt sick and began to vomit in the bathroom. When he came out of the bathroom he looked grey in colour. He shouted "Lil" and I grabbed him as he fell backwards. I knew straight away that Shug was dead. He had suffered a fatal heart attack. He had no history of any heart problems and had been a fit and healthy man until he started taking the treatment for his hepatitis C. I lost my husband who I loved very much. I expected to spend the rest of my life with him but I had to try and rebuild my life without him. I exhibit his death certificate as **WITN2181003**.
28. Shug and I didn't really know what hepatitis C was when we first went to see Dr Bramley. We became aware that the infection is typically associated with drug users and sex workers and that there was a stigma attached to it. Shug and I kept his infection to ourselves.
29. There were no work related effects on Shug in relation to hepatitis C. When I met him he was working at RTN, Patons and Baldwin Wollenmill, but he had taken early redundancy. After Shug died I

became a single parent and found it difficult to cope financially.

30. A few years after Shug died, I lost both my parents. The sheer grief of losing my husband and parents made me make the decision to start a new life in Ireland, where I currently live.

Section 6. Treatment/Care/Support

31. Shug and I were never offered any counselling or psychological support throughout his illness. I remember when Shug had his regular appointments with Dr Bramley there was a lovely nurse there who I would speak to. I don't remember her name but I remember I would cry in front of her and tell her how awful the treatment was that Shug was receiving. She was very kind and understanding.

Section 7. Financial Assistance

32. Shug and I did not receive any financial assistance from anywhere.
33. I do remember that Shug received a letter through the post and he mentioned something to me about the Penrose Inquiry. I know he filled in an application form for compensation but he died not long after and I never heard anything else.
34. After I found out about the existence of the financial schemes, I spent a period of time trying to locate Shug's medical records. I was advised that they were being held by Forth Valley Health Board as they had been returned there after he died. Years later, Thompsons Solicitors were advised by Forth Valley that the records had been destroyed in 2012 under their retention policy.

Section 8. Other Issues

35. It came as a great shock, when in 2019, I was contacted by Forth Valley and advised by Wendy Mitchell who is based at Stirling Community Hospital that two of Shug's records had turned up in a drawer. Originally she refused to send me these records and advised me that they were "not great" for my case. Thompsons Solicitors requested for further information and subsequently received two letters that had been in a drawer. These two letters discuss Shug's infection of hepatitis C but advise that he was an abuser of IV heroin in 1985 and 1986 which I know is false. The first letter is exhibited above, the second I exhibit as as **WITN2181004**.
36. Thompsons Solicitors have been advised that Shug's records were destroyed in 2012 under their retention policy. Does this include all the records that were related to the 1999 trial? If these records do exist for research, where are they and why can I not review them? Looking at these letters the words "*Hep C file*" are cced into his letters. I would like the Inquiry to look into this and find out what is this, why have they been cced in and what details are in there that are related to Shug?
37. I find it very hard to believe that these records truly have turned up in a drawer especially as the people who I had spoken to on the phone were adamant that the records did not exist, to suddenly finding records that went against my case for compensation. At the beginning they were requesting evidence on my husband's infection, on his motorcycle accident, on his admission to hospital (where he was for nearly a year) and photos of him and any visitors who went to see him while he was admitted.
38. The hospital where he was treated at in 1978/79, Wishaw Hospital, has closed down, as has the GP practice he had been registered with up until his death. It felt like, from my end, there was nothing I could do, and then I was hit with these two medical records turning up in a drawer. I do not believe that they have turned up in a drawer. These mysterious records state that my husband had injected drugs, but there are no

other records now to prove otherwise, just these two. I believe them to be fake.

39. My husband was robbed of his life in his prime. He had no heart problems and certainly he would have not been eligible for that trial had he ever injected drugs! The drug trial and that prolonged period of overdosing him on such a strong drug, killed him. My husband was a good, kind gentle loving man. He deserves better, as do I. I hope whoever made these decisions that created this terrible injustice for my husband and all the other people it has impacted, is brought to justice.
40. I do not wish to remain anonymous in this istatement.

Statement of Truth

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

Signed GRO-C_____

Dated Sep 29, 2020