Witness Name: James Law
Statement No.: WITN2180001
Exhibits: None
Dated: 27/11/2018

INFECTED BLOOD INQUIRY

FIRST WRITTEN STATEMENT OF JAMES LAW

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

I, James Law, will say as follows:

Section 1. Introduction

1. My name is James Law. My date of birth is GRO-C 1934. My address is known to the Inquiry. I am retired and before I retired I was a veterinary surgeon. I intend to speak about my late wife, Marion Christine Clarkson Law. In particular, the nature of her illness, how the illness affected her, the treatment received and the impact it had on her and our lives together.

Section 2. How Affected

2. My wife, Marion Christine Clarkson Law, worked within my veterinary practice in a clerical role, and was a very necessary part of the business. Her date of birth was GRO-C 1935. She passed away on GRO-C 2016.

3. I believe that Marion's GP had done a liver function test on her in the late 1980s. This was Dr GRO-D. They simply told her that her liver function tests were high and did nothing to follow up, it was just noted as far as I'm aware.

4. In the late 1960s, my wife had a miscarriage and lost a lot of blood. Because of this she did have to receive a blood transfusion. This was at the William Smiley maternity hospital in Lanark.

5. My wife was not the sort of person to ever really be ill. She had no symptoms until possibly around about the year 2000.

6. We went to visit my daughter GRO-C in the year 2000 and that is when we realised that she was very ill. She just seemed out of sorts then. I believe that we went to the Law Hospital. I am aware that this closed on 25th May 2001. I believe that it was a Dr Crofton and Wishaw that prescribed her anti-viral medication.

7. My wife had to take ribavirin and interferon, which I had to inject her with. The treatment was worse than the disease. It turned out that my wife was not the correct genotype for interferon. They did offer to retreat her with something else but I said no to this because I saw how ill the treatment made her.

8. My wife was very fit and able and had lots of energy her whole life. When she started experiencing the symptoms of what I believe to have been hepatitis C, her energy levels were gone. When my wife was well,

she was very dedicated and was the District Commissioner of the local pony club.

9. When my wife found out about her hepatitis C in the year 2000, I believe it was a Dr Crofton that explained that it had probably lain dormant for 30 years. My wife seemed to get much worse with the treatment and I recall that affected her memory. She had total brain fog and had issues concentrating. I believe that upset her more than anything because she was a very sharp woman.

10. I do not recall what advice was given about managing my wife's infection. When she found out, it was straight onto treatment. I believe that she had injections for around three months or longer. I know that we did the full course of the first round of treatment and I said no to the second course, my wife was green and yellow intermittently and had appeared jaundice because of her condition.

11. I do not believe I was given sufficient advice, nor was my wife, about any cross contamination or anything like that. They said not use the same toothbrushes but that was it. This was not adequate advice.

12. There was, however, a patient information leaflet that was given to my wife on numerous hospital appointments. This leaflet always made reference to contracting Hepatitis C from promiscuous sexual activity and/or intravenous drug use. This humiliated my wife and myself. There was never any understanding from the nursing staff that patients had contracted Hepatitis C from infected blood given as a blood transfusion. Time and time again, staff insinuated that my wife had abused drugs and the Hepatitis C infection was her fault. She was so embarrassed by this and it made her more withdrawn. She once had an outburst to one of the nursing staff saying that the NHS had given her this infection. There was a complete lack of training and understanding of patients infected with Hepatitis C via contaminated blood.

13. I do feel that they should have done a blood test in the late 1980s when the doctor mentioned that my wife's liver function test was high.

14. I do not believe that it was communicated well to my wife that she had contracted hepatitis C. I pointed out my wife's miscarriage to the doctor and pointed out that she had required transfusion. This elicited no response from the doctor.

15. I do not remember when I was tested but I do believe I did also get tested for hepatitis C and I did not have this. The children have told me that they went anonymously to an STI clinic to be tested and all came back negative.

16. We have four children. We have my daughter GRO-C who lives in London, we have my daughter GRO-C who lives in Harrogate, and we have my daughter Louise Green who is in Edinburgh and my son GRO-C who lives in Preston. I understand that the children all made up fake names to go get tested. My daughter GRO-C is a pharmacist and is relatively well clued up. I believe it was possibly GRO-C who suggested we get tested.

Section 3. Other Infections

17. I'm not aware of my wife having contracted any other blood-borne disease other than hepatitis C.

Section 4. Consent

18. I do not believe there was any point between the miscarriage and diagnosis, other than the liver function test when my wife had blood taken. I think they could have tested it when they tested her liver but it may not have been communicated to her.

Section 5. Impact

19. The first indication anything was wrong was that her liver test was high. My wife was not a drinker so I knew that this was not the reason for her liver problems. My wife did not drink much and I would say that she was almost T-T.

20. Mentally, my wife was very distressed about her diagnosis. She was so healthy before and couldn't do things she used to do. Her energy levels were very low and we they were never like that before.

21. My wife had horses and would normally have spent time with her grandchildren and prior to that, her own children. She kept trying to spend time with the horses as she would have done normally but she just was not able. She was much worse after the treatment.

22. Following the treatment my wife lost weight, had headaches and was totally upset. She lost interest in things that would normally have interested her. The symptoms were similar to the flu. I recall that she would feel the cold and then she was always cold from then on. My wife was outdoorsy and grew up on a farm so she never really was the type to feel the cold before. She also had night sweats.

23. I believe that my wife found out about her hepatitis C around August of the year 2000 and then I believe treatment was done in the year 2001 or 2002. I think part of this was done at the Wishaw hospital with Dr Crofton.

24. It seemed especially clear that my wife's brain fog or lack of concentration was caused by her treatments. The symptoms that my wife started having seemed to be long-term from then on. She had never been the type to be ill. I would say that she had a mixture of good and bad days but as time went on there were more bad days than good days.

25. My wife started suffering from Alzheimer's which later turned into dementia. I fully believe that this came from her treatment for hepatitis C. Her memory got worse all the time and when she died she died of pneumonia, which was also related to her dementia. The memory problems that my wife started having, only started after the treatment so I do not see how this cannot be the cause.

26. Following my wife's diagnosis, she did not have any issues with her liver although this was monitored by doctors at the Law Hospital and then Wishaw Hospital. At least one of these doctors was Dr Crofton.

27. I recall that we asked Dr Crofton questions. We asked how long my wife had as a prognosis. Dr Crofton said that she had anything from 10 to 20 years and would probably die of something else. It was a bit of a shock because my wife was never the sort of person to abuse her liver.

28. My wife was very healthy so she never had to have any other medical treatments other than treatments for her hepatitis C. I have no knowledge of my wife's condition having any effect on any dental treatment. I do not believe that there was any effect on this.

29. As I have said, my wife was that deputy district Commissioner for the local pony club and this is something she had been involved in since the club had formed in 1974. In the last five years she was at emeritus president of the pony club and was very well regarded in the pony sets. My wife was not the type to complain and didn't even complain when she was ill. My wife was a champion show jumper in her youth. This was a big part of her social life. We had six ponies in the family at one point. My wife was still very heavily involved when she was diagnosed with hepatitis C. Her involvement dipped when she was on treatment. I am unsure when my wife became the district Commissioner but I remember it was for at least nine years. I recall that at one stage my wife went to the AGM for the pony club and this was after her treatment

and she came back as a secretary as opposed to the deputy district Commissioner as she had been. I believe she pulled back because of her capabilities, because of the symptoms following her treatment. It was after that they made her an emeritus president. I believe that she might have been in this role for 10 years prior to when she died.

30. When our children were young, she would drive the children with horses to compete. She had a big horse box at the time and drove all over the country. My wife was going all over the country right up until she had her treatment and then after that was unable to.

31. The pony club was the biggest thing my wife did socially and it really was her whole life. I would say she did not cope well when she had to pull back on her involvement. She seemed very sad but never complained. My wife was one of the kindest people I ever met so she was not the type of person who would complain about her situation. She would also always help with Save the Children in Lanark. This condition, and really the treatment after, ruined her retirement and her life.

32. My wife and I have a number of grandchildren. My daughter, GRO-C GRO-C, has two children and my grandchildren are called James and Adam GRO-C. Adam is 24 and has just qualified as a dentist and James is 26 and works at Morgan Stanley. My daughter Louise has two children who are GRO-C and GRO-C. GRO-C is 10 and GRO-C is 12. My wife loved being a grandmother and it was a shame that she was never well enough to have fun with her grandchildren. The younger ones especially, only really remember my wife being ill and now they wave to her sometimes in the sky. My wife adored her grandchildren and would have had them up on her horses at some points when she was well enough but that did get harder over time as her health declined. The children would come up for the summer holidays and it was only after my wife's treatment that she was unable to play as big a part as she would have liked. The last five years of her life were very

hard. My wife did not have the energy to take part in family functions and did not like being around large groups of people. This was in part due to memory problems that surfaced over time. She would laugh off her memory problems and found it frustrating. She remained optimistic throughout but this did get more fighting over time.

33. When the two oldest grandchildren graduated from university, my wife was unable to go and see them graduate. The graduations were at Bath University for James and Bristol University for Adam. My wife was very upset that she could not go.

34. In terms of her social life, we always had dinner parties and family functions. We lost out on these as my wife self-declined. I, essentially, was my wife's carer for the last 15 years of her life.

35. My wife was a very determined woman and this was all very difficult for her.

36. My wife did attend a group called DAGS which was a dementia support group and this was the sort of thing we had to get her dressed up for, to go to.

37. I recall one Christmas we were supposed to drive through to Louise's in Edinburgh for Christmas but she did not want to go because of her health issues at the time. In the last years of my wife's life, she did have carers that would come in and assist with the care of her. I do feel that her dementia or Alzheimer's was as a result of the treatment she received. There is no family history, as far as I'm aware, of her side of the family for people having dementia or Alzheimer's. My wife was diagnosed with dementia in around 2006 or 2007. The changes became noticeable at Louise's wedding in September of 2007. My wife became quite withdrawn and was quiet and shy. Prior to this she was very bubbly and outgoing so we did notice a very stark change. I believe

my wife did enjoy the wedding but she really did not converse with people.

38. In terms the stigma of hepatitis C, my wife did hide it, as did I. I think we probably just said to people that she had liver problems. We are very close family. At my wife's funeral, it was totally full and there were no seats for anyone because was a very popular, people person. So many people she helped and knew were there.

39. I believe that my wife and I probably did associate hepatitis C with the AIDS crisis of the late 80s. I believe my wife was quite embarrassed by it.

40. It did affect me very badly. I can see my wife disappearing before my eyes. I cared for her after her treatment and then in the last years of her life. I would socialise with her and the pony club while she was still able. This did have a great effect on my life, not being able to do what we would have done before.

41. Prior to my wife's diagnosis, I would go to the likes of curling and golf. I retired in 1997 at the age of 63, and from then on I was my wife's carer until her death in GRO-C 2016. I did not mind though. I think the rest family would have like to have been more involved. But they do live quite far away. Louise lives in Edinburgh and GRO-C lives in Harrogate. GRO-C used to drive from London to visit and my wife would sometimes drive down to see her as well, but towards the end of her life when she started becoming more ill she became incapable of driving down to London see GRO-C When my wife gave up driving I believe that upset her. I'm not exactly sure when my wife gave up driving but I do know it was after her diagnosis. She drove a little Volkswagen golf.

42. When I retired in 1997, there was a big discussion about my retiring at the time. At the time when my wife started to become ill we were really just getting used retired life and were travelling quite a lot. We had lots

of holidays together and cruised quite a lot. After my wife's treatment she struggled to get any insurance for going on holiday so that that limit what holidays we could go on. Hepatitis C was the barrier to getting insurance for going on holiday. We had very few holidays after that. With my wife's threatening mental memory problems, there were issues where she would be scared if she woke up in places she did not recognise, this also became an issue. As my wife got ill we limited our holidays only to visiting family and domestic holidays within the UK. We had always travelled, even before retirement. We would go on the likes of curling club exchanges and we had planned to travel after I had retired.

43. My wife loved to go to agricultural shows but latterly she was completely incapable of going to them. This was too demanding in terms of her energy levels as well as her memory problems. Part of my wife's worry that she communicated to me was that she was worried about meeting people that she knew and not being able to remember them.

Section 6. Treatment/Care/Support

44. As far as I recall there was no counselling or support offered. Nothing was ever offered to any of us. We absolutely would have benefited from having support being offered. At no point did they accept any blame and this has added to worries about this kind of thing. The NHS never mentioned any infected blood and we were very much left on our own. I felt that the care offered was very superficial.

Section 7. Financial Assistance

45. I do believe that there may have been a sum of £2000 towards funeral costs for my wife in July 2016, but my daughter GRO-C would have been the one who dealt with this. The full funeral costs would have been approximately £3,500.

46. In terms of funding, I believe that my daughter GRO-C will have helped with any applications for any sums of money. I am not entirely sure when, but we did receive a lump sum of £20,000 from the Skipton fund. We received £30,000 in June of 2017 or roundabout then.

47. In addition to this, my daughter GRO-C applied for a living allowance from the SIBSS and was given £1,000 in December 2017. My daughter deals with any communications with them and she says they have been very helpful and understanding.

48. In November 2018, my daughter applied for a Chronic Hepatitis C (stage 1) regular payment and I was awarded an annual allowance of £14,175 paid in monthly instalments. This started in December 2018 and was backdated to September 2018.

Section 8. Other Issues

49. In terms of the Penrose Inquiry, we had no direct involvement. We did follow it but my wife at that point was not mentally capable of following it. I would describe it as a whitewash and I was most disappointed by the outcome.

50. As far as I'm aware, my wife and I have no involvement with Haemophilia Scotland or Scottish Infected Blood Forum.

51. I would say that my wife's hepatitis C ruined her life and she went from a person who was very healthy, who had a great quality-of-life to someone whose life was a very poor quality towards the end. My wife did try and make the best of it and never complained. It was such a big shock at the beginning when she was diagnosed but we never quite realised at that stage the full implications of her condition.

Statement of Truth

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

Signed GRO-C

Dated 22/3/19.