

Witness Name: Marjorie James

Statement No: WITN1304001

Exhibits: 0

Dated: January 2019

INFECTED BLOOD INQUIRY

FIRST WRITTEN STATEMENT OF MARJORIE JAMES

I, Marjorie James, will say as follows:-

Section 1. Introduction

1. My name is Marjorie James, DOB GRO-C 1938, and I live at GRO-C
GRO-C, GRO-C
2. My husband, Christopher Hayward James, died in 2008 after being infected with Hepatitis C through contaminated blood products imported from the USA. We have two children; a son and a daughter who also intend to provide statements to the Inquiry.
3. This witness statement has been prepared without the benefit of access to my late husband's full medical records. If and in so far as I have been provided with limited records the relevant entries are set out in the medical chronology at the end of this statement.

Section 2. How Affected

4. Chris suffered from mild haemophilia A, although this wasn't diagnosed until he sustained a knee injury playing rugby when he was 17 years old.

5. Chris and I met when I was 18 years old, and we married when I was 22. We spent eight years living in Africa where Chris was a geologist before moving to Southern California. Chris' haemophilia was never a problem when we were abroad. In particular we wouldn't have moved America, a country without health care, if it was!
6. When we returned to the UK, Chris was seen at St Thomas' Hospital, London under Dr Savidge. He was seen at St Thomas' because it was close to work and he could easily attend clinic appointments.
7. He was first given Factor VIII in 1981 after he injured his knee; before this he was treated very occasionally with cryoprecipitate. He was given Factor VIII again in 1984 when he had a tooth extraction.
8. In 1992, Chris was called into St Thomas's where he was told that he had contracted Hepatitis C and he would die from it. He was provided with very little information regarding the infection.
9. I remember Chris coming home and telling me he had been infected with Hepatitis C. It was a huge shock. I didn't even know what Hepatitis C was. We had no option than to just carry on and try to make the best of our lives. There was no support given to him whatsoever.
10. Neither Chris nor I were informed that the blood products he was treated with carried any risk at all. We should have been made aware of the risks as soon as St Thomas' had any indication there may be a danger of infection.
11. I was only tested myself much later when I was having some dental work done. This test was organised by the dentists – not any of the doctors that had been involved with Chris' care. None of Chris' doctors ever suggested that I be tested for Hepatitis C.

12. On 02.05.1997 we received a letter from Dr GRO-D (Senior Registrar / Lecturer in the haemophilia centre). In this letter, she confirmed that when Chris received treatment in 1984, he was Hepatitis B and Hepatitis C antibody positive. I don't understand why it took the hospital eight years to tell Chris about his infections; this was reckless and I am fortunate not to have been infected myself.

13. On 22.05.2003 I wrote to Dr Savidge at St Thomas's requesting Chris' medical records. A week later, Miss Deveraux, Dr Savidge's secretary, confirmed she would liaise with Susan Plunkett of Information Services to retrieve these notes. When I mentioned a Times article which said some records had been lost, she replied; 'Not mine. I have been here 28 years and have kept everything'.

14. I then received a letter from Ms Plunkett indicating that the records were available and they would endeavour to process my request as quickly as possible.

15. On 13.06.2003, I received a further letter telling me the records were no longer available. I was told the microfilm had been damaged and they could no longer read it.

Section 3. Other Infections

16. I am not aware that Chris was exposed to any infections other than those already discussed above.

Section 4. Consent

17. I believe that Chris was tested for Hepatitis without his knowledge or consent.

Section 5. Impact of the Infection

18. Chris was a financial partner in a city firm but had to retire in the late 1980's as he became increasingly tired. He was very lethargic but didn't know why. He had always been a man who paid real attention to detail but he started to lose his concentration. I could see it was making him very unhappy so I encouraged him to take early retirement. When he retired he was seen at The Royal Free in London and St Richards' Hospital in Chichester.
19. Chris had disability insurance cover so if he had been made aware of his infection, he would have been able to take medical retirement and received long-term disability insurance payments. Instead he was left with significantly less income than he could have received.
20. I was a teacher and then became a dealer in antiquarian children's books. Chris and I started to do book fairs together as it was a welcome distraction for Chris from his illness. GRO-C On one occasion I had pneumonia so couldn't attend an event, so Chris went in my place. However, after four days he became so fatigued he had to give it up and come home. We had to give up the business in 1998 due to Chris' ill health.
21. As a result of his infection, Chris was awake at night but slept in the afternoon. We therefore had to start sleeping in different bedrooms, which was very difficult after we had spent so long together.
22. Chris was offered Interferon to clear his Hepatitis C which he tried to take, but after 4-6 weeks he had to stop as he felt so ill and so depressed. I remember him walking into the living room and just collapsing on the sofa.
23. In 1999, Chris' Hepatitis C became a severe problem when he had his first severe bleed from the varices, which resulted in blood pouring from his mouth. This was absolutely terrifying and I had to call an ambulance in the middle of the night to rush him to hospital. This was the first of many times that I was told Chris might die very soon. I was told his death would be imminent on several occasions throughout his illness.

24. Six months later, he had a second similar bleed and was diagnosed with cirrhosis of the liver. He was given a Transjugular intrahepatic portosystemic shunt (TIPSS) and was told that this could cause dementia.
25. He was put on the liver transplant list at The Royal Free in January 2000 but they then decided that he wouldn't survive the operation he was taken off the list.
26. Later that year Chris had a Spinal Haematoma and could not walk. As a result of the enormous number of painkillers he was given, he developed Hepatic Encephalopathy, a form of dementia. He was sent home to die by St Richard's but eventually transferred to the Royal Free Hospital in London where he made a recovery of sorts.
27. In January 2003, he had the first of three brain haemorrhages which increased the dementia. The right side of his body was also affected. He was often in extreme pain and he walked with difficulty using a crutch. Chris could no longer properly read, write or communicate. He often had fits and fell over.
28. In June 2004 he fell over because of his difficulty walking. He broke his hip. We were on our way to visit my GRO-C brother in Yorkshire. His hip was pinned at St James' Hospital, Leeds, where I was again warned that he might not survive the operation. As his health deteriorated it was advised that Chris should be moved to a nursing home. After two months in a nursing home, he had recovered sufficiently to come home.
29. That year he suffered from cellulitis in his right leg for several months and urinary infections which both continued intermittently over the next few years. By then I was on anti-depressants and diazepam for anxiety.
30. In March 2008 Chris suffered from gastroenteritis and did not eat for 10 days. He was extremely unsteady and felt very ill, although he refused to go into hospital again. I had to help him wash and dress as his right hand was no longer working. In April 2008 he had to go into Westbourne House nursing home, as I could not cope any longer.

31. Over the nine year period of severe ill health, he spent over 12 months in hospital and consistently felt very ill. Mentally he suffered from confusion, depression and dementia.
32. He spent the last four months of his life in a nursing home and died on 15.08.2008 at the age of 71.
33. We had grown up together and now I am alone. We weren't close to family in the UK so when he passed away it was like half of me was ripped away. Trying to accept the fact that I would be alone was so difficult.
34. I had to downsize and leave the family home which we had lived in for 25 years as Chris' main pension died with him. I also felt like I had to move away from the sadness that the house would constantly remind me of.
35. I was unable to spend any real quality time with my grandchildren as a result of having to constantly care for Chris and my relationship with my grandchildren has unfortunately suffered as a result.
36. It is still affecting me to this day. I sleep very badly and I haven't had any closure.

Section 6. Treatment/care/support

37. There was no help made available to Chris or me. There was no connection between social services and the medical profession.
38. If Chris had cancer there would have been a lot more support offered to us, but because he suffered from Hepatitis C we were neglected. It was very isolating.

Section 7. Financial Assistance

39. Chris received the Stage One and Stage Two payments from the Skipton Fund. I used this to help pay for Chris' care and for respite breaks for him.

40. After Chris died I was given a £25,000 widow payment from Skipton in 2011 and then an additional £10,000 in 2017.

Section 8. Other Issues

41. None.

Anonymity

42. I do not wish to apply for anonymity.

43. NOT RELEVANT

Statement of Truth

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

Signed.....

Dated

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Anonymity

42. I do not wish to apply for anonymity.

43. I would give oral evidence to the inquiry if they
considered it would be helpful.

Statement of Truth

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

Signed...

GRO-C

Dated 31st June 2017