

Witness Name: David Hughes

Statement No: WITN2636001

Exhibits: 0

Dated: 28 May 2020

INFECTED BLOOD INQUIRY

FIRST WRITTEN STATEMENT OF DAVID HUGHES

Section 1. Introduction

1. I David Hughes will say as follows. My date of birth is GRO-C 1945, my address is known to the Inquiry.
2. I am the husband of Heather Hughes who was infected with Hepatitis C. Heather has provided a witness statement to the Inquiry, her witness number is W2637. I make this statement as an affected individual in relation to the impact of Heather receiving contaminated blood. In her statement, Heather has dealt with the background and possible circumstances of her infection as well as the details of the effect on her of the virus and the treatment. I will not cover any of the issues that Heather has covered, this statement is to set out the impact on me of Heather's infection.
3. I met Heather in 1977, we married in September 1979. We have two daughters born in 1981 and 1982 and a son who was born in 1991. In 1984 we opened a wine bar/ restaurant in Old Spitafields which was at that time on

the eastern edge of the city. After our daughters were born, we worked at the restaurant together. After our son was born Heather spent more time at home with the children but continued to work at the restaurant from time to time until she became too ill to do so.

4. Heather and I are both now retired and live in Epping.

Section 5: Impact

5. In the summer of 2002, after feeling extremely tired for some time Heather went to see her GP suspecting to be told that she was experiencing the onset of menopause.
6. I can recall exactly where we were when Heather first told me that she had hepatitis C. She had travelled to meet me at the restaurant to tell me the news. We were standing on the steps of the fire exit, she was extremely tearful, worried and stressed. She said that it was hepatitis C and that it could be serious. At that time, I did not know what I was being told. Whilst I was concerned, I had no idea of the illness and of what was to lie ahead for us both.
7. We told the children together because Heather's fear was that she did not know how she had got this, but that she wanted the children to be tested and they should know what was going on. She was becoming so ill that the children would have noticed anyway and would have asked what was wrong with mum. We did not tell Harry at that time because he was too young, but we told the girls. I was tested at the same time as the three children, this was hugely worrying for me. All our results were negative at that time.

8. Heather was diagnosed with Hepatitis C in August 2002. It was five long years before she was eventually given the all clear. As Heather describes in her witness statement her first course of treatment was unsuccessful. She underwent a second course of treatment starting in February 2005 which lasted for 18 months. The second treatment in particular caused her to be extremely unwell physically and had a significant impact on her mentally.
9. During this five year period I was continuously stressed and anxious. It was a really rotten worrying time. Being in the restaurant business means that you have to do long hours and as our business was pretty much a one man show, I had to be there. I went to as many hospital appointments with her as I could. Heather continued to work at the restaurant during the first treatment, but she was going through a very bad time. Her mood swings were awful, and she felt very low at some points.
10. As set out in Heather's statement she encountered difficulties accessing the second treatment. She had to fight for it, we felt as if she had been discarded. The second treatment only came about because of the intervention by Heather and her GP.
11. When Heather started the second treatment, she gave up work and eventually I stopped working evening shifts because I needed to be at home to look after the children. We employed a housecleaner and someone to do the ironing because I just didn't have the time and Heather couldn't do anything, she barely had the strength to move. She slept on the settee a lot during that time.
12. Watching her decline was devastating. The worst image and the thing that comes to my mind most of all is of her in bed, I remember leaving the bedroom and looking at this waif, I had to go to work but all day I would have

these dreadful thoughts, wondering what I might find when I get home. It was just a long awful worrying time. There were times when I was fearful of her survival, I tried to protect the children from how serious things were, but they were greatly affected by Heather's illness, particularly when it was very bad.

13. Heather was very worried about telling people about her diagnosis, she did not think that they would understand. As a result, she swore me to silence. There were a couple of very close friends that I told at the time, but I was careful about who I spoke to. Once we had the news that Heather had been given the all clear, I told a few other people almost out of relief. I have not really been aware of the stigma because I haven't brought it up with many people.
14. Heather's illness affected all areas of our lives. Our social life almost totally disappeared but this did not depress me because it was just the way things were. I had to be there for Heather as she battled through the treatment.
15. As a result of Heather having Hep C I was removed from the blood donor list. I have a relatively rare blood group and had donated blood for many years, on over 60 occasions. It's always been very meaningful for me and important to me to be a blood donor because of things that I witnessed abroad. To be told that I could no longer donate blood was very disappointing and it upset me greatly.
16. When Heather stopped working at the restaurant, we had to employ a member of staff to cover her shifts. This was around the time that hospitality businesses in the city started to struggle in the years before the financial crash. The people who worked in nearby offices went out for lunch less often and generally spent less when they did eat at restaurants. At the same time as Heather was recovering from the second treatment, the business was

struggling more than ever. It was a difficult time. In the end we decided to sell the business in 2009.

Statement of Truth

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

GRO-C

 **DAVID HUGHES**

Dated 28th May 2020