

Witness Name: Paul Anthony Jewels

Statement No: WITN2716001

Exhibits: 0

Dated: May 2019

INFECTED BLOOD INQUIRY

FIRST WRITTEN STATEMENT OF PAUL ANTHONY JEWELS

I, Paul Anthony Jewels will say as follows:-

Section 1. Introduction

1. My name is Paul Anthony Jewels. I was born on GRO-C 1946 and I live at GRO-C.
2. I am married to my wife, Sandra. I have 6 children and 10 grandchildren.
GRO-C
3. This witness statement has been prepared without the benefit of access to my 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 Infected

4. In or about 1984, I had cancer and was treated at Royal Devon and Exeter (RDE) by a Dr Amin for it. I was very poorly following chemotherapy as it was so intense. As a result, I needed a blood transfusion. At the time I was not aware that there were any problems with the blood products that I received.
5. In 2003, I was told that I had been infected with Hepatitis C (Hep C). I believe I was infected at RDE during the blood transfusion.

6. Prior to diagnosis, I was constantly feeling unwell and got tired very often. I suffered from chronic fatigue. I was recommended to go to an acupuncturist and every week she would tell me that my body was overheating. She said that the sort of symptoms that I was having indicated that something was wrong with my liver. Consequently, for a few years I kept on feeling very poorly. I went to the doctors on many occasions for about 4 years and the doctors kept saying that the symptoms that I was suffering were depression related. I knew what depression felt like as I had previously suffered it when I was about 26, I therefore knew that my symptoms were not depression related but something else.
7. Eventually, a locum GP took me seriously and took blood tests and asked me to come and see him for the results. He gave me the news that I had contracted Hep C and the symptoms that I was suffering were related to it.
8. The GP immediately by phone referred me to a consultant, Dr Alex Moran at North Devon District Hospital (NDDH) who then did his own tests on me at the hospital in relation to Hep C. Dr Moran then took it on board to try and cure me. Fortunately there was a good friend of mine who was a nurse and was prepared to come to my house on a regular basis to inject me.
9. I was not provided with any information or advice beforehand about the risk of being exposed to infections from the blood transfusion and I did not have a discussion about it as I was so poorly with cancer.
10. When the doctors tried to establish how I contracted Hep C, they knew I was not a drug user and that I did not have gay sex and the only other way I could have contracted Hep C was through the blood transfusion, which was documented in my records.
11. I was given information about Hep C by Dr Moran after the diagnosis. I was told the seriousness of it and also about a trial treatment that I could try and how it might not work for me.

12. I was hugely relieved when I was diagnosed, not to have Hep C, but to know that I wasn't a hypochondriac and that something was really wrong with me as I had been telling them for years.

13. I was given some information about the risks of others being infected as a result of the Hep C.

Section 3. Other Infections

14. I have not had any other infections as a result of the blood transfusion.

Section 4. Consent

15. I do not believe that I was treated or tested without my knowledge and consent. I had full knowledge that the treatment was not guaranteed to clear the Hep C and that it was experimental. I also knew that I was the first person to be treated with Interferon and Ribavirin in North Devon and that the hope was that it would be successful but that it was not guaranteed.

16. I believe Dr Moran gave me every piece of information I could have been given. He said he was going to try and help me in every way to clear the Hep C and I was very positive about it.

17. I know that I was tested for the purposes of research as I was the first person to be treated in North Devon as mentioned above, so I knew I was used for experimental purposes.

Section 5. Impact of the Infection

18. I suffered mental effects as a result of the Hep C. It frustrated me as the doctors were not giving me answers before the diagnosis. I became very short tempered. I could not work at the same pace as I was able to. I was irritated easily and had a short fuse. I was so used to being able to do things very quickly but then partially because of the way I felt, as well as the effects of finances, I could not participate in many normal parental activities with the twins who were young children at the time. I tried to be determined and stay positive.

19. I also suffered physical effects as a result of the Hep C. Chronic fatigue was one of the main symptoms as well as overheating of certain parts of the body. As previously stated, the acupuncturist would tell me week after week that the symptoms suggested I was having a liver malfunction. When I told the GP this, they said it was depression. We discussed the fact that my father had committed suicide due to depression and they suggested that I was similarly depressed. I strongly refuted this. I was too tired to do things much of the time and dealt with the Hep C as I did with the cancer. I believe that my behaviour and character change contributed to cost me my previous marriage. However, at that point, I did not know that I had Hep C and therefore cannot confirm if the breakup of my marriage was as a result of the Hep C symptoms or chemotherapy or a combination of both.
20. I have had 3 strokes in the past four years.
21. I started Interferon and Ribavirin treatment in June 2004 and it was supervised by Dr Moran at NDDH. The treatment involved daily tablets and injections on a weekly basis. The treatment was successful.
22. When I was first told that the treatment cleared the Hep C, I was relieved as I was initially told that the success rate was low. I was the first person in North Devon to get the treatment and it worked. It was a chance for me which I took. It is mind blowing when I think about it.
23. The treatment was diabolical, I tried to deal with it as best I could but it was dreadful. I had a lot of skin disorders and the blood vessels to my ears have shrunk and as a result I have to wear hearing aids. I have had to adjust to wearing them. I have always tried to stay positive about everything and think that I am incredibly fortunate about everything as I have seen worse. I compare myself to my brother in law (my wife's brother) who died aged 56 from brain tumours.
24. I had injections every week and was very sick. I was bed bound for 6 months. I have some good friends and good family so I did not need to always smile and be in a good mood for them as they were very understanding. They understood how tough it was for me. I lost a lot of weight and lost my appetite. I had

constant flu-like symptoms and I felt absolutely wretched and had no energy to even get up out of the bed and go to the toilet. I required assistance to have a shower. I was on the treatment for 7 months but it felt more like 12 months as after the treatment, the body had to readjust to its normal self.

25. Being infected with Hep C had a massive impact on my private, family and social life. It was not a lot of fun for my twins seeing their father like this. They had to deal with a father who was ill but they were brilliant towards me. I did not want to see people either, I felt very exhausted and felt sick all the time. I struggled to talk. I isolated myself from what was perceived to be normal. My social life and business life was all out of the window at the time. It was a very difficult time for my wife Sandra. I am 73 years old now and I believe I am lucky.

26. There was a stigma attached to Hep C at the time but I did not face any. Everybody knew I had Hep C. The twins' school had to know as I struggled to pay for their school fees. My friends and family all knew. No one ever said they did not want to touch or hug me. I did not compare myself to a leper so I just got on with life. The children were not teased at school. Everyone knew that the probable cause of contracting Hep C was through the blood transfusion, which was not my fault.

27. I suffered hugely with work-related effects as a result of the Hep C. Prior to the diagnosis, I was a self-employed chartered surveyor with my own business and was earning a significant amount of money on a yearly basis. I turned over a large income prior to my diagnosis as I was a well established Chartered Surveyor. The symptoms of the Hep C caused my business to collapse and I had no income to support my family. I was not able to give my all into my business because of the symptoms I was suffering. I was a well known and successful Chartered Surveyor in Devon and Cornwall with excellent clientele. I lost much of the goodwill and it took me a long time to build my business back up again.

28. I was the breadwinner in the family and at the time we had GRO-C twins. GRO-C it was an agreed condition that Sandra would stay at home and look after the twins, which was reasonable at the time as we were financially secure. As the business was doing really well we were able to

pay for the twins to attend a private school. We believed it would be good for them as they had had an unsteady childhood. When I was unable to work, I had to find money to continue to pay for the private school as well as general household bills. I had to sell my beach house, which sold for £124,000, which compared to now would have been worth a lot more money (approximately £500,000). We felt as though we did not have a choice, as we had no income.

29. I also had to get a mortgage and borrowed about £30,000. I was a high earner so it affected me hugely financially.

30. Sandra was brilliant and supportive. She was and is very calm and not demanding. She does not show emotions easily and she has been a rock solid support for me. She does not demand material things. We are very lucky with what we do have. Sandra was incredibly understanding about it at all. We just tried to be positive and we did not hide it from anyone.

Section 6. Treatment/care/support

31. I believe that rather than being told by the doctors that I was just depressed, they should have looked more into my symptoms deeply when I kept going to them when I was feeling poorly. I kept saying that something was wrong with me and the doctors were not listening to me at the time, which was frustrating. Being told that I had depression made me depressed, which affected my relationship with my family.

32. I have not faced any difficulties or obstacles in obtaining treatment, care or support after I met Dr Moran. He was as good as anyone could have been. I had total trust in his ability and knowledge as a consultant as well as the nurse who visited me daily.

33. I was not offered any counselling or psychological support. I do not consider I would have accepted the support had I been offered it as I have the support from my family.

Section 7. Financial Assistance

34. I received a Stage 1 payment in the sum of £20,000 from the Skipton Fund which was a life saver for us at the time as it really helped to pay towards the private school fees and general household bills. I received it probably towards the end of the treatment in 2005. I found out about this payment through my brother who was a lawyer at the time. The application was very simple and straightforward.

Section 8. Other Issues

35. It is not the first time I have had setbacks in my life but it has had a significant effect on a number of aspects on my life and I think that all my children would definitely say that. I am quite calm now compared to before. I have learnt that to be comfortable in my own skin is not always easy but I believe that I am there now.

36. I feel no bitterness towards the medical profession which only started screening blood for Hep C in 1991. To feel bitter only hurts yourself. I'm a great believer in not saying 'why me?' but 'why not me?'.

37. With cancer, you either get it and beat it or die but with Hep C, you never know what will happen and the unpredictability causes other mental effects. You have to accept that not everyone is going to be sympathetic about it. Hep C made it very difficult for me to get back into work.

38. I was involved with fundraising for a number of charities including Wooden Spoon the Rugby Charity, Families for Children an adoption agency and Children's Hospice South West. A small group of us in Devon raised approximately one million pounds over 7 years for Wooden Spoon and I managed to raise £35,000 at one dinner function I was able to organise in North Devon. I know there are less fortunate people out there. Nowadays I also attend hospices and Nursing Homes with my therapy dog on a weekly basis.

39. I have occasional blood tests for Hep C and I have been told that I am still clear of it.

Anonymity, disclosure and redaction

40. I do not wish to remain anonymous.

41. I would consider giving oral evidence at the Inquiry if required.

Statement of Truth

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

Signed

GRO-C

Dated

28/05/2019