

Witness Name: JEFFREY PEACH

Statement No: WITN3581001

Exhibits: 0

Dated: 2019

INFECTED BLOOD INQUIRY

FIRST WRITTEN STATEMENT OF JEFFREY PEACH

I, JEFFREY PEACH will say as follows:-

Section 1. Introduction

1. My name is Jeffrey Peach. I was born on GRO-C 1971 and I live with my wife and our 2 children at GRO-C I am currently working as a Factory Operative/FLT Driver.
2. I provide this statement in response to a request under Rule 9 of the Inquiry Rules 2006. My Mam, Maureen Peach, was born on GRO-C 1937. My Mam was infected with Hepatitis C (HCV) in 1971 following a blood transfusion post child birth. She passed away on 18 November 1990, aged 53.
3. I am aware that my sister Susan Dawson (WITN3397001) and my brother Steven Peach (WITN3630001) have provided statements. My sisters Diane Smith and Janice Hedges will also be giving statements. Our brother David Peach sadly passed away on 18 May 2016 from Non-Hodgkin's lymphoma.
4. This witness statement has been prepared without the benefit of access to my Mam's medical records.

Section 2. How infected

5. My Mam was infected with HCV from a blood transfusion that she was given after I was born on GRO-C 1971 at the Hedon Road Maternity Hospital, Hull (which has since closed down). My Mam needed the blood transfusion due to severe blood loss.
6. The first time I found out about the HCV was when my sister, Susan Dawson, informed me about 6 weeks ago that she was being accepted as a core participant for this Inquiry. I knew my Mam's liver had failed but I did not know what the cause of this was. I am therefore unaware of when or what information my Mam may have been supplied with.

Section 3. Other Infections

7. I am unaware of any other infections that my Mam may have contracted as a result of receiving contaminated blood.

Section 4. Consent

8. I do not know if my Mam was tested or treated without her knowledge or consent.

Section 5. Impact of the Infection

9. The first time I noticed anything different about my Mam was in 1987 or 1988 when her skin started changing colour and her eyes became jaundiced. Her overall health was not as good as it used to be. We used to walk everywhere and then it got to the point where she became house bound and did not really do anything. I was told it was nothing to worry about. As I was the youngest anything distressing was kept from me. I was shielded from my Mam getting ill.

10. It was only after my brother Dave and I went on holiday in the summer of 1988 that I knew my Mam was ill. When we returned from holiday my Mam had been hospitalised. I am unsure whether this was planned or as an emergency. Again I was told that everything was okay. My sister has since told me that this was when she had her gallbladder removed.
11. I also began to notice that my Mam was having problems with her mobility, to the point that one day I came home from a day out with my brother and she was unable to get out of the bath. This was around 1989 or early 1990.
12. Towards the back end of her life she became slightly withdrawn and did not talk a lot. She also suffered from mood swings and she became angry at things. This was completely out of character.
13. By early 1990 she was getting worse. I remember my Mam having to make her bed downstairs by this point and she started having many hospital appointments at St James University Hospital Leeds which was a 60 mile trip. It was then that I was told that my Mam would need a liver transplant.
14. My Mam had her first liver transplant around August 1990 which her body rejected. This was the first time I realised the seriousness of her illness. She then had a second transplant.
15. When my Mam had her transplants at St James my brother Steve would take us every other night as he had transport and it was so far away. This was exhausting for all of us. Visiting times were spent by me holding my Mam's hand as she was unable to talk, she was wired up to machines, and she would just lie there. Seeing my Mam like this was deeply upsetting. She had a button to press for the pain relief. These are my last memories of my Mam. That's how I physically remember her for the last couple of months before she passed away. I would spend most of the time there in tears; those visits left me deeply traumatised.

16. Late at night on 18 November 1990 I got a knock on the door and it was my brother Steve and my sister Sue. They didn't need to speak; I knew that my Mam had gone. I honestly thought that my Mam would get better and she would come home and I would look after her. Seeing my brothers and sisters so numb with grief was very upsetting for me. Our Mam was the most loving, caring and unselfish person. I miss her greatly and always will.
17. At the time of my Mam's death I was the last of her six children who lived at home. I was 19 years old and my dad died when I was only 2 years old. Growing up I depended greatly on my brothers and sisters but mainly on my Mam.
18. Due to the fact my dad died so young my Mam's life was dedicated to her six children. She brought us up on her own. She did not socialise much, she didn't have many clothes and didn't even have any make-up. She devoted everything to us and to me especially as I was the youngest. The effect of growing up without a dad meant I was incredibly close to my Mam. I recall growing up with very little money. Christmas times and birthdays didn't bring many presents but the love my Mam gave me was overwhelming. Things got better for us financially when my older brothers and sisters started getting jobs. After they all left home it ended up just my Mam and me.
19. Not having a dad didn't stop me having a wonderful childhood. I remember most of my childhood being perched on my Mam's knee until I got too big. I once went away for 4 days on a football trip aged 11 and I spent the entire trip wanting to be home with her. We used to have wonderful caravan holidays and day trips out which usually meant walking for miles.
20. As I got older, found a job, and started to make my own way in life my bond with my Mam never weakened so when I finally knew the seriousness of her condition I was completely devastated. I stayed strong especially for my sisters but inside I was in turmoil.

21. For 5 years after my Mam passed away I struggled. It affected me mentally. 30 years on it's become a lot less painful but at the time it was distressing. I had a girlfriend at the time and it was not massively serious but that ended because I was in such a state.
22. When I told people how my Mam died I would say she had liver disease but I would follow that with 'but my mother is not a drinker'. I felt like I had to explain because people associate liver disease with alcohol. My Mam did not drink and I didn't want people to think that she did. Finding out she had HCV explained a lot.
23. Now I have 11 year old twin girls of my own I see the joy they bring not just to my wife and I, but also to my mother in law. I see how much they love her and how much she loves them. When they sit on her knee for a hug or are upset or unwell I picture my Mam doing the same. My Mam only got to see a couple of her grandchildren and I know how proud she would have been of mine and how much love she could have given them. She should be here to see them.
24. At the time of my Mam's death I was living with her in a council owned property. When she passed away I became homeless because the council would not allow a single person to occupy the property. On top of everything else I had this to deal with. I had to find alternative accommodation as soon as my Mam died. I was only 19 years old with no parent or home.
25. My Mam's wish when she died was that I was not on my own. My sister Janice took me in initially and I lived with her and her partner for about 6 months. Then I got a flat on my own.
26. I am truly thankful for the support I had from my family. I often wonder if I didn't have them what would have happened to me after my Mam died. My oldest brother became my father figure. My sisters are absolutely amazing. We lost our brother 3 years ago and that brought us even closer.

27. My work as a machine fitter was affected when my Mam was ill and after she passed away. I was always late for work because I was not sleeping well, especially after she passed away. I had been positive my Mam would get better and come out of hospital and after she died I felt very depressed. I had a lot of days off work. Luckily, I had very understanding employers.

Section 6. Treatment/care/support

28. I was not offered counselling or emotional support when my Mam was unwell or following her death. I had to rely on the support of my siblings both financially and emotionally. After her death I kept a lot of my emotions to myself as I did not want to add to the stress of my siblings.

Section 7. Financial Assistance

29. I do not know if my Mam received any financial assistance but I doubt it as we did not have very much.

30. I received no support either personally or financially from anyone other than my brothers and sisters.

31. I don't know if the rest of my family had any support, but I doubt they received anything because they would have included me as we are very close.

Section 8. Other Issues

32. My Mam is not here so it's up to us to fight for her. I want justice for my Mam. I want answers; I want to know what happened.

Anonymity, disclosure and redaction

33. I confirm that I do not wish to apply for anonymity. I understand this statement will be published and disclosed as part of the inquiry.

34. I am willing to give oral evidence if required.

Statement of Truth

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

Signed

GRO-C

Dated

11/9/19