

Witness Name: Katherine Smith

Statement No.: WITN3616001

Exhibits: none

Dated: 25th June 2020

INFECTED BLOOD INQUIRY

FIRST WRITTEN STATEMENT OF KATHERINE SMITH

I provide this statement in response to a request under Rule 9 of the Inquiry Rules 2006 dated 29 July 2019.

I, Katherine Mary Smith, will say as follows: -

Section 1. Introduction

1. My name is Katherine Smith. My date of birth is GRO-C 1964 and my address is known to the Inquiry. I am married and live with my husband, Iain Smith. I am unable to work due to ill-health. I intend to speak about my infection with hepatitis C, I believe I had. In particular, the nature of my illness, how the illness affected me, the treatment received and the impact it had on me, my family, and our lives together.

Section 2. How Infected

2. On GRO-C 1985, I gave birth to my eldest daughter, Katrina Louise Shaw at Rutherglen Maternity Hospital. Prior to her birth she emptied her bowels, and this caused meconium aspiration. My waters broke and they were black. The

meconium is what is first released from the baby's bowels, normally after birth and is a black tar-like substance made up of what the baby has ingested in utero. I believe this is known to be a sign that a baby is in distress, and normally they should make efforts to deliver the baby, as soon as possible. They did not do this and I gave birth to my daughter via caesarean section ten hours later.

3. My labour went wrong because of this issue with the meconium. I recall that Katrina was delivered by a surgeon called **GRO-D**. After Katrina was born, I was able to have a quick look at her and then she had to be taken to the special care baby unit, which was essentially an intensive care unit for new-borns. I believe the issues Katrina had were because my placenta had torn off. I did not feel that things were fully explained by doctors in those days.
4. I remember **GRO-D** asking if I had ever had an abortion before, and as I had not, I told him this. He then leaned over the drapes that were there during my caesarean section and said that I was bleeding and he was struggling to stop the bleeding. I remember asking not to be put to sleep, but I was given a general anaesthetic anyway. Prior to losing consciousness I remember seeing a number of swab racks which were dripping with what I believe to have been my blood. I remember seeing blood on the floor from these swab racks.
5. I did not regain consciousness until three days later. Prior to this I do not recall any conversations with the doctors about me requiring blood, although I heard them saying that I needed plasma. I also recall hearing someone say that the blood bank was sending over all the blood they had. They gave me nineteen units of blood. I recall hearing that they were bringing in known donors to give blood as they did not have enough of a supply for the amount I needed. Given the quick turnaround, I do not believe that these donations would have been tested.
6. I believe as it was an emergency, they just went ahead and transfused me. My husband was told that I was touch and go during this time.

7.

GRO-C

8. I was extremely ill after having Katrina. I spent seven or eight days in intensive care before being sent to a normal inpatient ward. I was given injections in the normal inpatient ward for three or four days before being moved back to intensive care unit for a further week, prior to recovering and being discharged. I do recall being told that I was yellow at some point, and I was vomiting a lot. I am aware that being jaundiced can be an early sign that someone has been transfused with contaminated blood. I would not have thought of that at the time as I was also suffering from gestational diabetes.
9. In intensive care I was given the injections as I have already mentioned and a piriton drip. They said that this was in relation to Anti-D.
10. I was eventually discharged but I was told that I would receive an appointment with the haematology team at the Royal Victoria. All I was told was that this was due to the amount of blood I had received and to keep an eye on my Anti-D and blood levels.
11. I have never been told that I had contracted hepatitis C, however, I attended the Haematology Unit for two years, where they gave me a number of different medications, both in tablet form and injections. I was trying to cope with looking after my baby and I found that the tablets they were giving me, were making me ill. I do not know the names of the medications. I believe they may have been experimenting on me and trying a number of different treatments for hepatitis C.
12. I did not receive any notification from infection control, or any guidance about not sharing toothbrushes and so forth. I do recall that they kept telling me not to get pregnant or have relations with my husband. I got very ill with chest infections around this time, and they told me I had asthma, when I did not.
13. GRO-C
GRO-C She was in GRO-D's Hospital immediately after her birth and I felt as if we were treated as if I had Munchausen By Proxy. I had to get a second opinion before they would take me seriously.

14. Around this time I quite often fell ill and in order to protect my daughter from catching anything, there were periods of forty eight hours where I could not see her. I felt I was also becoming ill because of the amount of time I was spending at the children's hospital, where I believe infections were running rampant.

15. At no point in the two and a half years, when I was a patient of the Haematology Department at the Royal Victoria, was I told that I had hepatitis C. I do believe that I was treated for this and cured.

16. I went on to have two miscarriages due to Anti-D, so I do not believe that they could have been treating me for my anti-D levels if these were still high enough to cause two miscarriages.

Section 3. Other Infections

17. I believe that I was only infected with hepatitis C, but was never told, and I believe that I was treated before a test could indicate that I had it. I have never been tested for hepatitis C antibodies.

18. I have never received a formal notification that I am at risk of having vCJD, but I was told by the blood donation service to stop giving blood due to the fact that I had received a blood transfusion prior to 1989 or 1990.

Section 4. Consent

19. If I did have hepatitis C as I believe I did, then any treatment to clear the virus would have been done without my consent. I have never been told that I have had hepatitis C, but do not believe that there is any other explanation, for the cirrhotic condition my liver is now in.

20. I believe that I may have been treated for the purposes of research. I believe that they were worried that I, as a young mother then, would have gone to the press about what had happened to me, if I had known that I was infected.

Section 5. Impact

21. I am currently receiving palliative care. This is in relation to lupus which has been brought on by an auto-immune response to an abdominal mesh I had inserted as a hernia repair.
22. This auto-immune response has caused difficulty in the medications that I am able to take. I also suffer from Mast Cell Activation.
23. I was told that I was clear of hepatitis C when I was tested in 2016. When I explained to my doctor what had happened with my transfusions and subsequent treatment, I believe that they came to the same conclusion as I had.
24. In the time between my two daughters being born and while I believe I was being treated for hepatitis C, in the two years I attended haematology I remember being very tired. I recall that at one point I had to have my mum look after the baby for six weeks. I had never felt that level of fatigue before. My mum and sister were both very helpful with this.
25. The symptoms I had, included weight loss, vomiting, tiredness and though I did not suffer from any post-natal depression. I did find it very hard to cope physically.
26. I had put on weight during my pregnancy with Katrina, due to the gestational diabetes, but I lost this in the 3 to 4 months following due to being ill and vomiting.
27. I am sure that the treatments I underwent, purportedly for Anti-D, were not for that. I feel that they must have known that I had been infected. I believe I only had these transfusions because they did not get my baby out quick enough. I know that they saved my life, but they should have acted quicker after the first sign of meconium. I now also question why I never did query what medications they were giving me during those two years that I was treated. I should have

questioned it because there was no other reason that I should be diagnosed as having such severe scarring to my liver.

28. I remember I got some injections in Rutherglen Maternity Hospital every day. I also remember having to take a liquid medication at one point. When I was being treated, I remember that because I felt so flattened by the injections they then decided to put me on pills. I felt like the pills kept changing.

29. At one stage I went to the Scottish National Blood Transfusion Service on Nelson Mandela Place in Glasgow. I believe that they wanted my plasma because of the anti-D. When I told them of the treatments I had, they told me that these could not have been for Anti-D.

30. My marriage began to fall apart after Katrina was born. My husband GRO-D
GRO-D
We were arguing all the time and at one stage I left him and went to live with my mum. I did end up going back to him and fell pregnant again. I had already had two miscarriages at this point and thought that I would not be able to carry her to term, but I did and gave birth to my daughter Sara.

31. I haemorrhaged again after Sara's birth. They did a scan and said that there was a fibroid in my womb. They said that I would not contract. I do not believe they would do this nowadays, but they said that they had to give me a hysterectomy. GRO-D
GRO-D

32. I am going to discuss the abdominal mesh I had to repair a hernia, in 1990. I am unsure how much, if any of this, relates to being infected with hepatitis C. After having the mesh inserted I started having allergies to different medications. I could no longer take normal medications that I had been able to take throughout my life.

33. I believe that the damage to my liver is related to me once having had hepatitis C. I do not know if this could also have been affected by mast cell activation syndrome.

34. Everything that went on with my husband, possibly at least in part due to fatigue and tiredness, make me feel as though, all of this cost me my marriage. I suffered financially because my then-husband went to Southern Ireland. Although I was granted money as part of my divorce, this could not be enforced as the Republic of Ireland had not legalised divorce at that point. GRO-D

GRO-D

35. When I had my children I was a nurse, and I gave this up because of the sometimes erratic schedule. I wanted to be able to look after my children when I could. I became a representative for a pharmaceutical company. When I was a nurse I was a clinical specialist in wound care. I did this job until around three or four years ago. I earned about £50,000 per year, had a company car and an expense account.

36. My health issues have changed my life completely. I lost my husband and changed career. I did try and go back to working on wards but I got a drug splashed in my eye and had an anaphylactic reaction.

37. I have moved around a lot in my life and, I have been treated by a number of different GP practices.

- I was originally treated at Shawlands Medical Practice until around 1984.
- I then moved to GRO-C in about 1986 or 1987 and was treated at Barrhead Medical Practice by Dr Neilson.
- In 1993 or 1994 I moved to GRO-C and was treated at the Kilwinning Medical Practice by a Dr William McCarlie, who has now retired. I was then treated by Dr Richard White.
- I was then at the Massham Medical Practice from 1996.
- I then moved to GRO-C in 1998 and I was there for five years.
- I moved to GRO-C in 2003 for around two and a half years and was treated at the Morton Road Medical Practice.
- I moved to North Yorkshire after that to a town called GRO-C where I was treated at Neesham Road Surgery.

38. I have had issues with getting dental treatment. My main issue has been that no dentist would take me as they use lignocaine, which I am allergic to. I had to go to the hospital dentist.

39. I do feel that my health has had an impact on my daughters. I feel that both of them have been traumatised. Sometimes I think they do not want to accept that my health is as it is. It must be horrible for them being used to me being ill. I think this has damaged our relationship. I am worried about putting my whole family through everything.

40. I cashed in my pensions three years ago. I had two private pensions and an NHS pension. I gave my money to my daughters to buy their homes.. I was only able to cash them in because I am terminally ill.

41. Katrina became a travel agent and did human resources for a time. She is now an operations director for a delivery group.

42. Sara has had the biggest impact I think. She was **GRO-C** when she was fifteen. **GRO-C**
GRO-C

43. Due to my current health I have to fight to be treated. I had to fight to go to St Thomas' for my lupus and mast cell activation. Funding was withdrawn before my second appointment there, and they said this was due to a lack of funding for the Centre for Rare Diseases.

44. Doctors will no longer treat me. I believe this is due to my anaphylactic reaction to many medications. I think my liver should have been resected but they will not do anything.

45. I had a ductal carcinoma at one time and I was told by a surgeon in the UK that I would have to lose my breasts, but a surgeon in the US said I didn't have to so I was treated by him.

46. I am in the midst of kidney failure and they believe I am going into full blown failure of my kidney. Due to lack of blood flow, my toes are going black and this may require amputation at some stage, possibly further up my leg.

47. In terms of hepatitis C, as far as the doctors are concerned I was clear as of my most recent test in 2016. I have not been tested for hepatitis C antibodies as far as I am aware. When my GP tested me in 2016 he seemed to come to the same conclusion I did; that I must have had it and been treated for it. Around four years ago it was discovered that I have the severe cirrhosis that I have now.

48. I feel that my mesh has taken my life away from me. I should be spending time with my grandchildren. My daughter is too scared I'll fall over and hurt the baby. I have a grandson who is 13 who I have a good relationship with, but I cannot have the same relationship with the child who is now 3 years old.

49. I felt like a leper when I was in the haematology ward when I was there for the two years or more that I was treated. I noticed that I had a red dot and a yellow dot on my medical records. I did not notice any other signs like toxic waste or anything on them. I believed that the red dot was for allergies and the yellow was for anti-D.

50. While I feel that the mesh has taken my life, which I don't think is fair at fifty five, I do feel that hepatitis C has cost me the two children I lost. I don't think anyone can imagine the amount of pain a woman goes through when she has a miscarriage. I wanted more children and I loved being pregnant. I feel that someone took that choice away from me, and I went through menopause at 40. It changed the course of my life completely.

Section 6. Treatment/Care/Support

51. I have never been offered counselling in relation to my hepatitis C, as they have never admitted to me that I had it.

Section 7. Financial Assistance

52. I have not received any financial assistance through any of the funds. I was not aware of this whole contaminated blood scandal when I lived in England. I do not feel that it has been covered enough in the media. I have contacted the Scottish National Blood Transfusion Service who have been helpful but they have not been able to tell him if they have any record of me having a transfusion.

53. I am currently on enhanced PIP benefits as well as ESA and Disability benefits.

Section 8. Other Issues

54. I was not involved with the Penrose Inquiry.

55. I believe that more needs to be done in terms of awareness. I was completely unaware of the controversy over contaminated blood being used in Scotland until I moved up here.

Statement of Truth

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

Signed **GRO-C** (25, 2020 13:04 GMT+1)

Dated Jun 25, 2020