

Witness Name: Gillian Jane Marie Kenny

Statement No: WITN0466001

Exhibits: **WITN0466002-3**

Dated: 17<sup>th</sup> January 2019

## **INFECTED BLOOD INQUIRY**

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### **WRITTEN STATEMENT OF GILLIAN JANE MARIE KENNY**

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I provide this statement in response to a request under Rule 9 of the Inquiry Rules 2006 dated 3 September 2018.

I, Gill Kenny, will say as follows: -

#### **Section 1. Introduction**

1. My name is Gill Kenny. My date of birth and address are known to the Inquiry. I intend to speak about my late father, John Edward Anthony Kenny (DOB: 30 July 1937), who was infected with Hepatitis C ("HCV"), as a result of being given infected blood through a blood transfusion. In particular, I intend to discuss the nature of his illness, how the illness affected him, the treatment he received and the impact it had on him and our family lives to this day.
2. I confirm that I have chosen not to be legally represented and that I am happy for the Inquiry team to assist me with my statement.

## **Section 2. How Affected**

3. I come from a family of five, which consists of my mum, dad and two older brothers. I have always had a very close and special relationship with my father. Until I was 11 years old, my father worked in the British Army and he also served with the United Nations. As a result, we travelled around the world including going to Libya, Aldershot and Germany. When we returned from Germany, we stayed with our grandmother, as we never knew exactly when my father would come back from his duties.
4. Our family moved from Dorset to Essex in 1976 when my dad decided to leave the Army. My older brother decided to stay in Dorset to finish his education and my oldest brother had already moved out and joined the Navy. My parents eventually bought their first home together in Brentwood but it was a difficult time because my dad was working in Croydon and had to commute everyday because it was important to him for us to live and grow up in a nice neighbourhood. That was the kind of man my dad was; his family was first, last and the middle of everything.
5. My father then decided to work in Saudi Arabia in 1977 and was managing large projects for an Arabian Oil Company. Whilst my dad was in Saudi Arabia, he would call me once a week to catch up and I remember him always telling me he was proud of me when I was working at French Connection in the 1980's
6. My dad suffered really bad neck problems; he came back to the United Kingdom around Christmas 1979 and was seen by a surgeon called Mr Bonny in London. It was decided that he required surgery. The appointments he attended were in the Lindo Wing at St. Mary's Hospital in Paddington. They made a plaster cast of my dad because the bones in his neck were disintegrating and they wanted to prevent paralysis.

7. On New Years Eve 1979, my dad was admitted into the Wellington Hospital in St. John's Wood where he had his neck operation. During the operation he haemorrhaged and was in Intensive Care Unit ("ICU") as he nearly died.
8. The hospital gave him a blood transfusion with many units of blood to replace the blood lost from the haemorrhage and kept giving him transfusions until he was well enough. Seeing my dad in the ICU was devastating; I was only 14 years old. I remember they told us that my dad was lucky and would have died if he were not at the Wellington Hospital because they had a great ICU. Little did we know that as a result of the transfusions he was given infected blood, which would go onto make him extremely unwell and eventually end his life prematurely.
9. My dad stayed in the ICU, and was in the Wellington Hospital. My mum would borrow her friend's car and we would drive up to see dad everyday. We always drove pass the Christmas lights in Central London and even after Christmas, I remember that being our norm. The operation was a success and my dad was eventually discharged and ready to go home.
10. On returning home, my father went back to Saudi Arabia to work as a project manager; managing huge housing projects. As part of the procurement process he visited Philadelphia on many occasions and was touched by the warm welcome he received. You will see the relevance of this later in my statement.
11. My dad would regularly return home to the UK on leave. More often as he began to feel unwell. When he later returned to Saudi Arabia, he continued to experience pains in his stomach and back. In 1988, he had his Gall bladder removed in Saudi Arabia as the doctors felt this was the cause of the pain and his trouble. He continued to go

back and forth from Saudi Arabia to the UK to visit us and life just went on. He made a lot of sacrifices so my mother and I could have a good standard of living. Even with my older brothers living their own lives away from the home, he was incredibly generous towards them as well. Again, this was the kind of man my father was.

12. We began to notice that my father's stomach would get quite bloated and he would always attribute this to drinking too much Coca cola in Saudi Arabia. He was always tired, yet my dad would say this was due to jet lag from all of the flying. It would always drive my mum mad because he would just come home, put his things down and fall asleep straight away. We had dinner parties at our house a lot and it was a known thing that by 9pm, my dad would start dozing off to sleep. My dad also suffered with the cold terribly, but he would say this was a result of his blood becoming thinner from spending so much time in the Saudi Arabian sun.
13. Despite noticing the changes in my dad's health, we still had lots of fun together. We stayed at lovely hotels in London and he would buy my mum nice gifts from Liberty and take her on holidays to Switzerland. However, in the background, my dad was always dealing with his constant fatigue, terrible headaches and slightly grumpy, which I think stemmed from frustration with how his body was feeling.
14. My dad came back from Saudi Arabia for good in 1995 as employment prospects for expatriates were changing. The Gulf was changed a lot of the Arab attitudes towards the British. They would rather give the work to local people. My dad was a little depressed as he had built a nice life for himself in Saudi Arabia. He had a cat called Monty, which he had to have put to sleep, this made him sad.
15. My parents had spent large parts of their married life apart due to my dad's working arrangements, so there was a period of adjustment

where they both had to get used to each other's company again. Dad often found himself under Mums feet.

16. Coming back from Saudi Arabia, my dad still felt unwell. He went to the doctors and they did not investigate to see what the issue was. My dad went to Korea in 1997 and thought he may have picked up a bug from his travels. He decided to go to the Shenfield Surgery to see Dr Ward, as he still was not feeling any better. Dr Ward referred my dad to a liver specialist at Basildon Hospital. He saw an expert called Dr Sabani, by coincidence Dr Sabani's wife also worked at the same surgery as Dr Ward.
17. My dad did a series of blood tests and possibly a liver biopsy as well at Basildon Hospital. As far as I know and according to my mother my father was told in person by the Doctor at an appointment at the surgery that he was infected with HCV. He was given a helpline number to call. When my father called the helpline, he spoke to a former drug addict and came off the phone saying the whole call was useless; he did not need to speak to a former drug addict as he did not do anything wrong to cause him to have HCV.
18. When the tests revealed that my dad had HCV, Dr Sabani, at Basildon, tracked my father's treatments all the way back to Wellington Hospital. He was able to do this because the HCV had become so advanced at this point, so they were able to determine that the operation and transfusion was when my dad became infected.
19. Being officially diagnosed with HCV in 1997 was absolutely devastating for my father. He said it was like a death sentence. I remember he told me "I am never going to wake up in the morning and feel better again, it's only going to get worse. I feel sick, everyday".

20. My dad was not given any advice from the specialists on how to manage the HCV; I felt like they wanted to sweep it away. However, he was told and was made aware of the risks of others being infected as a result of the HCV. This is what devastated him the most. I remember he sat us all down and said we need to be very careful because if he cut himself, he would bleed a lot and it would not stop. We always used our own towels at home and we had two bathrooms, so my parents had one and my brothers and I used the other. My mother and father then decided to have separate bedrooms. My mother will go into more detail as to how this affected their lives together.

### **Section 3. Other Infections**

21. Apart from the HCV, my father did not contract any other infections as a result of being given the blood transfusions.

### **Section 4. Consent**

22. As far as I know, my father was always treated with his knowledge and consent. I do not believe he was tested for the purposes of research.

### **Section 5. Impact**

23. The impact the HCV had on my father was far-reaching. Physically, he was always fatigued and felt like he could not do the things he really wanted to do, like playing golf and mountain walking, running, he was a good long distance cross country runner who won medals.
24. My dad would call HCV the sleeping illness because he spent so much of his time sleeping and feeling sick. He described the feeling like being a pregnant woman, constantly feeling nauseous and always

tired. His eyes had a yellow pallor to them and he would often bang his head.

25. He also used to get very bad nosebleeds that would last a long time and brain fog where he would just sit down with his head in his hands. He felt he had to stop driving because of this and did not want to be a liability to anyone on the road. He was always scared that he might have a haemorrhage and his liver would explode.
26. My dad would often itch his skin, like he was trying to escape his own skin, as it was so uncomfortable for him. My dad was always fastidious about his cleanliness and made sure he did not get too close to people as he did not want to risk infecting anyone else.
27. My mum noticed my dad's mental capacity change more than I did. My mum mentioned that his demeanour changed. I think he was scared about what would happen to my mum if he were to go. I think his self-esteem was important to him as well and he lost this the more his health deteriorated.
28. The treatment offered to my father had a serious impact on him and the entire family. He was offered Interferon injections and Ribavirin tablets. It was horrendous and that nearly killed him. He had to inject the Interferon into his stomach once a week and would take the Ribavirin alongside it. My dad did the treatment for around a year and was supported by my older brother who was living at home at the time and was a trained nurse.
29. My dad became even more tired than he already was before starting the treatment and I did not think that was possible. It was like he had the inner energy and stamina to do things but the fatigue was too great for him to overcome. He was always nauseous and threw up many times over the course of the treatment.

30. One night, we sat down as a family and pleaded with him to stop the treatment because we honestly thought it would kill him and he agreed. We do not know if the treatment was successful or unsuccessful because he did not complete the entire course of treatment medication, at our request. It may have bought him some more years but we will never know. However, if he didn't have the treatment, he would have died anyway. My father was not offered any new drugs at the time to treat the HCV, as I don't think they were available yet.
31. I do believe the care and treatment my father received at Basildon Hospital was first-class. The treatment he received was primarily to help him control and cope with the illness and its symptoms and they always monitored his progress. There was a time when my father was referred to the Royal Free Hospital for a liver transplant whilst still being under the care of Basildon Hospital. They did the assessment and concluded that he was fit enough to have the transplant, but as he was 68, they felt he was too old. My dad was devastated and this took all his hope away of living a normal life. Why give him false hope and then say he was too old?
32. My dad also had haemochromatosis, which is where the body produces too much iron in the blood. Basildon Hospital managed this superbly considering that my dad had to have bloodletting on a regular basis, which is never a nice experience.
33. When my parents moved to Oxfordshire, my dad was referred to the John Radcliffe Hospital. We all thought great, this is a good hospital, little did we know. The treatment he received was very shoddy. When he was admitted into hospital, their treatment seemed more like palliative care; they did not seem to want to drive his treatment forward. However, he still had regular biopsies to assess his progress.



34. My dad was told his cirrhosis had developed into cancer around Christmas 2009 after having a regular biopsy performed. I remember my dad calling me to say that he had been officially diagnosed with cancer; I was absolutely devastated, especially as I was planning to get married in June 2010.
35. My dad wrote me a letter before my wedding saying that he did not think he would be able to make the wedding, he gave us his blessing. However when I got married on 26 June 2010, my father was right there to walk me down the aisle. My dad picked out my wedding dress for me and he was able to see me in it on my special day. I know it must have taken a lot of energy from my dad to do that for me. He did not give a speech at the reception, but he did recite the Owl and the Pussycat poem by Edward Lear. Poetry was our thing and we were both great fans of poetry and music It meant a lot.
36. I could see my dad struggling throughout the day. He had completely lost his appetite and could not taste anything; his weight had reduced dramatically. Even though my wedding day was one of the hottest days of the year, my dad could not get warm and it really bothered him that he was not comfortable.
37. My dad was admitted back into the John Radcliffe Hospital the following Thursday after my wedding because he was in a lot of pain. The ward was full of alcoholics and drug addicts and my dad should've never have been there; he should have been in a side ward because he could not sleep with the moaning and groaning from the other patients. We did not address this with the hospital because my dad did not want a fuss; but I thought it was awful. The consultant seemed like she did not know what she was doing half the time. My dad started taking Oramorph to treat the pain and returned home after a week in the ward because the ward was not a good experience for him.

38. July 2010 was stressful for me because my dad's birthday falls in this month. I decided to take him and my mum to lunch, but he could not even eat and he started being sick. The things I thought he would enjoy on his day, he couldn't even do. I could see my mum was getting distressed and my dad was thinking how this may be his last birthday; I think he felt like his life was slipping away. This is why my dad resonated with the film, *Philadelphia* so much. The character Tom Hanks plays had AIDS and was a ghost in his own skin; just like my dad felt like a ghost in his. He would often listen to Bruce Springsteen's song of the same name.
39. My father went into hospital for a second time in August and I remember my mum telling me that she knows dad loves her, but I am his reason for living. I was terrified of losing him. My dad told me that he wanted to go back to his old Roman Catholic Church in Leamington where he had been a server growing up. I drove him there and he threw up three times on the way. After Mass, dad saw his brother; my Uncle Joe and we had lunch together. My dad knew uncle Joe was sick, but did not know why. In September 2010, uncle Joe died and this affected my dad quite a lot. The whole family attended the funeral, including his siblings who he had not seen for many years. I noticed my dad going around to everybody and saying goodbye to everyone; like he knew it may be his last time of seeing them.
40. In September 2010, my father was in a lot of pain and started to hallucinate and I think it was because of the morphine and the toxins in his body. My mum dialled 999 and he ended up at Horton General Hospital. We used to call the hospital 'filthy Horton' because he was in a general ward and the staff did not know how to care for him. One of the nights he was there, he fell over when he was trying to go to the toilet and there was no one to help him. Once this happened, we brought him back home.

41. My parents wanted to take my husband and I out for lunch, as we did not go on a honeymoon after our wedding. We drove up to Oxfordshire near to our parents' house and stayed in the local Bed and Breakfast ("B n B") down the road. I called my dad every morning. On this particular day, he called me to ask if I was going to work today. I reminded him that I was staying at a B n B and he immediately sighed as he realised he could not remember what day it was. I could see him gradually fading away. There was a moment when dad tried to stand up to go to the bathroom and found that he couldn't. He had lost the feeling in his legs, his legs would not work, and he panicked. My husband walked him up and down all night as my dad was very distressed.
42. We called the GP in the morning and he came to assess my dad. The GP, Dr Mann was very good and called Katherine House Hospice and said he needed a bed straight away. Dad was admitted that same day. I called my brothers and told them our dad was not doing too well and they should come as soon as possible.
43. Whilst my dad was in the hospice, I was still taking my mother during the day and coming back home to cook her a meal. I would then go back to the hospice in the evening to be with my dad throughout the night. I would make this journey to and from the hospice up to three times a day. On the Sunday, the nurse assured me it was okay to not stay at the Hospice over night as my dad will be fine. However, at 11pm, the hospice called saying my dad had fallen out of bed and banged his head really badly, which left a huge cut. They had forgotten to raise the bar on the bed; it felt like the beginning of the end. I made sure to never miss another night there again. I was joined by my brothers and their wives, we stayed as a family unit at the hospice.

44. Whilst he was in the hospice he kept saying, "*I need to get out of this cage*" I and the rest of my family told him that it was okay for him to go; we all gave our permission at this point.
45. I saw that my dad had rallied a bit and I decided to throw my dad a cocktail party at the Hospice with all the close family in attendance, as this is what my dad would want. He said what a good idea. My brothers and wives were all in agreement.
46. The following morning after the party he couldn't speak, I never heard my dad speak again. By this point, he was on a syringe driver with morphine and we all knew it was near the end.
47. On Saturday night, my brothers and their wives returned to my brothers home whilst my mum and I stayed on at the hospice. On Sunday 31 October 2010, at 4am in the morning, I called my brothers, their wives and the priest to come back. My mother was sitting down with my dad lying peacefully in her arms and he died. My dad went with all those he loved around him. The priest anointed him and I bathed him. My husband and I said our final goodbyes before the funeral on 9 November 2010.
48. The funeral was mainly for family and close friends and was not the celebration of life we had hoped for; we were all still in shock that my father had died. He wasn't old and he should still have been around, he told me he wanted to do so much more. The HCV stole that away from him.
49. The funeral directors knew he had HCV and my dad found the funeral directors himself before he <sup>did</sup> ~~passed away~~. As far as I know, my dad did not have any difficulties in finding a funeral home that would bury those infected with HCV. GRO-C

50. Even his death certificate showed that my father died of HCV as a result of infected blood. 1a Hepatocellular Carcinoma. 1b. Hepatic Cirrhosis, 1c Hepatitis C. Certified by E MacGregor I produce a copy of his death certificate as **Exhibit WITN0466002**.
51. The impact my father's HCV had on me and my life was huge. My marriage broke down in 2000 because I was supporting my dad a lot throughout that time. I helped my parents financially because my father's earning potential dramatically fell and I gave him my car because he did not have one. My former husband said I was putting my dad first and he did not want to deal with that anymore; so he left me.
52. I struggled to get a job in the UK so I made the tough decision to work in Hong Kong and then Sri Lanka. I remember my dad came to Sri Lanka to visit for the week in October 2005, but when he came, he mostly slept the entire week. I went to visit home in December 2005 and when I saw how much my dad had deteriorated from when I last saw him in October, I handed in my notice to my boss and they were all very understanding of the situation. I felt that it was my turn to step up as both my brothers had families with children so I had to be there for my dad. I came back to the UK and moved to Surrey for a new job, as it was only an hour away from my parents' house.
53. My husband also had to deal with my father's HCV and it impacted him a lot. I was regularly visiting my parents so I could be close to them and when my dad died, this is now my norm with my mother. Eventually we decided to move closer so I can be near my mother, but this meant that we are no longer in London near our friends or my husband's family. My husband also had to change jobs and has to adjust to a life where caring for my mother takes up a huge amount of my time. I sometimes feel like I do neglect my husband, but I have to be there for my mother as she is now 82 and mostly house bound.

54. The impact of the HCV on my mum was difficult. My parents always had a very active relationship, but my father was very concerned that he may have infected my mother and it was always a worry for him.
55. My mum's health began to suffer. My mum was a trained counsellor from 1988 at a local hospice as this was her escape from my dad's declining health. [GRO-C]  
 [GRO-C] She became very immobile [GRO-C]  
 [GRO-C] My mum and dad could no longer go on any more holidays, which was a big change. They went to Jersey in 2003 and I looked after their dog. My mum insisted I come with them to Jersey again the following year in 2004, so the three of us went and that was our last family holiday abroad. I did feel that I had to go on the holiday because I knew my mum needed a lot of care due to her own health issues. [GRO-C] my dad loved to walk.  
 [GRO-C]  
 [GRO-C]
56. Financially, my father's HCV placed a lot of strain on my parents as they eventually lost their home and had to live in Galleywood. I believe he lost the house because he did not have the energy to fight two battles, the HCV and the finances. If the HCV had not caused him to become so tired, he would have been able to do the kind of job he wanted to do which would have maintained his normal standard of living. I believe my mum received carer's allowance, but her own health was suffering through stress so it did not help them much.
57. Eventually, my parents had to move from the Galleywood house into a council flat due to unforeseen circumstances with the owner. The council flat was awful and my dad's room was the size of a shoebox. There were only supposed to be elderly people staying there but one of the resident's son's was a drug addict, he constantly played loud music at all hours which triggered my mum's [GRO-C] My dad could not get any disability payments, illness payments or any other

kind of regular financial payment. After many enquiries and appeals, my parents were finally able to move to Oxfordshire, after my brother forced the issue with the relevant authorities.

58. The impact on my father's work life was life changing. My father could no longer fly, so could not do the work he was accustomed to doing abroad. He worked full time to help a friend set up a recruitment company and helped them win a lot of contracts. He worked all hours speaking to clients at all times.
59. He was later poached by a big construction company to become their new Head of HR in Enfield. But it wasn't the same as before, his earning potential had dramatically reduced and the type of work he did had to change too.
60. The impact of the HCV on our family was massive. Around the time our dad was diagnosed with cancer, naturally we had family disagreements.
61. My father did not tell his grandchildren or anyone else outside the family about his HCV until he was diagnosed with cancer in December 2009. We all had to be economical with the truth because of the stigma attached to HCV. My dad especially did not want the grandchildren to know because he wanted them to see him as the same fun loving granddad, not old and sick.
62. The stigma of having HCV affected my father and our family a lot. When we initially found out about the HCV, we shared this news with some of our family relations.
63. Their reaction was pretty much the same, extremely judgemental. They said the only people who contract HCV are drug addicts. I explained that my dad could not have contracted the HCV from anything else apart from infected blood; they said this could not be

true because blood is always screened for infections. There was also the insinuation that my father had been unfaithful to my mother and had done things he shouldn't have whilst aboard. After this, we never told anyone else, as we feared they might think the same. This Inquiry has helped me feel vindicated.

64. My father experienced the effects of the HCV in his ability to get adequate dental care. The dentist my dad went to for years, Mr [GRO-] refused to treat him when he learned about my dad's infection. Our whole family had been going to Mr [GRO-D] practice for years, but he did not want to treat my dad with his HCV. Looking for a new dentist was hard because my dad had to disclose that he had HCV. He eventually found a lovely [NR] dentist in Brentwood who had no problem treating my dad. He said: "I'll treat you, I know I won't catch anything". As far as I know, my dad did not have any other obstacles to receiving adequate medical care.

#### **Section 6. Treatment/Care/Support**

65. My father did not face any obstacles or difficulties in obtaining treatment as a result of the HCV.
66. Counselling and psychological support was made available to me as a result of finding out about my father's HCV. Especially towards the end of the 2000s, I knew my dad's death was imminent so I relied a lot on receiving counselling to get me through that time. Since Dad's death I have not needed any psychological assistance.

#### **Section 7. Financial Assistance**

67. Dr Sabani told us about the Skipton Fund which was a godsend and my father was awarded a lump sum payment of around £40,000. This was great because he was able to take the year off of work and relax for a bit, but it wasn't enough. The money helped fund our family



holiday to Jersey, we bought dad a golf membership, paid for a car outright and paid some of the bills that were due. He did not get any other lump sum or receive any monthly payments.

68. When my dad ~~passed away~~<sup>died</sup>, my mum received another lump sum payment and I followed up to ensure she received it. However, my mum has been unable to claim any benefits as a result of the last lump sum payment. My mum has essentially been living on the bread line since my dad died. However as a result of this Inquiry her benefits have now been resolved and she is more comfortable. This Inquiry is making a difference.

GRO-C

### **Section 8. Other Issues**

69. My main priority here is to give my dad a voice. Before he died, he told me that there will be an Inquiry and if he is not here to witness it or be part of it, he must have a voice and it must be heard. I would like to give my evidence in person at the hearings.
70. I have also provided the Inquiry with a CD Rom, which contains my father's medical records. I have never opened it and looked at the content. I am more than happy for the inquiry team to view the content and print out any relevant document. I produce this disc as **Exhibit WITN0466003**.

### **Statement of Truth**

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

Signed.

GRO-C

Dated 17<sup>th</sup> January 2019.