

Witness Name: JANICE ANN EVANS

Statement No: WITN3658001

Exhibits: WITN3658002

Dated: September 2019

INFECTED BLOOD INQUIRY

FIRST WRITTEN STATEMENT OF JANICE ANN EVANS

I, Janice Ann Evans will say as follows:-

Section 1. Introduction

1. My name is Janice Ann Evans and I live at GRO-C
GRO-C My date of birth is GRO-C 1959. I have two children named Christopher, born on GRO-C 1982, and Michael, born on GRO-C 1986. I was a fishmonger in Tesco for 20 years and was made redundant.
2. I have a brother named Phillip John Evans who has provided his own statement to the Inquiry. My mother's name was Jacqueline Ann Evans. She was born on GRO-C 1935 and died on 29th May 2000.
3. I make this statement in relation to my late father John Walter Evans who was born on GRO-C 1930 and who passed away on 15 April 1981, aged 50. The cause of death on his death certificate is "paracetamol poisoning" and a copy of this is attached as Exhibit WITN3658002.

4. I believe that my father was infected with Hepatitis C as a result of being given contaminated blood products.
5. This witness statement has been prepared without the benefit of access to my late father's full medical records.

Section 2. How infected

6. My father was involved in a car crash on 18th May 1977 and received a blood transfusion at Haverfordwest Hospital which is now Withybush Hospital. I was studying at Swansea College at the time and my mother was at the Chelsea Flower Show. My brother has provided information surrounding the accident but I understand that my father lost control of the car and hit a tree.
7. Following the accident, I visited my father in hospital with my mother. We were in shock although my dad was trying to be upbeat about the situation. He said that it was only a leg that he was still here and we would overcome this. He remained in hospital for 16 weeks on traction. He had emergency surgery to pin the bone in his leg and he received a blood transfusion in the process. He was in hospital for approximately 16 weeks on traction. He had a number of surgeries.
8. Eventually my father was told he had been infected with Hepatitis. I believe that my mother conveyed the news to me. I asked how he had contracted such a virus. In the coroners report, it states that they found Hepatitis, but there is no mention of "C" but I believe back then it was not categorised as such.

Section 3. Other Infections

9. I do not know if my dad received any other infections as a result of being given infected blood products.

Section 4. Consent

10. I am unaware as to whether Dad was treated without his consent. I believe that he was in an emergency situation and required surgery to his leg to pin it.

Section 5. Impact of the Infection

11. My brother has worked so hard over the last year researching symptoms of hepatitis and the reason for Dad's headaches which I understand were likely caused by his body not excreting toxins due to liver failure. He had such bad headaches and he took paracetamol to control these.
12. Following his operation, I spoke to dad numerous times throughout the months. Gradually, I started feeling as though he had changed. He wasn't the same man he had been prior to his operation. He had lost a lot of weight and his collars started looking big on him. I told him that I was worried about him so I went to our local GP on his behalf. My dad questioned why I went as he didn't feel any different. He tried to convince me that he would put the weight back on and eventually things would go back to normal. He said "I'm alright, don't worry, we'll get there". I feel he never wanted to burden me or Phillip with his health issues.
13. I can't say when it was but I was told by Mum that the doctor had told him he had Hepatitis. She told us that there was no cure for our dad's condition so we all agreed to carry on as normally as possible. It was difficult for us as we could physically see our father's health deteriorate. His weight loss was of great concern. On my wedding day, 19th July 1980, he was half the man he

had been prior to his accident. I was concerned about him being well enough to walk me down the aisle. He looked very ill and I was very concerned. I told him he was not well but he replied saying that he was here and I looked beautiful. In fact, he was going to deliver a speech at my wedding, but I was worried if he was able as he looked so frail. In the end he did. There is a photo of my parents on my wedding day; my mother was holding my father up because he was so weak.

14. On 15th April 1981 my mother found my father dead in his bed. On his death certificate it states that he died of paracetamol poisoning. As a result of this my mother had convinced herself that my dad committed suicide, even though all the evidence pointed to the contrary.
15. The Coroner firmly rejected that my dad committed suicide or died of paracetamol poisoning. Our parents close friend, Moya Cousins, recalls the coroner stating the same and recorded an open verdict. There was no evidence to suggest that my father had overdosed on paracetamol and that he committed suicide. He was a pharmacist and had he been trying to commit suicide, he would have known that the amount they found was insufficient to take his life. Furthermore, my dad never indicated to anyone that he had intended to take his own life. I understand from my brother that due to the liver failure he would have been unable to break down the paracetamol.
16. On the day of the Inquest, upon exiting the court, my mother and I went to the local pub and sat emotionless absorbing the information we had received. I cannot recall exactly what thoughts were passing through my mind at the time.
17. The effect of losing our father has been devastating. He and I were very close. As a father figure, he was always there for me no matter what I needed. We confided in him for everything. Growing up, I had the perfect childhood. Other children at school resented me for it and accused me of being snobby, but I literally had everything I could have asked for. We were

one of the first families in the area to have a colour television. My father purchased it and was so excited about it. Dad provided us with a very high standard of living. If our dishwasher was dirty and mum asked us to clean it, my dad would purchase a new one instead.

18. After he passed away; life was never the same. I miss him so much and think about him a lot. My brother settled down in **GRO-C** and unfortunately we drifted apart. As a family we were never as close again and we lead separate lives.

19. The time leading up to my brother and I meeting with our solicitor and making this statement is probably the most we have ever spoken about what happened. Throughout the years we have covered our pain and bottled up our feelings. We accepted that this was the life we were presented with and we got on with it.

20. My dad never had the opportunity to see his grandchildren. I fell pregnant soon after Dad died. Our children have missed the opportunity of getting to know their grandfather let alone meet him. That in itself I find heart-breaking. When my eldest was born, I was in a room on my own. That night the moon was shining so brightly I held my son up to the moon and spoke to my dad. I said, "Dad you have a grandson". I know that my father would have been an excellent role model to my children.

21. My mum was only 46 when dad died and it was life changing for her. Losing her husband destroyed her life. He was the breadwinner and mum kept the house; she did not work. This arrangement worked so well and together they led a great life. We always went on holidays and generally enjoyed life. The loss impacted badly on her as he was the main figure in our family.

22. As I have mentioned my mother died believing that dad killed himself. She was angry at him and cursed him for leaving her behind. She spent the next 20 years living alone and she did not enjoy that. It stole her happiness and caused her agony her whole life which she never got over. Even on her

death bed I had said to her that she could go to dad now and be happy, but my mum said she didn't want to as she had not forgiven him for leaving her. My mother died of motor neurone disease.

23. Thankfully we never faced any stigma due to Dad's infections. However, after Dad passed away, it was reported in the newspaper in our local area that the chemist had died from paracetamol poisoning. This caused my mother a lot of stress as she did not feel like she could go out in public with her head held high anymore. She felt as though people were talking about her under their breath. Of course we knew the truth, but my mum had convinced herself that our father had committed suicide.

24. Financially my mum struggled to cope as my dad provided the income for the household. Mum was too young to qualify for a widow's pension. She was angry for a long time.

25. I was employed with an estate agent but i left on 12 April 1981 a few days before Dad died to work in my dad's pharmacy. We had to find a locum as Dad was so ill so I was helping him with his books. Unfortunately, however, within a week of doing so, my dad died. My mum was glad that I was working at the pharmacy as I could help her out. Every Wednesday I went through the books and we had an accountant also helping us.

26. Eventually, a relative, who had studied pharmacy at university, took over the pharmacy.

27. Life has never been the same since Dad died. I have drifted apart from my brother as we tried to come to terms individually with Dad's death.

Section 6. Treatment/care/support

28. I have never had any counselling or psychological support as a consequence of Dad's death. This was not offered and I tried to be strong for Mum as she

was my main concern. I dealt with the grief in my own way. I do feel that she should have been offered counselling and would have benefited from it.

Section 7. Financial Assistance

29. I am not aware that my mother received any financial assistance as a consequence of Dad's death. I certainly have not received any financial assistance.

Section 8. Other Issues

30. I would like the Inquiry to deliver some form of closure for us, more so for Phillip than myself as he has spent a long time researching his death to link his death to Hepatitis and the blood transfusion he received 4 years prior to his death.

Anonymity

31. I do not want to remain anonymous.

32. I would like to give oral evidence to the Inquiry if called to do so. I would do it for Dad. I would do anything for my dad.

Statement of Truth

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

Signed.. GRO-C

Janice Ann Evans

Dated.. 23rd September 2019