

Witness Name: Kerri Hudson  
Statement No.: WITN0998001  
Exhibits: WITN0998002 –  
WITN0998008  
Dated: 18 October 2019

## INFECTED BLOOD INQUIRY

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### STATEMENT OF KERRI HUDSON

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I provide this statement in response to a request under Rule 9 of the Inquiry Rules 2006 dated 7 October 2019.

I, Kerri Hudson (DOB: [GRO-C]71), will say as follows: -

#### **Section 1: Introduction**

1. I am the daughter of the late Maureen Drane (DOB: [GRO-C]1946) DOD: 21.09.2018). I live at [GRO-C] Essex [GRO-C] [GRO-C] with my husband Simon and two daughters [GRO-C] and [GRO-C] [GRO-C]. I work as a Sales Administrator for Hyundai & Seat in Harlow.
2. I make this statement in connection with the care and treatment provided to my late mother by The Princess Alexandra Hospital NHS Trust.

#### **Section 2: How Infected/Affected**

3. My mother and father married on 22 July 1967 and had two children: myself (DOB: [GRO-C]71) and my brother Lee (DOB: [GRO-C]69).
4. I met Simon in 1998 and we married on 5/8/00.

5. My brother Lee lived with my parents when my mother was alive and still lives with my father, Terence Drane. I should say here that my father has already made a statement to the Inquiry dated 22 August 2019

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6. I am therefore making this statement so that I can give oral evidence in my father's place and will refer to his statement where necessary.
7. My relationship with my mother was the best any daughter could ask for. It is impossible to put our relationship into words. My mum always looked after me whatever my age. She was always there for me, with advice and support. She was my best friend.
8. Before being infected with hepatitis C, my mother worked as an auxiliary nurse at Princess Alexandra Hospital.
9. I know my mother had a subtotal thyroidectomy for goitre in 1990. I recall, we all visited her daily whilst she was in Princess Alexandra Hospital, but otherwise recall her as being in good health.
10. My mother was a very active person and led a healthy lifestyle. My grandmother lived into her eighties, and my mother's siblings who are still alive are in their eighties, so we have no doubt that my mother would have lived a much longer life, if she had not been infected with hepatitis C. As I have said above, her general health was good and she never suffered with any other long-term or serious illnesses.
11. My mother had a hysterectomy on 9 August 1994 at Princess Alexandra Hospital, Harlow. I remember visiting her in hospital. In her medical records is a letter from Dr Chhibber to my mother's GP, Dr Lowry dated 21 September 1994 (copy attached and exhibited at WITN0998002) which confirms that my mother was given a blood transfusion during this operation:

*“There is no history of foreign travel alcohol or contact with Jaundice, she had two units of blood transfuse 6 weeks ago with the operation.”*

12. I understand from my father's statement that at the time of the hysterectomy operation, my mother was under the care of Dr Wilson, Consultant Obstetrician and Gynaecologist at St Margaret's Hospital, and Dr Kamala and Dr Masters were the surgeons who operated on my mother.

13. A letter from Dr Oxley, Consultant Haematologist to Dr Gorman dated 5 March 1995 (copy attached and exhibited at WITN0998003) sets out the details of the blood my mother was given during her operation:

*“Thank you for your enquiry about this lady who has been found to be strongly anti-HCV positive. Our blood bank records show that she was cross-matched and issued with two units of PRB A Negative blood both expiring 02/09/1994 the numbers being 326787J3 and 326874J8. We have no record of her being transfused with any other blood products...Our records show that these two units were cross-matched and not returned to stock so presumably she received them.”*

14. I understand from my father's statement at paragraph 17 that my mother was not told that she had contracted hepatitis C as a result of her blood transfusion until 1998. A letter from Simon Whalley, Research Fellow to Dr Pradhan dated 27 July 1998 (copy attached and exhibited at WITN0998004) confirms this:

*“I gather from Dr Gorman at the Blood Transfusion Centre that the unit of blood received was negative for anti-HCV. However subsequent investigations have revealed that the donor was PCR positive for HCV RNA and has subsequently undergone seroconversion to anti-HCV positive status...”*

*...I discussed with Mrs Drane the diagnosis of hepatitis C...”*

### **Section 3: Other Infections**

15. I am not aware of any other infections my mother contracted.

#### **Section 4: Consent**

16. I understand from paragraph 22 of my father's statement that my mother was only made aware of her blood transfusion after her surgery, and that there was a possibility she may not have even needed the blood transfusion. My mother and father were not advised that the blood used for the transfusion could potentially be contaminated.
17. I believe my mother was treated and given blood without her knowledge and consent.

#### **Section 5: Impact**

18. My father states in his statement at paragraph 11 that following the hysterectomy and blood transfusion, my mother appeared to be coping well. That fits with my recollection and is how I remember her too.
19. However, my mother started to feel unwell in and around September 1994, I had just come back from my holiday in Mauritius and noticed that my Mum looked very unwell and extremely yellow. I will never forget how she looked. I recall being extremely worried.
20. A letter from Dr Chhibber to Dr Lowry dated 21 September 1994 already attached and exhibited at WITN0998002 notes my mother's symptoms:

*"She tells me that since a week she has been very jaundiced and suffered from nausea and vomiting...she complained of dark urine and ight stools."*

The same letter notes:

*"There has been no abdominal pain..."*

*On examination the liver is not enlarged, no tenderness, no masses."*

21. My father recalls these symptoms continuing for approximately four weeks, and my mother undergoing a number of blood tests. The letter dated 21 September 1994 notes the blood tests my mother was sent for:

*"I have sent her for some blood tests – hepatitis A, B & C, clotting factors U&E's and LFT's, and repeated the liver function test along with a liver ultrasound scan."*

22. A letter from Dr Ansari, Registrar in General Medicine to Dr Chhibber dated 3 October 1994 (copy attached and exhibited at WITN0998005) first mentions a hepatitis infection:

*"She also has a history of going to Malta in early August and this would fit nicely for hepatitis A...She was immunised for hepatitis B...There was no peripheral stigmata of chronic active hepatitis such as vitiligo but she does have a past medical history of thyroid disease..."*

*...We are therefore managing her conservatively at the moment as her blood chemistry shows a hepatitis which is improving."*

23. However, a letter from P. C. Richardson, Consultant Physician to Dr Diana Lowry dated 16 February 1995 (copy attached and exhibited at WITN0998006) states that my mother made a recovery from clinical hepatitis:

*"We now find that she has antibodies to hepatitis C. She has made a complete recovery from her clinical hepatitis which I thought was consistent with hepatitis A but of course she did have a blood transfusion in August last year...It is not for me to say what patients can get up to on holidays in Malta as hepatitis c can be acquired sexually or via an infected blood transfusion..."*

24. My father states at paragraph 15 of his statement that both he and my mother were extremely hurt when they read this letter as it implies my mother contracted hepatitis C by having causal sex in Malta. I too find this very upsetting and insensitive, and feel disgusted that a doctor can write such things about a patient. To this day, I feel very upset about this; the doctor's attitude and insensitivity is sickening. I note in the same letter that P. C. Richardson also states:



*“The excitement now of course is to find out whether the donor of the blood is suffering from hepatitis C.”*

25. I think to refer to a hepatitis C infection as “exciting” is not only thoughtless but I also find it extremely offensive.
26. I understand from my father’s statement that my mother had a liver biopsy in March 1997 due to her hepatitis like illnesses, and the biopsy showed features consistent with chronic active hepatitis C.
27. Following treatment for the hepatitis C, my mother started to suffer with abdominal swelling. I understand from my father’s statement that my mother was advised to limit her fluid intake and have a salt restricted diet. The abdominal swelling was investigated further in 2011, and it was then confirmed that my mother had developed chronic liver disease/cirrhosis. My mother was put on treatment for this which I understand, subsequently damaged her kidneys.
28. On 2 August 2012 my mother had a liver transplant at the Royal Free Hospital. However, this was complicated by rejection, a bile leak and recurrent ascites. The ascites required draining on a regular basis. . After the liver transplant my mum was in and out of hospital for about 6 months until she could finally come home. Over the years she had regular visits to the Royal Free Hospital as they never felt they could transfer her to a local hospital, as there were always complications. I went to most of her appointments with her. These appointments got harder and harder for my mum to cope with physically and mentally as well as myself. I remember that people would stare at her swollen stomach, and complete strangers would comment on how great it was that a woman of her age was expecting a baby, which gives an indication of how swollen her stomach was. Both she and I found this very upsetting.
29. My mother passed away on 21 September 2018
30. My parents enjoyed an active lifestyle and enjoyed travelling. I remember going on camping and skiing holidays when I was growing up. My mother also enjoyed taking the dog for long walks and caring for her ducks, which she kept

in her garden. She also had 1½ acres of land of which she maintained. However, following my mother's diagnosis her life (and my father's) became much more isolated. She was too weak to travel or go out walking and began to suffer with bladder issues due to the recurrent ascites. My mother also suffered with fluid accumulation on her legs and had to give up driving.

31. My mother became very dependent upon me, my father and brother. My brother and I would accompany her to hospital appointments for treatment. My mother tried to avoid attending the dentist or non related medical appointments where she could, as she didn't like telling them that she had hepatitis C.
32. I found it extremely hard to accept how my mum was infected with hepatitis c, and I feel as though I will never get over it. It is of some comfort to know that I was always there for my mum from when she started having hospital appointments. I would always ask plenty of questions about how things would affect my mum and if there were any alternatives that she could do. In short, I tried my best to be as supportive as possible.
33. Whilst my mum was in hospital I would visit her usually 4 to 5 times a week. Most of the time I would go straight from work. I would arrive at the hospital at about 2pm and generally stay there until 8pm. During this time I would help her shower if she felt up to it and generally look after her, including getting her any food or anything else she needed. During this time I would not get home until about 10pm of which was very hard for my husband and daughters.
34. I tried to always stay strong, and for the most part succeeded in looking as though I was coping well, however inside I would be crumbling. It was an extremely difficult time for us all. I will never get over the loss of my mum as I truly feel she was taken from too early. As everyone will understand a mother is very special and you never get to an age where you feel like you don't need her; you always need your mother however old you are. I feel completely lost without her, and I don't think that feeling will ever go away. I have lost my trust in doctors and hospitals, no matter who it is, whenever someone I know or care about goes into hospital, I find myself questioning everything.

35. Despite my mother's diagnosis of hepatitis C, and to all of our surprise the Princess Alexandra Hospital were happy for my mother to continue to work on the maternity ward. However, my mother was not comfortable with this and in addition she was suffering with chronic exhaustion and fatigue. She therefore left her job in March 1995 as an auxiliary nurse, and took a job working as an office administrator for a local farmer.

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

36. I was concerned to read in the letter from Dr Ansari to Dr Chhibber dated 3 October 1994 (already exhibited at WITN0998005) that the treatment used for my mother during her operation was not certain:

*"History of note is two previous surgical procedures in 1981 and 1990. Halothane was used on at least one of the occasions and the use of halothane in 1994 for abdominal hysterectomy is uncertain."*

37. I understand from my father's statement under paragraph 19 that after my mother's hepatitis C diagnosis, my mother was seen by Dr Richard Marley at the Royal Free Hospital. My father attended this appointment with my mother, and Dr Marley explained the nature of my mother's hepatitis C infection and possible complications, including the risk of liver cancer and cirrhosis. My father also states that my mother was told to avoid alcohol, and the risks of intravenous drug abuse, having casual sex and tattooing were explained. If my mother ever cut herself and began to bleed, she needed to be careful and she was also advised not to share her toothbrush.

38. The letter from Simon Whalley to Dr Pradhan dated 27 July 1998 (already exhibited at WITN0998004) states that treatment was available for my mother:

*"I discussed with Mrs Drane the diagnosis of hepatitis C and antiviral therapy using interferon..."*

*She is keen to start antiviral therapy...She may be a good candidate for a trial of pegylated (longacting preparation) interferon..."*



39. My mother received the pegylated treatment at the Royal Free Hospital as St Margaret's Hospital did not have sufficient funding for the treatment. This was not ideal as it meant my mother and I had to travel on the train to her appointments, which took over an hour each way, at a time when my mother was very fragile.
40. As my father states in his statement, the pegylated treatment was horrendous. My mother suffered with skin irritation, nausea and insomnia. My mother was constantly tired, anxious and seemed very low. She was not offered any counselling or psychological support, nor were we when we found out about my mother's diagnosis or following her death.

### **Section 7: Financial Assistance**

41. My husband was advised that the Skipton Fund offered financial assistance to those affected with hepatitis C. I therefore made an application to the Skipton Fund on my mother's behalf. However, in a letter to my mother from Nicholas Fish, Scheme Administrator dated 10 April 2012 (copy attached and exhibited at WITN0998007), Mr Fish advised that my mother's application had been rejected:

*"The Skipton Fund was set up by the Department of Health to provide ex-gratia payments to people who were thought to have been infected with hepatitis C, as a result of receiving treatment with NHS blood or blood products prior to September 1991. From the information we have received regarding your claim it appears that the treatment your doctor thinks may have been the source of your infection was during hysterectomy in 1994 which would fall outside of the remit of the scheme."*

42. As this application had been unsuccessful, I was advised by Georgie Robinson at The Haemophilia Society to apply to the Hepatitis C Trust. Unfortunately this application was also rejected because again, my mother did not meet the specific time criteria.

43. I therefore wrote to my local MP, Sir Alan Haselhurst. Mr Haselhurst advised that he could not help as my mother didn't live in his constituency. However, Mrs Eleanor Laing who was the MP for Epping Forest in 2012 wrote to me to confirm that she would look into the matter for us.

44. On 6 August 2012, Mrs Laing wrote to me again enclosing a copy of a letter addressed to her from Anne Milton, Parliamentary Under Secretary of State for Public Health which stated:

*"I was very sorry to hear that Mrs Drane has hepatitis C. However, as you are aware, the Skipton Fund was established specifically to make payments to people infected through their treatment with NHS-supplied blood or blood products before the advent of screening blood donations for hepatitis C, which was introduced in the UK in September 1991.*

*As your constituent has confirmed in her correspondence that Mrs Drane contracted hepatitis C in 1994, this would make her ineligible to a payment from the Skipton Fund..."*

Copies of my correspondence with Mrs Laing are attached and exhibited at WITN0998008.

45. I also made an application to the DWP for disability allowance for my mother, and other applications for financial support from the government but these were all refused. The only successful application I made was for a disabled parking badge for my mother but this was received a week after she died.

46. We were, and remain, very upset about the fact that my mother did not receive any financial assistance following her diagnosis of hepatitis C. The money would have helped to make her life more comfortable in that adaptations could have been made to my parents' house to accommodate her failing health, and she wouldn't have had to work as much meaning she could have spent more of her time with her family.

**Statement of Truth**

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

Signed GRO-C

Dated 18/10/19