

Witness Name: William Richardson

Statement No: WITN1488001

Exhibits: 0

Dated: 29th January 2019

INFECTED BLOOD INQUIRY

FIRST WRITTEN WITNESS STATEMENT OF WILLIAM RICHARDSON

I, William Richardson, will say as follows:-

Section 1. Introduction

1. My name is William Richardson though I am known as Bill. My date of birth is the **GRO-C** 1955 and I live at **GRO-C** **GRO-C** With my wife. I am a school teacher and run the Strawberry How Nursery School in Cockermouth, Cumbria.
2. I make this impact statement in relation to my uncle, my mother's brother, Thomas Henry Chesterton otherwise known as Harry who was born on the **GRO-C** **GRO-C** 1931. Harry was originally a brick layer but later when the house building market dipped in the early 1970's Harry turned his hand to making tubes for televisions for Thorn AEI, a company in Pallion, Sunderland. Harry was married to Sheila and they had a daughter, also Sheila **GRO-C** **GRO-C** Harry and Sheila lived in **GRO-C** Tyne and Wear and their daughter Sheila still lives there.

3. This statement has been prepared without the benefit of access to Harry's medical records. I have applied for his records but am told that the hospital destroys records 30 years after a patient's death and GP surgeries destroy records 10 years after a patient's death. Therefore, I make this statement from memory and Harry's death certificate.

Section 2. How Infected

4. Harry suffered from Rheumatoid Arthritis which runs in our family. Harry's mother, sister (my mother Violet) and two brothers suffered from this condition. That generation have all passed away as has Harry's wife Sheila.
5. Harry was given one or more blood transfusions at the Freeman Hospital in Newcastle as a treatment for his Rheumatoid Arthritis, Harry's particular arthritis was with Felty's syndrome indicating that his white blood count was very low hence the need for transfusions.
6. I do not know when or how many transfusions Harry had or the makes of any of the blood products used.
7. I do not know whether any information or advice was provided to Harry beforehand about the risk of being exposed to infection. But as Rheumatoid Arthritis is such a painful condition I expect Harry would have tried anything to relieve the symptoms.
8. As a result of receiving the blood transfusion Harry was infected with Human Immunodeficiency Virus (HIV).
9. I do not know when or how Harry was told about his infection but it must have been in the early 1980's. I believe he was one of the first people to have developed the Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome (AIDS) as I recall him

telling me, when I went to see him in December 1982 and he was very ill with AIDS, that he had been presented in a wheelchair to an auditorium full of doctors at the Freeman Hospital. I assume Harry must have been a case study and Harry told me that the doctor presenting described to those in attendance his condition, it was as if they had not seen it before. It was not very subtle, they were viewing him negatively and Harry said it made him feel very small.

Section 3. Other Infections

10. I do not know if Harry had any other infections as a result of being treated with infected blood.

Section 4. Consent

11. I do not know if Harry was treated or tested without his knowledge, without his consent or without being given adequate or full information; or for the purpose of research.

Section 5. Impact

12. After I left school I went to Plymouth College for three years then I took a teaching job in southern England before teaching abroad for six years. Therefore, I only returned home to GRO-C where my parents lived too, in summer and winter school holidays so I was not around very much at the relevant time.
13. I recall seeing Harry in the summer of 1982, but I do not remember him being ill at all.
14. As stated above, I visited Harry when he was very ill in hospital in December 1982. I knew he was very ill but I did not know his condition. He was only early

50's but he looked like an 80 year old, he was all skin and bones. I was with my mother, his sister. We wanted to clean him and shave him, as he was in a terrible state; however, he was still able to talk at the time.

15. Harry's demise happened very quickly, months not years. I believe he may have had the transfusion when he received infected blood in 1982 and he died on the 11th April 1983.

16. None of us knew about HIV or AIDS and it was only later after I saw Harry's death certificate that I became aware of the stated cause of death 1. Pneumonia, 2. immunodeficiency, 3. hypersplenism and 4. rheumatoid arthritis with Felty's syndrome. As far as I was aware Harry's condition was not spoken of. Even my mother did not know till after Harry died and she would have known if it was spoken about as she was 'Head of our Family' and very involved with everyone.

17. I do not know if my Aunt Sheila was infected. She died on the 11th July 2002 at the age of 70.

18. Harry and Sheila's daughter, Shelia, was born on the **GRO-C** 1961 **GRO-C**
GRO-C
GRO-C Sheila lives on her own at **GRO-C**
GRO-C
GRO-C Sheila is a lost person, she has no parents. She was 22 years old when her father died **GRO-C**

19. **GRO-C**
GRO-C Her general health is very good and she attends the gym at the Centre, sugar craft and pottery lessons, as well as computer sessions. **GRO-C**
GRO-C
GRO-C I doubt she has been on an overseas holiday.

20.

GRO-C

GRO-C Essentially Sheila misses her mother and father and can become very upset if we talk about them to her.

21.

Over the years Sheila has appeared more stressed and angry, **GRO-C**

GRO-C

GRO-C I recall visiting her recently and she had propped wheelie bins against her front door for security reasons so people could not get to her front door.

Section 6. Treatment/Care/Support

22. I do not know if Harry faced any difficulties or obstacles in obtaining treatment, care or support in consequence of being infected with HIV.

23. I do not know if counselling or psychological support has ever been made available to Harry or Sheila or their daughter Sheila.

Section 7. Financial Assistance

24. I do not believe Harry or Sheila or their daughters Sheila have ever received any financial support as Harry and Sheila's daughter, Shelia has nothing. My mother tried to persuade Aunt Sheila to ask questions but she was not interested and she did not do anything. They were a bit like that, this was not a 'claiming

culture', and their attitude was to 'just get on with it'. However, I also do not know if Aunt Sheila could not be bothered or if it a claim would be too stressful for her.

Anonymity, Disclosure and Redaction

25. I confirm I do not wish to have anonymity and that I understand the statement will be published and disclosed as part of the Inquiry.
26. I do wish to be called to give oral evidence if I can assist the Inquiry.

Statement of Truth

I believe that the facts stated in this Witness Statement are true.

Signed..

GRO-C

William Richardson

Dated: 29th January 2019.