

Witness Name: Graham Howard Simpson

Statement No: WITN1518001

Exhibit: WITN1518002

Dated: January 2019

INFECTED BLOOD INQUIRY

FIRST WRITTEN STATEMENT OF GRAHAM HOWARD SIMPSON

I, Graham Howard Simpson will say as follows:-

Section 1. Introduction

1. My name is Graham Howard Simpson of GRO-C
GRO-C born on GRO-C 1953. I am an only child and both of my parents have now passed away. I am a married man with three grown up children and I am retired.
2. I provide this statement in response to a request under Rule 9 of the Inquiry Rules 2006.
3. This witness statement has been prepared without the benefit of access to my late father's medical records.

Section 2. How Affected

4. I make this statement in connection with my late father Kenneth Simpson of GRO-C Leeds, GRO-C who died a week after a liver bypass operation on 19 November 1983 aged 58.

5. I also make this statement in connection with my late mother Elizabeth Mabel Simpson, who was also known as 'Betty', who passed away on 16 October 2011 aged 84.
6. My father Kenneth Simpson was a Haemophiliac. He did not have a lot of bleeds and I am not aware that he ever had a serious bleed.
7. My father was given Factor VIII products when he had a knee replacement operation at St James's Hospital, Leeds in or around 1974. The only other treatment that he had received was about 10 years before this, in or around 1964, when he had a boil and was admitted to hospital for about a week. I do not recall he was given anything before that.
8. My father was treated at Leeds Royal Infirmary and St James's Hospital, Leeds.
9. My father did not like to discuss his Haemophilia and he kept a lot of this to himself. I was even unaware that he was a Haemophiliac until the Hepatitis illness came about. I remember when I was a child that my father used to bruise a lot and he had swelling of his joints and was in a wheelchair at times, but as a child I did not question this.
10. His skin turned yellow within months of his knee operation in 1974. I am unsure how my father was told that he had non-A, non-B Hepatitis but I assume he looked in the mirror, saw he was yellow and was then sent for tests.
11. My father was told quite early on after the knee operation that he had non-A, non-B Hepatitis. He shared this information with my mother and me as he had to explain that we had to be careful not to become infected. My parents were basically left to deal with the situation with no explanation of what had happened and why he had been infected in this way.
12. With regard to the information and instructions that I received personally, I only found out through my mother who had been told that we would need

special care to prevent cross infection of the rest of the family. My mother nursed him and our home effectively turned into a hospital ward.

Section 3. Other Infections

13. I am only aware my father had non-A, non-B Hepatitis which I understand was later renamed as Hepatitis C.

Section 4. Consent

14. I do not know if my father was tested without his consent and I am unsure if he was used as a 'guinea pig' or for research.

Section 5. Impact of the Infection

Impact on my father:

15. After contracting Hepatitis, there were times when my father could not get on with life. He was destroyed. It was a terrible thing to watch. He was not well. He was fatigued and not feeling himself. I believe there was about a 10 year period from his knee operation to him passing away. The original problem was seen when his skin went a funny colour and he started to go yellow. The infection was devastating and crept up slowly and there was a gradual worsening of his health over the years as his liver deteriorated. We just had to wait as his health gradually deteriorated in front of us during his retirement. It was a slow process. He didn't complain but was destroyed physically.

16. His quality of life was destroyed. He didn't go out a lot. I believe he closed in on himself and felt embarrassed and that he had let people down. My father was not the man he had been. Previously he was a jolly person but I believe he had lost this about himself. He was on a slide down to death and he became more and more depressed.

17. My father used to enjoy doing crosswords and reading books which he carried on doing when he was unwell. However, his other main hobby was attending

rugby league matches with me or one of his friends but he did not go to them anymore after he had become infected.

18. He developed severe liver problems which ended up killing him. I know my father wanted answers but my mother did not. He started writing letters over a number of years to people at the Health Service to get an explanation from the NHS as to what had gone wrong and to MPs, but he never received any apology or explanation. He was ignored and unfortunately he died before he could take things further.

19. He was told that his liver was seriously infected and that no cure was available. He eventually became so ill that the doctors decided that his only chance was to have a liver bypass operation but this only had a 30% chance of success. The hospital were initially reluctant to give him this operation because everything in the operating theatre would be infected with the Hepatitis but eventually, as a desperate measure the doctors made a last ditch effort to try to help and gave him the operation to as I understand it bypass his liver. After this operation he contracted infections within his body and unfortunately he did not recover. He died on 19 November 1983, which was a week after the operation.

Impact on my mother:

20. It was horrible for me seeing the strain on my mother and she struggled to look after my father. My mother could not deal with the fact that he was infected or the fact he was dying because of it all. She just shut down.

21. Everything fell on her which then started to fall on me because she needed more support from me.

22. My mother became his nurse and constant carer. We were at risk of cross infection and it was frightening to think that we could catch this too. We had to be very vigilant to ensure that we did not become infected as Hepatitis is very infectious and my mother put procedures and regimes in place to prevent us becoming infected.

23. All of a sudden my father had this infection and we had to be very careful about bathing and towels. My mother would disinfect the bath or shower after each use. My father had his own cup that he used for his cup of tea.
24. My mother and father could not go away on holiday because the worry of the infection; picking up something in a hotel room and disinfecting everything. During the time he was infected, my Mum would occasionally go for a weekend away with friends but that was it.
25. After the infection they did not socialize as much as they were concerned about infecting others.
26. It was devastating to my mother when he passed away. Looking back at it no one ever came to the house. My mother did not want to talk about it. She was in denial and closed in, as if it had never happened. Following his death my mother did not want to raise the matter of why he had been infected as she was too upset to deal with it.

Impact on me:

27. I was very shocked and I lost a father who used to support me when I was 30 years old.
28. I was in my early twenties when all this happened and at the time it was all a bit unreal and confusing watching my father deteriorate before me. I was still living at home at weekends but was working away during the week. Due to all the precautions we had to take I felt that we were living in a hospital ward; in short life was hell.
29. I moved out at 25 when I married my wife. I told my wife about the infection but it was difficult to share, as she worked in Pathology and she understood it was a hard situation being in the home. From memory at that time my father was not as debilitated as he became until a few years after the infection.

30. My father became more and more dependent on other people and he was not as proactive as he used to be. As he became more and more ill he could not do those things. I started filling in roles that my father would have done.
31. When my father died everything was left for me to deal with including supporting my mother emotionally, and including the funeral. I fulfilled my father's role of managing the home, so when anything came through the post regarding money I dealt with the finances for her. I took over that role for my mother as she had never dealt with those things.
32. When he died, the hospital could not get rid of him quick enough. My Mum struggled to come to terms with what had happened and she asked to meet with medical staff for an explanation which I also attended. In the meeting there was a full acknowledgment that infected blood products had been used at that time of the knee operation. They explained to me why the Factor VIII was used and that my father would have been unable to have the knee operation without it. I recall that the doctors were very careful what they said during this meeting. The doctors had explained that the chances of the liver operation being successful were quite minimal but they said my father had agreed to take that risk.
33. At the meeting with the consultants my mother shouted at them and I was shocked. She was not a woman for having outbursts. She was shattered and heartbroken. In this meeting, my mother was unable to accept what they were saying; that because of his infection the likelihood was that he was not going to live long. My mother was just angry that it had happened and she wanted to blame someone for it all.
34. I believe the doctors at the end had tried to help. It was not them who had provided the Factor VIII when they were carrying out the liver operation.
35. Regarding his death certificate they did not want to put down that he had a liver infection due to Hepatitis. All they would put on it was that he was a Hemophiliac. Also I had to press for the death certificate to state that the liver

disease was non alcoholic. I explained that it should state what actually killed him and not just the side effect. I attach the death certificate at WITN1518002.

36. My children were born after my father passed away. To them, Grandad is a plaque in the cemetery.

Stigma

37. Myself and my mother were the only ones who were told about the Hepatitis infection and we kept this to ourselves. My mother did not want to share this with others. The friends my mother and father had were not aware why my father was ill as my parents did not share this information with them because they were embarrassed.

Financial impact on my mother

38. Before my father was infected he worked for British Rail organizing the freight side of things and they offered him a package to retire on ill health grounds due to problems with rheumatics. He also received a disability pension.

39. After my father died the pension that my mother received was a widow's pension from the British Rail. She was left without a husband at a young age and the financial security that she could have expected had he not died.

40. I believe my mother was forced into getting a job because of the lack of finances coming in.

Section 6. Treatment/care/support

41. I was never offered any counselling or support. I do not remember any support being given to my mother either. There was certainly no physical help, and there was no special equipment like beds or even carers. I think in the early years the work my mother carried out was to ensure that neither she nor I became infected. In the later years it was more physical care from my mother towards my father. No one came to the house, no one came near her.

42. Similarly, after my father died no one came to the home to see if we were coping.

43. I believe my father went to St James's Hospital for his dental treatment but at that time he was not sharing this with me.

44. I am unsure if he had difficulties accessing treatment. I do not remember him being offered any treatment except for the liver bypass.

Section 7. Financial Assistance

45. There was no financial assistance offered at the time or afterwards. My mother did not receive any payments from any Trusts. No one contacted my mother or me to advise on how she could have been compensated or helped to get through this nightmare which ruined her life.

Section 8. Other Issues

46. On a personal level I was robbed of a father far too early. It was a strain coming to terms with what had happened. I had to support my mother who struggled to come to terms with things and she was not herself for about 12 months after his death. My mother actually took a job on for a while at a hotel with a friend she knew, she worked there part-time for about 5 years. She then worked at the Wheatfields Hospice in Leeds as a voluntary worker for many years almost up to her death, for about 15 to 20 years. She started doing things to occupy her which took her mind elsewhere in order for her to cope. Working at the Hospice, she was very good at working with the other people there, but she was unable to deal with my Dad's illness or her own life.

47. The consequences of what happened will never go away. My parents had been married for about 30 years when my father died and then my mother lived by herself for almost 27 years. It was sad for me and my mother and the grandchildren that he never met. The whole thing was quite cruel.

48. I am giving this statement because I feel as though my father should be recognised. I also feel that my mother should have been looked after financially. Her life was not what it would have been if my father was still alive.

49. I am angrier now because I believe that there are still things being covered up. I also feel that I was let down by the Health Service who knew full well what had happened. I believe they wanted to cover things up at his death by not being clear on his death certificate. It was only my intervention that ensured they added that his death was non alcoholic cirrhosis; although I believe that it should really have said death from contaminated blood products.

Anonymity, disclosure and redaction

50. I do not wish to be anonymous.

51. I am happy to provide oral evidence if needed at the inquiry.

Statement of Truth

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

Signed.....

GRO-C

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Dated..... 22-1-19