

Witness Name: Nicola Burrridge
Statement No: WITN2426001
Exhibits: **WITN2426002**
Dated: 2nd March 2019

INFECTED BLOOD INQUIRY

FIRST WRITTEN STATEMENT OF NICOLA BURRIDGE

I provide this statement in response to a request under Rule 9 of the Inquiry rules 2006 dated 12th December 2018. I adopt the paragraph numbering in the Rule 9 request for ease of reference.

I, Nicola Burrridge will say as follows:-

1. Introduction

1. My name is Nicola Burrridge. My date of birth is GRO-C 1970 and my address is known to the Inquiry.

2. How Affected

1. I was 15 years old when my father passed away. My husband works in the media industry and that is how I found out about the Inquiry.
2. My mother did not want to give a statement initially, reliving it has been very difficult for her. However, she has since changed her mind and is also giving a statement.

3. From what I can remember, at the beginning of February 1985, my father was taking Warfarin for his heart. Concerning the blood he had been given I have heard different stories as to what he was medicated with and the possibility that he was over-prescribed Warfarin. I remember him being swollen from an internal bleed.
4. I recall my mother saying at the time that he was being treated with Factor VIII for this. My father had been over-prescribed Warfarin and this was believed to have caused the internal bleed. This was the first and only time my father was ever treated with Factor VIII. From what my mother has told me, my father was given Factor VIII at Morriston hospital, Swansea.
5. I remember when my father fell ill, his health and quality of life deteriorated very rapidly. Not only did he become unwell physically but his mental health also suffered.
6. I remember my mother being at home with me and coming into bed with me after we were told he had died at Singleton hospital. I had to go on and be strong for my mother as she was so distressed and besides herself.
7. It was all quite vague what had happened. My mother was so shocked and upset. I didn't want to lose them both. My father was given Factor VIII when he was admitted to Moriston hospital. However, I haven't seen any of my father's medical records as they have been destroyed.
8. Until it came out in the news, we didn't know what was going on. I recall watching a television show on the BBC presented by Carol Vorderman which discussed the contaminated blood scandal. Whilst watching the television programme I realised my father was a victim of contaminated blood. It was awful what the blood had been contaminated with. I cannot believe blood had

been taken from prostitutes and individuals who had used drugs. I find it horrendous!

9. I don't remember what my father passed away from but he suffered with his heart very badly. I have since obtained my father's death certificate and it states that my father passed away from Acute Hepatic Failure. I refer to Exhibit WITN2426002 which is a copy of my father's death certificate. When my father passed away the hospital told my mother that he could have died from HIV or hepatitis C as a result of the Factor VIII he received.
10. Me and my mother never really talked about my father's death. It was left to one side as it was very upsetting. We never understood how this could have happened. My father was a healthy man. It was only until I got older did my mother discuss with me that my father had been given the Factor VIII blood products. The only thing I remember was the internal bleed on his arm, this was very significant.
11. When my father's health deteriorated his treatment moved from Moriston Hospital to Singleton hospital. The last time I saw him was at Singleton Hospital.
12. I remember this all happening in February 1985. It was very close to Valentines Day. I remember receiving a Valentines Day card from my friends at school which contained a message of condolence inside. The whole of my school year had signed it, it was very sweet.
13. I am unsure if my father was given any information about the risk of infection from the blood. I was told that my father had received contaminated blood. I was not told if my father was infected with HIV or hepatitis C or if it was both. I didn't specifically get told if it was one or the other.

14. My mother or brother told me this information as one of them had been told this at the hospital by a medical professional. My brother and mother would have been told by a medical professional that my father had received the blood. However, we now know that he passed away from Acute Hepatic Failure. Like I said earlier on in my statement I was very young and the majority of information I received relating to my father's death was from my mother.

15. I am unsure if my father was tested for hepatitis C, but what I am aware of is that his death certificate stated that he died as a result of liver complications.

3. Other infections

1. My father was on Warfarin for a life-long heart condition but apart from this, I am unaware of any other conditions that he suffered from.

4. Consent

1. I am unaware if my father was tested without his consent.

2. I don't know if my father was tested without adequate or full information.

5. Impact

1. I remember visiting my father at the Hospital and he was shouting loudly. Seeing him deteriorate and in this mental state was very distressing. It was very out of character and strange.

2. I am not sure of any further conditions that my father has been diagnosed with or had. I would say that he was out of character in the weeks leading up to his death. I don't know how much pain he was in- but he was out of character. I remember him being at home and him acting strangely. I remember it all

happening so incredibly quickly. I was only 15 years old at the time, therefore I wasn't entirely sure what was happening to my father.

3. He was in bed and I remember him walking around in circles and not really knowing what was going on around him. At the time, I was so upset that I was taken away.
4. When my father passed away I recall my mother and I cuddling in a single bed as we both comforted each other.
5. I don't remember anyone coming with me and talking about my father's cause of death. However I do remember my mother telling us that he was given the Factor VIII which ultimately led to his death.
6. The impact has been that it was a massive shock and having to deal with a mother who was shocked and devastated was also very difficult. I believe that I had to grow up a little faster than I wanted to. It had some impact on my schooling. I would say a massive void was created in my life. My father was such a fun and bubbly character. I still miss him terribly.
7. He was loved by everyone. The main concern was the worrying about my mother and dealing with a huge situation like this when you're 15.
8. My mother was the worst affected. My brother was now the man of the house and the family. I felt as though he had to sort everything out. All of this was a shock to everyone, including my father's brothers and sisters who he was very close to.
9. My father had a large circle of friends. They were terribly shocked at the situation. He was a very strong man in terms of physicality. For a while I couldn't concentrate in school. It was the start of the GCSE's we were the first year to sit those exams.

10. I must say however, that after my father's passing I was never aware of any financial burden on my family. He was the main breadwinner and after he passed it was just my mother who financially supported me.

6. Treatment/Care Support

1. I have never been offered any kind of counselling or psychological support. It wasn't done in the 1980s. It was just family support. My mother has a great family and I had a lot of support from family members.
2. My mother's family were very close. My father was one of seven and my mother was one of eleven so I always had a lot of support.

7. Financial Assistance

1. I wasn't aware of financial assistance being available for haemophiliacs who had been infected with contaminated blood.

8. Other Issues

1. There have been many comments regarding the destruction of medical records which implies there was some sort of cover up.
2. I would like some sort of answers in relation to my father passing away and whether or not there was a cover up! I really want to know what was going on at the time in respect of blood products individuals were being given.

Statement of Truth

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

Signed,

GRO-C

Dated.....

2/3/19.....