

Witness Name: SALLY WOODLEY

Statement No: WITN1611001

Exhibits: 0

Dated: FEBRUARY 2019

INFECTED BLOOD INQUIRY

FIRST WRITTEN STATEMENT OF SALLY WOODLEY

I, Sally Woodley, will say as follows:-

Section 1. Introduction

1. My name is Sally Woodley. I was born on **GRO-C** 1962 and I live at **GRO-C** **GRO-C** Cornwall **GRO-C** I am by occupation a Library Manager at **GRO-C** College.
2. My father, Jeffrey Arthur Smith (born on **GRO-C** 1937) was infected with the Hepatitis C Virus (HCV) from contaminated blood products. He died from a bleed on a nodule in his liver caused by liver cancer on 19th April 1917 aged 80.
3. My sister, Kay, has given her own Statement to the Inquiry (Witness Number WITN1453001).
4. This witness statement has been prepared without the benefit of access to my father's medical records.

Section 2. How Affected

5. My father had mild hemophilia A. He was diagnosed with it from the 'get go'. It was in the family. GRO-C He was cosseted by his mother in childhood but had many battles. My father also had severe asthma. He was a very determined person and just got on with living life to the maximum. My father told me that he GRO-C given snake venom as treatment for haemophilia GRO-C
6. My father was treated at the Truro Haemophilia Centre, The Royal Cornwall (Treliske) Hospital, under the care of Dr Helena Daly and Dr Creagh. My father rarely needed Factor VIII (FVIII) treatment and never at home. I can remember two significant occasions of my father receiving FVIII during his adulthood. On Boxing Day in 1984 he was admitted to hospital with a stomach ulcer. He was in hospital then for 4 or 5 weeks and was given quite a lot of FVIII in order to stop an internal bleed. In 1986 or 1987 he had a circumcision operation and had FVIII then as well.
7. My father was told that he had HCV by a junior doctor on a hospital ward in the late 1980s/early 1990s. Because of the passage of time, I do not recall precisely when that was or why he was in hospital. My father was an amiable character and easy to talk to. He was in his hospital bed chatting to the doctor in question when the doctor said "of course, you do know that you've got Hepatitis C, don't you?" My father did not. My father did not know that he had been tested for HCV. He did not know what HCV was. It was a complete shock to him and I remember him being very upset. I think that the manner in which my father was told he had HCV was disgusting, dreadful. He was told in an off hand way in the middle of a ward in the hearing of other patients.
8. My father's hospital file was then clearly labelled with 'infected' or 'contaminated'. He was very upset by this and felt that he was treated differently to other patients because of it. He had this labelling removed from the exterior of his files. My

father was led to believe that he had been infected with HCV when he had the circumcision in 1986/1987 or possibly the treatment for the stomach ulcer. He was told by the Junior Doctor at the time the news was divulged, that he had a life expectancy of around a couple of years.

9. My father was told that there was a risk that he had similarly been infected with HIV/AIDS. He was told he needed testing for several years in order to obtain a conclusive result. That became 5 years of testing with letters available showing the original invitation to be tested dated May 1985 ongoing until January 1991
10. I do not believe my father was given information or advice beforehand about the risk of exposure to infection from contaminated blood products. The news that he had HCV came as a complete (100%) shock to him. I remember being present at one or two appointments with my father when he was given FVIII. No-one mentioned anything relating to risk to him before or after treatment. The comments made about the FVIII treatment were limited to how they were mixing and administering it.

Section 3. Other Infections

11. I do not believe that my father received any other infection than HCV through infected blood products. My father went through a laborious five year testing process to establish whether he had been infected with HIV/AIDS through contaminated blood products before the hospital could be sure that he did not have the virus. My Mother opted not to have any testing done to see if she was infected. Her view was she was in the relationship in sickness and in health.

Section 4. Consent

12. My father was identified as having HCV but did not know that he had been tested for it. He was tested for HCV without his knowledge and consent.

13. My father agreed to engage in an Interferon trial in the 1990s. My father was told there was an 18% chance of clearing the HCV with Interferon during the trial. He was prepared to trial the treatment, which included administering daily injections in his stomach, hoping that the Interferon would benefit others and not just himself.

Section 5. Impact of the Infection

14. My mother and father met in 1957 at a dance neither of them intended to go to. They became engaged within six weeks and were married in 1959. My parents were not well off. My father was an Electrician by occupation. He was a hard working man. He was a 'go getter'. He did not let anything hold him back. My father once slid down a wall and grazed his back. The graze was relatively superficial but it would not stop bleeding. My siblings and I remember being told that Mother strapped some old fashioned sanitary towels to his back and off he went to work.
15. He attended at the hospital for regular blood appointments to test for HIV/AIDS over a five / six year period. He knew about HIV/AIDS and there was a real worry that he may have been infected. It was a worry that my parents kept to themselves at the time. Each time my father went to be tested he was given the result of the previous test. I believe he went to the hospital on a monthly basis. There were financial implications for him in terms of fuel costs and time off work. He was self-employed and could not readily afford to take time off work for hospital appointments. He had a family to support and a mortgage to pay. The possibility of infection was never discussed outside of the immediate family. He was not tested for HepC at this time, or if he was he was not aware he was being tested.
16. My mother opted not to have any tests. She said 'what will be, will be'. She had married my father in sickness and health.

17. The stigma associated with both infections was huge. The media publicized HIV/AIDS as a 'gay disease' and HCV was associated with drunks and drug addicts sharing dirty needles. I was vaguely aware that Dad was being tested for HIV but not aware that it was over such a long period of time so I was unaware of my parent's worry and anxiety about HIV. When Dad was diagnosed with HepC, we took our parent's lead and told no-one that my father had HCV. There were so many misconceptions about it. We did not want anyone else to know about it. My father was not a drinker and he seriously believed people would think he was an alcoholic (or worse) if he told people. It was not my father's fault that he had HCV. The stigma was huge for all of us. It was all very hush hush.

18. My father had Interferon clearing treatment some time in the 1990s. He injected the Interferon treatment into his stomach. The treatment made him very ill. It affected his asthma to the extent that he could not breathe. He could barely think or function and he told me that the treatment made him feel like a zombie. I have always lived in close proximity to my parents (and with them between moves). To see an active quick witted man just sat zombie-like each day was awful. To know that he was suffering was awful. The issues with my father's breathing made it difficult to communicate with him. I couldn't speak to him because he would try to talk. He had a great sense of humour, but he was unable to laugh without it badly affecting his breathing. My father agreed to trial the treatment hoping it would benefit others. He was given a mere 18% chance of it working for himself. He wasn't a man to let anything beat him and he gave the treatment every chance before making the decision to stop.

19. My father had many scans of his liver at the hospital in Truro and stage 1 liver disease was identified in Truro. Later, Derriford Hospital in Plymouth acquired new scanning equipment and were able to do a more advanced scan showing blood flow. My father's liver had advanced to stage 2 disease.

20. It was very traumatic when my father developed liver cancer in or around 2014.

We are a 'glass half full' family and believed my father would be able to fight and beat it. My father had 4 lots of Transcatheter arterial chemoembolization treatment (targeting the liver directly) at Plymouth. I took holiday from work to take him and fetch him on several occasions, as it was a 2 night stay in hospital each time and necessitated a 150 mile round trip to take him up and then the same again to collect him and bring him home. My father had several treatments (4 at least). My parents were best friends and had never had many nights apart until then. It was traumatic for both of them to be apart from each other, having been married for over 54 years.

21. The treatment was hard for my father to endure. I had to watch him suffer, take him to treatment and wonder if it was working. He had fallen over in the garden and hurt his shoulder. During the treatment he had to remain still in a specific way that was painful for him. The treatment also caused gout as he was not allowed to drink during the treatment. He was in a lot of pain throughout this time but bore it with stoicism.

22. My mother and father were ultimately told that the treatment had been unsuccessful. They asked how long he (my father) had left and were told that he had about three months to live. He had a bleed on one of the nodules in the liver and died just two weeks later. He disappeared from my life in the blink of an eye. He went to the bathroom and collapsed on the floor. He did not realise he was bleeding internally. I missed the phone call from my mother that night and only picked the message up the next morning that my father had been rushed to hospital. There was nothing they could do in the theatre to stop the bleeding. My father's breathing was terrible. He really struggled. He made it through the following night and we got the call the next morning to go straight in again.

23. My father died at about 7.00 am with me and my mother there. He did not wake up. The trauma of being with him when he died was horrendous. He bled to death in a hospital bed behind a hospital curtain in a public ward. I had to ring

my brother and sisters to tell them. As the eldest, I took control, registered the death, arranged the funeral and organised everything.

24. I have a son in Australia. He has been there for four years now. He had only been out there for a year or so when his grandfather died. My husband and I had no money to pay for his return to England for the funeral. My son is still so upset that he was not able to be there. He is hugely impacted by his grandfather's death and is struggling to forgive himself that he was not there. He had his own form of memorial for his grandfather on the day of the funeral. He was the oldest grandchild and my father was so proud of him. My Father left behind 9 grandchildren and 4 great grandchildren. They all miss him and this impacts the older grandchildren especially.

25. My father was a loving and supportive man. He always told us that he was proud of us. He was a good father, grandfather and great grandfather. He was an inspirational man. He had leadership and spirit. He was funny and generous. My own son GRO-C I have brought him up with the same outlook adopted by my father: you let nothing hold you back and you get on with it. There is a hole in my life and that of my family, that can never be filled. The thought that I will never see my father again is an unbearable one.

26. My father had a very positive outlook to life. He did not let anything stop him. In the year preceding his death, he built an extension to his house. He did all the electrical work and wiring, reading up on the new standards. He must have been in a great deal of pain but he did it. He was a determined man. There was definitely another ten years or so in him were it not for the impact of receiving infected blood.

27. My father was my mother's life. She is now on her own and is isolated where she lives. My sister and I (and my other siblings) are assisting her in organising

a move for her. My father did everything for her and with her previously. They spent every day of every week together.

28. Now that my Father is not there, the support and caring of my Mother falls to his children. When my Father died, my Mother asked my husband and I to move in with her for support. We sold our house, facing great upheaval and did just that. We lived with her for 18 months, however, even with us living with Mother, her quality of life without my Father was poor. It was decided that this could be improved if Mother relocated to a location with transport links and a community where she can meet people. I am now supporting her with her sale, finding a new property and all of the legal aspects involved.

29. I continue to assist Mother regularly with paperwork and admin and have done so since Father passed away.

Section 6. Treatment/care/support

30. My father was not offered counselling.

Section 7. Financial Assistance

31. My father received Stage 1 and Stage 2 Skipton payments. He also received a regular income as quarterly payments.

Section 8. Other Issues

32. My father followed the developments in the media in relation to contaminated blood intently. He was immersed in the Penrose Inquiry and would have been very pleased at the announcement of this Inquiry.

Anonymity, disclosure and redaction

33. I confirm that I do not wish to apply for anonymity and that I understand this Statement will be published and disclosed as part of the Inquiry. I am willing to give oral evidence to the Inquiry.

Statement of Truth

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

Signed...

GRO-C

Dated

23.2.19.