

Witness Name: J Beddoes
Statement No: WITN1087001
Exhibits: 0
Dated: December 2018

INFECTED BLOOD INQUIRY

FIRST WRITTEN STATEMENT OF JENNIFER BEDDOES

Section 1. Introduction

1. My name is Jennifer Beddoes of GRO-C
GRO-C Cumbria, GRO-C and my date of birth is GRO-C 1972. I am married to Graham and we have two children: Danielle (20) and GRO-C I am currently working as a Financial Administrator.
2. This statement has been prepared without the benefit of access to my father's medical records.

Section 2. How Affected

3. My father, David Joseph Gill, was infected with HIV and Hepatitis C as a result of receiving contaminated Factor VIII. He passed away on 6.12.1998.
4. He had Severe Haemophilia A with a clotting factor of less than 1%. He received Factor VIII at The Newcastle Haemophilia Centre and The Royal Victoria Infirmary, Newcastle-Upon-Tyne, between the mid 1970's up to his death in 1998. I am unsure as to the exact dates of his infections. His consultants were Peter Hamilton and Peter Jones.

5. My father was provided with absolutely no information pertaining to the risks of receiving Factor VIII. In fact, he was advised that it was a "*miracle product which would change his life*". This was true; but not in the way in which the consultants envisaged.
6. My father accidentally discovered that he had HIV. We were going away on a family holiday in August 1984. My father therefore applied for a letter so that he could take his Haemophilia treatment and associated paraphernalia out of the country. He duly received the letter for the purposes of Customs and Excise and it was stamped with a warning stating "*This person is infected with HIV*". This was utterly soul destroying for my father and mother; the news was exacerbated by the way in which it was delivered. I am utterly disgusted by the way in which this information was imparted to my father.
7. No-one sat my father down to explain the realities of his HIV infection to him. He received no information about how to manage this virus or about the risks of transmitting the same to others.
8. As a result of this letter, just before we were about to embark on our family holiday, my mother and father took my sister and me to The Royal Victoria Infirmary and unbeknown to us at the time, we were tested for HIV. They must have been petrified, but they managed to maintain an air of normality for all our sakes. I recall that my sister and I ended up missing a day's schooling to attend the hospital.
9. The only reason that my mother has not been infected with either HIV or Hepatitis C was because she had had a full hysterectomy in the late 1970s. I do believe that my mother was extremely lucky; had it not been for her hysterectomy I have no doubt that she would have been infected.
10. No-one ever told my father that he had been infected with Hepatitis C.

Section 3. Other Infections

11. I do not know whether my father was exposed to vCJD or any other viruses.

Section 4. Consent

12. My father was tested for HIV and Hepatitis C without his knowledge and therefore impliedly, without his consent.

13. I believe that my father was the subject of research because I think that his blood samples were sent to a hospital in Birmingham without his knowledge.

Section 5. Impact of the Infection

14. The mental effects of the infections on my father were that he suffered serious depression. He was a private person and he did keep things from us, but I wholly believe that his intentions were to shield his family from any possible stigma. When I was a young girl doing my homework, I asked my father what purgatory was and he responded "*my life*". I did not know what purgatory meant so I looked it up and was very distressed. It was hard to imagine the living hell that my father endured.

15. My father suffered many physical effects as a result of his infections, including a brain infection, bronchial pneumonia, sepsis, a knee infection, a chest infection and shingles.

16. My father received combination therapy for his HIV. I was aware that some patients were given treatment at the time and that other patients were given a placebo. I believe that my father received the "*real treatment*". He was so poorly whilst undergoing this treatment and became intolerant to a number of foods. It is difficult for me to remember the other side effects of the HIV treatment as I was still quite young and I think I found the whole thing quite difficult to process.

17. My father also suffered from severe pain in his joints which necessitated the use of a walking stick. As the infections took over, his entire mobility was

compromised and he became wheelchair bound. My parents had to move into a bungalow to ensure that my father had some sort of quality of life.

18. The most terrifying illness which my father suffered from was Fournier Gangrene, which occurred in or around June 1998. He was hospitalised and he was only the 12th person in the UK to have been diagnosed with this. The treatment for this was severe; my father underwent a lengthy operation to remove his entire scrotum. During the removal process his scrotum was left exposed without any covering of skin to allow the infection to heal. He had to be anaesthetised on a daily basis so that his dressing could be changed. My father had to have a new scrotum made from both skin and fat which was taken from his inner thighs.

19. During his last operation, to cover his testicles with skin grafts, the surgeon had to remove a testicle as there was still a patch of infection that had not responded to the antibiotics.

20. Whilst my father was in hospital, he underwent a brain scan and found out that he had an infection in his brain. My mother was so traumatised by this point

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In total, my poor father spent 5 months in hospital as a result of the Fournier Gangrene. When my father was released from hospital he was wheelchair bound.

21. My father never managed to clear the Hepatitis C virus. He was supposed to start his treatment the next time he went to The Royal Victoria Infirmary, but he died before his next appointment.

22. On 4.12.1998 he developed a chest infection and sepsis. He was rushed to intensive care on 5.12.1998 and put on a ventilator. The doctors tried to do everything they could but were unable to save my father, who by this time was bright yellow and filling with fluid. He died, fighting for his breath, at 2.30pm on 6.12.1998. I am so angry about what the NHS and the Government did to him.

23. I recall that when I was aged 14 I was searching the family home for Christmas presents, which included looking in my mother and father's bedroom. I found a packet of condoms in the drawer under the bed. I knew that my father had had a vasectomy when I was aged 4 and that my mother had had a hysterectomy a short while after. I had obviously watched the news and seen the stories of haemophiliacs being contaminated with HIV and Hepatitis C. The floor fell out of my world that day. I kept quiet as I did not know how to broach such a sensitive issue. I did not mention anything to my mother until a week later when we were alone. I asked her if my father had AIDS, she said "*no he has HIV*".

24. My mother was extremely upset when I found out that my father was HIV positive. She told me that I could not tell anyone. She told me that if anyone found out we would have to move to a town where no-one knew us. She told me that I would have to leave school and leave all of the friends who I had grown up with. I was told that I must not tell my older sister because she was due to get married and if her fiancée found out he would not marry her. I kept quiet and did not tell anyone and dealt with everything alone. It was really hard keeping it from my sister as we were close. My mother also said that I must not tell my father and I therefore had to pretend that I did not know.

25. The impact on me at that time was mainly that it was constantly on my mind. I was taking my GCSE's at the time I discovered that my father was infected and I obtained below average grades in these exams. It was a burden to have to keep it a secret and not being able to share it was a massive weight to bear. Mentally, I struggled to cope with it.

26. When my sister finally found out GRO-C She was aged 19 and ran off to her fiancée to tell him but my mum had forbidden this stating "*Don't tell Steven*". However, it turned out that he was extremely supportive and the marriage went ahead.

27. My father did not confide in anyone except my mother; he did not even tell his own mother. When he was in hospital with knee infections; his friends would

telephone me and I was made to lie and say that he was suffering from a chest infection. His work colleagues felt really guilty because they thought that his chest infection was caused as result of his occupation.

28. My father was so concerned about ensuring that no-one found out about his HIV that he resorted to religiously shredding all of his HIV medication boxes.

29. My father retired aged 50 due to his ill health. My mother took a redundancy package when I was aged 16 to care for my father on a full time basis.

30. The impact on my mother has been everlasting. She is still single following my father's death over 20 years ago. She had been with my father since aged 15 and she was aged 51 when he died. My mother has never recovered from this tragedy that took her soulmate from her far too early.

31. My father's infections have shaped my life. When I was younger, I always thought that he was being mean because he would not let me invite friends to the house. I know now that he was scared that someone would discover his infections and that he was worried about infecting others.

32. As I grew older I always wondered how things may have been had my father not been infected. I still do now.

33. I have suffered from anxiety and depression but I did not want to take the medication prescribed by my GP as I did not want to appear weak.

34. In September 2018 I received a telephone call from my consultant at The Manchester Royal Infirmary requesting that I attend for an urgent Hepatitis C test. They had discovered that I had been given blood products when I was aged 8 at The Royal Victoria Infirmary. This was such a worrying moment and it also brought back all the memories of what had happened to my father. I duly attended the hospital and thankfully the test was negative.

35. I am a quiet person and it is only since the resurgence of this matter with the opening of the Inquiry that I now feel able to discuss my story with others.

Section 6. Treatment/Care/Support

36. As far as I am aware my father was not offered any counselling or psychiatric support despite the fact that he was a very depressed man having been infected with both HIV and Hepatitis C.

37. Neither my mother, sister or I were offered any counselling or psychiatric support.

Section 7. Financial Assistance

38. My father received approximately £150 per month from The Macfarlane Trust and I think that he found out about this Trust via his consultants.

39. I believe that my mother may have applied for some grants from The Macfarlane Trust once my father had passed away. I recall that there was some damp in the house so funds were released for the services of a plasterer.

40. My father was party to the HIV litigation that ended in 1991 and he had to sign a waiver. My father also received 2 ex-gratia payments as a result of being infected with HIV. I believe that these payments were for £16,000 and £18,000. My father had to use this money to fund a move to a bungalow because he could not manage the stairs in their old house because he was wheelchair bound.

41. I believe that my father received two payments from The Skipton Fund, those being £30,000 and £50,000.

42. I can't really comment about the application procedures for the Trusts because I was not involved in this, having received no money myself from either Trust.

Section 8. Other Issues

43. My sister and I are a part of the Tainted Blood Campaign Support Group and The Fatherless Generation.

44. I do not want anything like this to ever happen again and I want the right people to be held accountable for this tragedy.

Anonymity, disclosure and redaction

45. I do not wish to apply for anonymity and I would like 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...21/12/18.....