

Witness Name: S Payton
Statement No: WITN3027001
Exhibits: 0
Dated: April 2019

INFECTED BLOOD INQUIRY

FIRST WRITTEN STATEMENT OF SUSAN PAYTON

I, Susan Payton will say as follows:-

Section 1. Introduction

1. My name is Susan Payton and I was born on GRO-C 1960. I live at GRO-C West Midlands, GRO-C. I am married to Michael who has been both a wonderful and supportive husband to me.
2. I make this statement as an affected person in relation to my late brother, Robert Kendrick, who was born on GRO-C 1953 and died on 25th February 1997, aged only 44, as a result of receiving contaminated blood products.
3. **This witness statement has been prepared without the benefit of access to my brother's medical records.**

Section 2. How Affected

4. My brother had severe Haemophilia A and received Factor VIII throughout his life. He required it whenever he had a bleed, medical or dental treatment.

5. He was treated at Treloar College, Hampshire and Queen Elizabeth Hospital, Edgbaston, Birmingham.
6. He was infected with Hepatitis B, Hepatitis C and HIV as a result of receiving contaminated Factor VIII.
7. Due to the fact that my brother was a fiercely private individual I do not have any information as to when or how he was told about his viruses. However, he was highly intelligent so I assume that he asked the relevant questions.

Section 3. Other Infections

8. Robert mentioned to me that you never knew what you could be infected with as a result of receiving contaminated Factor VIII.

Section 4. Consent

9. I strongly believe that Robert was tested for various viruses without his knowledge and therefore without his consent.
10. It is also entirely feasible that he was used for the purposes of research but I do not have any evidence in this regard.

Section 5. Impact

11. Robert was sent away to Treloar after he passed the 11 plus exam. I was too young to be fully aware as to why but I found out later that the Local Education Authority advised my parents that this was the best option for Robert. The reason they did this was because they did not want him at the Local Grammar School because they felt that it would be too dangerous due to his Haemophilia. I know that he took his O-Levels at Treloar.

12. I think that I was aged about 16 when my brother was allowed to inject himself with Factor VIII so that would have been in approximately 1976. Robert managed very well with his Haemophilia and lived as full a life as he could.
13. I think that Robert then returned to live at home and he did in fact then attend the local Grammar School for his A-Levels before he left to attend Manchester Polytechnic to continue his studies.
14. Robert was an intensely private and independent man who only told me that he had been infected with HIV and Hepatitis C once his consultant had given him approximately a year to live due to his failing health as a result of his infections.
15. I believe that one of the reasons why Robert told me about his infections was because one of my brothers, David, had passed away in a car accident when I was aged 24 and Robert was trying to spare me from having another shock death in the family.
16. I already strongly suspected that Robert had been infected with HIV but I did not want to ask him because I was afraid of knowing the truth and by asking it would make it seem real. I also did not want to invade Robert's privacy.
17. I was also scared because I was afraid that the reality of Robert's infections would be the beginning of the end for our elderly mother as losing one son, David, had already been hell for her.
18. Telling my 80 year old mother that she was going to lose Robert was the second worst moment of my life which was why Robert and I kept the truth from her for as long as possible. I did not tell her until the very end and by then she obviously knew all was not right with Robert. When I told her she said she had known for months that there was something wrong with Robert but she did not want to ask questions or speak about it because it would make it real.

19. I know that Robert was infected with Hepatitis B at some point following his return from Manchester Polytechnic as I recall that we were told not to share plates, cutlery, towels and the like while he was being treated for this.
20. Robert also underwent knee joint replacement operations on both his knees. This was carried out in St Thomas' Hospital in London in February 1993 and Robert turned 40 whilst recovering in hospital. I took my mother down there to see him and we brought his birthday cake and cards to the hospital. The Queen Elizabeth refused to carry out the knee joint replacement surgery but I am unsure as to why.
21. Unfortunately the details I have regarding Robert's infections are quite sketchy because he was so fiercely independent and private. People who were very close to Robert were not even aware of his Haemophilia due to his intensely private nature.
22. I am incredibly proud of Robert because despite his Haemophilia and infections, he always tried to live as normal a life as possible. However, I did notice at times that he became quite introverted.
23. Towards the latter stages of Robert's life he did become extremely poorly. He had cirrhosis and he looked very yellow; furthermore his eyes had also turned yellow. He was exceedingly bloated, particularly in his abdomen area, and I drove him to the Queen Elizabeth on 18th February 1997 because I knew that he was so ill and required hospitalisation. I had not seen him for a couple of weeks and we had met at our mother's house and I could not believe the change in him. I have a recollection of him saying that the hospital had already given him antibiotics which had tipped his liver over the edge.
24. I am aware that Robert was on Interferon treatment for his Hepatitis C because following his passing the hospital telephoned to arrange to collect his sharps box and medications and I saw some medication which was labelled with "*Interferon*".

25. I am the youngest sibling and I have three older brothers. Robert was the eldest, followed by Peter who was 2 years younger than Robert, followed by David who was 2 years younger than Peter.
26. I was only aged 24 when David passed away following a car accident. I was living at home at the time and I took the call from the police who reported that David was in intensive care with permanent brain damage following a car accident. I had to wake my parents and break the news to them and this was the most horrific thing I have ever had to do. This was followed by a close second when I told my mother that Robert was also going to die.
27. The loss of Robert after David was almost too much for my mother to bear. This was compounded by the fact that I then had to tell her that she could not view Robert's body at the funeral home as his body was sealed. My mother was of the generation that took great comfort in this viewing of a passed love one; she had done it with my brother David and my father previously. Therefore, it was devastating for her to think that Robert's body was classed as unclean so she could not even give him one last kiss or say one last goodbye. The only thing that kept her going was that Michael (my then partner) and I purchased a house using some funds from Robert's Estate and moved my mother in with us. This gave her a focus and without this I do not think she would have had the strength to go on.
28. Thankfully my mother passed away before my brother, Peter, committed suicide in 2009.
29. To be honest, I don't know how I have managed to cope with life thus far. I have had very good support from Michael and I am naturally a strong person; I believe that I have inherited this strength from my mother and father. I feel that it would be totally disrespectful to Robert's memory to fall apart after everything he had to go through. Robert would have wanted me to carry on and he was incredibly strong; like me.
30. I recall that one of Robert's Haemophiliac friends, who sadly is no longer with us, spent his entire life in the family home and literally never ventured outside.

This makes me feel more positive about Robert's life because at least he lived life to the fullest that he could manage given the difficult cards that he was dealt.

31. Robert filled so much into his last two years once he had been given the news that he was dying. He went to the US and he visited his brother Pete who was, at that time, residing in Australia. Robert was positive and strong and I feel honoured that he was my brother.

Section 6. Treatment/care/support

32. I remember that when Robert was admitted to the Queen Elizabeth for the last time that all the medical staff were fully gloved when they treated him.

33. As far as I am aware, Robert was never offered any counselling or psychological support.

34. I have never been offered any counselling or psychological support.

Section 7. Financial Assistance

35. Robert was a party to the 1991 HIV litigation and was awarded compensation in the region of about £30,000 although I cannot be sure about the figures.

36. I am unaware as to whether Robert received any support from either the Macfarlane Trust (MFT) or the Skipton Fund during his lifetime.

37. I was paid the sum of £1,000 from John Williams at the MFT following Robert's death. The money was paid to me because I was the executor of Robert's Estate.

Section 8. Other Issues

38. I just want to make sure that they don't do what they did to my family to anyone else's family.

39. I am speaking out because I want Robert's voice to be heard.

Anonymity

40. I do not want to be anonymous and I do not wish 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..... *10th April 2019*