

Witness Name: J HATTON
Statement No: WITN3235001
Exhibits: 0
Dated: May 2019

INFECTED BLOOD INQUIRY

FIRST WRITTEN STATEMENT OF JAMES HATTON

I, James Hatton will say as follows:-

Section 1. Introduction

1. My name is James Hatton of GRO-C
GRO-C. My date of birth is GRO-C 1983. I am currently employed as a finance team leader. I live with my wife, Rebecca, and our two daughters, GRO-C aged five and GRO-C aged two.
2. I make this statement in relation to my late father, David Hatton who was born on GRO-C 1957 and who passed away on GRO-C 1998 at age 41. He was infected with HIV, Hepatitis B and Hepatitis C.
3. My mother, Mrs Rhiannon Hatton and my sister, Mrs Katie Walford are also providing their own statements to the Inquiry. My mother's witness number is WITN1279001.
4. This witness statement has been prepared without the benefit of access to my late father's full medical records.

Section 2. How infected

5. I refer to my mother's statement regarding the background of how my father was infected, the advice he was given prior to receiving blood products, consent and how he found out he was infected.
6. I was just two years old when my parents found out that my father was infected with HIV. My sister Katie was not even born. My parents made the decision not to tell us about my father's infections.
7. My mother told me after my father died that he had been infected with HIV, Hepatitis B and Hepatitis C from contaminated blood products used to treat his Haemophilia. At the time of my father's death I was 15 years old and Katie was 10 years old.

Section 3. Other Infections

8. As far as I am aware, my father was not infected with any other infections other than those mentioned in Paragraph 2 of this statement.

Section 4. Consent

9. Please refer to paragraph 5.

Section 5. Impact of the Infection

10. My father suffered from Haemophilia A. If he cut himself he would bleed continuously and without treatment, his blood was unable to clot. I knew he had Haemophilia but I did not know about his infections until after his death.
11. My father was never very well; I don't remember a time when he was completely mobile. When we were younger he hid his poor health better from us. He was home with us while Mum worked. I loved that he was always around with us. Other people's dads were not.

12. His health got worse over the course of time. He was always tired and he spent a lot of time in bed.
13. During our primary school years, Katie and I came home from school for lunch every day. Our lunch was always set up around his bed.
14. Towards the end of his life he became incredibly gaunt and he was no longer mobile. In order to get around he would reach for things to aid and assist his movements such as railings or furniture. There were days he would struggle just to get out of bed. I thought then that this was because of his Haemophilia.
15. I am not aware of what treatment my father received for his infections. He took an extraordinary amount of pills every day and some of them were massive. I remember asking about his pills and I was told it was for Haemophilia. I never guessed that the pills were to treat his HIV infection.
16. My father was in hospital very often and all the doctors and nurses knew his name. Whenever he went in hospital, he was admitted into a private room. He always had his own room and his own TV. At the time I believed that it was because he was there so often and the staff all knew him so well that they would offer him a room of his own. I realise now with hindsight that he needed to be isolated due to his infections.
17. I refer to my mother's statement in relation to the treatment he had and any difficulties my father faced in obtaining treatment.
18. My father passed away on GRO-C 1998. I was told that he had died from acute kidney failure.
19. Not long after my father's death, my mother told me that there was more to it than kidney failure and that he suffered from HIV and Hepatitis C. I did not know what HIV or Hepatitis were and she had to explain things to me. I remember being devastated by this and feeling very angry. I was shocked

that he had had these infections and angry with my mum for hiding the truth from me.

20. Things were very difficult for me after my father passed away. I felt the need to step up the best I could to fill his shoes. I was only 15 years old and not capable of dealing with that sort of turmoil. To manage, I buried my emotions.
21. I have blacked out a lot of memories from that period and also from before my father died. I dealt with things internally and was not able to speak about what I was going through.
22. When I returned to school after my father's death I felt very lonely and isolated. My teacher had instructed the whole class to say nothing about my father's death. I don't think anyone at the school knew any of the intimate details about how he died, but they did know that my father had died. To have nobody approach me about my loss made me feel extremely lonely. I expected someone to say something, but nobody did. Not one person acknowledged my loss or even asked if I was alright.
23. My attitude towards school changed after my father's death. He had passed away shortly before I was due to start my GCSEs. I didn't want to study for my exams and did the bare minimum in order to pass. I didn't bother trying hard as I didn't find it important anymore. I had the same approach toward my A Levels. Thankfully, I did pass my exams and went on to University to study Theatre Studies.
24. Our family life changed completely after my father's death. We didn't go out much and we did not have family holidays. It was very difficult for all of us. We only started going away as a family again after mine and Katie's children were born.
25. I do not remember being happy for a long time after my father's death. On the outside I appeared happy, but internally I was not. It felt like I wasn't quite all there inside. I had a deep sadness inside and often I would act out of

character. It is only since meeting my wife and having our daughters that I feel like I started to experience happiness again.

26. Nobody really knew what I was going through and I never felt able to confide in anyone until my late twenties when I met my wife. Even now, I still find it very difficult to talk about my father. I haven't spoken about it fully with my wife. This statement for the Inquiry is the most I have ever spoken to anyone about what happened to my father and to our family.

27. For a long time I blamed my mother for hiding the truth from us. I stored a deep anger inside me. Having now had my own children, I am better placed to appreciate my parents' approach. If I had been told about my father's infections at a younger age, I doubt I would have been able to deal with it.

28. I built up resentment towards my mother for not telling me about my father's infections. I was very angry and my anger did not subside until my mid to late twenties when I gained more understanding.

29. My mother did not deal with my father's death well.

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I felt she wasn't being a parent to us and this fed my internal anger. I was very angry with her and very unkind to her about it. I made things so much harder for her. She forgave me a long time ago for this, but I haven't really forgiven myself. I realise now how hard it must have been for her. She was so understanding to me and so remarkable when I look back on it.

30. Katie and I are very close, but she doesn't talk to me much about what happened to our father, mostly because I have not been ready to talk about it. She has been actively involved in campaigns for tainted blood and has been interviewed by several media platforms. She tends to prepare me before she goes on TV so that I am not taken by surprise. My sister lost her father when she was only ten years old. I cannot comprehend losing a parent at such a young age and I know it was hard for her. Personally, I would be unable to

speak about my past like she does. I am so proud of her and my mother for everything they have done to honour my father.

Section 6. Treatment/care/support

31.No counselling or psychological support was made available to me or my family in consequence of what happened. I am sure some counselling would have helped us all.

32.After his death I went inwards and tried to deal with the emotions myself. Counselling would have helped me. My brain tells me I would still benefit from it now. It may help me regain some of my younger years back. Everything was happy up until a certain point when my father died. I have blacked out so many memories.

Section 7. Financial Assistance

33.I refer to my mother's statement in relation to any financial assistance received.

34.I have not personally received any financial assistance in relation to my father's infections.

Section 8. Other Issues

35.Producing this statement has been the most I have ever openly discussed the topic of my father, however I feel that the time has come where I should do my part and honour my father.

36.My father was my hero and he's not here anymore.

37.Over time I have become somewhat of a cynic. It has gotten to a point where I am not getting my hopes up for a desirable outcome from the inquiry.

38. So many lives have been deliberately destroyed because of contaminated blood and no one gives a monkey's - the victims have all been left to die. It's an incredibly shocking thing to have to say out loud. The people responsible probably hoped that all those infected would be dead by now,

39. Like everyone else, I want justice for my father. I would like someone to admit that they made this decision and they got it wrong. I find it ludicrous that to this day no one has apologised. It's a very basic human moral to own up to your mistakes and as far as mistakes go, the UK Government made a grave one.

40. The loss of my father is a constant cloud hanging over my head, it won't go away, and it maybe never will.

Anonymity

41. I do not wish to remain anonymous and I want 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 11/6/19.