Witness Name: Julia Anne Borthwick
Statement No: WITN1629001
Exhibits: 0
Dated: October 2019

INFECTED BLOOD INQUIRY

FIRST WRITTEN STATEMENT OF JULIA ANNE BORTHWICK

I, Julia Anne Borthwick, will say as follows:-

Section 1. Introduction

1. My name is Julia Anne Borthwick. My date of birth is GRO-C 1972. I am married and live with my husband and two children at GRO-C, GRO-C, Middlesex GRO-C. I have two siblings, a brother and a sister.

2. I make this statement as the daughter of Mr Geoffrey Arthur Hazelwood who was infected with the Hepatitis C from contaminated blood. He was born on GRO-C 1942 and died on GRO-C 1999. He was 52 when he died.

3. This statement is prepared partly from conversations that I have had with my mother and partly from my own personal knowledge. The statement has been made without access to my late father's medical records.

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Section 2. How Affected

4. My father was diagnosed with severe Haemophilia A at birth.

Churchill Hospital, Oxford (early 1980's)

5. In the early 1980's, my father was treated with Factor VIII (FVIII) products at Churchill Hospital, Oxford (CH). He was placed under the care of Doctor Matthews and another Doctor who apparently spoke with a Welsh accent.

6. CH gave my father the option of treating himself but I do not know when. He was taught how to inject himself with FVIII products. My mother, his wife, was trained as well and she administered the medication. This was party because my father did not want to inject himself and partly that it was difficult for him to do so. One of his arms was fused bent and the other fused straight. From then on there was no need for the family to rush him to hospital for urgent treatment. This came as a huge relief and helped the family considerably.

7. It was in and about the mid 1980's, a specialist nurse, whom I believe was called Mary Whitehouse, at CH wanted to meet my mother away from the hospital. Mary was due to retire and perhaps this was the reason why she was prepared to speak with my mother privately. Mary said my father was tested to see whether he was infected with HIV and or hepatitis because he was treated with contaminated blood. The tests for HIV proved to be negative but she confirmed that he was infected with Hepatitis and he had 5 to 15 years to live. Needless to say, I was flabbergasted when I found out.

8. I believe my father was indeed infected with hepatitis C when he was treated with FVIII products at CH or when he or my mother were treating him in and about the early 1980's to mid 1980's. All home treatment bottles were collected by my father from CH. It also could have been myself who provided the infecting blood products to my father as there was a brief period of time in the mid to late 1980s when I administered his injections for him.

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9. CH told the family nothing about this infection. We found out unofficially from a nurse who was due to retire. I do not believe my father was told anything about the risks involved with being treated with FVIII products. If he was, he never told the family.

10. Whilst there was considerable media coverage about HIV and AIDS, there was no similar coverage on Hepatitis C. I believe CH should have called the family to the hospital and explained everything to us including the risk of infection and how we should deal with our father's condition. Unfortunately, this never happened.

11. CH never advised my mother of the date when my father contracted Hepatitis C, how the infection occurred, where he was infected or how it would affect his life. It should have advised our family that our father was infected as soon as it found out. If we had been informed, we could have approached certain situations differently. For example, I remember once my father cut his finger and I went to put a plaster on it. He literally leapt back away from me as if he was petrified that he may infect me. It took me a long time to realise that it was not me who had done something wrong. If CH had advised us what we could and could not do, we would have been able to prepare for these kinds of situations.

12. A number of years after I found out that my father was infected, my mother was called to the hospital to be tested. This followed an incident at home when was after she had pricked her finger with a needle. The hospital carried out tests and found that she too has contracted a mild form of Hepatitis C. CH believed it may have been caused by the needle injury.

Section 3. Other Infections.

13. At the time, we did not know whether our father had other infections from the treatment he was receiving. I do remember, however, in the 1980's he tended to get ill frequently, felt lethargic or generally did not feel his normal self. The doctors were unable to explain why he felt this way and I would not be

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surprised if he had contracted other diseases from the treatment that he was given at the hospital.

Section 4. Consent.

14. Factor VIII - At no time did the hospital discuss with us risks associated with the use of FVIII blood products. The risks only became known to me through knowledge I had acquired in the 1990's through the media and discussing matters with The Haemophilic Centre. My father had placed utmost trust with the doctors who provided the treatment.

15. Hepatitis C - I believe my father was tested for hepatitis but I do not know when these tests were carried out. I believe these were likely to have been carried out before hepatitis C had been identified as a separate virus to hepatitis A and hepatitis B.

16. Research - I do recall my father was requested to travel to a hospital in Oxford to undergo various tests. I know that one of the tests involved cognitive skills. He was tested before and after being given salted crackers. I do not know for certain this was for research purposes because the doctors never gave him any explanation. Sometimes, the doctors spoke with him and took blood samples and on other occasions he was detained for the whole day.

17. Perhaps, we should have demanded more information from the hospital where he was being treated but we were young and never thought about challenging the actions of the hospital.

Section 5. Impact

Impact on my father

18. After my father was informed he was infected, he was terrified that he would infect someone else. I would say, at times, he became paranoid. I say this

because whenever we accompanied him to hospital, he constantly asked hospital staff whether they had gloves.

19. It is difficult for me say what exactly was going through his mind after he learnt that he had been infected. Generally speaking, he appeared to be fine. However, this was probably because he did not want his children to worry about him. He was that sort of person.

20. In early 1999, my mother was regularly driving my father to a hospital in Birmingham which was some distance from where we lived. This was because my father's liver was severely damaged by hepatitis C. I recall X-Rays carried out at this hospital revealed that the doctors had noticed a shadow on his liver and was taken to a ward and left there. Understandably, he became extremely anxious and kept asking the nurses whether they could give him more information. The nurses were unhelpful and unsympathetic. They invariably told him they were unable to say anything which was very frustrating given the serious nature of his illness. My mother informs me that this hospital treated him very poorly.

21. Apart from failing to tell my father whether or not the shadow on his liver was cancer, the attitude of the nurses was appalling. My father had to wait approximately 7 to 10 days before doctors found time to call him into a meeting with 5 other doctors to break the news that he had cancer of the liver. Needless to say we were all devastated to learn that we were going to lose our father and that this was due to being treated with contaminated blood.

22. From that date, we were told that he had 6 months to live. He in fact died after a prolonged suffering in September 1999. In this difficult time, the hospital in Birmingham repeatedly told us that there was nothing that the doctors could do to save his life. We were told that there was no possibility of a liver transplant and Birmingham offered no care in the remaining months of his life.

23. Effectively, we were sent home. The hospital in Birmingham offered no medication, no counselling or any palliative care. CH tried to sort out palliative

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care. After the diagnosis, my father spent more time in hospital than he spent out of it. When his platelets dropped we constantly had to go to hospital urgently to get his levels back to a manageable level. It was not feasible to travel to the hospital in Birmingham and my father returned to CH in Oxford.

24. My mother had the unenviable task of taking care of my father whose physical and mental condition slowly declined. This had a terrible impact on my mother. Prior to this our grandmother was living with us and my mother had to manage two jobs to pay all the bills. This all changed when my mother had to give up work to care for my father. In consequence, my grandmother had to move into one of her other daughter's home.

25. My father's health slowly declined over 20 years. In the last 5 years his mental condition changed noticeably and in the last 2 years, his condition got considerably worse, both mentally and physically. Before the infection, he was a healthy gentleman. He was not normally ill and had a full and active social life. In fact, his occupation in the 1970s was a design engineer which involved designing diesel engine's and managing and overseeing such projects from start to finish.

26. Prior to the infection, my father was intelligent, jovial and outgoing. He was always joking with us. He liked solving problems. He loved engineering. He liked to make us laugh. He used to design model planes but all the energy and enthusiasm he once had was slowly sucked out of him.

27. After the infection, he moved less freely because his energy levels were low and he was in considerable pain. For this pain, in the 1980's he was taking 10 DF118 tablets per day. These were prescribed for the pains in his joints caused by the bleeding. These tablets made him very sleepy and I believe may have affected his memory. We found that he was not absorbing as much information as he was prior to taking the medication.

Impact on me

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28. When I was in the 1st or 2nd year of secondary school, I recall my classmates laughing and shouting at me in a classroom "gay disease"…"prostitute". I was shy and hardly spoke but on this occasion, I turned around to them and said "*It is not a gay disease, it is a blood borne disease, and you don't know what the f**k you are talking about!*" I then ran out of the class.

29. In the mid-1980's, nobody in our family knew how to deal with the issues that we were faced with. Our school did not know nor what we were going through. At this time, AIDS was widely reported and there was considerable adverse publicity given to it. There was a lot of stigma and hate against families who were thought to be affected by it. There was stigma attached to Hepatitis C as well but not as much as AIDS.

30. My father tested negative for HIV. We were told he was the one in four who did not have AIDS. I hate to think how I would have coped if the results confirmed that he AIDS and my school mates got to know about it. I tried to remain positive believing that there is always someone worse off than me. I dealt with the situation the best way that I could.

Section 6. Treatment/Care/Support

31. I know a drug called Interferon came on the market but I do not know whether it was available at a time when my father needed treatment.

32. The duty of treating my father was left to my mother, sister and me. This was in the mid 1980's and my sister and I were both in secondary school. This was a difficult period because I was at an age when I was ready to start working and concentrating on my own life but instead found myself treating my father. We were vaccinated against Hepatitis A and Hepatitis B as a safeguard to protect ourselves. However, I do not know for certain because I was very young at the time.

33. My father was given no care or support. The attitude of CH staff was that my father had been infected and there was nothing that could be done about it.

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Section 7. Financial Assistance

34. After my father died, the DWP paid my mother an allowance of 79.00 pw. She did not receive any other support and, because she owned her home, she was unable to claim housing benefit. My mother should have been given more assistance because my father's death was caused by the hospital and she was left in no fit state of mind to fend for herself. Emotionally and mentally, we are still trying to come to terms with what has happened. It was after our father died that our mother started having panic attacks.

The Skipton Fund

35. At some stage after my father's death, the Oxford Haemophilia Centre (OHC) wrote to my mother to advise her that The Skipton Fund was making payments to families affected by contaminated blood. After completing the necessary forms, this Fund paid to my mother a lump sum for the death of my father and another payment because my mother was infected by a needle injury. I do not know if there were any pre-conditions upon receiving this sum and nor do I know of the amount she received.

36. I believe this Fund also pays my mother £200 per month and a £500 towards a winter allowance. She receives no further payment.

37. Making a claim for a payment has felt like a form begging. Payment is not paid by way of a right; it is necessary to prove entitlement. I do not think this is right.

18 Section 8. Other Issues

38. I believe the hospitals have attempted to cover up the facts and I do feel that the families have been left helpless. I also think that the stigma attached mainly with HIV has prevented some families coming forward with complaints of the way in which they have been handled.

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39. At my Father's Funeral, I read out the Eulogy I had written the night before. It started *"How do you put a man's life in to so few words" except this time it's not a man's life, but thousands of men, their wives and partners, their Children, family and friends".*

40. It has taken so long for this matter to come to light when most have already died and suffered in a silence not of their own choosing. Why has it taken so long, when other tragedies have been brought to light much sooner and changes made so it does not happen again and those affected are helped? I'm just one daughter, who has struggled and still struggles in how this act of deception has torn her family asunder, taken away her father and along the way, my innocence and joy in life. But my hope is that it will never happen again, that those who made the decision are brought to task and that those who are still trying cope and survive are given the help that they need.

Anonymity, disclosure and redaction

41. I confirm that I do not wish to have anonymity and that I understand this statement will be published and disclosed as part of the Inquiry.

42. I do wish to be called to give oral evidence.

Statement of Truth

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

Signed..... GRO-C .....

Julia Anne Borthwick

Dated 14 /11 /2019