

Witness Name: Judith Chambers

Statement No.: WITN2628001

Exhibits: 0

Dated: 30 September 2019

INFECTED BLOOD INQUIRY

FIRST WRITTEN STATEMENT OF JUDITH CHAMBERS

Section 1. Introduction

1. I, Judith Chambers, will say as follows.
2. My date of birth is GRO-C 1951 and my address is known to the Inquiry.
3. I live in Northamptonshire with my husband and am retired.

Section 2. How Affected

4. My sister, Carole Butt, has prepared a witness statement for the Inquiry. I have read her statement and agree with the facts set out. I make this statement to add my own account to what happened.
5. As set out in my sister's statement, my father, Arthur Kirton, was born on GRO-C 1913 and passed away on 8 March 1980, aged 67. I do not

know for certain, but I believe my father was infected with HIV from contaminated blood and that this may have led to his death. I want to provide this witness statement to the Inquiry because I want to describe what happened to my father and set out my fears that his illness and death may have been caused by contaminated blood. I believe there may be others who, like my father, were infected and who died without ever knowing why they were ill. I would like the Inquiry to bear these accounts in mind when considering the very great impact infected blood has had.

6. My sister's statement describes the blood transfusions my father received, the subsequent deterioration in his health and his death.
7. From the time of the blood transfusion in August 1979 to his death in March 1980, my father became very unwell. I worked full time and came home each evening and could see how he was deteriorating because I was living at home at that point. At night he would go to bed after sitting in his chair in the evening, and my mother would say, 'he was not very good today'. This decline continued until he died.
8. When he could still walk around outside he showed me how to blow the tyres up on my car and how to check the oil. He said, 'I have to show you this because I won't be here much longer'. He knew he was not going to recover.
9. As he deteriorated, he used to sit in his chair at home and was able to do very little. On one occasion, in the last month or so, he was very ill and I recall the cat scratched him and the wound would not heal. He was so unwell his immune system could not fight any infection at all. He was admitted to hospital shortly afterwards and that was his last admission before he died.

10. During his last admission to hospital I went to visit him. When I arrived, my mother said, 'thank goodness you're here, your father is delirious and asking for you'. My mother did not know what to do and he was very disorientated. By the end of that week he had died.
11. On the day he died I was with my mother visiting him. The rest of our family came to be with him. We got up to leave and he said 'goodbye'. He would normally have said, 'cheerio, see you tomorrow', but this was much more final.

Section 3. Other Infections

12. I do not know whether my father was infected with anything other than suspected HIV.

Section 4. Consent

14. I do not know whether my father was treated or tested without his knowledge, consent or for the purposes of research.

Section 5. Impact

15. My father's illness made him very worried. He became depressed because he did not know why he wasn't getting any better.
16. My father's death came as a big shock and affected me very badly. I couldn't believe he had gone. Eventually, I began to move on with life. Then my sister Carole said to me one day, many years later, that she thought our father had been given infected blood. She said she had been thinking about it and that was perhaps why the hospital had asked to test her blood soon after he died. To think his death could have been prevented, that he could have lived longer, enjoyed his retirement and spent time with his grandchildren makes me very sad.

Section 6. Treatment/Care/Support

17. Neither my father nor any of our family was ever offered counselling or psychological support as a result of his death.

Section 7. Financial Assistance

18. This section is not relevant to my witness statement as neither my father nor any of our family were aware, at the time of his death or for quite some years afterwards, that he may have been a victim of contaminated blood.

Section 8. Other Issues

19. I feel very dismayed that the government continued to allow contaminated blood to be used even after they became aware of the risks. I hope the Inquiry will be able to ensure a disaster on this scale is never allowed to happen again.

Statement of Truth

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

Signed

GRO-C: Judith Chambers

Dated

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