

Witness Name: Ciaran Anthony O'Sullivan
Statement No: WITN2657001
Dated: 9th April 2019

INFECTED BLOOD INQUIRY

FIRST WRITTEN STATEMENT OF CIARAN ANTHONY O'SULLIVAN

I provide this statement in response to a request under Rule 9 of the Inquiry rules 2006 dated 12th December 2018. I adopt the paragraph numbering in the Rule 9 request for ease of reference.

I, Ciaran Anthony O'Sullivan will say as follows:-

1. Introduction

1. My name is Ciaran Anthony O'Sullivan. My date of birth is GRO-C 1970. My address is known to the Inquiry. I am not married but in a relationship and I don't have any children. I would describe my profession as being a merchandiser, but I presently work as a postman.
2. I will be telling the Inquiry about my father, Anthony Gerard O'Sullivan, whose date of birth is GRO-C 1940. He lives in GRO-C Northern Ireland. My father is married to my mother Angela Veronica. Both are alive and still living together. We are six children in all. I have three brothers and two sisters. I'm now the oldest. There was a seventh child, but he died before I was born, he being the first born.

3. Up until the early 1980s I would describe life at home as tough although this is normal of most families; there were good and bad times. My parents had a difficult marriage in the 1980s to 1990s for reasons the children did not understand. My father would sometimes drink quite a lot. He was never violent, but he could be quite verbal.
4. Dad wasn't the only haemophiliac in the extended family. He was one of six children, of which there were four boys. GRO-C
GRO-C My uncle Jim passed away in the 1980's (85 or 86) and Dennis in 1998. The death of Jim would have had a serious effect on Dad's well being if he knew what he died from as both had haemophilia.
5. When I was quite young, Dad seemed quite happy. He liked to walk as much as possible. If there was any sun, we would go out. He couldn't run but he could walk in a limited way. He would shuffle along. He always had problems with the joints in his leg, that's where he took most of the bleeds, in his knees, but it never stopped him, he never saw it as a hindrance and encouraged his children to be very active.
6. Dad was a publican with his own pub. I believe he bought the pub in 1969 and the family still owns it but he hasn't worked in it for a number of years. In fact, I've never known Dad to run the pub in my known memory. He has always rented it out to other people and they have run it. I understand that my father had wanted to work in the pub, but he physically couldn't do it because he couldn't stand for very long. He found it frustrating to be sat down all the time.

2. How Affected

1. I remember that Dad's health was up and down. He was a haemophiliac from birth. He has type A haemophilia. He frequently had to attend The Royal Victoria Hospital in Belfast. An ambulance would come and collect him once every week at one period to take him to Belfast. They were organised visits.

He would go up there to get physiotherapy, do swimming to help his joints and he would receive Factor VIII injections. My father sometimes did his own injections, but this was ad hoc. The regular injections were conducted in the hospital. I remember my mother doing it too when I was quite young but then stopped doing it when it became more difficult to find a vein.

2. I understand that Dad was given infected blood in the 1980s or early 1990s. I only learnt about this two or three years ago in 2016 or 2017, when we heard about the Infected Blood Inquiry. My sister told me about the Inquiry and she told me that dad had been infected. Most of my information has come from my sister as she often attended the hospital with Dad.
3. We actually didn't know what he was infected with. My sister thinks its hepatitis C (HCV), but we were never told formally or my father given any written confirmation. To get access to my father's medical notes was not a very easy process and we do not believe we have received everything. My sister was told by Doctor Benson not to peruse the case, it would only cause heartache. (Doctor Benson was my father's latest doctor and presently for the son of my sister who also has the illness). I don't know if the reason why we could not get his notes. Was it because he's alive or whether it's because they're trying to keep it quiet?
4. In view of the fact that my father was receiving Factor VIII or blood transfusions on average a weekly basis, or at times daily, we have no idea of knowing in what circumstances he became contaminated. As far as I'm aware, my father only received Factor VIII, so we can be pretty sure this was how he was contaminated. It couldn't have been anything else, as all the Factor VIII came from Belfast.
1. We cannot tell when my father was told of the infection, or how much detail or be totally certain whether the money he was given was at the same time or much later. He kept this information to himself, not even our own mother knew. I believe he would have thought of the worst scenarios once he was told the

little they did say and this leads to agitation and worry on his part to why we are not understanding.

2. In November 2016, my father had an infection and had to go to hospital. He was quite susceptible to infections. I don't know exactly what this infection was. Whilst he was in hospital, he was in the wrong ward. People didn't properly understand what haemophilia was even within the health sector. When my father came out of hospital seven weeks later he was a completely different person. He had Lewy Body Dementia which means he gets very confused about situations. It's now impossible to talk to him about the issue of the infection. My sister was talking to him a few weeks ago and he started to talk about an illness he caught but was told to keep quiet by hospital staff at the time. My sister tried to gently delve for information, he was forth telling about how he had caught the illness but the subject changed and we realise that this could never be used in court.
3. My father's doctor was Dr Mayne. My father idolises this lady. My father would prefer to go to Belfast to see her, rather than to see a different doctor in Derry. Whatever products my father received to address the issues relating to his haemophilia were prescribed by Doctor Mayne, although he could have collected his prescription at either Belfast or Derry, but all the products were signed off by her; Doctor Mayne did once complain that my father was using too much Factor VIII and we believe that was a cost issue. Also from the notes we noticed derogatory references to my father. I believe Doctor Mayne is alive but is now retired. Doctor Benson took over, I believe, in or around 2009.
4. We have no idea whether Dad received a single item of contaminated blood or whether he received more than one item over a period of time. Only authorities can answer what period they used this contaminated blood.
5. I don't believe Dad received any advice in advance about the risks involved about receiving blood which could have been contaminated or rather did they even inform him where the blood came from. My understanding is that most of the blood products came from the United States and from prisoners in custody.

I think the authorities were buying blood on the cheap, without considering the dangers of doing so. One of my questions to the Inquiry would be, 'along the line of this question being put to me' regarding an awareness of the risk; did the government itself assess the risks of obtaining blood on the cheap from the sources in America?

6. I don't know when or how my dad found out that he had been given contaminated blood. Did they tell him when he got some money and was he fully informed of what illness they contaminated him with? My Mum is still alive. I've tried to talk to Mum about it, but she says she doesn't know anything. I genuinely believe my mother knew nothing. At this time Dad did not talk much to my mother and also I believe, being very proud he would keep it quiet.
7. I cannot comment on the adequacy or otherwise of the information that dad was given. I certainly was never given any information myself. However, from the medical notes, Doctor Mayne was quite derogatory in her notes to colleagues. She wrote to our local GP in Derry informing him that my father should not be admitted to local wards due to his hepatitis C (HCV), this was in the GP reference notes my Mother was never consulted for examination for possible infection.

3. Other infections

1. I don't know whether he acquired any other infection over and above HIV, hepatitis C or hepatitis B. I am also not aware if Dad acquired any other infections directly as a result of having initially received contaminated blood. To be honest, he was in and out of hospital so often because of his haemophilia, I wouldn't have known whether any new infection or issues were linked to the contaminated blood or not and if they were related the authorities at the hospital were not telling our family any information.
2. My sister was taken to a room by Doctor Benson on one of the trips to Belfast and was told my father was at risk from VCJD (Variant Creutzfeldt-Jakob

disease)] better known as mad cows disease. I am not sure if this is in the notes.

4. Consent

1. I don't know if Dad was treated or tested without his knowledge, or without his consent, or without being given adequate information, or for the purposes of research.

5. Impact

1. Mentally, my father went more into himself. He gave us money at one point, saying he didn't know how long he'd be with us. Also, I remember he said he didn't want anything to do with the money. He would drink more, he would be more argumentative with my mother, he would insult her more and he would regularly go out to the pub and come back late. This sort of behaviour started to happen more and more in the 1980s. My uncle and my father's older brother Jim who was also a haemophiliac died in the mid 1980s and about the time my father's general attitude changed. Could he have known then about the contaminated blood and was he worried about the same fate happening to him?
2. I went to university in 1989 to Canterbury in Kent. I later went back to Ireland for one year in 1993 and later went to Bristol in 1994. I went home every term holiday when at Canterbury but during my university time in Bristol and subsequent residence there afterwards, I went home a little less. However, I would talk to Mum every day or every other day, so I would have learnt what was happening at home. My father was very good to my sisters, but not so to my Mum. He was looking for someone to blame. Physically he started to deteriorate.

3. My sister told me that she read in the notes somewhere that about 10 years ago Doctor Benson observed my father getting slightly confused and that he was in the early stages of dementia but nothing was put down, neither were we informed of anything.
4. My father developed cataracts and glaucoma in his eyes. He's now largely lost his sight in both eyes. He is like a new-born baby, most things are quite blurred I believe.
5. I do recall that Dad's attitude generally was particularly bad between 1986 and 1989. We moved house during this time, so whether the stress was caused by the move itself, or whether caused by him finding out that he had received contaminated blood, the death of his brother or indeed one of these issues caused or exacerbated the other, I cannot tell.
6. I'm not aware of any complications or medical conditions arising from the initial infection, other than possibly the issues with the cataracts or dementia. This will hopefully come out when we get full access to the notes and can study them in detail.
7. I'm not aware of whether my father received any treatment for the infections. I was only aware of him receiving Factor VIII. What we can say for certain is that he's not currently receiving anything other than normal medication for his dementia, and vitamins because he is now completely bedridden. I feel now with hindsight that they have washed their hands of my dad.
8. I'm not aware of any treatments that Dad ought to have received. When someone gets infected through no fault of their own, but because of a fault in the system, then they should receive some treatment, but I cannot say specifically what that treatment should have been. Also, why they took no action to consult or test my mother this is an issues I want answered? All part of the cover up.

9. Dad hardly ever got colds or flu. The only illness that he seemed to have were connected to his haemophilia that is until these latter years.
10. Dad was a very private person. He would try not to use his crutch. In public, he wanted to be seen as everyone else, he hated fuss or attention. I think the reason why he drank so much and argued so much with Mum was because he was angry. He was taking it out on others for what they had done to him. It's easy to strike those close to you.
11. I cannot say that I noticed a difference in Dad's attitude towards me subsequent to him finding out he'd been infected. Dad was always loving of all his children. I'd always been closer to my mum than my father. I cannot say that I was affected emotionally but I did notice the arguments but like I said, not overly.
12. I did notice that in later life my father was becoming more and more **GRO-C**. I am **GRO-C**. Although I never explicitly discussed my **GRO-C** with my father openly, I'm pretty sure that he would have known, either through guessing or because someone else in the family told him. I cannot say for certain that his **GRO-C** people was because he had infected blood, but there might be a correlation. When my father was infected the general attitude from the media was that it was from **GRO-C** drug users.
13. I cannot comment on the issue of stigma my father would have or did face. As for me personally I only found out two years ago and these days stigma is not such a pressing issue as it might have been 20 or 30 years ago. The biggest issue for us is why Dad never told us anything about it. He bottled and kept all this to suffer alone. I'm pretty definite that the point about it having a stigma in the 1980s and 1990s is one of the reasons why he never told us. He was very self-conscious about various issues in his life anyway so it must have been impossible for him to be able to discuss his being infected with anybody else at the time. The perfect example of this was the film Philadelphia.

14. The only people he might have confided in was his sister Terry, but she has Alzheimer's, so we can't get information from her anymore and his brother Dennis who also had haemophilia, but he has since sadly died.
15. In hindsight, the impact on my Mum after he'd discovered he was infected was very bad during the 1990's. He needed someone to take the aggression out on. He was quite hard on her and refused to do anything with her. For example, would take the telephone away from her forcing her to use a public telephone box to call me. This all suddenly happened in the early 1990's. I know it because I spoke to mum regularly.
16. With regard to my siblings, it has affected my sister very personally, because her eldest son has haemophilia. Due to being a carrier of the illness she decided not to have more children. At one point my sister regularly gave my father injections of Factor VIII also. My sister would attend the hospital with Dad a lot. She was close very to my father because of this. She's taken a lot on emotionally due to my father and her own son's illness.
17. Of the others, my brother Caoimhain has developed a very close bond with my father. This has affected him a great deal. He was quite wild as a lad, but now he has become very sensible. He'd drop anything and everything for my dad. I'm not sure how it's affected my other siblings. It may have affected my younger sister as she was much younger than the rest of us and so lived with my parents as a young girl and teenager at this time. She's still at home with my mum and Dad. Dad receives home care now due to the dementia, mostly from the family.
18. I cannot say that I have ever experienced any work or financial issues through Dad being infected. He never let it affect us. Times were tough but he always struggled on provided for us all. However from 19 years old I lived away and if I ever needed some money Dad would always find a way to help me out.

6. Treatment/Care Support

1. I am not aware of whether my father was offered, or received, any treatment, care or support. And from what I am now reading it seems like he was abandoned and given no help whatsoever. Doctor Mayne who my father idolises to this day was very derogatory in communication with other staff about my father.
2. I am not aware if he received or was offered any counselling or psychiatric support.

7. Financial Assistance

1. I'm aware that my father received some money which he passed onto the family in 2004. I don't know where it came from and I don't know the total that he received only that he wanted us to get it quickly. I know Dad kept none of it, all was given away. I was told it came from the pub. He told me to put it in the bank. I didn't question him when he told me it came from the pub. My sister thinks it was hush money given to him as a way of saying sorry for what had happened. Looking back on it, I should have wondered where the money came from. I've gained a lot of information through talking to other people and from what I've read, but I cannot give any specific details about when and how much he got, or other people.
2. Although the sum of maybe £20,000 from the Skipton fund in 2004 was a lot of money, my father was given, in effect, a life sentence and the amount seems unimportant in that context. What they should have done is told him about consequences, possible effects or cures and perhaps suggested that he talk to the family and my mother. Plus, look at how there was a failure in the system and how this terrible situation occurred in the first place.
3. I've not received any financial assistance directly from any other body.

8. Other Issues

1. The biggest scandal is the authorities hoped it would not be talked about and would just be forgotten. I would like to find out from whichever body was in control of buying these blood products, did they know where the blood came from and did this raise any alarms? Did they carry out due diligence checks? Were they carrying out tests on the blood products and were they assessing the risks themselves? Or did they know about the blood products being contaminated all along, but turned a blind eye? Did they continue to buy the products knowing they were contaminated and at point did they stop buying and also supplying?
2. I would want to know what the authorities have been doing since to rectify this. Are they doing proper research and proper analysis on future blood suppliers? What are they doing to reach out to those that were affected?
3. The medical notes suggest nothing in relation to a proper look at these issues. Wouldn't you want to open it all up and have a good look at it all?
4. Whilst the Inquiry might explain a lot of what happened, of course, unfortunately, a lot of people have now passed on. There should be some recognition of guilt, and those people held responsible. I believe my father's doctor, Mrs Mayne would know a lot of information, she was responsible for Dad, plus many others who have sadly passed away due to being the director and guardian of the supply of Factor VIII and the contamination so many received. She, her colleagues and successors must answer on this.
5. Let me put this to you, my father caught hepatitis C (HCV), this so easily could have been HIV (Aids) if he had received a different batch of Factor VIII. This could have easily been my father's death certificate and I could have missed so many years and time with my father, as well as my siblings. This is a fate that has happened to many other families, this situation I can not imagine.

Statement of Truth

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

Signed:

GRO-C

Dated.....

09/04/19

