

Witness Name: Mr Richard Buss
Statement No.: WITN1846001
Exhibits: 0
Dated: 3 May 2019

**WRITTEN STATEMENT OF MR RICHARD BUSS
INFECTED BLOOD INQUIRY**

Section 1: Introduction

1. My name is Mr Richard Buss. My date of birth is the GRO-C 1971; my address details are known to the Inquiry. I have three daughters; Ashleigh, Georgia and Abbey, all have left university and have jobs. They are the best and most beautiful children I could have asked for. I am still married to their mum Julie who is a beautiful woman inside and out and best person I have ever met. My eldest daughter lives with her fiancé Nathan. My two youngest children, GRO-C and GRO-C live with my wife and me.

Section 2: How Affected

2. I make this statement in memory of my mum, Colleen June Buss who gave birth to me on GRO-C 1971 at the Royal Sussex County Hospital. During my birth mum lost some blood and the blood that they used to replace what she had lost was contaminated with hepatitis C. Shortly after her discharge from hospital she started to show signs of being unwell. A pharmacist that she visited with my Nan advised that my mum should go to the hospital as she was

looking a little jaundiced by then. My mum passed away on 10 April 1971, GRO-C GRO-C after I was born. She was only 18 years old. She was the eldest child in her family. She had two sisters and one brother. Mum's death certificate states that she died from hepatic coma and infective hepatitis C suspected from a blood transfusion, she was in good health before this happened.

3. My mum did not suffer from a bleeding disorder.
4. Mum was infected with hepatitis C as a result of receiving contaminated blood after my birth on GRO-C 1971 at the Royal Sussex County Hospital. I have not previously tried to acquire my records but my lawyers are going to try to help me to do this, to see if there is anything I can find. I do not hold out much hope as mum died almost 50 years ago now.
5. I do not know whether my mum was advised about a risk of being exposed to infection prior to the receipt of the blood by her. I fear for the fact that she may have received the blood unnecessarily because I am not sure how I will take news that she may not have needed the transfusion she received. Very many people's lives were affected very badly by her passing away from this infection.
6. It is my understanding that my mum was infected with hepatitis C only. This is the only infection that our family knows about.
7. My grandfather; my mum's dad, has told me that my mum became very unwell soon after she was discharged from hospital. She went to see a pharmacist with my Nan and while there she was told to go to the hospital as she looked very unwell and slightly jaundiced. I understand that she went to the Royal Sussex County Hospital to try to establish what was wrong and that it was there that she was diagnosed with hepatitis C. My mum was transferred to Foredown Isolation Hospital in Portslade, Hove where she was quarantined. I don't know for how long she was there before she slipped into a coma.

8. I do not know what or whether information was provided about the infection or indeed who provided that information;
9. I do not know whether adequate information was provided but from what my grandfather has told me I do not think that it was. I understand that my mum was moved to Foredown because it was considered that she posed a serious risk of infection to others. This meant that my grandparents and I were kept away from my mum; my grandparents have told me that they were made to stay in their own home just in case my mum carried a tropical infectious disease and that it would spread.
10. I cannot answer this question but I doubt that information could have been provided earlier because my mum became sick very soon after receiving the blood.
11. I do not think that my mum knew that she had been infected with hepatitis C; I understand that when she reached Foredown she was delirious.
12. The family was quarantined initially; I think it was for a couple of days until it was ascertained whether my grandparents and I carried the infection. I don't actually know whether I was tested but I suspect that I was.

Section 3: Other infections

13. I think that my mum was infected with hepatitis C only.

Section 4: Consent

14. I think that my mum was not given adequate information about the risks of being infected because I think that she would have chosen to not have the transfusion if she had known; however, I do not know for certain. I do not think

that she was treated or tested without her knowledge or consent or for the purposes of research.

Section 5: Impact

15. My mum passed away 55 days following receipt of the blood transfusion which carried the infection to her.
16. I am unsure what further medical complications or conditions my mum had as a result of the infection but it seems that she developed an acute response to the receipt of the blood which included serious fever, jaundice and coma. She passed away from hepatic coma and infectious hepatitis C which was suspected to have come from a blood transfusion.
17. As I have said above, my mum passed away on the 10 April 1971.
18. I am unsure whether my mum was given any treatment but I assume that the hospital tried to reduce her body temperature and to rouse her from the coma.
19. I do not think that this question is relevant.
20. I do not think that this question is relevant and it seems my mum passed away before she could have received any possible treatments.
21. My mum passed away from the infection.
22. The infected status meant that my mum was quarantined and kept away from her family, including me. She passed away on her own in the Foredown Isolation Hospital.
23. The impact of the infection with hepatitis C killed my mum and ended her private, family and social life.

24. I was the only child that my mum had. The effect of this unnecessary tragedy is still felt today. My dad was only a young man when this happened, he was only 18. He became a widow. He did not take the news of my mum's death very well. He drank as a result and became aggressive. He was not in my life very much. My grandparents and my dad's brother became my parents and my aunts and uncles, my siblings. I don't know when I consciously thought that my mum would never be in my life. I remember when I used to get upset at parties that I would ask for her. I did not understand initially that she was not coming back. At some point it did dawn on me but I do not know when. I was a very unruly teenager and got into drinking and drugs as a result. I was very angry at what happened, very angry with my father for not caring enough about my mum and me. This anger affected me. I think that my father's approach to the whole thing really badly affected me; I could not understand why he did not care that my mum was not around anymore and so I let this affect me. Her death; her absence from my life still affects me. I remember seeing my school friends with their mums and I was aware that this was something that I did not have. I was always known as the one parent child and there was a stigma attached to this for me. I cannot go to my mum's grave any more, it affects me too much. I am affected in the most stupid ways. I always ask whether she would be proud, what she would have thought, whether I would have lived up to her expectations.
25. I do not think that there was a stigma associated with my mum's diagnosis and death from hepatitis C. I do not think that her infected status was shared with anyone else; we kept it within the family.
26. My grandparents really did try to keep my mum's memory alive and fought to keep me safe. They kept my mum's notes and her handbags and make up and they gave these things to me. They kept the little lists that my mum had made prior to my arrival into this world, these were lists of all the things that she wanted to buy me. My mum's dad is still with us and celebrated his 90th

birthday in December last year. Even now when I talk about mum I can still see the hurt in his face. Although he and my Nan got over it, I don't think that they ever got over it properly. My Nan wanted to put me and all of her children; my mum's two sisters and brother, and my grandfather into the car and drive it off Beachy Head so that they could be reunited with my mum again. If my Nan had been a driver then this might have happened, but my grandfather was the driver and he said that they could not do it, that they had to take care of the children. My Nan started to think that we were cursed, she became scared of everything. This impacted on my life because I was not allowed to do things that were even slightly risky, like riding a motorbike. If there was a chance that something might go wrong then I was not allowed to do it. My Nan worried constantly. My aunt was the same.

27. My mum's life came to an abrupt end and the loss of her had a major financial impact on my life because my father became wholly responsible for me and he was not a responsible person. We obviously only had one income and when I was with my dad, we lived with his mum. If he had to do something for a couple of weeks he would leave me with his siblings. My mum's parents wanted to adopt me, but my father refused because of the income that he received for me. His approach to things was very different to what my mum's would have been. I think that this had a significant financial impact on me and my life. I used to stay with my grandparents at weekends and school holidays.

Section 6: Treatment/ Care/ Support

28. My mum did not receive treatment, care or support as she passed away so soon after receiving the blood transfusion.
29. Counselling and psychological support has not ever been made available to me in consequence of what happened. I think I could probably benefit from it as I usually cry at the silliest things.

Section 7: Financial Assistance

30. I have not received any financial assistance; I did not even know that there was financial assistance available. I have always thought that this was an isolated incident until I saw a notice on Changeme.com approximately two years ago. I had always thought that my mum was the unlucky one.

Section 8: Other Issues

31. I am making this statement in memory of my dear mum who passed away at only 18 years of age. She had the whole of the rest of her life ahead of her. I have lived my whole life without her. I want her and her memory to count in this Inquiry. I would like the Inquiry to find out why and how this happened to her and to others. I want to find out the truth and to know who is responsible for this tragedy. I believe that someone in the higher echelons of our society knew at some point that this was happening to the people in this country and they knew their decision to carry on was having a huge impact on so many lives. If there is someone, or a number of people responsible, then that person or those people need to be held accountable.

Statement of Truth

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

Signed:

GRO-C

Full Name: RICHARD BUSS

Date:

07/05/2019

