

Witness Name: Sharon Angela Parr-Veck

Statement No.: WITN3443001

Exhibits: WITN3443002

Dated: 19th July 2019

INFECTED BLOOD INQUIRY

WRITTEN STATEMENT OF SHARON ANGELA PARR-VECK

I provide this statement in response to a request under Rule 9 of the Inquiry Rules 2006 dated 12 June 2019.

I, Sharon Angela Parr-Veck, will say as follows: -

Section 1. Introduction

1. My name is Sharon Angela Parr-Veck. My date of birth is GRO-C 1971 and my address is known to the Inquiry. I intend to speak about my father, Ronald Parr, who was infected with HIV and Hepatitis B Virus ("HBV") following treatment with Factor VIII and blood transfusions.
2. I live on an olive farm in Spain with my husband and daughter. Although I live abroad, I am still very close with my mother, Marjorie Joyce Parr (W0889), and brother, Simon Parr (W0908), who are also providing statements to the Inquiry.

Section 2. How Affected

3. My father was born in Liverpool on GRO-C 1944. He had severe Haemophilia A.

4. When Simon and I were younger, we had a great life. My mother and father were perfect so we and I had a happy childhood. I was a 'daddy's girl'; he would spend hours brushing my hair. We were a really close family and we always had people around the house.
5. Back then, my mother giving my father injections of cryoprecipitate and then Factor VIII was just a part of our lives. I remember the orange and later red box my mother had containing the injections. I used to go and collect the box for my mother until I got to an age when I couldn't be anywhere near the injections because I hated the sight of them.
6. In 1983, when I was 12 years old, my father had a knee operation in New Cross Hospital, Wolverhampton. The surgery went wrong and the skin burst from his knee all the way down to his ankle. He was in hospital for three months and permanently on Factor VIII. We think it was likely during this time that my father contracted HIV and HBV.
7. I don't recall much about this operation, but I do remember talking with my father in the car about how the operation had gone wrong. I also remember he had a large ulcer on his leg from the operation.
8. Within a year of the knee operation, my mother and my brother went to pick up Factor VIII for dad from the Royal Shrewsbury Hospital, Shropshire. The consultant, Dr O'Shea, took them into his consultation room and he told my mother that my father had HIV. He said it as though she should have known already, and she was left to break the news to my father. My mother has also told me that she was given very little information about how to manage dad's infection and the risk of transmission.
9. My mum does not recall whether they were ever told that my father also had HBV, or whether she first learnt this when she saw it on his death certificate.
10. Years later, my mother was tested for HIV and was cleared. I remember the period of waiting for her test results to come back. It was awful. I was tested for HIV before I had my daughter. It was negative.

Section 3. Other Infections

12. As far as I am aware, my father did not receive any infections other than HIV and HBV as a result of the Factor VIII or blood transfusions.

Section 4. Consent

13. As I was only a teenager at the time, I do not know whether my father was treated or tested without his knowledge and consent or for research purposes.

Section 5. Impact

14. Initially, my father did not tell Simon and I about his HIV diagnosis. He and my mother decided to keep it between the two of them. After school, I went to college and studied childcare. I then got a job as a nanny in Oxford, working for a haematologist called Peter Alton ("Pete"). Pete worked at Radcliffe Hospital in Oxford. I would stay in Oxford for work from Monday to Friday and travel home every weekend.
15. I did not find out that my father had HIV until I was around 18 years old. I had come home for the weekend and, one evening, my father came home after being out drinking. When Simon and I told him that he shouldn't be drinking so much given he only had one kidney, he said that he "might as well". It was then that he told us he was HIV positive.
16. Receiving this news was awful. I wanted to stay home with my parents in GRO-C but my father wouldn't let me. He wanted me to continue working in Oxford. I went back to work on the Sunday.
17. At the time, all we knew about HIV was what we had learned at school. As teenagers, we wanted to learn about it as it was all over the news. However, it was portrayed as an illness that only gay people and drug

users had. Until my dad told us he had HIV, I didn't realise it was possible to be infected with the virus through blood and blood products.

18. When my father first told us about his HIV, I did not feel able to tell my friends. My parents did not want us to have to deal with the stigma at school. Even when my dad passed away, with some people we could tell the truth but with others we had to make things up. I didn't want to deal with the questions about how he got it.
19. My dad's health did not deteriorate significantly until the very end. However, I do remember that he started looking really thin. There was one occasion when I came home and was shocked to see how thin he had become. His glasses seemed to take up his whole face.
20. Dad also started to drink a lot more around this time. He had a kidney removed around 1987 or 1988 but there were no complications with this operation.
21. In 1989, my father's eyes and skin were yellow as a result of jaundice. However, my mother cannot recall whether my father was officially diagnosed with HBV at this point.
22. One day in late 1990, while I was in Oxford, I received a phone call saying dad was in hospital. Pete, my boss, drove me home to Telford. Because he was a haematologist, he explained that my father had gone into a coma and informed me about what was going on.
23. When I came back, my father was so ill. I stayed in GRO-C while dad was in hospital but I only went to see him a couple of times. It was too difficult. Seeing him so unwell was awful. It wasn't my father lying in that bed.
24. On 21 December 1990, while I was at home, we received a telephone call saying that my father had passed away. His death certificate states

that the cause of death was Staphylococcal Septicaemia, AIDS, Haemophilia A and Chronic HBV. I produce a true copy of his death certificate as Exhibit WITN3443002.

25. I was 19 years old when my father died. I remember it all being a blur at the time. I stayed at home in GRO-C for a couple of weeks then went back to work.

26. I remember things being difficult for our family financially when my father was ill and after he died. However, mum always made sure we wouldn't go without. I even remember her foraging for food and trying to feed us nettle soup.

27. I later moved to Belgium for a year, then to Paris for three years. I met my husband while I was travelling. We moved back to London and decided that we were going to emigrate to Spain. We got married in May 2009.

28. My husband and I tried to have children for six years before we decided to try in vitro fertilisation (IVF). Due to my father's haemophilia, we decided to go for screening. We did not want to have a male child who would have to go through what my father went through. I gave birth to my daughter, Isabella, in 2007.

29. I was never tested for whether I am a carrier of the haemophilia gene; however, I suspect that I may be. I bruise easily and my joints hurt when I knock them.

Section 6. Treatment/Care/Support

30. My family and I have never been offered any counselling or psychological support. Luckily, as I was working with Pete, the haematologist from Oxford, I could talk to him about what was going on

with my father's health. Because he was a doctor, I felt I could talk to him about it without worrying about the stigma.

Section 7. Financial Assistance

31. We received some financial assistance shortly after my father passed away but I do not know where this was from. I believe it was around £4,000 to £6,000 and we split it between the three of us.

32. I think that the amount of financial assistance that was provided was shocking. It was not enough given my father had been unable to work and support his family.

Section 8. Other Issues

33. I have never been involved in any previous inquiries or campaigns. I hope that, following this Inquiry, those involved will learn from their mistakes. Procedures should be put in place to ensure that something like this never happens again. That is why my husband and I were too scared to have a boy. You don't know if something like this is going to happen again down the line.

Statement of Truth

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

Signed

GRO-C

Dated

19th July 2019