

Witness Name: James Cuthill

Statement No: WITN4073001

Dated: 1st July 2020

INFECTED BLOOD INQUIRY

FIRST WRITTEN STATEMENT OF JAMES CUTHILL

I provide this statement in response to a request under Rule 9 of the Inquiry rules 2006 dated 13th March 2020. I adopt the paragraph numbering in the Rule 9 request for ease of reference.

I, James Cuthill will say as follows:-

1. Introduction

1. My name is James Cuthill. My date of birth is GRO-C 1971 and my address is known to the Inquiry.
2. I am married and have two children from a previous marriage and two stepchildren from my present marriage. I currently work as a Contracts Manager for a plumbing company.
3. I am the son of Gordon and Maureen Cuthill and I have a twin sister Jennifer and an elder brother Stewart. My father was born on GRO-C GRO-C 1946 and tragically died on the 28th January 2011.

2. How Infected

1. My father worked as a coach driver and sometimes his work would take him on foreign excursions. In 1974 my father was involved in a road traffic accident and sustained multiple serious injuries. I was quite young at the time and I don't really remember much about the details, but my father's injuries were so bad that he had to have his right leg amputated. I understand on a number of occasions it was thought that my father may not live. He was in hospital in Germany for a number of weeks after the accident, and on returning to Edinburgh, he was hospitalised for approximately a year.
2. I understand that my father received blood transfusions when they operated on him in Germany. On his return to Edinburgh, he received further surgery and I believe he was also given blood transfusions during this operation.
3. My father was treated in a number of Edinburgh hospitals at the time. Edinburgh Royal Infirmary, 51 Little France Cres, Edinburgh EH16 4SA; Edinburgh City Hospital, 51 Greenbank Drive Edinburgh EH10 5SB; and Princess Mary Rose Hospital, 41 - 43 Frogston Road West Edinburgh EH10 7ED.
4. I am unaware of whether any advice was given to my parents about the risks of infection from the blood given to my father.
5. In 2009 my father felt unwell and had abdominal pain. He went to his GP who referred him for tests. When my parents received the results of the tests, they called my brother and sister and I together. They told us that the tests had shown that my father had tumours on his liver and that he was also infected with hepatitis C. This came as a great shock to us, although we thought with treatment he may recover. My parents suggested that it would be beneficial to us if we all got ourselves tested. I did get tested and fortunately for me the test came back negative for hepatitis C. GRO-C
GRO-C I am not sure whether Jennifer was tested.

6. In or around 2009, my father was told by the clinicians that because of the damage that the hepatitis C had done to his liver, it was not able to regenerate. He was put on a course of chemotherapy treatment. It was at this point that I became very worried as I realised he was not going to recover.
7. I recall being with my father in the hospital when he was quite poorly. When my mother left the ward, my father said to me that he thought "*he would go tonight*". This was an extremely upsetting and emotional moment for me. I felt completely helpless.

3. **Other infections**

1. I believe that my father was also infected with hepatitis B, but I was very young at the time, so I have no recollection of this. My mother, Maureen Cuthill will provide more detail about this in her statement to the Inquiry.

4. **Consent**

1. I am unable to comment in this section as I have no recollection.

5. **Impact**

1. My father worked in a factory for a few years after recovering from his accident in 1974. Unfortunately, he had to stop work as the pain in his stump made it extremely difficult for him. Instead my mother went out to work to support the family. She was an Auxiliary Nurse and worked with elderly people.
2. I remember life being difficult for my mother. Over the years she had coped with a lot. She had supported and looked after my father after being injured in the accident, and went through the stress and trauma

of having to travel by boat to Germany to be with him, leaving her young family behind. Mum had to deal with him being in hospital for such a long time and all the while, looking after three young children. It couldn't have been easy for her. She then received the final blow - the devastating news that my father was infected with hepatitis C and was also suffering with liver cancer. It was hard to see my mother so upset and worried. I believe the stress took its toll on their relationship. My mother GRO-C and nursing my father must have been difficult for her.

3. I was living at home at the time my father was diagnosed with hepatitis C. On recollection, it would have been quite easy for me to have picked up and used my father's razor, instead of mine by mistake as this happened from time to time.
4. When we were growing up, because of my father's disability, we were not able to play football together or games of a similar robust nature but instead, we would sometimes play bowls. My father enjoyed bowling with my brother Stewart. I would sometimes join them.
5. I recall Stewart and I would take my father to the speedway on occasions. We would also take him to Easter Road in his wheelchair to watch Hibernian play. When he became too ill to go to watch the games, my two boys and I would sometimes watch them on the TV with him at home instead.
6. I find it difficult to understand that my father had not been told of his infection earlier. He attended regular medical appointments due to his disability. Why wasn't he informed at one of these appointments?
7. My father received chemotherapy treatment. This was given by injecting him through an artery in the stump of his right leg. I believe that one of the nurses, Sister Kilpatrick, told my mother about my father

being given infected blood and that he had been given two types, Afro/American and Asian blood.

8. My father didn't want anyone to know about his infection of hepatitis C. He was embarrassed about it. No-one outside the immediate family knew of his infection. He put on a brave face for the family, but he must have been very depressed in private.
9. It was hard in the last weeks of my father's life to sit and watch him die. I regret going to see him during the last days of his life, as that image of him looking so ill will stay with me. I would have preferred to have remembered him as a fit, active and happy man.
10. I think it is sad that my grandchildren will never know or have the opportunity to meet or spend time with their great grandfather.

6. **Treatment/Care Support**

1. Counselling or psychological support was never made available to my father or the family.

7. **Financial Assistance**

1. A few years after my father's death, my mother made an application to the Skipton Fund, her application was subsequently refused. I believe the reason for the refusal was that she was unable to prove that the infected blood my father received was not from the transfusion in Germany.

8. **Other Issues**

1. My father becoming infected has left me feeling frustrated and angry. Why did it take the medical staff so long to detect my father's hepatitis

even though he was back and forth to the hospital on many occasions for so many years.

2. Why was my mother refused help from the Skipton Fund? She should not have had to prove the source of the infected blood given to my father.

Statement of Truth

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

Signed.

GRO-C

Dated...

1/7/20