

Witness Name: Stewart Cuthill

Statement No: WITN4074001

Dated: 7th February 2020

INFECTED BLOOD INQUIRY

FIRST WRITTEN STATEMENT OF STEWART 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 Stewart Cuthill will say as follows: -

1. Introduction

1. My name is Stewart Cuthill, my date of birth is GRO-C 1969 and I am 50 years of age. I work as an Assistant Manager for a Plumbing Merchants. I am married and have a stepson and grandchildren.
2. I am the son of Gordon and Maureen Cuthill. My father's date of birth is GRO-C 1946. He tragically died on 28th January 2011. I have two siblings, Jennifer Hall and her twin brother James Cuthill. They were born on the GRO-C 1971.

2. How Affected

1. My father worked as a coach driver. He would drive coaches on foreign excursions and the like. He was seriously injured when he was involved in a road traffic accident in Germany in 1974. I was too young to really remember the details of the accident but I am told by my family that I saw a newspaper headline about the crash and told my mother, but I don't personally recall this. I do however recall my father returning home having lost his right leg. He had a below the knee amputation.
2. In the coach accident, my father suffered multiple injuries and I understand there were a number of occasions when it was felt he might not live. He was in hospital for many weeks in Germany and remained in hospital for the best part of a year when he returned to Edinburgh.
3. I understand that when he was operated on in Germany, he received blood transfusions. He was then operated on again when he returned to Edinburgh some weeks later, after the accident and he received blood transfusions during that operation as well.
4. 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.
5. I am not aware that any advice was provided to my father or mother about any risks of infection from the blood transfusions.
6. I don't believe that my father knew anything about his hepatitis C (HCV) for many years.
7. I learnt about HCV when my father was ill in 2009. I was still living at home with my parents at that time. I can remember my mother telling me that she had just been told that my father had HCV. I recall him

sitting there with his head in his hands. He seemed ashamed about it and he absolutely did not want to discuss it.

8. It came as a great shock to us all in the family. I decided I should get myself tested for HCV as I felt sure I had it. I was very worried about becoming infected. When you live at home, you sometime share toiletries, razors and the like. I can recall waiting on the result of the test for some days and being very worried. It was terrible. It came as a great relief to get the all clear.
9. I find it extraordinary that my father had not been told earlier. Given his disability he had pretty regular medical appointments over the years. You would have thought somebody would have picked it up at one of those appointments and told him.
10. I can't help thinking that if it had been picked up earlier, my father could have received some sort of treatment which prevented the illness that eventually took him away from us.

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 do not believe my father had been given any warnings at any time about infected blood.
2. I do not believe he was tested without his knowledge or consent. However, the medical records are incomplete, so I can't be wholly sure of that.

5. Impact

1. After my father came home following his terrible injuries in 1974, he worked for a few years in a factory, but he suffered with stump pain in his right leg. It was very difficult for him to be able to continue to work, so instead, my mother went out to work. Firstly, she worked part time and then full time. She was an Auxiliary Nurse and worked with elderly people.
2. My father still managed to have a full and active life for many years. He was particularly enthusiastic about bowling. He actually achieved quite a senior position within the local bowling community and became President of the East Lothian Bowling Society. He encouraged me to play as well, and we used to bowl together. I loved bowling with my father, it brought us closer together. We had a shared interest and a bond. It also became an important focal point in my father's life.
3. As my father was able to drive, he used to run my mother back and forth everywhere because she was a nervous driver.
4. My father enjoyed going down to his local pub for a drink. He wasn't a heavy drinker in any sort of way. My mother would not have tolerated that as she was teetotal but he enjoyed the social aspect.
5. In late 2009, my father was feeling poorly. He had been to the doctor a few times saying he was feeling sick and had pains in his left side. He was clearly unwell. He had tests in hospital and was told he had lesions on his liver. We knew this was serious, but presumed treatment would help.
6. My father had chemotherapy treatment during which, they injected him through an artery in the stump of his right leg.
7. One of the nurses dealing with my father, Sister Kilpatrick at Edinburgh Royal Infirmary, told my mother about him having been

given infected blood. She said he would have been given two types, one was Afro/American, and one was Asian.

8. After the injections, my father didn't wear his false leg anymore. He was effectively wheelchair bound. He had to give up many things he enjoyed doing, particularly of course bowling. He went a few times to watch me play but it was never the same. It meant that I also lost interest in the sport. It was just not the same without him and eventually gave it up.
9. My father was not able to drive from that point onwards. He lost his independence and became more and more reliant on others.
10. My father was adamant that he did not want any nurses around at home. He didn't want to have anything to do with the Macmillan nurses. My mother of course was well placed to be able to care for him given her job, and this is what she did.
11. He tried to keep his illness as private as possible. Very few knew about it apart from immediate family.
12. My father put on a brave face in his dealings with us. He seemed to be coping. However, I would have thought that, when we were not around, he must have been very down. It must also have been very difficult for my mother, but they managed to shield this from us.
13. My mother was worried and drained. It all took its toll on her but she never complained.
14. As a family we would try to help out. We would take my father out for the day, for example. This would give our mother something of a break. He liked horse racing, so I took him out to the races a few times.

15. In the October before my father died, he went away with my mother to Pitlochry for a short break.
16. In the December we took him to the races in Kelso. We had a good day out, but it proved to be the last.
17. On Christmas Day 2010 he went to dinner at my sister's house with my mother. It was not the joyful occasion Christmas is usually is for us all. I think he knew time was limited.
18. During the last weeks of his life my father suffered a lot of pain but fortunately slept through a lot of it, probably due to the medication he was receiving at that time. He was as brave as anyone I have ever known. My father sadly passed away in January 2011. His death certificate stated the cause of death was Hepatocellular Carcinoma.

6. Treatment/Care Support

1. There was never any counselling or psychological support made available to my father or the family as a consequence of what happened.

7. Financial assistance

1. A few years after my father's death, my mother made an application to the Skipton Fund for financial support, but it was refused. It is my understanding that the reason for the refusal was she could not prove that the infected blood he had received was from the UK and not from what he received in Germany.
2. It seems bizarre and unfair to me that a victim has to somehow produce proof to eliminate all other options.

3. The extra finances would of course come in very handy for my mother who gets by on just a pension. However, it was the principle and justice of the issue which has really upset her and the family. She feels she has been brushed off by the system. She also feels she is not being allowed to get to the truth of what happened to my father - nobody will take responsibility.

8. Other Issues

1. I heard from someone who ran hospitals in Scotland in the 1970's that they knowingly bought in dangerous blood from abroad, without checking it, purely for cost cutting reasons.

Statement of Truth

I believe the facts stated and this witness statement are true.

Signed.....

GRO-C

Dated.....

7/2/20