

INFECTED BLOOD INQUIRY

FIRST WRITTEN STATEMENT OF JENNIFER HALL

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 Jennifer Hall will say as follows: -

1. Introduction

1. My name is Jennifer Hall, I am 48 years of age. My date of birth is GRO-C GRO-C 1971 and my address is known to the Inquiry. I am an Adult Support Need Auxiliary and I assist children with special needs in a primary school. I am married and have three grown-up children.
2. I am the daughter of Gordon and Maureen Cuthill. My father's date of birth is GRO-C 1946 and he tragically died on 28th January 2011. I have two siblings, Stewart Cuthill who was born in 1969 and my twin brother James Cuthill.

2. How Affected

1. My father worked as a coach driver. He would drive coaches on foreign excursions and the like. In 1974 he was seriously injured in a road traffic accident in Germany and suffered multiple serious injuries. I was too young to really remember the incident and the details, but I was aware of my father returning home having lost his right leg. He had a below knee amputation.
2. In the coach accident, he 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 a number of weeks in Germany and then hospitalised for the best part of a year when he came back to Edinburgh.
3. I understand that when he was operated on in Germany, he received blood transfusions. He was also operated on when he returned to Edinburgh some weeks after the accident and had blood transfusions at that time as well.
4. My father was treated at a number of hospitals in Edinburgh at the time: Edinburgh Royal Infirmary, 51 Little France Crescent, Edinburgh, Edinburgh City Hospital 51 Greenbank Drive, Edinburgh and Princess Mary Rose Hospital, 41-43 Frogston Road, West Edinburgh.
5. I am not aware that any advice was provided to my father or mother about any risks of infection from the blood.
6. I don't believe that my father knew anything about hepatitis C (HCV) for many years.
7. I learnt about HCV when my father was ill in 2009. I live near my parents and would call at their home regularly. I can remember my mother telling me that she had just been told my father had HCV. I can recall him sitting there with his head in his hands. He seemed ashamed about it. He absolutely did not want to discuss it.
8. It came as a great shock to us all in the family. My older brother Stewart was living with my parents at that time and I can recall him

getting tested for HCV. He was found not to be positive with it. I of course, had not lived at home for many years at that point so I did not feel the need to get tested, nor was it something that crossed my mind.

9. I find it extraordinary that he 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 and told him at one of those appointments.

10. I can't help thinking that if it had been picked up earlier, he could have received some sort of treatment which prevented the illness that eventually took him away.

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 about infected blood at the time.

2. I don't believe he was tested without his knowledge or consent. However, the medical records are not complete, 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 work so my

mother went out to work, firstly part time then full time as an Auxiliary Nurse working 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. He encouraged my brother Stewart to play as well, and they used to bowl together. There was a great bond between them in that respect. It became an important focal part in my father's life.
3. My father was able to drive. He used to run my mother back and fore 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.
5. In late 2009, he 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.
6. He had tests in hospital and was told he had lesions on his liver, but at that time, we were unaware of how serious this was.
7. He had chemotherapy treatment in which they injected him through an artery in the stump of his right leg.
8. 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.
9. 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. I think he went a few

times to watch Stewart play but it was never the same again. He was not able to drive from that point onwards. He lost his independence and became more and more reliant on others.

10. My father didn't 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 us to be coping. However, I would have thought that when we were not around, he must have been very down. It must have been very difficult for my mother, but they shielded my brothers and I from this.

13. I could tell that my mother was worried and drained. It all took its toll on her. She looked worn down, but she never complained.

14. As a family, we would try to help out. We would look to take Dad out for the day, for example. This would give our mother something of a break.

15. In the October before he died, he went away with my mother to Pitlochry for a short break which they both enjoyed.

16. On Christmas Day 2010 he came to dinner at my house with Mum. It was not the joyful occasion Christmas is usually is for us all. I think he knew time was limited. He spent most of the time in bed feeling uncomfortable and in a lot of pain.

17. My father sadly passed away in January 2011.

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. It was refused. It is my understanding, that the reason for the refusal was she could not prove that the infected blood Dad had was not from when he was 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 him as nobody will take responsibility.

8. Other Issues

1. I have nothing to add to this section of my statement.

Statement of Truth

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

Signed



GRO-C

Dated 20.4.20