

Witness Name: TRACEY KENNEDY

Statement No: WITN5656001

Exhibits: 0

Dated: MARCH 2021

INFECTED BLOOD INQUIRY

FIRST WRITTEN STATEMENT OF TRACEY KENNEDY

I, Tracey Kennedy, will say as follows:-

Section 1. Introduction

1. My name is Tracey Kennedy. I was born on 1970 and I live at
2. My father, William Willis (born on 1946), was co-infected with the Hepatitis C Virus (HCV) and the Human Immunodeficiency Virus (HIV) through contaminated blood products. He developed liver cirrhosis and died from liver failure on 10th February 1992, aged 46.
3. This witness statement has been prepared without the benefit of access to my father's medical records.

Section 2. How Affected

4. My father (Dad) had severe Haemophilia A, as did his younger brother, Michael. They were treated at the Haemophilia Centre at the Royal Victoria Infirmary in Newcastle under the care of Dr Peter Jones.
5. Dad was given Factor VIII (FVIII) concentrate as a home treatment. The vials were kept in our fridge.
6. I do not know when Dad was co-infected with the viruses. He didn't want to talk about it. It was something he kept to himself.

Section 3. Other Infections

7. I think that my father was also been infected with the Hepatitis B Virus.

Section 4. Consent

8. I do not think my father was pre-warned of the risk of infection through contaminated blood products. I do not think Dad would have done anything risky. It was enough that he had severe haemophilia, and he wouldn't have wanted to risk making things worse for himself. Dad trusted his doctors. Our family spent a lot of our time at the Haemophilia Centre, Dad even more so. As children, my sister, Sharon, and I would look forward to playing with the box of toys there and were even given a Christmas present. We were so comfortable there and the nurses were dead friendly. I subsequently took my

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The nurses remembered our family and one nurse spoke so fondly of my Dad and his brother (my Uncle Mick).

9. I do not know if Dad was treated or tested without his consent. We never had a full discussion about any of it. It was bad enough for Dad to deal with and he would not have wanted to feel he was burdening Sharon and me. Even

when he realised that we knew he was infected, he kept things to himself. He was a very private person. He was very close to his younger brother Michael. They went through everything together. Dad put some of his feelings down on paper and they made difficult and emotional reading when we came found them after he had gone.

Section 5. Impact of the Infection

10. I lost my mother at the age of 13 and I remember Dad's health starting to go downhill sometime after. He was often nauseas and sick and he started to lose weight. I remember him being jaundiced. Dad began to cough and vomit blood and, when that happened, he wouldn't let us near him. He had a lot of problems with his liver and he had a lot of back pain. He struggled to get around and he rarely went out. His personality changed. He went from being a happy go lucky sort of person to being in a low mood. Dad did try to lead as much of a normal life as he could, bearing in mind him being so unwell. He was able to take us on family outings, but this was a very rare occasion and there were times when he was just not physically able to do this. We always had in the back of our minds how at any time his health could change, and we were always very very careful. He wanted us to have a normal childhood, but it just didn't happen that way. Our lives as children dealing with this was very different to the lives we saw our friends lead. At times we just were not able to do normal things being wary of the risks.

11. I married and left home in 1988. My daughter was born in 1989. Dad had friends to help him get to hospital appointments if Sharon was at work. I would pop in to make sure Dad was alright and to see whether anything needed doing for them both. It was hard on everyone to witness Dad's decline and we all suffered. It was especially hard on Sharon who was still at home, caring for Dad whilst trying to juggle a job.

12. We always thought Dad was just 'poorly' with his liver. We had no idea that he was infected with HIV and hepatitis until he had some severe variceal

bleeds (sometimes in the middle of the night) and Sharon had to call for an ambulance. She was always told to wait for the emergency services to arrive and not to touch Dad or his blood and. It was through the paramedics that we found out what had happened to Dad. One of them pulled her to one side to explain Dad's situation to her. Dad began to realise we knew but it wasn't talked about. Because of the stigma Sharon and I kept it to ourselves. We didn't even tell our friends that Dad had haemophilia when we were at school because of its association with HIV/AIDS.

13. Having haemophilia was hard enough for Dad. He and our Uncle Mick spent a lot of their youth in and out of hospital. He and Dad were very close. They went through so much together. Our mother had a stroke when I was 11 years old and she struggled with her mobility as a result. She died after suffering a second stroke a couple of years later. It deeply affected Dad as his family was always his utmost priority. With the help of family and friends, he raised us and kept us all together. Uncle Mick (also infected with HIV through infected blood products) died in 1991 from AIDS (although we only ever spoke about the cause of his death as 'cancer'). Dad was devastated and he knew that the same thing (or something similar) was going to happen to him.
14. Having to live with severe pain over many years was one of the hardest things Dad had to endure for himself. He tried various treatments that didn't work. In the end he was given a driver containing morphine that he could carry around with him at all times in a bum bag. He was so happy to have something that worked and saw it as a turning point, and he said he could now get on with his life. After his death we came across something he had written down in January 1991 about the pain he had been in for years and how he had felt unable to cope. His happiness at finding an effective pain relief treatment was short lived.
15. Dad tried so hard to remain positive, but there were times I could see the pain etched on his face. In his decline, he barely left the house and even his bed.

He was so lethargic and frail and just wanted his family around him. My daughter was nearly three when Dad died and, even at his very worst, he always wanted to see her. Dad was taken away from us too soon. He was robbed of all those quality family times, seeing myself and my sister, getting to know his grand daughter and future grandchildren. He should not have missed out on all of these special things, precious things things due to something which was completely out of his control.

16. Dad was in and out of hospital a lot and, nearer the end, he was there most of the time. We brought him home on Christmas Day but after a few hours he had to go back in. We tried to spend as much time as possible with him in hospital so that he was never alone, and even when he passed, we were there with him. Sharon and I had personal letters to open after he had gone. He wrote that one of his greatest joys was to hold his granddaughter and that he was sorry not to be around to watch his family grow. That letter is one of my most treasured possessions. For Dad to write such letters to his children knowing what the outcome was going to be must have been horrendous for him. He wanted to give us something and although they are very precious to both of us they are extremely heart breaking.

17. Someone should be held accountable for what happened. We lost two family members to this whole mess and it never should have happened. If we can come forward with any information that will help bring justice, then we want to. We still suffer today, remembering seeing our only parent go through all he did has taken its toll on both of us and our lives today. We both have depression which we have dealt with in our own way. We never had an easy life coping and living with this. Hopefully telling our story among many others will mean this never happens again.

Section 6. Treatment/care/support

18. Dad had a lot of medication to take. We were never offered any counselling or psychological support.

Section 7. Financial Assistance

19. I do recall that my Dad had some interaction with the MacFarlane Trust, but I do not know how successful he was in claiming financial assistance. We were successful in claiming a Skipton Fund payment.

Anonymity, disclosure and redaction

20. I do not seek anonymity and understand that my Statement will be published by the Inquiry.

Statement of Truth

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

Signed....

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Dated.....

29/3/2021