

Witness Name: W Gambin

Statement No: WITN1226001

Exhibits: 0

Dated: December 2018

INFECTED BLOOD INQUIRY

FIRST WRITTEN STATEMENT OF WAYNE ANDREY'S GAMBIN

I, Wayne Andrey's Gambin, will say as follows:-

Section 1. Introduction

1. My name is Wayne Andrey's Gambin of GRO-C.
I was born on GRO-C 1974. I am married with three children and I work at Tesco. I have one brother GRO-C.
2. This statement has been prepared without the benefit of access to my medical records.

Section 2. How Infected

3. I have mild Haemophilia A and received Factor VIII since I was aged 1.
4. I believe that I was infected with Hepatitis C and Hepatitis B when I was aged 1; which would have been in or around 1975.

5. I believe that I was infected at The University Hospital of Wales in Cardiff, formerly known as "*The Heath Hospital*". My consultant at the time was Prof. Bloom.
6. My mother was not provided with any information regarding the risks of Factor VIII.
7. To the best of my recollection, I was aged 13 or 14 when I found out that I had Hepatitis C. I went to The Heath Hospital with my mother for what I think was a routine appointment. I was told in a very matter of fact way by a consultant, Dr Dafani, that I had Hepatitis C.
8. I was provided with insufficient information about what Hepatitis C was but I do recall that the consultant said that there was a low risk of sexual transmission and that the main mode of transmission would be via blood-to-blood contact.
9. No medical professional has ever advised me that I had Hepatitis B but I was given regular Hepatitis B booster injections without my knowledge.

Section 3. Other Infections

10. I recall receiving a letter which advised that I had been exposed to vCJD.

Section 4. Consent

11. I believe that I was tested for HIV, Hepatitis C and Hepatitis B without either mine or my mother's knowledge or consent. The consultants routinely took my blood at every appointment. This was a normal procedure for Haemophiliacs so we never questioned this and I believe this allowed copious amounts of testing to take place, without our knowledge or consent.
12. When I was aged 11 and before I was told about having Hepatitis C, my mother was contacted by somebody in relation to a survey on Haemophiliacs. As part of this survey; blood was taken from all of my family members. In retrospect, I believe that we were all tested for Hepatitis C without our knowledge at that time.

13. I also believe that I was used for the purposes of research. The medical professionals routinely took samples of my blood when I was very young.

14. I was treated without my knowledge or consent and an example of this is the Hepatitis B boosters which I was routinely administered.

Section 5. Impact

15. I was aged 13 to 14 when I found out that I had Hepatitis C and from that moment, I would describe my head as being *"in a complete mess"*. I continuously talk to myself and have been on antidepressants since that day. Currently I am prescribed 40mg of Fluoxetine per day.

16. Due to my depression I don't really go out and prefer to spend my time alone. I suffer from severe brain fog and constantly forget things.

17. I have experienced extreme weight loss having lost over 4 stone in the last 18 months.

18. I have severe arthritis in my left ankle and most of my teeth have now fallen out. My poor oral hygiene stemmed from the fact that I have struggled to secure regular dental care. This has been further exacerbated by not wanting to have a toothbrush in the house for fear that my children would pick it up and become infected through any blood residue left as a result of my bleeding gums.

19. I have stage 3 cirrhosis and I recall that about 8 years ago my Fibro scan score was 28; a normal score being around 12.

20. I underwent a number of Interferon and Ribavirin treatments when I was aged approximately 20, 26 and 34. I was told that the virus was at an undetectable level after the third treatment.

21. My first treatment was when I was aged approximately 20. I was very poorly and suffered from severe sickness and rashes. The treatment was discontinued before I had finished the course because the medical professionals formed the view that I had not

experienced a significant improvement whilst undertaking the treatment. I am of the opinion that this decision was financially motivated.

22. During the second and third treatments my depression significantly worsened. I became angrier; I would snap and had a short fuse. The source of my anger has always been the same and centred on the fact that I could not understand why we were given contaminated blood which put our lives at risk.
23. Since the Interferon and Ribavirin treatments, I started suffering with brain fog which significantly worsened with time and it still continues today. I suffered fewer memory problems before embarking on the Hepatitis C treatment.
24. The second treatment was definitely the most severe treatment and it ruined everything. I was hoping to continue working at Parcellforce but by about week 5 of the treatment I had absolutely no energy and had broken out in rashes all over my body which resulted in absences at work.
25. I ended up losing my job and was unable to obtain any type of insurance or pay the mortgage GRO-C. My wife was forced into taking on the role of the bread winner which put excessive strain upon our relationship.
26. The third treatment lasted for 12 months and although I did not manage to clear the virus, it was classed as "*undetectable*". However, my weight had risen to a massive 22 stone because a part of the treatment was in a tablet form which had to be taken with 20g of fat three times per day.
27. Hepatitis C has had a massive effect on my family life despite the fact that my wife has been extremely supportive and has always accepted me for who I am.
28. I was petrified of cleaning my teeth in case my gums bled onto my toothbrush. I was scared that my children would pick up my toothbrush and become infected. I have now lost the majority of my teeth.

29. Despite my infection and fear of even touching the children in case I infected them, I have worked hard to ensure that I have an excellent relationship with my children. They are fully aware of my infection. I have never hidden anything from my immediate family; however this is where my openness stops. My friends, employers and colleagues do not know about my infection.
30. This decision stemmed from an incident where I suffered stigma at The Royal Gwent Hospital. I was aged 19 and a consultant placed me in a little room on my own and I always remember that my mother became extremely angry because hospital staff insisted that she wear a gown, mask and gloves before visiting me. This early experience has had a very negative effect on me but has also moulded and shaped how I dealt with my infection, and from this moment, I made the decision not to share my infected status with anyone outside of the immediate family.
31. If medical practitioners could be this naïve about the transmission of Hepatitis C then it would be unwise for me to expect more from those who were not medically qualified.
32. I am absolutely furious about what has happened to me and that I could be treated in this way; particularly given the mode of my infection.
33. Although I found out that I had Hepatitis C aged 13 to 14 I was determined to become an electrician. However, due to a number of reasons, I was not able to realise this ambition.
34. Financially, life has always been a struggle. I had to claim as many benefits as I could GRO-C during my second Hepatitis C treatment. I remember attending numerous medicals in relation to verifying my eligibility for benefits which I found very unfair given the mode of my infection. I also felt like I was begging which was not a nice feeling.
35. I live in fear that my Hepatitis C will resurface because you are never “cleared” of the virus, rather you are told that the virus is at an “*undetectable level*”. I have lived with the stigma of this virus for almost all of my life and I am tired of fighting.

Section 6. Treatment/care/support

36. I suffered stigma at The Royal Gwent Hospital, which I have detailed in paragraphs 30 and 31 above.
37. I have also struggled to obtain regular treatment from a dentist.
38. In approximately September 2018 I was due to undergo a gastroscopy at The Royal Gwent Hospital. I was called into a room and was asked questions about my medical history. I advised the nurse that I had Hepatitis C but that it was undetectable following treatment and that I had been advised that I had been placed at risk of vCJD. On hearing this, her facial expression completely changed and she began to continuously hum. She then left the room and when she returned she advised me that the gastroscopy could not now take place and this was because I had Haemophilia. I knew that she wasn't telling the truth because the hospital was already fully aware of my Haemophilia status.
39. Psychological support was offered to me approximately 10 years ago but I did not take this up. I have not dealt with my infection and the anger surrounding the mode of infection.

Section 7. Financial Assistance

40. I received the Stage 1 payment of £20,000 from The Skipton Fund approximately 15 years ago. I do not remember how I found out about The Skipton Fund.
41. I received the Stage 2 payment from The Skipton Fund about 7 years ago.
42. I was aware that I could obtain grants from The Skipton Fund but I was dissuaded from applying because I heard that the procedure was somewhat protracted and that you had to obtain 3 quotes and disclose bank statements.
43. I also receive winter fuel payments from The Skipton Fund of approximately £500 per year.

44. I do not believe that The Skipton Fund was fit for purpose and I believe that victims of the contaminated blood scandal needed much more support than that which was offered by The Skipton Fund.

Section 8. Other Issues

45. I am a member of Tainted Blood and I think that this campaign group provides unrivalled support to victims.

46. I have also had a couple of articles published in The South Wales Argus Newspaper which detailed the story of my infection with Hepatitis C.

47. I am so angry about what has happened and how the medical professionals treated us with contaminated blood products. They took an entirely unacceptable risk with our lives; so many victims have died and will not see the outcome of this Inquiry. I want justice and closure.

Anonymity, disclosure and redaction

48. I do not wish to apply for anonymity and I do not want to give oral evidence to the Inquiry.

Statement of Truth

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

Signed...

GRO-C

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Dated.....

15/01/2019