

Witness Name: Geraldine Todd

Statement No.: WITN2276001

Exhibits: WITN2276002-004

Dated: 10th July 2020

INFECTED BLOOD INQUIRY

FIRST WRITTEN STATEMENT OF GERALDINE TODD

I provide this statement in response to a request under Rule 9 of the Inquiry Rules 2006 dated 5th November 2018.

I, Geraldine Todd, will say as follows: -

Section 1. Introduction

1. My name is Geraldine Todd. My date of birth is GRO-C 1957 and my address is known to the Inquiry. I am unemployed and on sickness benefit. I intend to speak about my infection of hepatitis C. In particular, the nature of my illness, how the illness affected me, the treatment received and the impact it had on me and my partner, Adam.
2. I can confirm that I have appointed Thompsons Solicitors to be my legal representative. I can confirm that the Inquiry should send all correspondence regarding me to Thompsons.

Section 2. How Infected

3. I was infected with hepatitis C following a blood transfusion during a sinus operation in March 1985.
4. In March 1985 I underwent a submucous resection of my nasal septum following a problem with my sinuses. I had a massive haemorrhage one week after the operation and received four units of blood.
5. I was not told at the time about the risk of being exposed to infection from the blood. My transfusion was due to an emergency and ultimately it saved my life.
6. In 2005 I was suffering with high blood pressure. My doctor took my blood to be tested. My doctor at that time was Dr [GRO-D] from the Anderson Medical Practice, at Argyle Street. A few days after I had my blood taken by the doctor, I received a letter saying that my blood had shown some abnormalities and I was to go in and see her. I did so, and she told me that my test results had revealed that I had contracted hepatitis C. I did not know what hepatitis C was.
7. She explained to me that it was a blood borne virus. She said that the infection could be passed to others and told me to get Adam tested as I could have infected him. She did not give me any other information regarding hepatitis C. She did not tell me how to manage the infection. She appeared to know very little about hepatitis C herself. She then referred me to see a liver specialist. I exhibit a letter from Matthew Priest, Specialist Registrar at Gartnavel General Hospital to my GP discussing my diagnosis under **WITN2276002**.
8. Adam went to his own doctor and told him about my hepatitis C and requested that his blood be tested. A few weeks later we returned to his GP surgery for the results. We were sitting in the reception area, waiting to see the doctor when the receptionist came up to us and gave Adam a letter that

was to be posted out to him that day. He opened it and it said that his test results had revealed that he had abnormal blood. I said to Adam that it was the same wording that had been used on the letter I had received and that he must also have hepatitis C. We both went in to see the doctor and the doctor confirmed that indeed Adam had been infected with hepatitis C from me.

Section 3. Other Infections

9. I was not infected with any other viruses other than hepatitis C as a result of being given infected blood.

Section 4. Consent

10. I do not believe that I have been treated or tested without my knowledge or without my consent. I do not believe I have been treated or tested for the purposes of research.

Section 5. Impact

11. From having the operation in 1985 when I received a blood transfusion I did not feel well again. I lost a lot of weight and I had flu like symptoms. I was always fatigued and just generally felt unwell. Mentally I was depressed and put that down to generally feeling unwell physically.

12. As a result of being infected with hepatitis C, I have now developed cirrhosis of the liver. I exhibit a letter from my medical records under **WITN2276004**.

13. I was under the care of Professor Mills the liver specialist at Gartnavel Hospital. He informed me that I had chronic hepatitis C and offered me treatment. He told me that the treatment would be for a year and I would have to self-inject Interferon and also take Ribavirin tablets. He told me that

I would need to inject the Interferon once a week and take four tablets of Ribavirin a day.

14. I did not face any difficulties or obstacles in accessing this treatment, it was offered to me immediately.

15. I was not made aware that there were any other treatments available the time.

16. From taking the first injections the effects on me were profound, physically I had a fever almost immediately and was having hot flushes. My skin was extremely itchy all the time. I couldn't get out of bed, I was that fatigued. I felt constantly nauseous and was often vomiting. Mentally I was extremely depressed and cut myself off from the world. I believe I only took one injection and a few of the Ribavirin tablets and I decided to stop the treatment. I physically could not continue. Adam saw what I went through and he decided not to take the treatment as it had been offered to him also.

17. A few years ago in 2015, I was given another treatment for hepatitis C. This is a new drug that has been developed. I took the course and I am happy to say that my hepatitis C is now dormant. Unfortunately, I have chronic cirrhosis of the liver though. I exhibit a letter from Liz Little, Liver Nurse Specialist discussing the side effects of this under **WITN2276003**.

18. I don't believe my infected status impacted upon any treatment for any other conditions. I didn't want my dentist to know that I had hepatitis C as I had heard that some dentists won't treat you if you have that condition. If I had to go to the dentist I would not tell him I had hepatitis C. The impact of contracting hepatitis C for me was profound. Adam and I isolated ourselves, we used to be a social couple and enjoyed going out. After we discovered we had both contracted this infection we became very insular and private. Between 2006 and 2010 we were both very ill. I had good days and bad days but I was generally lethargic.

19. Adam's condition deteriorated during this time. He had no appetite I just could not get him to eat anything. In April 2010 Adam was taken to hospital, he was admitted to the Western Hospital. He died on 19 April 2010 in hospital. His death certificate states he died from hepatitis C and pneumonia. I lost the love of my life, I was completely devastated. The next two years for me is very much a blur I was grief stricken and hardly left the house. I had known Adam for twenty three years and we had been a couple for eighteen years. I was utterly heartbroken. I also had tremendous guilt knowing that I had passed on the infection to him. Even though it was through no fault of my own, I still live with the guilt to this day.
20. The impact of me contracting hepatitis C ultimately cost my partner Adam his life. For many years we were ill and isolated ourselves from the world.
21. The loss of my partner and my health conditions have left me severely depressed I have been given antidepressants by my own doctor, Dr Esther McLeod from Anniesland medical practice.
22. I am aware there is a stigma associated with hepatitis C it is mainly associated with drug users and sex workers. Both Adam and I did not broadcast our illness as we did not want people to think we were involved in any of these activities. I did tell my close friends of my condition particularly if they were staying over at my home. I ensured that they used their own toothbrush and used their own razors for fear of passing on the infection. The condition made me feel like a leper, I felt dirty and constantly worried about what other people might think.
23. I have not had any difficulties or obstacles in obtaining treatment as a consequence of being infected with hepatitis C.

Section 6. Treatment/Care/Support

24. I was offered no counselling or psychological support when I was diagnosed. I do remember one of the nurses at Gartnavel Hospital informed me that there was a group of people who had hepatitis C who met together on a regular basis for support. I contacted this group, it was called, 'C Level' and was based on Queens Crescent, Glasgow. I remember the woman who ran it was called Claire. This group offered alternative therapies and group discussions. I went for over a year to this group and I did find it helpful, however, it was mainly a drug support group of people that had contracted hepatitis C through drug use.

Section 7. Financial Assistance

25. I have received financial assistance from the Skipton Fund and also from the Scottish Government. In 2006 I received £20,000. Adam, also received £20,000. When Adam passed away in 2010, I informed the Skipton Fund and I received a further payment of £50,000. I also receive £2,225 per calendar month, this is from the Scottish Government.

26. I cannot remember how I first found out that there was some financial assistance available. I think it was from someone at Gartnavel Hospital. I was given a telephone number to ring and remember having dealings with Nicolas Fish. He sent me out some forms and I filled them in. It was fairly straightforward. In relation to my second payment of £50,000 I received a letter from the Scottish Government saying that I was entitled to further financial assistance. There was a form to fill in, it was fairly straightforward. I did not experience any difficulties or obstacles in applying or obtaining financial assistance.

27. I don't believe there were any preconditions imposed on the making of an application for financial assistance

28. I am grateful for the financial assistance that I have received, but no amount of money could compensate for my ill-health and the loss of Adam.

Section 8. Other Issues

29. I do not wish to remain anonymous in this Inquiry.

Statement of Truth

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

Signed GRO-C
Gerardine Todd (Jul 15, 2020 10:51 GMT+1)

Dated Jul 15, 2020