

Witness Name: Claire Williamson

Statement No.: WITN2284001

Exhibits: none

Dated: 30th August 2020

INFECTED BLOOD INQUIRY

FIRST WRITTEN STATEMENT OF CLAIRE WILLIAMSON

I provide this statement in response to a request under Rule 9 of the Inquiry Rules 2006 dated 28th August 2019.

Section 1. Introduction

1. My name is Claire Williamson. My date of birth is GRO-C 1974. My address is known to the Inquiry. I intend to speak about my late father Iain Morrison Campbell date of birth GRO-C 1945 who died on 28 May 1996. My father died of liver cancer after contracting hepatitis C. I intend to speak about the nature of my father's illness, how the illness affected him, the treatment he received and the impact it had on him and my family.
2. I have a very close and loving family. I have one older sister Katherine Morrison Johnson who lives nearby. My mother Peggy, (Margaret Mary MacAulay Campbell) also lives close by. My father was our rock and his untimely death, devastated us all.

Section 2. How Affected

3. Dad had mild haemophilia A. This condition was new to my family. I have two sons, GRO-C who is ten years old and GRO-C who is seven years old. Both my sons GRO-C
GRO-C
4. Dad contracted hepatitis C as a result of being given contaminated Factor VIII during a hernia operation in 1978. Dad had three hernia operations at Glasgow Royal Infirmary which took place in July 1978, in the summer of 1983 and in January 1994. I remember when he had his final operation I was very worried about him. Dad was a stoic man and never wanted to show his feelings. It was obvious to me though that he was in a lot of pain and discomfort.
5. Dad was given Factor VIII on each occasion he had a hernia operation. I do not believe that Dad was ever told about the risks of being exposed to infection. I am certain he would have refused to have Factor VIII if he had known about the risks. I do remember him saying after his final operation in 1994, that he did not want Factor VIII anymore because it made him feel very ill.
6. Dad was told he had hepatitis non-A, non-B in 1978. I was only four years old, so I only know this through speaking with Mum. Mum and Dad had been living in Curacao, Netherlands, Antilles for several years at this point. He had returned to Glasgow on holiday and ended up having his first hernia operation in the Royal Infirmary Glasgow. When he fell ill on his return in 1978, he spent weeks in a hospital back in Curacao, and was diagnosed with non-A, non-B hepatitis.
7. In 1995, both Katherine and I were living together in Surrey. We were both working as cabin crew at Heathrow airport. My parents were living in Alnwick, Northumberland. I received a phone call from Mum telling me that Dad had been infected with hepatitis C. I had no idea what hepatitis C was. I believe Mum and Dad had known about his infection for some time, but only told Katherine and I when he was at the point of needing a liver transplant.
8. At the time, Mum did not discuss with me how Dad had been infected with hepatitis

C. We were all focusing on his impending liver transplant.

Section 3. Other infections

9. I am not aware of Dad being infected with any other infections from the blood other than hepatitis C.

Section 4. Consent

10. I was only four years old when Dad became ill in 1978 whilst living in Curacao, Antilles, in the Netherlands. Mum has since told me, that this was when he was diagnosed with non-A, non B hepatitis. In 1994 Dad had another hernia operation in Glasgow Royal Infirmary. Mum has told me that it was at this time that he was tested and it was discovered that he had hepatitis C. I did not realise that non-A, non-B hepatitis was the same as hepatitis C. I find it incredible that this was not picked up on until 1994.

Section 5. Impact

11. Dad's physical health deteriorated rapidly in the last twelve months of his life and he died at the age of fifty on the GRO-C 1996 because of hepatitis C.

12. I remember in January/February 1995 Mum and Dad came to Newcastle airport to pick me up. I had just recently got a job with Virgin Atlantic and I was wearing my uniform. I remember Dad's face when he saw me, he was so proud. It was such a bittersweet moment because he also looked extremely ill. He had lost a lot of weight and was just skin and bone. Dad always had lovely smooth skin but his skin looked yellow then and appeared really rough.

13. Dad did receive treatment for his hepatitis C from Freeman Hospital in Newcastle. This would have been in early 1995. This was a course of treatment called interferon. I remember Mum saying that it hadn't worked and that Dad was going to have a liver transplant.

14. I do not know if there were any difficulties or obstacles that Dad faced in getting his treatment.
15. Dad was a big fit man and was over 6'3 in height. Prior to his transplant, I would fly home every time I had a day off. I watched him fade away before my eyes.
16. In September 1995 Dad had to have a liver biopsy. He told me it was extremely painful.
17. Dad received a liver transplant in November 1995. He had chemotherapy before his transplant, during his transplant and after his transplant. I went to visit him when he was in intensive care and I asked him how he was feeling and he said "*I've never felt as good in years.*" He did well in recovery and was allowed home after a few weeks. The whole family was so happy and relieved.
18. Dad was a fun man with a brilliant sense of humour. I was very much a 'daddy's girl' growing up. In January, 1996 we were told that Dad had secondary cancer and there was nothing more that could be done for him. I was totally devastated. I had started a new job working for British Airways in March 1996. In early May I was selected to do a ten day trip to the Seychelles. What should have been a trip of a lifetime was a complete nightmare for me. I knew Dad was dying and I just wanted to be with him. I just wished the days away.
19. I remember going home to see Dad not long before he died. He was at home and he was complaining that he couldn't see properly. I thought he may have had a mini stroke. He was skin and bones thin, his forehead was bright red and he said he felt very unwell. He also said that he couldn't feel his leg or his arm. I managed to get him into bed, but I could hear his laboured breathing. Mum called for an ambulance and Dad was taken to Freeman Hospital. He passed away on 28 May 1996.
20. The loss of my father at the age of twenty one had a profound effect on me. I remember thinking, who would walk me down the aisle if I got married. My father was lovely. I have such fond memories of him taking me out in his car for a drive.

21. Every memorable event that has happened in my life, I have thought about my dad and how I wish he could be here. I have two sons of my own and I know how much they would have loved to have had him in their lives. He has missed out on so much through no fault of his own. Dad did not get to see me as an adult. It was a bittersweet moment when my uncle, who was Dad's brother, walked me down the aisle. I still feel very angry at what has happened.
22. Mum was left a widow at forty nine years old. Dad was the love of her life and she has never remarried. My sister and I tried to support her as best we could, but it was difficult as we didn't live near her.
23. Before he died, Dad encouraged Katherine and I to get on the property ladder. Dad didn't have life insurance and we were not left financially secure after he died. Katherine and I fulfilled our promise to him though. We borrowed money from my aunt and uncle and took out a loan and bought a house together.
24. There are no words to describe the pain I still feel about losing Dad. Mum grieves every day. I do worry about her, as I feel she keeps her feelings hidden to avoid any more distress to Katherine and me.

Section 6 Treatment/Care/Support

25. Our family were never offered any counselling or psychological support. As Mum lived alone after Dad died, I do believe she would have benefited from such support.

Section 7 Financial Assistance

26. GRO-C I decided to join the Haemophilia Society in 2010/2011. It was then that Mum and I learned that financial assistance was available. Mum contacted the Skipton Fund and received a payment of £70,000, about eight years ago. She also receives a monthly amount from the Scottish Government now.

27. I believe it was a straightforward process for Mum in applying for financial assistance. I know she had to provide hospital records, to prove Dad had been infected with hepatitis C, to the Skipton Fund.

28. No amount of money could ever compensate our family for the loss of Dad. The money Mum received was welcome, as she has lived, hand to mouth for many years after he died.

Section 8. Other issues

29. I do not wish to be anonymous for this statement.

Statement of Truth

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

Signed

GRO-C

Claire Williamson (Aug 30, 2020 17:58 GMT+1)

Dated Aug 30, 2020