

Witness Name: Richard Newton

Statement No: WITN6897001

Exhibits: 0

Dated: October 2021

INFECTED BLOOD INQUIRY

FIRST WRITTEN STATEMENT OF RICHARD NEWTON

I, Richard Newton, will say as follows:-

Section 1. Introduction

1. My full name is Richard Michael Newton. I was born on GRO-C 1977 and I live at GRO-C, Newcastle Upon Tyne, Tyne And Wear GRO-C.
2. My brother, Mark Newton (born on GRO-C 1964), was infected with the Human Immunodeficiency Virus (HIV) through contaminated blood products. He developed Pneumocystis Pneumonia and died on 27th January 1989, aged 24.
3. This witness statement has been prepared without the benefit of access to my brother's medical records or my parents medical records. A witness statement is available upon request from my own therapist Katherine Guest.

Section 2. How Affected

4. Mark had Haemophilia A. He was treated at the Haemophilia Centre at the Royal Victoria Infirmary in Newcastle (RVI) under the care of Dr Peter Jones. He had Factor VIII (FVIII) concentrate as a home treatment on a regular basis. I was very young, but it was normal for me to see Mark self-inject his FVIII treatment. He would freely do so in front of me when I was around him.
5. I do not know how, where or when Mark was told that he had become infected with HIV, but I believe it to have been some time in or around 1984. Mark married Judith 'Judy' and became a father to two daughters, Charlotte born in 1985 and Rebecca born in 1987. I know that Mark was certainly known to be HIV positive by 1986 after I had become an Uncle to Charlotte and when I had to change to a different junior school (through being bullied), at the age of 8.
6. I do not know what information and/or advice he and Judy were given about the risk of others being infected. GRO-C

Section 3. Other Infections

7. I do not believe that my brother was infected with anything other than HIV.

Section 4. Consent

8. My parents were not pre-warned about the risk of infection through the use of blood products before Mark had treatment during his minority. I believe Dr Jones and his team used young haemophiliacs like my brother for the purposes of research and/or for personal financial gain. It is well documented that clinicians were induced with 'nice perks' by some of the pharmaceutical companies to buy and use their products.

Section 5. Impact of the Infection

9. In making this my Statement, I also speak on behalf of my deceased parents Margaret Newton born [GRO-C] 1945 died 27th October 2018 and Brian Newton born [GRO-C] 1945, died 6th September 1999.
10. I was the youngest of three sons. Mark (the eldest) was 13 years older than me and Nick, my other brother, is 10 years older. Mark and I were close. He was so likeable, and he was really ballsy. Notwithstanding his haemophilia, he wanted to be as normal as possible and treated that way by others. I remember him riding his motorbike across the field (Mum went ballistic that he had bought one). I remember, too, a holiday in Scotland with Mark and Judy and Mark stopping at a Ferrari garage to test drive a car he could never afford. I remember his jokes, I remember us walking the dogs, the cats on his farmhouse in Bradbury, the two birds 'Romeo and Juliet' and scaling his garage climbing wall with him.
11. I don't specifically remember being told that Mark was infected with HIV/AIDS as I was so young. I wasn't told enough to fully understand what it meant for Mark to be infected with HIV/AIDS and I had no support. I was bullied at my first junior school because of my brother's illness. The other kids would shout at me that I had the 'lurgy'. There was so much ignorance and general lack of awareness. Even the teachers gave me a wide berth. When I was 8 years old a boy who was bullying me jumped on my back. I flipped forward and he head butted the floor. There were no repercussions for my assailant. I was sent to the Head and I got my coat and bag and went home instead, telling my parents I didn't want to go back. My last day at that school resulted in me being chased by the Head around the school reception area in front of everyone to include those lined up in the dinner hall. He called me a 'little bastard' and had my hands pinned behind me and I ended up back kicking him in the balls. It must have been the talk of the school. Even very recently I was reminded of it by a

former pupil. I did not need to be reminded as those days are forever ingrained in my memory.

12. My Dad was infuriated that I had been treated in that way and with so little understanding and he went in after the incident to complain to the Head. I didn't go back to the school. My Dad was very protective of me at that time, but we still had Mark. Dad was a smart man and he recognised nonsense and scaremongering when he came across it. Whilst I don't specifically remember being told very much, I do remember a later conversation with Dad. He explained to me that far from being able to catch HIV through sharing drinking vessels for example, you would actually need to consume 7 pints of saliva to catch it and there was only a very remote chance that another person would become infected with HIV/AIDS through blood to blood contact. I was an Uncle at the age of 8. GRO-C

13. Mark was in and out of hospital a lot in the latter part of his life and I would always visit. I used to wonder why the nurses were all double gloved. I thought it very odd. Mark went into hospital for the final time over Christmas 1988. His immune system was breaking down and he lost his fight to pneumonia. The week before Mark's death I was there at the hospital asking when Mark was coming home. I felt angry and confused to be told by Judy that he wouldn't be coming home. Mark didn't want a burial. He was cremated and his ashes were scattered in the Highlands of Scotland. He didn't want a headstone. He always said that the mountain would be his headstone and that was so like him.

14. We were all catastrophically affected by Mark's death. His death had a butterfly effect for everything else that happened in my family's life. Mental health problems prevailed with my mother, father and me. Recently I have been undergoing childhood trauma therapy for everything that happened in my childhood and beyond.

15. I have memories of both my brothers playing jokes but most of my memories are mainly of Mark. Everything that happened seemed to be about Mark. When he died, my father threw himself into his work (working away in the Middle East) and I was left with my mother who became chronically depressed and anxious and alcohol reliant. I was 11 years old and had no support. I was left alone with my mother and neglected by her and I was rejected and abandoned by my father. Our GP prescribed benzodiazepines for my Mum. I would find her drunk, upset and sat sobbing over the photos in Mark's wedding album several times. I'd hear my mother crying downstairs very often in the years following Marks death and had to comfort her, sometimes this resulted in drunken outbursts. I was young and didn't know what was best for my mother except to console her emotional pain and put up with her drunken upset emotions. I felt responsible for Mum and I couldn't work out why Dad wasn't protecting his family. I always felt like the 'United Nations' of the family trying to make peace in alien territory.

16. The following Summer and at the age of 12, I was sectioned and spent 6 weeks in a mental institute. This left a huge emotional scar on me since I was treated for being angry not grief. I was taken away from my parents (who I needed most) and left with strangers on the advice my parents were following from doctors. The Police were called to our home (for Mum and/or me) on several occasions throughout my teens. She too was sectioned after attacking my Dad. No-one seemed to understand what we were going through. I had no respect for doctors, the Police or anyone in authority and I carry that today.

17. My education suffered. I remember studying for my GCSEs and trying to look after Mum at the same time, but I didn't have the tools in my bag to do it. I chopped and changed colleges and thought 'what is the point?' When I was 17 or 18, I tried to kill myself. I did a proper job of the attempt. I took 200 tablets and ended up in hospital for a week wired up to a heart machine. I felt worthless and overlooked by those closest to me. The only thing that stopped me was that I didn't want my Mum to go through losing another son.

18. I was more than capable academically. I wanted to go into Law and change the world, to become more transparent. My Dad died the week I was due to start university and I stayed at home to look after Mum. She had lost two family members and needed my support. I found it difficult to hold down a job and was even out of work for around 18 months. I had no respect for authority and hated being told what to do. I hate injustice and it all stems back to what happened to my family. I find it hard to bite my tongue and have struggled with anger issues, never violent. Conversely, I am a people pleaser, seeking the approval of others.

19. I have been in some very traumatic abusive relationships. I was married at the age of [GRO-D] and the marriage didn't last long. I was then unhappily married for many years (until [GRO-D] without any emotional support from my wife. It was a calmer relationship, [GRO-D] and I normalised our relationship. I was once again a United Nations peace keeper. [GRO-D]
[GRO-D]

20. I am actually blown away by what I have begun to learn about myself through the Attachment-Focused EMDR therapy I am currently having. I am starting to understand the extent of the impact Mark's death had on me, but it has taken a lifetime to unravel. As far as I am concerned, the Government of the time murdered my brother and destroyed my life and those of my family.

Section 6. Treatment/care/support

21. I do not know what sort of HIV treatment Mark was offered, if any. No-one in my family was offered care and support.

Section 7. Financial Assistance

22. Mark died before the existence of the Trusts and Funds.

Anonymity

23. I do not seek anonymity and I understand that this Statement will be disclosed for publication to the Inquiry.

Statement of Truth

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

Signed.... GRO-C

Dated.....29TH OCTOBER 2021.....