

Witness Name: Angela Stafford

Statement No.: WITN0722001

Exhibits: **WITN0722002 - W0722005**

Dated:

INFECTED BLOOD INQUIRY

WRITTEN STATEMENT OF ANGELA STAFFORD

I provide this statement in response to a request under Rule 9 of the Inquiry Rules 2006 dated 04.03.2019.

I, Angela STAFFORD, will say as follows: -

Section 1. Introduction

1. My name is Angela STAFFORD. My date of birth is GRO-C1963 and my address is known to the Inquiry. I am divorced, and I live with my elderly father and two daughters, aged 26 and 14. I have two sons aged 34 and 32 who live elsewhere in England.
2. Prior to falling ill with sarcoidosis 32 years ago, I worked as a nurse. I am now unable to work.

Section 2. How Infected

3. My first child was 11lb and was delivered via caesarean section without issue.
4. My second child came on GRO-C 1987. I was almost four weeks overdue and had been expecting to give birth to him via caesarean section also. I had been asked to come into Leicester General Hospital that day and I told them I would be staying, in order that this baby could be 'cut out of me' – he had been in there for too long.
5. After I had been admitted, the Sister instructed me that I would be delivering the baby naturally. This was despite the scans which showed that he was nearly 11lbs. She was slapping my leg as I delivered, and was screaming at me. I was screaming back, "Fetch the doctor! I'm tearing!" she just yelled at me to keep pushing. Another nurse came in and told me to be quiet because of the disruption.
6. To allow the head of the baby to come through, the Sister snipped my perineum without first administering any pain relief. There is a letter in my medical records dated 27 January 1987, in which my consultant Mr Graham states that the scissors were blunt.
7. After I gave birth, I was gushing blood clots everywhere and the nurses were hurriedly scraping them into a bucket. My medical records show that on GRO-C 1987 at 21.00hrs, I had lost 600+ mLs. They pushed the emergency button for the doctor to come. The first doctor entered and looked shocked and confused when she saw me. She called another doctor to consult with. He entered wearing a white apron that was covered in another person's blood.

Son was
10lb 6

8. They were arguing in front of me, saying "How did you miss this?" The doctor was talking about the fact that I had split from back to front. Meanwhile, one of the nurses was slapping me around the face and yelling, "Don't go to sleep, you'll fall into a coma."
9. The second doctor spent more than an hour stitching up my insides and my outside. He didn't really speak to me or tell me what he was doing or why he was doing it. I just remember seeing the clock and thinking, 'He's been down there over an hour'.
10. I was in the recovery room after this, when I first became aware that I was being given blood. I could see the blood bags next to my bed draining blood into my arms. I also had a catheter and fluids going into me. I wasn't told that I was being given blood or anything about it, they just gave it to me.
11. My medical records show that on the [redacted] and [redacted] GRO-C 1987, I was transfused with two units of blood. The first unit was given at 22.50hrs on the [redacted]th. The second was given at 01.05hrs on the [redacted]th.
12. I have seen in my records what seem to be the numbers of the blood I was given. The form shows my hospital number GM016326 at Leicester Royal Infirmary/Leicester General Hospital. It shows the date given as the [redacted]th and [redacted]th of [redacted] GRO-C 1987.
13. The unit given at 22.50hrs is no. 611497 DO O Pos. Concentrated Red Cells. Exp 20.01.87.
14. The unit given on the 10th at 01.05hrs is no. 603341 D5. O Pos. Concentrated Red Cells. There is no expiry date shown.
15. This form I exhibit as **WITN0722002**.

16. The two pages of my records showing the transfusion on [GRO-C] and [GRO-C] [GRO-C] 1987, I exhibit as **WITN0722003**.
17. I was still in hospital four or five days later. Whilst in the ward, I went to the toilet and I was gushing blood from my vagina. The bathroom floor was totally flooded. I was wheeled back to my bed and put back on blood again. I think I might have signed for this – I was actually compos mentis this time, I definitely wasn't the first. I received another two units of blood and two units of plasma this time.
18. I don't recall anything being explained to me about any risk of infection from the blood. My medical records show that on [GRO-C] 1987, I was given a blood transfusion of two units. The records show that the first unit was given at 17.30hrs. The second was given at 20.06hrs.
19. I have seen in my records what seem to be the numbers of the blood I was given. The form shows my hospital number GM016326 at Leicester Royal Infirmary/Leicester General Hospital. It shows the date given as [GRO-C] 1987.
20. The unit given at 17.30hrs is no. 612254 DX. O Pos. Red Cells. (Additive sys) Exp 01.02.87.
21. The unit given at 20.06hrs is no. 610699 D4. O Pos. Red Cells. (Additive sys) Exp 01.02.87.
22. This form I exhibit as **WITN0722004**.
23. The page of my records showing the transfusion on the [GRO-C] 1987 taking place, I exhibit as **WITN0722005**.

24. As soon as I came out of the hospital, I knew that something wasn't right. I felt so ill all the time. My hair was falling out and my teeth were loose. I felt drained and under the weather, and was coming out in a raised rash all over my body. It felt red hot on the back of my scalp. My mind was wiped out as well - I was forgetful. This even happens now - I had a flare up in November for example, and couldn't recall getting cash back from the petrol station. I had to have them show me the CCTV to prove it.
25. I visited doctors in [GRO-C] about these symptoms. At first, they said I was just under the weather due to my traumatic birth. I kept on asking whether it had anything to do with the blood and he said no. This was in early-mid '87.
26. A year later, the doctor at [GRO-C] phoned me to explain that I needed to come in for a blood test because there was something wrong with the blood I had been given. It was like a recall of a car model. This was in 1988.
27. I went in for the blood test. Nothing was mentioned about HIV or AIDS, they just wanted to test for Hepatitis C. I assume that nothing along these lines came up. They weren't actually telling me the truth then.
28. I've been poorly for 32 years. It's like my immune system was just attacking my body all the time.
29. Before Samantha was born in 1992, I had blood tests which showed that my thyroid had failed. This was at [GRO-C]. I was prescribed 200mg Thyroxin and was told that this is why I had been feeling unwell. It was reduced to 150mg and then to 125mg.

30. I was also having trouble with my eyes, they were dry and felt as though I had got glass in them. I still have these symptoms now.
31. Around 2000, I got pleurisy and chest infections multiple times in one year. They tried prescribing antibiotics all the time. I changed from Dr Griffiths to Dr Stampfli at GRO-C Practice. Dr Stampfli sent me to the hospital for x-ray at North Devon District Hospital, known as Barnstaple Hospital.
32. Within a few days of the x-ray, they said something was wrong with my lungs. Within four or five days I was sent to Exeter for a biopsy to check for either cancer or tuberculosis.
33. The biopsy results were given to me in Barnstaple by Dr Oliver. He just said, "You've got sarcoidosis", and that was it. He just said that it was an immune system thing. I asked again if it was from the blood, and they said no. I can't see how you could have eight units of blood when you don't have sarcoidosis, and then develop it. I don't know whether all that blood came from America, because they sourced it from anywhere.
34. I wasn't given anything. Throughout the years of visiting doctors post-diagnosis, they've all told me that you can't get it from blood. I've seen information online explaining that you can test for this disease via a blood test though. I was also told that I was unable to donate blood shortly after my diagnosis, because it was infecting my organs.
35. I was told straight away about my sarcoidosis. But, they sort of shunned it and put it in the background as though it was nothing. They just said it was my immune system. They weren't interested.

36. Nothing else was explained to me about risks of infecting others. According to research I've done, you can pass it down. My eldest daughter Samantha (26, born after I was transfused) suffers from Postural Tachycardia Syndrome (PoTS), a heart condition which can be caused by sarcoidosis, as I saw on the National Health Service (NHS) website. Samantha is also giving a statement to the Inquiry. Please refer WITN0907001.

37. Around four years ago, Dr Stampfli sent me to the heart specialist due to my ongoing chest pains. The specialist inserted a tube with a camera on it, through my groin and up through my body to inspect my heart.

38. Then I was sent for an MRI scan. The MRI showed that the wall of my chest and my left lung are full of scarring as a result of the sarcoidosis.

39. I have never used drugs intravenously, and my only tattoos were later in life (well after my transfusion).

Section 3. Other Infections

40. I don't think I received any other infections as a result of the blood I received. I have developed other complications from my sarcoidosis though, which will be detailed below.

Section 4. Consent

41. I don't know if I've been treated or tested without my knowledge or consent. If I'm poorly with my chest or thyroid I'll often have my blood taken. Sometimes they take additional blood from me and I'm not sure what it's for.

Section 5. Impact

Mental effects of sarcoidosis

42. Nothing was really explained to me when I was diagnosed, so I didn't really know what to think. More recently I've only found things out about it from Google.
43. I know that I got this from the blood. I feel angry. I know that I've passed this onto my daughters and that they're going to be ill. While this statement was being taken, my youngest daughter was taken to hospital and kept in overnight. She was having trouble with her chest.
44. It used to make me depressed, because I felt so ill that I was crying and under the weather all the time. I've been prescribed antidepressants in the past.

Physical effects of sarcoidosis

45. I can't do anything physical because I'm constantly out of breath. I stopped working after I had Samantha because I became so ill. This was when they said I had a thyroid problem. I was weak and tired. I have to take a nap in the afternoon because I'm so tired – I used to work 70 hours per week.
46. The current chest infection I have is not that bad, but sometimes Samantha has had to call the ambulance because I've not been able to speak or breathe.
47. Physically, I have painful lumps around my joints, particularly the backs of my knees.
48. Further medical complications that I suffer from include:

- a. Constant lung infections: pleurisy several times a year;
- b. Constant lethargy;
- c. Hair loss and loose teeth;
- d. Fevers and night sweats;
- e. Eyes are dry and glassy; sometimes the whites turn red and painful; sometimes spots develop on the lower eyelids; eyesight has suddenly deteriorated;
- f. Bumpy, itchy blisters (looks like psoriasis) all over my body and scalp which comes with memory loss;
- g. Thyroid failure and accompanying weight fluctuation;
- h. Nerve damage in my legs;
- i. Joint swelling;
- j. Painful lumps around my joints;
- k. Depression.

Treatments

49. For my recurring lung infections, I have been prescribed antibiotics constantly throughout the years, often in conjunction with steroids (Perliysilone). I started with Amoxicillin, then Doxycycline, and finally to Clifromycine. I also take two inhalers daily: Clenil Modulite (a preventative steroid inhaler) and Ventolin (a reliever).

50. I am constantly taking eye drops for my eye troubles.

51. I have to take Thyroxine for the rest of my life to manage my thyroid problem.

52. I take painkillers daily, including Neproxin, which is a strong anti-inflammatory to help with my joints. I also take Voltril as a suppository for the same.

53. I was prescribed Citalopram for depression.
54. I'm unable to take Ibuprofen because it further inflames my lungs and stomach. Instead, I take Neproxin. This causes lower levels of inflammation, for which I take Hermaprozil.
55. I have constant infections in my lungs and the doctors tell me that I can't have antibiotics, that it's a virus and that my immune system will fight it. I don't have an immune system! I have to demand antibiotics. Dr Stampfli is away a lot, so I have these troubles often. I have to really push for them to give me them. I'll be clear for a month and then I'll have another one.
56. The anti-depressants really suppressed my mood and made me more depressed. I stopped taking them.
57. Suppositories give me diarrhoea.

Private, family and social life

58. I can't manage home life by myself. Candy (14) does the cooking and Samantha (26) does the cleaning.
59. When I go up the stairs I feel absolutely exhausted. I can't even carry shopping bags, my joints hurt me so much. I think that I've got the worst effect of the disease because I'm at a later stage. Often we (Samantha and I) are both in bed all day.
60. I don't have a private or a social life. I don't do active things. I just don't have the energy. It literally wipes me out.
61. When I go out with friends, I get worn out and have to sit down. They get peeved off with me and don't bother asking me out.

62. I have never been able to give Candy the care and attention she deserves because I have been too ill. My daughters have missed out an awful lot because I have not been able to do things for them.

63. As mentioned, my eldest daughter suffers from GRO-C

64. GRO-C
GRO-C Everyone says that it is nothing to do with sarcoidosis. Why are they trying to cover up something that it might be?

65. She has also suffered GRO-C
GRO-C She is off school and is being treated with inhalers, antibiotics, and steroids. Candy has also had GRO-C

66. About 18 months ago, Candy got what I thought was GRO-C She had GRO-C We thought she had an allergic reaction at first, but it got worse.

67. The doctors sent her to the dermatology unit within North Devon Hospital and took a GRO-C. They didn't know what it was, and wanted to do a study on her. I asked a doctor at the unit if she thinks it is related to sarcoidosis, and she said she didn't think so. They all say that.

68. GRO-C
GRO-C

69. My elderly father lives with me and I have not been able to take care of him. I can make him a sandwich or other meals, but he otherwise looks after himself.

Stigma

70. There's not much stigma because people don't even know what it is. Not even my doctors.

71. My local pharmacist told the whole village that I had chlamydia because of the antibiotics I was taking constantly – one of them is prescribed for both sarcoidosis and chlamydia. I had her investigated and she had to leave her job. But people think that I'm a dirty trollop now!

Education and work

72. I have not suffered educational effects from my sarcoidosis, although I would like to partake in higher education if I could. There are lots of things I would like to do, like have a go at English and Maths again, for example.

73. I have not been able to work since before Samantha was born – more than 26 years ago. I was very physically ill after the transfusion, and it was during these four years (pre-Samantha's birth) that the doctors had put it down to my thyroid.

74. Being pregnant and having sarcoidosis just wiped me out. It basically dropped me down to nothing. Trying to manage two kids and a pregnancy was beyond a joke.

75. Prior to this I was working as a carer in a mental asylum (late 80's-early 90's). I also worked intermittently as a bank nurse at the Ear, Nose and Throat Department of the Royal Leicester Infirmary. I was earning £7.80/hour and £15.00/hour respectively.

76. The financial effects of not being able to work mean that I have missed out an awful lot. I have struggled.

77. I currently only get £1,200/month to maintain a five-bedroom house. I am currently only meeting the interest repayments on my mortgage.

Section 6. Treatment/Care/Support

78. I have never been offered counselling or psychological support. It has never been talked about. Not even to go to any meetings or anything. Sarcoidosis sufferers are so few and far between.

79. I would like to go to sarcoidosis support meetings.

Section 7. Financial Assistance

80. I have not received any financial assistance from any of the Trusts or Funds set up to distribute payments to witnesses in the Infected Blood Inquiry.

81. The only financial assistance I have received since I stopped working in 1991 is a Personal Independence Payment (PIP) which is around £480/month. I also receive a Child Maintenance Payment of £140/month. There is also a Child Tax Credit of £250/month. These payments total around £1,200 per month.

82. This money is meant to cover a car and care. There is nothing for me to manage this house with. As mentioned, I am only meeting the interest payments on it.

Section 8. Other Issues

83. I had gone into hospital for a caesarean section. This Sister refused to even fetch the doctor, she just slapped me and told me "You will deliver this baby".

84. Because of this decision I ended up nearly dying during childbirth, and this is when I was transfused with the infected blood. I never should have been in this situation.

85. I have been asked if I would like to put any further questions to the Inquiry:

a. Given that sarcoidosis is common in African American populations (4,500 died in America in 2012), I would like to know if there are any further diseases common in these populations that could also have been spread through infected blood, that have not been connected with it yet.

b. I would also like to know why they don't test for every possible disease that can be transmitted via blood?

86. I have had the Use of my Statement form explained to me and do not request anonymity for any part of my statement.

87. I am not legally represented.

88. I have given my hospital and medical records to the Inquiry for them to find any information they may need. I have been told that they will be returned to me and I will then keep them safe.

Statement of Truth

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

Signed

GRO-C

Dated

23/4/2019