

Witness Name: Hilary Lander

Statement No. WITN0749001

Exhibits; WITN0749002-3

Dated: 11.6.19.

INFECTED BLOOD INQUIRY

WRITTEN STATEMENT OF HILARY LANDER

I provide this statement in response to a request under Rule 9 of the Inquiry Rules 2006 dated 3 May 2019.

I, Hilary Lander, will say as follows: -

Section 1. Introduction

1. My name is Hilary Lander. My date of birth is GRO-C 1948 and my address is known to the Inquiry. I am retired and live with my husband. I intend to speak about my infection with Hepatitis C. At this point I will mention that I have always believed that I had Hepatitis C as I am positive that is what I was told by the doctors when I was first diagnosed. That is my husband's recollection also. I will explain the relevance of this later.
2. I confirm that I do not have legal representation and do not require anonymity.

Section 2. How Infected

3. In 1974, I had to have an emergency caesarean at Nether Edge Maternity Hospital, Sheffield, after being in labour for two days. When I came to I could see that I had had a blood transfusion because I could see the blood bag, but was never told that I had had one. I had to stay in hospital for the next ten days, but after I was released and came home, I felt fine.
4. In 1978, I had my second son by elected caesarean. I do not recollect having a blood transfusion on that occasion and was never told that I had one. Following this birth, I did suffer from a bout of depression. However, I went back to work at National Westminster Bank in Worksop.
5. My medical record also states that I had a minor blood transfusion in 1980, but I have no recollection of this.
6. In 1983, I went to go and give blood with some work colleagues. I remember that the nurses were really keen for me to give blood because I have a very rare blood type. The following day, I received a letter from the blood transfusion service to say that I could not give blood anymore and that I was infected with Hepatitis C.
7. I went to see my GP at Lidgett Lane Doctors Surgery, Sheffield, and within a week I was referred to see a liver specialist at Sheffield Hallam hospital. They did blood and liver tests and was asked if I had ever been seriously ill. When I replied "no", they said that if I had had Hepatitis C then I would have been bedridden or really ill for a time, but I had never had anything more than a dose of flu up until 1983.
8. When I was referred to the hospital, they did not give me an explanation as to why I had contracted Hepatitis, but said that it must

have been from the blood transfusion after my first pregnancy. All I was told was that I was infected and that it could come and go with time. They didn't provide me with any advice on how to manage it or advise on any precautions to take. I didn't ask either as I was not aware that it was particularly serious. I was told that, if I was a carrier, I could pass it on to my husband. However, he has never been tested

Section 3. Other Infections

9. I do not believe that I have contracted any other infections as a result of being given infected blood, apart from what I believed to be Hepatitis C.

Section 4. Consent

10. In 1983, I was asked to take part in a drug trial, which I consented to. I was given a tablet to take daily for a week and I had to get the bus from North Anston to Sheffield each day for a blood test. I don't remember what drug the trial was for, but it will probably be in the medical records. I believe that I have always consented to testing and treatment.

Section 5. Impact

11. In 1989, I was hospitalised with severe depression. The doctors attributed it to the loss of my father and moving house. I have been on anti-depressants ever since. I have tried to come off them, but so far have not been able to. I don't remember there being any blood-related issues whilst I was in the hospital.
12. I have suffered from chronic fatigue, which has got worse over the years. I can become incredibly fatigued just doing things around the house, which means that I can't be very active. Sometimes, my

husband doesn't understand why I am so fatigued. I believe that this has resulted from my infection with the virus.

13. I used to be very active and we used to go on walking holidays with friends, but now when we go I cannot keep up and am always a long way behind them. This has impacted on my social life to an extent as well as my general health as I am not as fit as I once was.
14. I don't recall any aches or pains or any other symptoms. I very rarely went to the doctors.
15. The infection has not had any real effect on my education or employment as I had finished school prior to my diagnosis and as stated I went back to work at the bank after my children were born.
16. It has also had no real effect on my family. My husband never had to take time off work to care for me. I don't recall having to take any extra precautions around my children as I was not fully aware at the time of the severity of the virus.
17. I always just accepted that I had Hepatitis C and never really thought about it. I really didn't think that it was that serious. I was brought up to assume that the doctor was right and never to question them so when he told me I had Hepatitis, I just accepted it. My husband noticed the Infected Blood Inquiry on the internet and that they were looking for people to tell their story and so suggested that I should do so.
18. I have never mention that I had Hepatitis C on travel insurance forms. I didn't know that I had to.

Section 6. Treatment/Care/Support

19. I have never had any treatment with Interferon or similar for my Hepatitis. My treatment has just been going for blood tests roughly three times a year. I have never been told that I have any liver damage. They only inform you if you have any abnormalities and I have never been so informed.
20. I had to go for dental treatment to have my wisdom teeth out in the late 1980s / early 1990s. I am sorry but I can't remember the exact date. I went to the Charles Clifford Dental Hospital and they told me there that I would experience negative comments and people saying not nice things. They said people would say that I was a drug addict or a prostitute because I had this disease. I can't recall if I notified them or if they saw it on my medical records. I should say at this point that I have only had one sexual partner, who is my husband, have never had a tattoo and never taken intravenous drugs.
21. When I went in for the dental surgery, the anaesthetist had an argument with the dental surgeon because she didn't want her equipment to be "infected". The dental surgeon won the argument and eventually I was anaesthetised. I was also isolated in my own room with a black and yellow sign on the door, marked "hazardous". The staff would only speak to me from the door and pass me food from the door. I don't recall anyone saying anything, but definitely felt that people were staring at me.
22. I woke up from the surgery and was vomiting for a long time and I sometimes think that it may have been because they didn't drain the blood from my mouth during the surgery. I was under anaesthetic so I don't know if that was the case but I thought that at the time. I felt really bad at the way I was stigmatised due to the infection.
23. When I had my second son in 1978 I was also isolated in a room by myself, but I had not been given my diagnosis at this point but it makes me wonder now if someone suspected something.

24. I have never been offered any psychological counselling since being told that I had Hepatitis C. The infection does worry me. I have been so fortunate with my Hepatitis when I see what has happened to others but I do often think what lies around the corner for me.

Section 7. Financial Assistance

25. I was unaware that funding existed so have never had any contact with the trusts or received any financial assistance. The option has never been mentioned to me by anyone treating me either.

Section 8. Other Issues

26. As I mentioned earlier, as far as I was aware, I have been infected with Hepatitis C, in all likelihood since I received the blood transfusion during the birth of my first son. I have lived my life since 1983 believing this was the disease that I contracted. It was only after being contacted by the Inquiry that I sought medical records. On examining these, they clearly state that my diagnosis in 1983 is Hepatitis B. This is confirmed again in 1992. I have absolutely no recollection of Hepatitis B being mentioned to me as being my infection at any stage by doctors, including during my regular blood tests. See Exhibit W0749002.
27. There is a doctor's letter that shows Hepatitis C as a condition I suffer with. However, it is followed by a question mark and may be where I have mentioned it to the medical professional when asked what I suffered from. See Exhibit W0749003.
28. I will contact my GP and the hospital in order to establish what exactly my diagnosis is.

Statement of Truth

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

GRO-C

Signed

Dated

11th June 2019.