

Witness Name: S J Sheriff
Statement No: WITN1517001
Exhibits: WITN1517002
Dated: April 2019

INFECTED BLOOD INQUIRY

FIRST WRITTEN STATEMENT OF SPENCER JOHN SHERIFF

I, Spencer John Sheriff, will say as follows:-

Section 1. Introduction

1. My name is Spencer John Sheriff of GRO-C
Worcestershire, GRO-C My date of birth is GRO-C 1974. I live with
my wonderful wife whom I have been with for 13 years and married to for 4
years. She is very supportive and I could not function without her. She works
full time and is the bread winner of our family. I also have one step daughter.
2. **This statement has been prepared without the benefit of access to my
full medical records. I confirm that my Birmingham Children's Hospital
records are missing for the years 1974 through to 1994.**

Section 2. How Infected

3. I suffer with severe Haemophilia B with inhibitors and I have a 0% clotting
factor. I received Factor IX from when I was aged 5 or 6 and this continued to
in or around 1994. Prior to this I received Cryoprecipitate.

4. I was treated at the Birmingham Children's Hospital under the care of Dr Jillian Mann for the first 3 years following which I was under the care of Dr Frank Hill.
5. In 1994, I was transferred to the Queen Elizabeth Hospital under the care of Dr Jonathan Wilde.
6. I was infected with Hepatitis C and Hepatitis B as a result of receiving contaminated Factor IX.
7. I was not given any advice regarding the risks of receiving Factor IX.
8. Dr Jonathan Wilde told me that I had been infected with Hepatitis C in 1994 on the same day that my care was transferred to the Queen Elizabeth Hospital. We were discussing my Haemophilia and he stated, in a very matter of fact manner, "*I understand you have inhibitors and Hepatitis C*". I immediately questioned what the second thing was as I had never heard this term mentioned in terms of my care before. He said something like "*Hepatitis C, yes I have been informed by Dr Frank Hill and it is also documented in your children's hospital records that you were infected with Non-A non-B (NANB) Hepatitis in approximately 1982*".
9. At the time, even though it was 1994, I did not fully appreciate the significance of what Dr Jonathan Wilde had just told me. He did talk me through abstaining from alcohol due to liver related damage, not smoking and he gave me some information in relation to the risks of transmission of the virus. I believe that the information I was provided with at the time was reasonable.
10. GRO-C is also a Haemophiliac who contracted Hepatitis C and her consultant was also Dr Frank Hill. **Exhibit WITN1517002** is an extract from GRO-C medical records which is a letter dated 29th October 1996 from Dr Jonathan Wilde to Mr Cusack which states "*With regard to Spencer he was found to be Hepatitis C antibody positive at the Children's Hospital prior to his transfer over to my care in February 1994.*"

11. I contracted Hepatitis B when I was a child having received contaminated Factor IX. The doctors told my parents about this when I was an inpatient under Dr Frank Hill's care. As far as my mother and I can recall I did not receive any treatment for this virus which cleared naturally of its own accord.

Section 3. Other Infections

12. In the late 1990s or the early 2000s, I received a letter which confirmed that I had been put at risk of vCJD.

Section 4. Consent

13. Every time I went into the Birmingham Children's Hospital, my blood was taken by the nurses for "screening". This was the closest I ever came to being given a reason as to why my blood was consistently and routinely taken.

14. I am of the view that I was tested for Hepatitis B, Hepatitis C and HIV without my knowledge and therefore without my consent. I recall that on one occasion I was told that I was being tested for HIV for which I was negative.

15. I suspect that I may have been used for the purposes of research.

Section 5. Impact

16. Approximately two months before I found out that I had Hepatitis C I had just started a relationship with a lovely girl. As soon as I found out about my infected status I immediately ended the relationship. I then remained single for over a decade.

17. I do not recall the mental or physical effects of the Hepatitis B infection because my body naturally cleared this when I was a young boy.

18. My life dramatically changed following my infection with Hepatitis C. I was aged 19 or 20 when I was told this bombshell news in 1994. I had just passed my driving test and my life was heading in a fantastic direction; I was sociable and looking forward to what the future might offer me. Everything changed on that fateful day in 1994.
19. As soon as I left the Queen Elizabeth Hospital the first thing I did was to visit my girlfriend's house and explain everything to her and this formed the basis of our relationship break up. I told her there was no way that I could put her at any risk of infection. It was very sad because I did actually think that she was "the one". We had known each other since we were aged 12 or 13 and had been friends for many years so our relationship had firm foundations.
20. [REDACTED] **GRO-C** [REDACTED] were also Haemophiliacs who were all sadly infected with Hepatitis C. We were all in the same boat and I found myself able to open up to them about 2 or 3 years after I found out about my infection. Apart from these people and two very close friends, I kept the news of my infection under the radar which meant that I avoided any negative stigma or difficult situations.
21. [REDACTED] **GRO-C** [REDACTED] is 5 years older than me and because we were similar ages we were able to open up to each other about what we were going through in terms of the Hepatitis C infection. I was glad to have [REDACTED] **GRO-C** [REDACTED] because when I was in and out of hospital I found the majority of medical staff very standoffish and not helpful with regard to what we were going through.
22. Living with Hepatitis C definitely made me very depressed and in contrast all of my friends were out having fun while I was left dealing with the unthinkable. I tried really hard to enjoy going out with them and I always used to offer to drive when I joined them. Being the driver on the night gave me a valid reason as to why I could not drink alcohol. I of course had had to give up drinking alcohol due to my infection but I did not want to disclose my infected status to my friends so my car became the perfect guise to disguise the real reason as to why I was unable to drink alcohol.

23. I did not take any medication for my depression and rather dealt with everything on my own.
24. I have been lucky that my four monthly Liver Function Tests (LFTs) have demonstrated that my liver was functioning fairly well despite my infection with Hepatitis C.
25. My body managed to clear the Hepatitis C naturally by 2008. This meant that, although I was penalised by the Skipton Fund (see section 7 below), I did not have to endure the horrific treatments which GRO-C had to go through in order to clear their infections.
26. Despite my body naturally clearing the Hepatitis C I still feel extremely lethargic and some days it is as bad as it was before my body cleared the virus. I have been and still am mentally drained and I tend to forget a lot of simple things which is incredibly frustrating.
27. Such was the severity of my Haemophilia that I ended up sitting my GCSEs in the Birmingham Children's Hospital. The teachers from my school brought the examination papers to the hospital and sat in the room with me whilst I completed the exams as in the same way I would have if I'd been in school.
28. I have never really been able to hold down a full time job due to the severity of my Haemophilia and my Hepatitis C. I have severe arthritis which resulted in numerous joint replacements. I generally use crutches to aid my mobility but when my arms are in a lot of pain I use a wheelchair which although is a self propelled it put a lot less strain through my arms.
29. My wife works full time and she is the breadwinner in our house. Her employer is very understanding and allows her to take time off to take me to the hospital and to any other appointments.
30. I have suffered financially as a result of my Haemophilia and Hepatitis C. I had to rely on my parents & now my Wife, many years ago I applied for & was

successful in my application for Disability Living Allowance (DLA) & was given it for life, then 3 years that all changed when I had to apply for Personal Independent Payment (PIP) which was very traumatic. In order to obtain this I had to go through a horrific medical assessment which meant that I had to prove my disabilities. PIP was awarded to me for 5 years, so in 2021 I have to endure the same trauma to prove that my disability is worse than my 1st application.

Section 6. Treatment/Care/Support

31. When I was aged approximately 8, I was admitted to the Birmingham Children's Hospital as a result of a bleed because at that time home treatment was not available for me due to my Inhibitors & the incredibly large doses of Factor IX I had to have for bleeds. My mother and I recall that I was admitted to Ward Nine, which was an isolation ward. The medical staff on this ward were fully gowned and gloved. My parents were told to put protective wear on and were advised by the medical staff that an infection was circulating in the hospital and that they were therefore taking precautions. However, when my father went to get some drinks, he noticed that none of the other adults were wearing protective clothing. My mother even questioned Dr Frank Hill about the fact that only those persons dealing with me were wearing protective clothing and he basically sidestepped the issue and dressed it up as though they were trying to protect me from catching anything in the hospital. Both my parents and I were certain that I was treated differently due to my Hepatitis C.

32. GRO-C encountered difficulties in accessing dental care. She was seeing a dentist regularly but when she contracted Hepatitis C the hospital informed her GP and the dentist of her infected status which resulted in her regular dentist telling her that they were no longer prepared to treat her. She therefore had to go to the Queen Elizabeth Hospital to receive dental treatment.

33. Due to my severe Haemophilia, I always had to use the hospital dentist. I recall that whenever the hospital dentist treated me they would immediately

throw all of the equipment into the bin in full view of me. It would have been slightly more professional had they carried this out in a discreet manner.

Section 7. Financial Assistance

34. I did not receive any financial assistance from the Skipton Fund. I applied for financial assistance a few years ago but I was informed that my application had been rejected because my body naturally cleared the Hepatitis C.

35. My views in relation to the Skipton Fund are unfortunately negative. I was a bit miffed when my application was rejected. I believed that I should be entitled to the same support as everyone else who was infected because we were all infected in the same way via the contaminated blood products. I am of the view that the criteria adopted by the Skipton Fund were and are unfair and arbitrary.

36. During one of my visits to the Queen Elizabeth Hospital, in or around February 2019, one of the nurses told me that I should try to apply to the EIBSS for financial assistance. The hospital helped me to complete the application form and I have just been advised by the EIBSS that having considered my application, they too have turned me down because my body naturally cleared the virus.

Section 8. Other Issues

37. I have never been involved in anything like this before the Public Inquiry. I am actively involved now and I have known Andrew Evans, the Chairman of Tainted Blood, since we were young boys attending the Birmingham Children's Hospital. There were approximately 30 of us young boys receiving treatment at this hospital and today there are only 5 of us who are still alive. One of the

slightly older boys was like a brother to me, when my parents went home after visiting me they knew that this older boy would look after me. Sadly he too passed away about 2 years ago.

38. I would like the Government to acknowledge that there was a cover up and that this scandal should never have happened and that it was totally wrong to let it happen.

Anonymity, disclosure and redaction

39. I do not wish to apply to retain my anonymity.

40. I think I may be prevented from giving oral evidence due to ill health and I therefore struggle with travelling.

Statement of Truth

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

GRO-C

Signed

29-4-2019