

Witness Name: Francesca GIGLIO

Statement No: WITN7137-001

Exhibits: See attached

Dated: 5 August 2022

INFECTED BLOOD INQUIRY

WRITTEN STATEMENT OF Francesca GIGLIO

I provide this written statement in response to a request under Rule 9 of the Inquiry Rules 2006 dated 12 July 2022.

I, Francesca Giglio, will say as follows:

1. My name is Francesca Giglio and my date of birth is **GRO-C** 1979. I live in **GRO-C** **GRO-C** and my full address is known to the Inquiry.
2. I intend to speak about my Uncle Thomas James Higgins dob **GRO-** 1955, who received multiple blood transfusions following a serious motorcycle accident in 1980 or 1981. He was treated at St Helens Hospital and Whiston Hospital and was mostly in hospital the whole time, and following the blood cancer he developed as a result of the blood transfusions he was also under Clatterbridge Hospital Liverpool, but died at Whiston Hospital on 30 March 1983 from blood cancer Hodgkin's Disease. This was a direct result of the infected blood which he received as he only went into hospital initially following the motorcycle accident and then after the multiple infected and unvetted blood transfusions developed blood cancer – Hodgkin's Disease.

3. I can confirm that I have chosen not to have legal representation and that the Inquiry Investigator has explained the anonymity process to me. I do not wish to be anonymous.
4. The Inquiry Investigator has explained to me the 'Right to Reply' procedure, and I understand that if I am critical of a medical professional or organisation, they will have the right to reply to that criticism.
5. I wish to acknowledge that naturally as time passes, memories can fade. I have been able to provide approximate timeframes for matters based on life events. However, these timeframes should be accepted as 'near to' rather than precise dates.
6. I have constructed this statement without having read my uncles' medical records, although I am in the process of trying to obtain them. I have obtained his death certificate and birth certificate however to assist with the inquiry.

Section 2. How Infected

7. My Uncle Thomas worked in a factory, a machinist as well as a labourer and he lived with my grandparents still Mary and Thomas Anthony Higgins at GRO-C
GRO-C. My Uncle Thomas was the youngest of three siblings. My Mum, Marion Giglio, was his older sister. Uncle John was the middle child. My Mum died in September 2020 and my uncle John 14 weeks after in December 2020. My Grandmother Mary Higgins died in 1984 aged 62 – the year after my Uncle Thomas died – they say from a broken heart. My Grandfather Thomas Anthony Higgins died in 1995. There are no remaining parents or siblings of my Uncle Thomas James Higgins and he had no children.
8. As already stated, my uncle was involved in a very serious motorcycle accident sometime around 1980. At the time I was very young. My older brother's Marcel and Rene, have reaffirmed to me that our Uncle Tom/Thomas came to visit them at their school at lunch time on his motorbike, while they were approx.

school aged about 10 & 11 (There is 1 year between my two oldest brothers. Marcel was almost 14 and Rene almost 13 when our Uncle Thomas died.

9. When Uncle Thomas rode away on his motorbike from seeing them at school he turned right and was hit by another vehicle.
10. Unfortunately, my mum Marion Giglio (Nee Higgins) passed away in September 2020 and the only remaining relative, my uncle John, passed away in December 2020. I only have my memories, my brothers and also my father's (who is still alive) to go on now but mum always said Thomas was killed by the infected blood as he had gone in from a motorcycle accident, had multiple blood transfusions and then next thing he develops blood cancer as a result.
11. I remember going with my mum to visit Uncle Thomas in hospital. He was initially treated at St Helens hospital, Merseyside following the motorcycle accident. Uncle Thomas was linked up to machines and was receiving blood which was in bags by his bed. I remember he was in a big private room on his own at some point and even though I was young I saw it all – I remember. I remember him asking me if I had my diddly shoes on (my patent black pretty shoes) and he wanted me to dance for him. We also have a number of pictures taken from outside his hospital window with my brothers and my grandmother on etc....
12. He was very unwell and struggled to get better following the accident to such an extent that he barely ever left hospitals – being transferred from one to the other and then for the cancer he developed at Clatterbridge then back to Whiston where he died.
13. I remember being present when the doctors told my mum and his mum, my grandmother, Mary Higgins, that Uncle Thomas would not have long to live but he lived at least several months more than they expected and kept on going and before deteriorating and then his death at Whiston.

14. My uncle was transferred to Clatterbridge hospital in The Wirral, at some stage, as this was a specialist cancer hospital. Then on [GRO-C] 1983 Uncle Thomas eventually died. I recall he had been in hospital a long time. My grandmother and my mum were informed that he eventually had Hodgkin's Disease – I believe maybe non-Hodgkin's lymphoma specifically, a blood cancer which is what eventually killed him – confirmed by the death certificate. Over the years when my mum talked about her brother's tragic death at such a young age she explained to people in front of me that along with Hodgkin's disease he caught HIV through the blood. This is something my father also is aware of as he was by my mum's side obviously as they were married with 4 children (I am the youngest of 4) at that time and had been married since 1969 and were still together until her death.

Section 3. Other Infections.

15. I don't believe he contracted any other infections.

Section 4. Consent

16. I don't know if consent was ever requested or given.

Section 5. Impact.

17. [GRO-C] when my Uncle Tom/Thomas died. I remember going to see him in his private room at the hospital. I remember the screams of my mum when he died, as do my brothers and father.

18. Mum started to suffer from panic attacks, anxiety, depression, and agoraphobia as a result and was on medication diazepam etc from then on till her death.

19. This affected my growing up as my mum would never let me out her sight, never let me play out in the street nothing and I then developed panic attacks, depression and agoraphobia as well as we were intensely close, co-dependent

and would get separation anxiety. As a result, I've never left home and always lived with my mum. They say phobias such as agoraphobia are learnt behaviours (majority of which are from parents because of trauma and distress from something that they experienced/saw at a young age) and as explained my mum and I were inseparable. I've never really lived my own life as I have suffered a long time. My mum was on diazepam from that time until her death- so for 37+ years. She was still unable to function and have a normal life on medication and so we never went on any family holidays from then on. She never went on a aeroplane and couldn't even get to the airport let alone on an aeroplane. For many many years she could only go to the local shop – and as a child I only went those very local places with her. I saw her have full blown panic attacks when I was a child and growing up and crying and depressed a lot. See my mum was effectively like a second mum to her baby brother Tom as he was 8 years younger than her- we have letters she wrote to my dad before they got married (she married at 21) in which she would write to my dad and tell him she was taking Tom to Southport etc on the train, her little brother but effectively like a second mum to him at that time.

20. Mum initiated interest in the inquiry but due to her endometrial cancer and ill health and now death she is unable to pursue and get justice for her brother and the devastating detrimental effects it had on her family and her own mental health and subsequently mine as well. I have seen several psychiatrists, therapists and counsellors over the years, and they deem me as a complex case and even privately my mum and I have spent thousands trying to get help without any success. I am currently under the mental health hospital Peasley Cross St Helens on yet another waiting list for psychological help.

21. My Grandmother, Mary Higgins died aged 62 a year after my Uncle Tom/Thomas in 1984. It's always been said she died of a broken heart as a result of her son, my uncle's death.

Section 6. Treatment/Care/Support

21. I don't have any recollection of my uncle's treatment, but I am trying to obtain his medical records. I have requested from both St Helens & Knowsley Trust Hospitals (which cover St Helens and Whiston) and also Clatterbridge cancer hospital. They say that due to length of time that has passed they may not have any records, but they do sometimes find such old records in their archives.

Section 7. Financial Assistance

22. No member of the family has ever attempted to seek financial assistance as a result of Uncle Thomas' death.

Section 8. Other Issues

23. Mum followed the Inquiry while she was alive, and we always discussed that Thomas was killed by the blood transfusions and not because of the motorcycle accident – which is confirmed by the death certificate.

24. I want justice for my uncle who was only 27 when he was given these infected blood transfusions and for the detrimental effect it had then on my family and still has with my mental health as a result of my mum's own mental health issues because of it.

25. This scandal was obviously not publicly known about until so many years later. I now know no financial support or compensation has ever been given but should be to those who have suffered.

26. As a young 27 year old man, my Uncle Tom/Thomas did not have a Will and his parents were both still alive at his time of death and he had no children. Whilst his siblings are now also deceased, I am continuing this to get justice for him, for my mum and the lifetime affects it had on her and that I am still suffering from as a result of it all too.

Statement of Truth

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

Signed

GRO-C

Dated ____ 5 August 2022

EXHIBITS:

EXHIBIT	DATE	DESCRIPTION
DEATH CERTIFICATE	30/03/1983	DEATH CERTIFICATE
BIRTH CERTIFICATE	21/10/1955	BIRTH CERTIFICATE