

Witness Name: Philip Wilde

Statement No.: WITN3702

Exhibits: Nil

Dated: 11/12/2019

INFECTED BLOOD INQUIRY

WRITTEN STATEMENT OF PHILIP WILDE

I provide this statement in response to a request under Rule 9 of the Inquiry Rules 2006 dated 23 August 2019.

I, Philip Wilde, will say as follows: -

Section 1. Introduction

1. My name is Philip Wilde. My date of birth is GRO-C 1961 and my address is known to the Inquiry. I work at Forest Green Motors which is a business that my wife, Sally Wilde ("Sally") and I own.
2. I confirm that I am not legally represented. The investigator from the inquiry has explained what the anonymity process is and I do not require it.
3. My statement should be read in conjunction with Sally's statement (WITN3759001).

4. I intend to speak about Sally's mum, Lily Emily Davis ("Lily") and her Hepatitis C infection ("HCV"), which she contracted during her treatment for leukaemia. In particular, I will speak about how Lily was not told of her diagnosis, how the lack of information affected her and us, the impact it had when she passed away and it was discovered, and the lasting effect it has had on us following her death.

Section 2. How Affected

5. Lily's health began to deteriorate quickly after the death of her husband around Christmas time in 1986. She had become very fatigued, and had lost her appetite.
6. After attending Hospital and having several tests, she was diagnosed with leukaemia. During this time her Doctor was Dr Mackey. Her leukaemia required a lot of going back and forth to the Wexham Park Hospital in Slough and she was also seen at the John Radcliff.
7. Due to her general poor health and the effects of her cancer, her immune system was deteriorating and she was offered a blood transfusion. Between 1987 until the time she died Lily had received several blood transfusions as part of her treatment for the leukaemia.
8. Lily consented to all treatments offered to her for her leukaemia. As far I am aware, she was not given any information of advice about the risks associated with blood transfusions.
9. Lily continued to struggle on although often in pain but obviously you expect the worse although her death still came as a huge shock when she died on GRO-C 1994.
10. On the day she passed away I received a telephone call from Sally's aunt as Lily had become unconscious, so Sally and I immediately went to where she was staying at the time.

11. She was on the bathroom floor when we arrived, so having a first aid certificate and a father who was a paramedic, I went through the basics, checking for a pulse and her breath. I could detect neither.
12. I then tried to resuscitate her by giving her CPR, the kiss of life, while the others called an ambulance. I continued with the action for some time but she didn't come around, and in the end, there was no point, I knew she had died.
13. The ambulance arrived and she was transported to Wexham Park Hospital. Once we were in the relatives' room they said they thought she had died of a heart attack, there was no mention of any infection.
14. Her death certificate records that the cause of her death was (1a) Pulmonary tuberculosis, and (1b) chronic lymphocytic leukaemia.
15. During the years of Lily's illness, Sally made herself available to assist her. Sally's work had to be flexible because when Lily needed treatment she needed to be taken and accompanied. My father helped organise transport, and I supported Sally where I could.
16. Lily was never told at any stage that she had contracted HCV nor to my knowledge was she told that there was any possibility of that occurring.
17. It was with Dr Sparrow two weeks after her passing that we found out that she had had Hepatitis C. As far as I remember, he said that because of the treatment Lily had received, there was something that could have infected her. No mention was made of how long she may have been infected or when it was first discovered.
18. We do not know how her treatment could have been affected or influenced if she had been properly informed about her HCV infection.

19. As far as I can recall, it was not explained that the HCV infection had been or could have been transmitted to Lily through her blood transfusions.

Section 3. Other Infections

20. We do not know if Lily was infected with other viruses that could be transmitted via blood transfusion such as HIV and it is possible that she was not tested for these, or possible that she was tested for these without her knowledge or consent. I do not recall any mention of damage to her liver or testing for such whilst she was alive.

Section 4. Consent

21. As far as I am aware Lily was not told, nor consented to being tested for HCV.

Section 5. Impact

22. While she had been ill, her death was very much unexpected. We were told that because she had leukaemia a post-mortem was needed. The post-mortem was completed in Reading.

23. After all the family met the Doctor, Sally and I were asked to stay behind, and that's when we were told that Lily had tuberculosis ("TB").

24. Her death certificate records that the cause of her death was (1a) Pulmonary tuberculosis, and (1b) chronic lymphocytic leukaemia.

25. We were told the coffin had to be sealed, and I remember we looked at each other in horror. We were thinking "what the hell?!". We assumed that it was because of the TB that the coffin was sealed, but we weren't actually told that by the Doctor. When we heard that she had TB, Sally and I looked at each other I thought "bullshit!"

26. We never knew that she had TB, so it was a shock to us. She never appeared to have any symptoms of TB and nothing was ever said about this condition during her many hospital visits. Obviously, we did not expect her coffin to be sealed, so none of it really any sense to us.
27. The Undertaker told us because of the post-mortem the coffin must be sealed, and that was that. He could not elaborate.
28. Sally and I always had the feeling that there is something that they are not telling us, there is something that they are hiding from us.
29. Both of us remain suspicious about the TB diagnosis too, as she often had chest X-Rays, so surely if she had had TB they would have picked up on that then.
30. It was the meeting with Dr Sparrow two weeks after Lily death when we learnt of her HCV, that we were also told, as I had tried to resuscitate her, there was a risk I could have been infected too and that precautions should be taken. Of course, I didn't know at the time of giving CPR because no one knew. Nothing had been mentioned to Lily or us about HCV or even the possibility of infection.
31. I had to have an X-Ray, as well as blood tests over the course of a year and it was an awful. It was a year of wondering and worrying whether I had been infected too. We didn't tell anyone. It was our own decision to not tell anybody, and during that time it caused us a lot of anxiety. It put a strain on our marriage. It was a year from hell.
32. Our social lives were also heavily impacted. We wouldn't go out and socialise because it was just too difficult. We weren't comfortable and were scared I could somehow infect someone. I felt the less contact I had with others the better. It was difficult as we were a sociable couple.
33. Family stopped visiting which we put down to our house bringing back sad memories for them as Lily had lived with us for a long time. We felt very isolated.

34. I had to take special precautions in the home too, having separate tableware, towels and toothbrush. We had to keep everything separate.
35. If I got a cut at work, no one was allowed to touch or come near me. I had to carry a medical card too. This obviously caused problems as well as we wanted to keep the matter private.
36. My and Sally's intimate relationship was affected as there was a risk of transmission. Of course, by the time we were advised of this we had already unknowingly exposed ourselves to multiple risks of transmission since we hadn't known of Lily's HCV during her lifetime and not until two weeks after her death.
37. At the time we found out about the HCV and the risk of infection, I was working in a warehouse and held a first aid certificate. I didn't have any other choice but to tell personnel there about the risk, because it was a physical job where I could have got cut. My certificate was suspended for a year.
38. My salary at the time included a supplement for the first aid certificate, so that was reduced, but it wasn't a lot of money.
39. Sally has suffered from anxiety and depression for some time and was under a GP being treated for the condition. It is fair to say that her mental health suffered significantly more due to the additional stress caused by what happened following Lily's passing, how her infection was handled, and how it affected myself and Sally's relationship.
40. My mental health also suffered a lot. I had to go to the GP for help too, but I was prescribed pills and, in the end, I chucked them out because I had seen what the pills had done to family members – perhaps in hindsight it wasn't the best thing to do.

41. They should have told us about the infection, they should have been more forthcoming about what it was and what it meant, especially because of Sally's anxiety issues.
42. If we have known about the infection we could have taken precautions during Lily's lifetime, and I wouldn't have been exposed to the risk of infection and the following trauma when she passed away.
43. We suspect we also would not have had the shock of having the coffin unexpectedly sealed when Lily passed away. Things would have been very different.
44. We weren't told how, why or what infected Lily. I got a funny feeling when watching a television show which was about evidence coming to light about blood from US prisoners that could cause infection, and I remember thinking I wonder if that's how Lily was infected.

Section 6. Treatment/Care/Support

45. As far as I am aware Lily did not receive any treatment for her HCV.
46. I was never offered counselling at any stage, nor was Sally although she did receive general bereavement counselling following Lily's death.
47. While we knew I had to be tested for HCV we were never really told what it was exactly or what it meant. We knew it was HCV but I had to research myself to find out that there was a 9 to 12 months incubation period and that was why I had to have continued blood tests.
48. The last test was about 6 months after Lily's passing, and I was never actually given the result. The only reason I found out that I was all clear is when I went to the GP on an unrelated matter, and they happened to mention "oh I see you've been tested for Hepatitis C.... and that's all clear".

Section 7. Financial Assistance

49. Lily did not receive any financial support or assistance in relation to her HCV infection. She passed away unaware of the infection.

50. Sally and I have not received any financial support or assistance in relation to her HCV infection, nor in relation to the impact on us. There was a cost in time and money with Lily's continuous hospital appointments but this is something we would have met as a family anyway

Section 8. Other Issues

1. Sally and I feel that the medical profession went to great lengths to bury information about Lily's HCV. How long did they know about it? Having leukaemia, her blood was being tested regularly. Surely it must show up irregularities. They should have been more open with us and they should have given us the information we needed.
2. Things would have been much easier if we had received an explanation of what Hepatitis C actually was.

Statement of Truth

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

Signed _____

GRO-C

Dated 11/12/2019