

Witness Name: Donald Peters

Statement No: WITN4175001

Exhibits: WITN4175002

Dated: September 2021

INFECTED BLOOD INQUIRY

FIRST WRITTEN STATEMENT OF DONALD PETERS

I, Donald Peters, will say as follows:-

Section 1. Introduction

1. My name is Donald Peters. I was born on GRO-C 1964 and I live at GRO-C GRO-C Tokyo GRO-C Japan with my family.
2. My father, George Ernest Peters (born on GRO-C 1926), was infected with the Hepatitis B Virus (HBV) or the Hepatitis C Virus (HCV) through a contaminated blood transfusion. He died on GRO-C 1993, aged 67. I refer to Exhibit WITN4175002 being a copy of my father's Death Certificate.
3. This witness statement has been prepared without the benefit of access to my father's medical records.

Section 2. How Affected

4. I am the elder son of George Ernest Peters. I was just 12 and my younger brother just 9 years old when we lost our mother to cancer complications on GRO-C 1976 at aged 46. She was admitted to the Queen Elizabeth Hospital, Birmingham the day before (on GRO-C 1976) to have some fluid drained from her abdomen, GRO-D
GRO-D
5. My late father had been diagnosed with a Heart Murmur (Arythmia) in the 1970s, probably before my mother passed in 1976, and was taking standard medication (Digoxin I think) to stabilize the heart rhythm irregularity.
6. My father was under the care of Dr Terry at Grove Road Surgery, Grove Road, Solihull, West Midlands. One day, at the end of August 1980 (I remember that I was aged 16 as I was due to start a new job as an apprentice technician at the GPO Telephones, later British Telecom on 1st September 1980 and my younger brother was then just 13 years old) my father was seen by a young locum GRO-C doctor and instead of being given the correct repeat prescription, he was prescribed the standard drug for Angina (probably nitro-glycerin tablets).
7. The following day (on 30th August I believe), my father couldn't get out of bed. It was a weekend and we had to call an emergency doctor out to the house. The emergency doctor discovered that my father had been given completely the wrong medicine in Dr Terry's absence and had had a severe heart attack. My father was immediately admitted to Solihull Hospital where he was in Intensive Care for several weeks, all caused by the lack of the correct medicine and the prescription of the incorrect medicine. The damage inflicted on his heart was debilitating and my father was never able to work again.

8. I believe that it was out of a sense of guilt, and maybe the fact that he was a single parent with responsibility for us two sons, that my father was later offered open heart surgery in the form of a Mitral Valve Replacement. This operation was conducted at the National Heart Hospital in Paddington, London sometime in late 1981/early 1982 (I think, winter, as I was in my apprenticeship training). During the surgery my father was put on a heart/lung bypass machine and given a blood transfusion. It was during his stay at the National Heart Hospital that they realised that he had been infected with Hepatitis from the contaminated blood used in the blood transfusion.
9. Through being infected with Hepatitis, after a week or so he was transferred from the National Heart Hospital to ICU at Solihull Hospital, Solihull, West Midlands. He was never the same man he was before the contaminated transfusion. He was robbed of all quality of life. He was constantly jaundiced and on all sorts of medication to include Warferin (blood thinner/rat poison). He couldn't walk very far and was constantly out of breath. He never recovered. He lived about another 10 years and died in 1993 at just 67 years old.

Section 3. Other Infections

10. I have no idea as whether my father was infected with anything other than Hepatitis (and I do not know whether he was infected with HBV or HCV or both).

Section 4. Consent

11. My father underwent heart surgery in the form of a Mitral Valve Replacement. This operation was conducted at the National Heart Hospital in Paddington, London, sometime in late 1981 or early 1982, I think. During the surgery, my father was given a blood transfusion, as you would expect. He would not have been prewarned of the risk of infection.

12. The way my father was treated whilst under the care of the NHS was utterly despicable. In endeavouring to make amends for the mis-prescription by providing the heart surgery, the surgery went wrong, and they ended up infecting him with Hepatitis. They were supposed to be improving a crisis health situation created by them. They made it far worse instead as HCV played a huge part in his early demise. It just added Insult to injury to Injury.

Section 5. Impact of the Infection

13. The mental and physical effects of being infected with Hepatitis were just devastating. I know my father contemplated suicide many times, but he said the only reason he couldn't go through with it was because they would have to bring his body through the house, in front of us kids.

14. The loss of our mother at such an early age impacted us for many years. It impacted my and my brother's schooling, education, quality of life. Then, just as we were starting to adjust to her loss, my father was struck down by this medical malpractice. We didn't know if he was going to survive the heart attack due to the mis-prescription, and the stress on the family was very great. Then there was obviously risk to the surgery (my mother had died in hospital undergoing a supposedly routine procedure), and finally to be infected with Hepatitis due to this malpractice was devastating.

15. My father was debilitated. He could not work and that led to financial hardship for our family. He was relegated to living on disability benefits and I paid some support from my meagre apprenticeship wages. My father could not walk very far. His quality of life was greatly affected, and that of myself and my younger brother. My brother was still at school, age 13, when my father was taken ill,

GRO-C

16. I have been suffering from depression on and off since childhood; after my mother's death, after my father's (induced) heart attack, after my father's operation and infection, after my father's death, and for a long time thereafter. My relationship with my brother has been seriously adversely affected by what has happened. We haven't spoken in very many years.

17. I was never treated for depression, never offered counselling or anything at all in the UK. I was later treated for depression, after my father's death, in Hong Kong, and am now being treated for depression in Japan. I am currently unemployed due to Covid and my depression. I should also say that I have no trust in doctors or hospitals, or the healthcare system, in the UK or in Japan, as a legacy of how my parents were treated.

Section 6. Treatment/care/support

18. My father was mistreated at the hands of the NHS. The treatment, care and support provided to my father and our family was not only woefully deficient, it was negligent.

Section 7. Financial Assistance

19. No financial assistance was provided to us from the Trusts and Funds. My father relied upon Unemployment Disability Benefit, as meagre as it was.

Section 7. Other Matters

20. I heard about this Inquiry by accident, listening to the Morning Show on the BBC one day. Some politician was talking about it, but when I contacted her office, I was brushed off... told that they couldn't help me as I was not in her

constituency. Not even a redirect. 'Please look at this website...' No. Classic candidate for Esther Ranson's 'Job's Worth' Award!

21. I tried to get my father's medical records, under the auspices of this Inquiry, but each time I just get the run-around and they send back the application... Oh, you need to provide this, or you now need to provide that... Why don't they just give the full list of what I needed to provide on the original form? Despicable!

Anonymity

22. I do not seek anonymity and I understand that this Statement will be disclosed for publication to the Inquiry.

Statement of Truth

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

Signed....

GRO-C

Dated.....

29.10.2021