

Witness Name: Michael Robert Draper

Statement No: WITN3231001

Exhibits: 0

Dated: June 2019

INFECTED BLOOD INQUIRY

FIRST WRITTEN STATEMENT OF MICHAEL ROBERT DRAPER

I, Michael Robert Draper, will say as follows:-

Section 1. Introduction

1. My name is Michael Robert Draper and I was born on GRO-C 1979. I live at GRO-C. I am married and have 2 children. I work as a self employed joiner.
2. This witness statement has been prepared without the benefit of access to my late father's full medical records.
3. I am aware that my mother, Susan Haines, also intends to provide a statement to the Inquiry.

Section 2. How Affected

4. I am providing this statement in regard to my late father, Peter Robert Draper, who was born on GRO-C 1953 and passed away from AIDS on 8

February 1995 as a result of being infectedd with HIV by blood products. My dad was 41 years old when he died.

5. My father was born on GRO-C 1953. He suffered from haemophilia A. It took him a lot longer than normal to get over injuries to his body. I remember him having bleeds in his leg, for example, that would go on for a long time. I was very young and did not understand back then why his injuries lasted so long. My dad always struggled with a limp.
6. I do not know when my father was infected with HIV. I understand from my mother that he was treated with Factor 8 in the 1980s at the Liverpool Training Hospital.
7. I refer to my mother's statement for more detailed information about my dad's haemophilia, how he was treated with blood products, how he found out about his infection and what information was given to him regarding the HIV infection.
8. I first found out about my dad's infection in 1993, when I was 14 years old.
9. I am the only child of my parents and the three of us had been away in Jersey on a family holiday. On the way back home we stopped off at our favourite fishing spot in Bromyard and we stayed the night at a bed and breakfast. It was that evening that my parents told me that my dad had HIV.
10. My parents tried to explain to me what happened. My dad told me that he had been treated with infected blood which had come from jails in America and that his infection was not his fault. The memory of that talk with my parents has stayed with me. It was very sad for me. I understood from that conversation that my dad's life was going to be short, that he was going to die.
11. My mother and I were tested for HIV when we returned home. Thankfully, we tested negative.

Section 3. Other Infections

12. I am not aware of my father suffering from any other infections.

Section 4. Consent

13. I would like to refer to my mother's statement for this section.

Section 5. Impact of the Infection

14. My dad was a top guy. He was a role model to me. He was a very hard worker. He was a really genuine person and had a lot of respect for others. He was fun and a good laugh. He was a very loving person.

15. My dad and I were very close. He was my best friend.

16. At the time my father told me that he had HIV, he was still quite healthy. Knowing that he had HIV and would not live long made me feel very sad.

17. At first I did not really notice any significant difference in his health. He had arthritis in his legs but he already had this due to his haemophilia.

18. In the time that followed, my dad's condition deteriorated. He got thinner and weaker. His arthritis became worse and he suffered from bad skin conditions. He always tried to just get on with it and he never felt sorry for himself. Looking back, I think he tried hard to keep up appearances for me.

19. My dad and I used to spend at least 2 days a week together when we would go fishing or watch football. He stopped being able to do these things with me and instead, if I was going out, I would go with my mum or with my friends.

20. He owned a small yacht which he took out frequently on a local lake. He loved sailing, paragliding and life in general. He had purchased what he referred to as his 'dream car', a Jaguar. He became too ill to enjoy any of those things. He had to sell his yacht as he was no longer able to sail.

21. My parents ran a successful restaurant business at the time. My father went from working hard day and night, to hardly working. He was no longer able to help my mother at all in running their business. It was hard to witness.
22. I do not know what treatments my father had for his infection, my parents did tell me. I therefore refer to my mother's statement for details of any treatment he received and how the treatment affected him.
23. I believe that my father was diagnosed with AIDS in 1981. He became very ill with AIDS and was admitted to hospital in early 1995. He was very weak and bedridden. I visited him all the time in hospital. Shortly before his death, he was allowed home and was in a bed downstairs at home for the remainder of his life. He passed away from AIDS on 8 February 1995, GRO-C
GRO-C
24. The year my father died I was 16 years old and doing my GCSEs. It was a bad time for me. I was thinking of my dad all the time, I could not concentrate on my studies and I could not keep up with my school work. I failed badly.
25. I had always wanted to be an architect however I did not get the grades that I needed to go to university. I went to college to study design and ended up going into construction.
26. My dad missed a lot of milestones in my life such as passing my driving test, getting married to my wife, the birth my children, my first house, my first legal beverage. This makes me very sad.
27. My mum could not keep the business going after my dad's death. I started helping out in the restaurant on weekends and after school but eventually she had to sell the business that they had built together. Things were very difficult for her financially. She also had to sell my dad's dream car. My mum is strong but dealing with my dad's death was very tough on her. My mum was heartbroken and it was hard for me to see her like this.

28. My dad's infection and death had a significant impact on his parents, my grandparents, who had to see their son pass away before them; it hurt them a lot. My dad's sisters were also affected by his illness and death. The whole family grieved deeply.
29. Other than family and close friends, we did not tell anyone that my father had HIV or AIDS. I was told not to tell anyone about this. I never told any of my friends, in case the word spread.
30. When I was in secondary school, sick jokes about HIV and AIDS were common. Although only my family knew of my dad's infection, it was hard for me to take when jokes were made about HIV or AIDS.
31. My parents were running a restaurant and if we had told anyone that he had HIV, no one would have come to the restaurant. HIV was like a plague at the time, no one understood it.
32. When my father died, we said that he died from cancer because we could not say that he had died of AIDS.
33. Since the Inquiry began, I am finally able to speak about what happened to my father. It was different in those days because people were not educated about HIV.

Section 6. Treatment/care/support

34. As far as I am aware, my father was never offered any counselling, help or support in relation to his infections.
35. I was never offered any counselling to deal with my dad's infection or his death from HIV.

Section 7. Financial Assistance

36. As far as I am aware, my father received no financial assistance in relation to his infections and neither did my mother. I have not received any financial assistance myself from any of the Trusts or schemes.

Section 8. Other Issues

37. I just want some sort of result for my dad. I would like some answers, for his sake.

Anonymity

38. I do not wish to remain anonymous.

39. I do not want to give oral evidence to the Inquiry.

Statement of Truth

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

Signed.....

GRO-C

Dated.....

25/06/19