

Witness Name: MARGARET PATTERSON

Statement No: WITN3661001

Exhibits:

Dated: September 2019

INFECTED BLOOD INQUIRY

FIRST WRITTEN STATEMENT OF MARGARET PATTERSON

I, MARGARET PATTERSON will say as follows:-

Section 1. Introduction

1. My name is Margaret Patterson of GRO-C. My date of birth is GRO-C 1936.
2. I make this statement on behalf of my late husband, George Dennis Patterson who was born on GRO-C 1931 and passed away on 18th May 1986, aged 56.
3. My husband was infected with Hepatitis as a result of being treated with Factor VIII (FVIII) concentrate in order to manage his Haemophilia.
4. I am aware that my son, Craig Patterson has provided a statement to the Inquiry (WITN1461001).
5. I requested a post mortem and the death certificate states that the cause of death was from cirrhosis of the liver.

6. This witness statement has been prepared without the benefit of access to my late husband's medical records. If and in so far as I have been provided with limited records the relevant entries are set out in the medical chronology at the end of this statement.

Section 2. How infected

7. My husband suffered from mild Haemophilia.
8. My husband initially attended the Haemophiliac Department at Sheffield Royal Infirmary and after it was knocked down it was replaced by the Royal Hallamshire Hospital in Sheffield. He was under the care of Consultant, Mr Preston, Professor Blackburn and Professor Makris. I understand that my husband was first treated with FVIII blood products in the early 1980s. George continued to attend the Royal Hallamshire Hospital until his death.
9. George received radium at Western Park. He always had lovely teeth but the radium affected his teeth over time and subsequently resulted in him requiring a tooth extraction. I understand that during the procedure his gums had to be stitched but when he came home it throbbed all the time. The blood was forcing its way out. He went back to Grimsby Hospital and the blood just burst out. I understand that George received blood to stop the bleed, but I do not know if it was blood products or a transfusion.
10. George also had his spleen removed at Western Park when he was around 50 years old. He received blood products or a transfusion during that operation too.
11. I am not aware of the exact blood products that George received. At the time he was not told about what he received it just happened. He was not given any warnings about the procedures.
12. I did not know that George had Hepatitis and it wasn't until after he passed away that Mr Preston told me about the infection.

Section 3. Other Infections

13. I do not believe that George contracted any other infections as a result of receiving contaminated blood.

Section 4. Consent

14. It wasn't until after George died that I found out he had been tested for AIDS. I am not aware that he even knew himself because I am sure if he knew he would have told me.

Section 5. Impact of the Infection

15. When my husband became ill I thought he had AIDS. I knew he wasn't getting better but I did not know it was because he had received contaminated blood. He had previously been diagnosed with Hodgkin's disease so I thought maybe he had not been cured.

16. The virus took 10 years to reach George's liver. He didn't go to see his doctor very often and he just carried on because he was so strong. Towards the end of his life he became a bit depressed and he cried, that was something he had never done before and I think he realised just how ill he had become.

17. Prior to George's death his stomach swelled and he was unable to wear his trousers. He lost so much weight and he was in so much pain.

18. George did not receive any treatment.

19. George had all his check ups at the Western Park Hospital. He always had to go for a blood test before he saw the doctor but on the last occasion he went they refused to do the blood test. Instead we were taken upstairs to a special room where they stuck a big red sticker on his notes. I do believe they knew

something was wrong with him at that time and that is why they refused to do the blood test.

20. One morning, in 1986 George collapsed on the porch. The doctor sent him to Grimsby hospital and he wanted me to promise that he would not be sent to Sheffield, but they sent him to Sheffield. They must have known how ill he was but I didn't know. George died shortly after that on the 18th May 1986. When he died I did not know what the cause of death was.
21. After George's death I never saw him again because the coffin was sealed and we were told that it was not allowed to be opened. It wasn't until later that we were told by Mr Preston George had died of Hepatitis and it was highly contagious. Mr Preston said it was more contagious than the AIDS virus. If it was that contagious they should have told me while I was living with George.
22. The man from the funeral parlour came to see me at my home. I knew full well George had to be cremated because he had something that was highly contagious. We had no choice and we knew that no one would handle him because of the infection.
23. George and I had our silver wedding anniversary and we booked a meal for our 25th anniversary but he was too ill to go. It's harder losing a partner when you are older because you have been together for years. We went on a couple of holidays in England. My husband was not very good at walking and he could not walk far. It was hard living with someone who was ill all the time but at least he had me to look after him. I have no one to look after me now.
24. It was sad watching my parents and siblings die but when your partner dies the loneliness is unbearable. George did not talk much but at least he provided me with company. I have never remarried and I have been on my own since 1986. At first it was horrible going to bed and no one being there. I used to close the bedroom door because I was scared. When you have been around someone for all those years it becomes hard when you're suddenly alone.

25. I had been ill prior to George's death but the doctors told me nothing was wrong. I felt awful though and I was not myself. Two weeks after George's death I was ill in hospital and they put me in isolation when they heard my husband had died from Hepatitis. Visitors had to put outfits on from the hospital before they could visit. They tested me for Hepatitis but I was clear.

26. When I got ill I thought I had what George had. He came home from work one day and I had been in bed all day. The pain was so bad I couldn't eat or drink. I banged on the floor and said 'if you don't get a doctor out I will take all these tablets'. I had been looking after George while I had been ill. He was not strong enough to take care of me. I lost a lot of weight because I could not eat. I had a blockage in my intestine and I was in so much pain.

27. After George died they discovered I had bowel cancer and I was in intensive care for weeks. Having to deal with that so soon after the death of my husband was extremely difficult.

28. I never told people that George died of hepatitis and I did not mention it to my dentist because I thought they wouldn't accept me as a patient.

29. My son and daughter both worked when their father was ill. My daughter would not go and see him because she was so upset. I was worried about my son, Craig, because he had to do so much around the house including, the cooking, cleaning, and washing. He did everything because we couldn't do anything.

30. The doctor told my children that they should be tested for hepatitis. It was myself that was tested when I was in hospital, not my children.

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31. George was a window dresser and he did manage to go to work. He worked nearly up until he died. He was so very brave and I admired him for continuing

to work. I think that it took his mind of the illness by going to work. Our neighbours used to say that he was the salt of the earth.

32. I used to work in factories before my husband died but afterwards I took up work as a social carer where I looked after the elderly. I had to do this because I no longer had my husband's income. We lost the main breadwinner in the family and at that time we needed financial support because there was no one to help us. I worked in care work for about 5 or 6 years. I could have worked to the age of 65 but at the age of 60 I had enough. I couldn't physically do it any longer.

33. Financially George's death had a huge impact. Paying the bills was hard but we had paid the mortgage off before he got ill. I went without so we could pay the bills. The funeral cost a lot and I don't think we should have had to pay for it when it was not our fault. It was the government's fault.

Section 6. Treatment/care/support

34. I was never offered any counselling.

Section 7. Financial Assistance

35. My husband never found out about any payments that were available at the time. I do not know whether he ever looked into it.

36. Professor Makris, who was my husband's treating consultant at Sheffield Royal Infirmary, helped us answer the medical questions on the application forms and in 2014 I received the first payment in the sum of £20,000. I gave my children £3,000 each. A few months later I received the second payment in the sum of £50,000.

37. It was like a gift from heaven for me because I have never had any money to buy anything.

38. Once we realised that I was entitled to a payment we didn't encounter any issues with the payments.

Section 8. Other Issues

39. I don't understand why hepatitis was not on George's death certificate because that's what Mr Preston said he died of. I would like answers as to why this was the case.

40. If George had not received the contaminated blood he would still be alive.

Anonymity, disclosure and redaction

41. I confirm NOT RELEVANT that I understand this statement will be published and disclosed as part of the Inquiry. 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.....SEP 29 2019.....