

Witness Name: Natasha Godfrey

Statement No: WITN3756001

Exhibits:

Dated:

INFECTED BLOOD INQUIRY

FIRST WRITTEN STATEMENT OF NATASHA GODFREY

I, provide this statement in response to a request under Rule 9 of the Inquiry Rules 2006 dated 8 November 2019.

I, Natasha Godfrey, will say as follows: -

Section 1: Introduction

1. My name is Natasha Godfrey. My date of birth is GRO-C 1987 and my address is known to the Inquiry. GRO-C and I am single. I am the only child of Jana Godfrey, a retired speech and language therapist, and Philip Peter Godfrey, who was a biochemist up until his death in 1991.

Section 2: How Affected

2. I intend to speak about my father, Philip Peter Godfrey, born GRO-C 1957, who died on 9 August 1991 at the age of 34 after being infected with HIV through contaminated blood products.

3. My dad suffered from severe Haemophilia A, which was diagnosed when he was a young child. I'm afraid I do not know which treatment he received, I have heard of the name 'Factor VIII', but I am not sure if this is definitely what he was treated with.
4. He was the eldest of three siblings, and had two younger sisters. [GRO-C]
[GRO-C]
[GRO-C] I have three female cousins and I suspect many of the women on that side of the family including myself are also carriers.
5. My dad grew up in [GRO-C] as a young child, but the family later moved to [GRO-C] when he was older. I do not know where he received treatment during that time.
6. It is my understanding that my dad received treatment throughout the 1970s and 1980s and it was during this time that he came to be infected with the HIV virus.
7. My dad studied at the University of Birmingham and later moved to the United States of America as part of his science studies, which is where he met my mum. As far as I know, he was not diagnosed with any infections at that point. I think he was in the States for a couple of years and it was there where he was first diagnosed. This was all before I was born, so my mum's account is liable to be much more detailed, but I believe that one of the reasons that they moved back to the United Kingdom was because AIDS was much more politicised and stigmatised in the USA than in the UK. I am not sure exactly when he was diagnosed but I think that there were about five years between when he tested positive for HIV and his death.

8. My parents returned to live in the UK and were living in GRO-C which is where I was born. My dad was offered a job with Glaxo (now Glaxo Smith Kline) and so we moved to Switzerland when he took up the position. Glaxo was aware that he had HIV which had developed into AIDS and were very supportive of his illness. My mum wrote a book with the help of a co-writer about this period, and from that I know that he was often sick with a number of different illnesses as a result of the AIDS which had to be treated as and when they materialized. My dad worked as a biochemist in the laboratories at Glaxo up until his death.
9. After he died, my mum and I did not stay in Switzerland for very much longer, perhaps somewhere between two and six months, and that was only to tie up loose ends. We moved back to GRO-C where my dad's parents live. My grandparents looked after me a lot growing up, especially while my mum retrained as a speech therapist.

Section 3: Other Infections

10. As far as I'm aware, my dad was only infected with HIV and had not been exposed to any other infections.

Section 4: Consent

11. I do not know much about what treatment my dad consented to as it was probably before I was born, but I believe my grandparents would have consented to his treatment when he was young and then he would have consented for himself when he was older.

Section 5: Impact

12. My grandmother has a war-era, 'just get on with it' kind of attitude which my dad certainly inherited. There is definitely a theme running through our family whereby we live by the mantra that life throws things at you, but you have to get on with it. This is I think how my dad dealt with his haemophilia and his AIDS, and how I've had to deal with growing up without him. His haemophilia was very painful and he had to deal with that pain and get on with his life. Both my parents loved to travel, although they were restricted in that due to my dad's illness.
13. In terms of the stigma, my knowledge is all anecdotal and retrospective as I was too young to remember, but not much was known about AIDS or HIV. My dad, as a member of the scientific community tried to understand it, but it affected my mother as she had to deal with it in real time and had to process it then. My mum and I have spoken about this more recently due to the Inquiry, and I think in the last twenty-five years she has found a lot of peace, but she has never remarried or even dated really. I think she felt like she had met the love of her life and that has stayed with her forever.
14. My mum is from the USA, but she stayed very close to my dad's parents who have always treated her like a daughter and she lived near them in [GRO-C] for many years, before recently moving to [GRO-C] [GRO-C] were Christians, and I am too, along with [GRO-C] [GRO-C] I think they took the view that his death was not the end, which was a comfort, though that is not to say that it was not very hard for my [GRO-C] and there was a lot of struggle. Because of this, the Church and the Church family was instrumental in supporting us all during that time, and continues to do so.

15. My mother worked part time at times before I was born, I think when we were in Switzerland she supported my father and then became his carer when the illness progressed, as well as taking care of a young child. I would like to think that she did not find me too burdensome, but I think I was probably quite hard work, and she had a lot on her plate and was not able to share the workload with my dad. My grandparents provided a lot of support, especially when my mum was retraining for a new career and then working as a single parent. We had quite a big extended family, and many family friends, especially through the Church.
16. I think I had a really wonderful childhood, but I learnt to take my family's characteristic pragmatic approach early on and just get on with it. I think I was always very aware of what was happening though, I knew my dad had been sick and was no longer here, but I believed he was in heaven. When I was really young I was happy that he was not in pain anymore, and knowing he was in heaven was a comfort.
17. Even now I take a practical approach to separating my emotions from factual scenarios, and I used to do that as a child too, I missed him but it was a very private thing, and it was only when I was on my own that I would think about how much I missed him. Because everyone around me was getting on with it, I bottled up my emotions, and often had a feeling of not quite loneliness, but a feeling of missing out. Psychologically, I think it has affected me quite a lot. You develop your sense of self and outlook on the world in your first six years, and I think my dad dying during that time affected me in ways that I did not recognize until I was older. As a child, you cannot really process trauma, and I've had issues with sharing my feelings and talking about my dad in an emotionally impactful way. I went to counselling earlier this year for the first time, which I'd thought about for a long time and it helped me start to process my emotions about losing him, and I even spoke to my mum about it in a really emotional way which

I had not properly done before.

18. Growing up I do not remember any stigma, perhaps because there was more of an understanding about the virus and the illness by that time. I was always very open and honest with people about what my dad had died of. When I was about eight years old, my mum's book came out and I think they interviewed me for television about that. I can only remember people being very sympathetic. In my memory I do not recall my mum facing any stigma, I think possibly there was stigma in the United States, as it was such an unknown illness, and there was a lot of fear surrounding it, but I think it was much worse for the gay community.

19. For me, the biggest loss is the feeling that I will never know what could have been. As I've got older, I only wish I could share things with him and I think we would have had a lot of things in common which I wish we could talk about. I wish I could talk about books that I like and that I know he liked. Also films and travelling stories which we could have shared. The loss of shared experiences is almost worse than actually losing him. I always wonder what we could have done together and what my family life would have been like, I wonder where we would have lived or if I would have had siblings. I think my parents tried to have more children and I know they wanted to, but they did not manage to. It was difficult being an only child, and I think you cannot help but develop a more self-centered approach to life. I sometimes wonder whether I would have been more developed as a person if I had grown up with a father and siblings.

20. I feel like I've been robbed of a life I will never know and I cannot escape the fact that I simply do not know my dad. I was such a young child when he died and we never had that relationship. I have a few memories of him, but they are very early memories, and are mostly just pictures in my mind.

One memory I have is of me tickling his feet, which I used to do in the mornings and I think he used to enjoy that when he was in a lot of pain. The other memory is of him being in hospital and me being there playing on his bed.

21. Looking back at pictures of myself with my dad when I was a toddler, I almost feel jealous of myself in the photo, because I knew him then and I was physically with him and happy, and now he's not here. I also feel like I was too young to properly appreciate him then, whereas I would now and we could actually have a proper conversation now. I wish the person I am today could swap places with me as a young child in the photographs. I just have a desire to have known him and had a relationship with him. I feel like a part of my identity is lost, and to not have had such a core relationship with a parent, I cannot possibly know how that might have shaped me.

22. I've struggled with the fact that all of this happened to us as a family, there's a feeling of 'why did this happen?', and also a sense that it could all have been avoided. Knowing what I know now, I almost take the view that it has happened and there is nothing I can do to change the past and I struggle with blaming anyone for it because I would love to believe that people did things to the best of their abilities. I do not believe that it is helpful for me to hold people to account emotionally, or get angry or point the finger, but I appreciate that on the technical side of things the work that the Inquiry is doing is very helpful.

23. Financially, I think we were very lucky that my grandparents were so supportive in the absence of my dad's income. I think my mum received some money from the Swiss government and some money from my dad's pension. I cannot really comment on whether my life would have been any

different if we'd had my father's income, I don't think I've lost out on anything because of not having that. What I do feel like I lost out on was the opportunity to have a steady family core. I suppose it has made me a practical person, and you learn to struggle through life having become harder and more resilient, but not necessarily in a good way. There's a sense of loneliness there, and it makes it harder to trust people which is perhaps a self-protection mechanism. My main feeling is the loss of what could have been, which I will never know, and I will never properly know my dad either.

Section 6: Treatment/Care/Support

24. I have not previously received any psychological support and have only this year sought counselling and been able to discuss these issues with both the counsellor and my mother.

Section 7: Financial Assistance

25. I am unable to provide any details of the financial support afforded to my mother following my father's death, save that I've already mentioned. My mum has provided a statement to the inquiry and that would probably be more useful on this issue.

Section 8: Other Issues

26. From a technical point of view, I now question whether at the time, people broke the law. Ultimately I feel this is an important issue for the Inquiry to resolve. I have not been involved in any of the earlier Inquires. It is important for me to feel that I am part of the Inquiry process and believe that those people affected should be heard. I expect people involved to

say what they did and those affected will then be able to understand why it happened.

Statement of Truth

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

Signed GRO-C

Dated 10.1.20

10/10/2020

10/10/2020