

Witness Name: Nicola Evans

Statement No: WITN2898001

Exhibits: 0

Dated: June 2019

INFECTED BLOOD INQUIRY

FIRST WRITTEN STATEMENT OF NICOLA EVANS

I, Nicola Evans, will say as follows:-

Section 1. Introduction

1. My name is Nicola Evans of GRO-C,
Bedworth, GRO-C. My date of birth is GRO-C 1965. I am not married
and I live alone. I am registered as disabled and as a result I am unable to
work.
2. I make this statement on behalf of my late brother, John Robert Lomas, who
was born on GRO-C 1968 and passed away in October 1996 aged 28.
3. John was infected with HIV as a result of being treated with Factor VIII
concentrate in order to manage his Haemophilia. I do not think he was
infected with Hepatitis C.
4. My recollections of the specific details are limited as John died a long time
ago and I have had health issues which has affected my memory.
5. This witness statement has been prepared without the benefit of access to my
late brother's full 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

6. John was diagnosed with Haemophilia as a baby and I do not know the type or the severity.
7. John was treated at Coventry and Warwickshire Hospital (CWH). He always went into hospital for treatment whenever he had a bump or a bleed and he did not self administer at home. John received blood products all his life however I do not believe he had any blood transfusions.
8. I am not sure what information or advice was provided to John or to my mother about the potential risk of being exposed to infections. John was disabled and mentally backwards in age therefore I do not think that the doctors would have spoken to him given that he would not have been able to understand. Any conversation would have been with my mother but I do not know whether this took place or not.
9. I am not sure when John or my parents found out about his diagnosis of HIV. I suspect that it would have been communicated to my mother given that John didn't have the mental capacity to understand.
10. I really cannot remember what information was provided to us about the HIV diagnosis. I recall that my mother told me and my sister that we had to keep quiet and that we were not allowed to tell anyone about John's diagnosis. We didn't know anything about HIV but we soon became aware that it was a big thing. I do remember that we were told about the HIV diagnosis just before we went to Florida which would have been sometime in the 1980s, but I cannot remember exactly which year it was.
11. I believe that there should have been more information provided to John and my parents earlier. My mother used to say to me that she did not know what

was going on. I do not know what she meant by that but we never new enough about HIV. We did not have access to the internet in the 1990's and there was no way for us to research easily.

12. I do remember that when I was in my twenties and thirties my sister and I were quite intrigued by the fact that our brother had HIV and we did not know much about it. We went to the library to read up about it ourselves. I do not know whether my mother did not want to speak to us about John's HIV or whether she just did not know much about it herself.

Section 3. Other Infections

13. As far as I know, John was not infected with anything other than HIV.

Section 4. Consent

14. I do not know whether John was treated or tested without his knowledge and consent. A lot of my memory has been wiped away.

15. I cannot remember whether John was treated or tested without being given adequate or full information. If my mother was aware of there being any risks I am sure that she would not have consented to the treatment.

16. As far as I am aware, I do not believe John was treated or tested for the purposes of research.

Section 5. Impact of the Infection

17. We used to go on family holidays to Florida and there was only one occasion in August or September 1996 that John came with us. John became poorly during the holiday and he was not able to enjoy the holiday at all. When we returned, John's health deteriorated rapidly and he died within a month of being home. I understand that his immune system was weak due to his HIV

infection and he caught some sort of virus and his death happened so very quickly.

18. I do not know what treatment John received for the HIV. I also do not know what mental or physical effects he suffered. I do not know whether John faced any difficulties or obstacles in accessing treatment.

19. John's diagnosis and subsequent death had a huge impact on my whole family. We were all absolutely devastated. I personally was heartbroken and it brings back so many memories talking about it now.

20. When John first died I wanted to be left alone and I had lots of arguments with my husband. I was working at the time and I did not feel like speaking to anyone about his death. I could not face them and so I just stayed away. I was going through a bit of recluse and it took me a long time to get over his death. I had a bit of a set back. I still have not got over it. I could not get over why this had to happen to John. He was my only brother and I feel teary and emotional just to speak about how much his death impacted on me.

21. The death of John really affected my father GRO-C
John was his only son and he went through so much. The thought that he died of something we all never got to know much about made it even more upsetting. My father also had just lost his only grandson before John died. It was a lot for him to cope with. My father's work was affected, he was a driver but he had to take time off because his mind was not on the job. My father is better now than he was in the first couple of years following John's death, although he does have his moments even now. Seeing my father the way he felt was heart breaking.

22. My mother isn't alive anymore and she suffered terribly when John died. I do not think she ever got over John's death and she never stopped talking about him.

23. My mother had always been very honest with us and she told us that we had another brother who she had to give away at birth. Last year I was contacted

by Jason Evans who informed me that his father was the child that my mother had given away. Jason and I started talking and he told me that his father (my brother) had also been infected with HIV and had died.

24. I was shocked and devastated to learn that I had another brother who I had never met and had also died as a result of receiving contaminated blood. My mother never knew that her other son had also been infected because she had died before Jason told me about my brother. She would have been heartbroken if she had known.

25. There was such a stigma attached to HIV back in the 1990s. My brother worked at a bar and he did not tell his boss about the HIV. He was concerned that if his boss knew he would have lost his job. It was a very awkward situation because we could not talk about it back then. People linked HIV with gay men and homosexual people. It was known as a dirty disease and my mother did not want anyone to associate John with it. She therefore did not tell anyone about John's diagnosis. We were all very cautious and worried whenever John had a bleed because we thought we could catch it from him. We had to keep it all a secret and just come to terms with the HIV. However after his death it started to come out that he had died of HIV and it became hard to hide.

26. I was working as a bus driver when John died and I had to take time off work to take my mind away from everything. I remember my husband took me away for a while to get my mind off things.

Section 6. Treatment/care/support

27. I do not know whether John or my mother faced any difficulties or obstacles in obtaining treatment, care and support.

28. I was not offered counselling or psychological support as a consequence of what happened. My sister and father were also not offered anything.

29. I do not know whether my mother was offered any further assistance but it would have helped her if she had received further information.

Section 7. Financial Assistance

30. My mother received a payment about 10 or 15 years ago from a Trust or Fund but I cannot remember which one.

31. My father received a payment of £25,000 I believe from the Skipton Fund. I cannot remember when he received it.

32. John also received a Disability Living Allowance.

33. I do not know whether my parents or John received any other payments.

34. I am not aware that they were part of the 1991 litigation.

35. My father does not receive any financial help now.

Section 8. Other Issues

36. My father was a member of the Birchgrove Group in Cardiff and attended many meetings from 1988 to John's death in 1996. This was a support group for Hemophiliacs who were infected with HIV and my father attended on John's behalf.

37. My mother always used to ask the question 'why did this happen to our John?' I have the same question myself. John could have been here today, alive, with the rest of the family. I would like some answers and to find out how it was ever allowed to happen.

38. I do not have any of John's medical records because when my mother died, my father blitzed the house and got rid of a lot of things such as photographs and clothes as he wanted to wipe away the memories.

39. I am glad someone is doing something about this scandal.

Anonymity

40. I do not wish to remain anonymous.

41. I do not want to give oral evidence to the Inquiry because it would be difficult for me to attend.

Statement of Truth

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

Signed..... GRO-C

Dated..... 22. 7. 2019