



Witness Name: Katerina Kalogeropoulou

Statement No: WITN7376001

Exhibits: **WITN7376002**

Dated:

INFECTED BLOOD INQUIRY

WRITTEN STATEMENT OF KATERINA KALOGEROPOULOU

I provide this statement in response to a request under Rule 9 of the Inquiry Rules 2006 dated 14 October 2022.

I, Katerina Kalogeropoulou will say as follows: -

Section 1: Introduction

1. My full name is Katerina Kalogeropoulou and my date of birth is GRO-C 1958. My address is known to the Inquiry. I am married and have children. I live in Greece and I am self-employed.
2. I wish to speak about my brother George Kalogeropoulos' infection with HIV as a result of blood products, he was given as a severe haemophiliac.
3. I confirm that I am not currently legally represented and that I am happy for the Inquiry Team to assist me with my statement.
4. I also confirm that I have had the option to seek anonymity and the Inquiry's statement of approach explained to me. I can confirm that I am not requesting anonymity.
5. The inquiries criticisms procedure and the 'right of reply' has been explained to me.
6. I have sent the investigator 4 documents relating to George these are

exhibited together as **WITN7376002** and a pages 1 to 4:

1. Death Certificate of my brother George.
2. Report of the Royal Free Hospital ,that states the conditions under which the Coffin could be transported to Greece.
3. Funeral arrangements by the funeral directors.
4. My brothers hand written notes of his elbow bleeding

Section 2: How Infected

7. George born on 1961, he was diagnosed as a severe haemophiliac at the age of about 6 months, we were living Greece at this time. He died on 6 June 1991 in London, making him just 29 when he passed away
8. After George was found to be haemophiliac, my parents took him to various hospitals including to Paris. They were not aware of haemophilia in the family. In Paris they established that haemophilia started with carrier, and so am I.
9. I have children, but they are I did have a miscarriage and that child was tested and found to be haemophiliac.
10. George was initially treated in the Hippocrateon Hospital in Athens. This would have been with Cryoprecipitate at that time. He had allergic reactions sometimes and had to be treated with antiallergic medication.
11. He missed a lot of school, with bleeds, and followed with difficulty and many gaps, but he loved history and constantly read whatever he could put his hands on, that had to do with it. He was young and restless, but when he was being treated, he remained still with ice packs on his joints, so he suffered his pains silently with self-discipline unequal for his age. Even at this age he didn't want to take painkillers because he had read that they were addictive.
12. He couldn't take part in sports but he did like to walk, read and pray (we were a devout family).
13. As George got older following the family tradition (my father was educated in the UK) he was supposed to study at University in the UK.

14. Georges English was not good and it took him 2 years to improve. Eventually in 1985 he applied to the University of London and after his interview he was accepted to read Slavonic and Eastern European History.
15. In Greece they didn't have specific Haemophilia Centres and patients were dealt with via the Greek Blood Transfusion Service
16. In relation, to his haemophilia, George's studies were very restricted at the University of London. He was then permanently under the Royal Free Hospital the Katherine Dormandy Haemophilia Centre and Haemostasis Unit, where the staff were always very professional.
17. My parents were always very happy with how George was treated at the Royal Free. This was where he had his first treatment with Factor 8, and where he had all his numerous subsequent treatments. He has learned to self-inject factor VIII, which was given to him, at occasions, to be self-infused at home. My parents regularly donated money to the Royal Free Haemophilia Unit. On at least one occasion this was for £3,000, to express their gratitude.
18. George regularly struggled with bleeds to his right elbow, this was a problem as he was right-handed and had to teach himself to write left-handed. See page 4 of **WITN7376002**.
19. In 1986, George was very unwell and went to the university's own doctor, during the examination the doctor asked about George's blood count and asked "if he could be HTL3+?", George didn't know what this was. The university doctor then wrote to George's own GP in Greece and said that he had glandular fever type symptoms and advised complete rest.
20. The family think this could be the start of his HIV.
21. I became pregnant in 1987. Around Christmas that year, George became ill in London and my parents flew to the UK to be with him, as it was urgent. In GRO-C 1988 George was told that he was HIV+. I had just had my daughter and I was not told about George's diagnosis, in case it upset me.
22. I was worried because he didn't return to Greece at Christmas 1988 as usual, but my mother told me not to be, that he was ill but it was hepatitis and he

would get better, as it could be treated.

23. George came home to Greece summer 1989 and at Christmas 1989. He looked like a scarecrow, he was all skin and bone. He was unwell yet seemed happy in himself preparing for his death in a Christian way, having forgiven the people who had given him the virus. It was only then that I was told he was HIV+.
24. Due to the stigma around HIV, especially in Greece, we kept it very secret about George. Even my husband and our Grandparents didn't know what was wrong with George, just he was very ill and could die, it was at the very end of his life that they learned the truth.
25. Around this time, my mother was diagnosed with breast cancer and I had my second child in GRO-C 1990, this was all very upsetting for me to deal with.
26. George came home in the summer of 1990 and again at Christmas that year (1990) but he was even worse, he was sweating then shivering very badly. He couldn't eat as he had very bad mouth ulcers. Our father brought him powered food for him to take, these were meant for athletes (although quite normal now, these were very rare then).
27. He was also coughing profusely and had bouts of diarrhoea. He had to be helped to walk and could soil himself, if he didn't get to the toilet quick enough. He also had repeated chest infections.
28. Due to the shame, if people came to the door, George would hide himself away. There is a Greek Orthodox prayer which says "God grant us a painless and shameless end to our lives", in George's view he didn't have either of these, but he wasn't angry.
29. I think it wasn't a God given ailment, it was something given to him by human negligence and I am still angry about that, it was so unfair.
30. I found myself becoming depressed, but I had to stay strong and fight it, for my 2 young children. I forced myself not to cry, nor to show my immense grief. My father also thought it was so unfair. I think he blamed himself for persuading

George to go to the UK for his education.

31. George still attended the University of London and he came home during the holidays. I think this was more for seeing my children than actually wanting or needing to come home as the travel was so difficult for him. He couldn't stay in Greece all the time because he had to keep up the appearance of being ok. Eventually this meant that he died in London, with only our parents with him, without me or any of his beloved friends.
32. Before he died, he was in and out of the Royal Free Hospital a lot, we got regular messages saying he is near the end, I think this happened about 6 times. He still tried to attend the university. My mother and father would go to London to see and help him as much as they could. I also went briefly 3 times, to see him.
33. Dr Christine Lee often said to our family "he should have died months ago; he must have tremendous drive".
34. When George died on 6 June 1991 in the Royal Free Hospital in London, he was only with my parents, I missed him for only 30 minutes, as I flew from Athens on another urgent call. Arrangements had to be made to bring him home to Greece. See page 2 of **WITN7376002**.
35. He had to be in a metal coffin and it was commented on by friends and family, on the funeral in Greece. Once again, we had to lie and say this was how it was done in the UK. We also had to have a closed casket.
36. Around this time my mother's cancer returned, the family are sure this was connected to my brother dying. She died hurt broken 5 years after George did.
37. Around the same time as my mother died about 5 or 6 years after George's death, a pharmaceutical company (I don't know which one) sent my father a letter saying they would pay compensation. Father was furious and ripped their letter up saying "I'm not being paid for my son dying".

Section 3: Other Infections

38. The family are not aware of any other infection that George was given, but if

there was hepatitis, this would have been secondary to his HIV in our thoughts.

Section 4: Consent

39. We don't know that George was tested without his knowledge or consent or used for research purposes in the UK.

40. We don't know if he was provided with adequate information about his infection or how to deal with it.

Section 5: Impact

41. In Greece there is still a stigma and lack of understanding about haemophilia, let alone infections such as HIV and hepatitis. My parents especially my mother were strong, but George's haemophilia and then infection were always kept as close family secrets.

42. Even my Grandparents were not aware of his haemophilia, if he had a bleed, it was just put down as an injury because he was being 'naughty'.

Section 6: Treatment/Care/Support

43. No counselling or psychological support was made available to George or our family, while he was being treated or dying.

Section 7: Financial Support

44. As far as I'm aware, my mother and father were not made aware of any support schemes.

45. The Investigator has mentioned the English Infected Blood Support Scheme and how to apply. I intend to donate the money to a charity.

Section 8: Other Issues

46. The attitude to HIV has not changed a little in Greece, therefore George's death is still something that the family cannot speak about openly but now I am determined to uncover the truth at whatever cost, because we have all been innocent victims and should not be ashamed for it.

Statement of Truth

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

Signed Katerina Kalogeropoulou

GRO-C

Dated 17/12/2022