

Witness Name: Patricia Humphries

Statement No.: WITN7411001

Exhibits: **WITN7411002 -003**

Dated: 16 November 2022

INFECTED BLOOD INQUIRY

WRITTEN STATEMENT OF PATRICIA CHRISTINE HUMPHRIES

I provide this statement in response to a request under Rule 9 of the Inquiry Rules 2006 dated 28 October 2022.

I, Patricia Christine Humphries, will say as follows: -

Section 1. Introduction

1. My name is Patricia Christine Humphries. My date of birth is GRO-C 1957 and my address is GRO-C Northamptonshire GRO-C
2. I live with my fiancé, John. I have been married twice and have four children, two from my first marriage and two from my second marriage, comprising three sons and a daughter.
3. I have definitely received a number of blood transfusions after giving birth to my three youngest children. I believe that I may have also had one relating to the birth of my first child but I cannot be certain.
4. I intend to speak about my infection with hepatitis. I was never given a formal diagnosis, so I am unable to say which particular strain of hepatitis

I was infected with. In particular, I will discuss the nature of my illness, how the illness affected me and the impact it had on my life.

5. The anonymity process has been explained to me and I do not wish to be anonymous for the purpose of this statement.

Section 2. How Infected

6. I was fostered to a family in Bedford aged 2 years old. I took my foster parents' surname, Stevens. I took the surname Bartlett, when I married my first husband. Humphries was my second husband's name.
7. I gave birth to my first child at Bedford Hospital in 1977. As I say, I can't remember exactly whether I received a blood transfusion in the course of this childbirth, although I think I may have done.
8. I gave birth to my second child in 1980, following which I definitely recall receiving a blood transfusion.
9. I married my second husband in 1981. I gave birth to my third child also in 1981, following which I again received a blood transfusion.
10. My daughter, my fourth child, was born in 1983. I again explicitly remember receiving a blood transfusion immediately after giving birth. My daughter was a large baby, weighing 9 pounds and 10 ounces, which meant it was a very difficult childbirth.
11. About five days after giving birth to my daughter, I took her to see my foster mother, who I refer to and call my Mum. She was severely ill with leukaemia at the time so I was understandably keen to show my daughter to her grandmother.
12. I took my daughter round to my Mum's house and she was elated. Lots of other family members began to arrive and it soon became an impromptu get-together. This became very tiring having recently been through a difficult childbirth.

13. When I get home, I had a serious haemorrhage. I was rushed by ambulance to Bedford Hospital. I remember the midwife telling me that I had overdone it and that the haemorrhage was due to this, clearly meaning that she blamed me.
14. The doctors at Bedford Hospital performed a D&C (dilation and curettage) and established that the afterbirth had been left inside me, which had resulted in the haemorrhage. They then cleared out the afterbirth. During this procedure I received two pints of blood via transfusion.
15. After giving birth to my daughter, and the subsequent procedure to remove the afterbirth, I felt very weak and fatigued. I constantly felt drained and lacking in energy. I had four children to look after and had lots of things I wanted to do with them, but I never felt physically capable of doing so.
16. Despite suffering with debilitating tiredness, I just knuckled down and got on with it. I accepted it and simply attributed this to having given birth to a very large baby.
17. At this point I wish to state that I have suffered with numerous medical conditions and ailments throughout the course of my life. I have seen lots of doctors and been to countless hospital appointments over the years. I don't believe any of these medical conditions to be relevant to the Inquiry and therefore, this statement. However, in the immediate period after giving birth to my daughter, in 1983, I did not have any medical conditions which I have otherwise not mentioned in this statement.
18. I had a hysterectomy procedure on 29 May 1985, which also necessitated receiving a blood transfusion. In total, I can say conclusively that I have received blood on at least five occasions. Three of these relate to giving birth, one after the haemorrhage in 1983, and one during or pertaining to the hysterectomy in 1985.

19. Around 1986 or 1987, I was on a ferry with my husband and children to visit family in Orkney. I began to feel very ill, as if I had a severe flu. I encountered dreadful stomach and abdominal pain, which I believed to be connected to my recently diagnosed pancreatitis.
20. After arriving in Orkney, my husband remarked that I was jaundiced. My skin and eyes appeared yellow. I was obviously worried by this but didn't want to see a doctor in Orkney so I waited until we got home.
21. I went to see my GP, Dr Norris at Fraser and Maines Practice in Bedford, who sent me straight to hospital for a blood test. I then returned to my GP for the results some time later, where I was told I had hepatitis. I was not told what strain of hepatitis I had contracted.
22. I had no idea what hepatitis was, and none of this nor its implications were explained to me by the GP. Dr Norris asked me what I had been doing, even asking if I had had an extra-marital affair. This was ridiculous and offensive.
23. At no point did Dr Norris nor anyone at the hospital, ask me if I had had any invasive procedures or had ever received a blood transfusion. It was only a while later when a friend explained to me what hepatitis was. She didn't seem to me to be particularly well-informed and she seemed to associate it with HIV/AIDS. This only added to the stigma that I felt at being diagnosed with hepatitis.
24. I enclose as exhibit **WITN7411002** a letter from Dr Saunders (Consultant Physician at Bedford General Hospital) to Dr Summerfield (Royal Free Hospital) dated 06 October 1987. I wish to highlight the following extract, which refers to an 'attack of jaundice which was thought to be due to viral hepatitis. Certainly, her attack of jaundice was associated with the usual hepatitis symptoms, although there was perhaps an unusual amount of pain.'

25. After being told I had hepatitis, I went for daily blood tests at the hospital for a number of months. I was not made aware of the outcome of these blood tests, nor was any treatment ever mentioned.
26. In the meantime, I continued to feel extremely fatigued. I was a very busy Mum of four children, so I had to get on with life, however difficult that was. Around this time, I also lost my mother, followed by my father shortly afterwards. I then lost my Nan. These were all family members that I was closest to. This grief only added to the fatigue that I was experiencing.
27. The hepatitis just seemed to go away. It was treated like a flu really. After being told I had hepatitis, I just went for blood tests until these stopped. I was never actually told that I had 'cleared' the infection.
28. I must conclude that I contracted hepatitis through one of the many blood transfusions I received. I personally believe it resulted from the transfusion after the severe haemorrhage in 1983, as this was when my health and energy levels began to decline. However, the jaundice materialised after the hysterectomy operation in 1985, so it could have been from this blood transfusion.
29. I have requested my medical records from Bedford Hospital in the hope of clarifying which transfusion was the cause of my hepatitis infection. Bedford Hospital responded to me in a letter dated 19 August 2022 (**WITN7411003**) informing me that my medical records had been destroyed in 2014 'in line with retention and destruction policy'.
30. I was astonished by this. Why should medical records be destroyed, especially so in 2014? Surely, they could have been archived electronically. This would potentially have enabled me to determine the cause of my hepatitis infection. I think records of batch numbers of blood administered to anyone should be kept and recorded indefinitely, for this exact reason. After all, I understand that the issues with contaminated blood were well known.

Section 3. Other Infections

31. I am not aware that I received any other infections in consequence of the many blood transfusions I was given.

Section 4. Consent

32. I do not believe that I have been treated or tested without my consent. I had countless blood tests after being diagnosed with hepatitis, and I was not kept properly informed of the results of these, however I did consent to being tested.

Section 5. Impact

33. Aside from the visibly-shocking jaundice that resulted from my hepatitis infection, the greatest impact on me physically was the persistent fatigue. This lasted for years. It meant I was unable to do a number of things that I wanted to with my children. This saddens me to think about.

34. As iterated previously, I have a number of chronic health conditions which have affected my quality of life. I am unable to definitively say whether hepatitis may have contributed to them, although I do not believe it did. It is also impossible to think back and attribute the way I was feeling specifically related to hepatitis. My medical history is so complex.

35. I felt very stigmatised and self-conscious as a result of being diagnosed with hepatitis. I remember when we, as a family, dropped by to visit [GRO-D] [GRO-D] whilst on way to visit relatives in Middleborough. This was not long after I had been diagnosed. When we arrived, [GRO-D] turned us away, having learnt of my hepatitis [GRO-D] They assumed I had been

engaging in extra-marital affairs and were obviously concerned that I could infect them and so refused to allow us in. This was extremely upsetting. We didn't continue to Middlesbrough and just went home after that.

36. Whilst in hospital, one of the nurses put a black and yellow stick on my medical file and said it had to remain on there. I think the sticker may have stated something along the lines of 'hazardous' or 'contaminated'.

37. I also noticed doctors wore considerably more protective gear when treating me, in comparison to other patients and also what I had previously been used to. Even for blood tests they would wear a full gown and mask, which was quite unusual at that time, compared to now.

38. All of these incidents made me feel ostracised and dirty. Being treated that way by medical professionals, was distressing for me.

Section 6. Treatment/Care/Support

39. I have not knowingly faced any difficulties in obtaining treatment, care or support in consequence of my hepatitis infection. I never informed my dentist, so this did not apply either. However, I was certainly treated differently by clinicians, which I have outlined in section 5.

40. I was never offered counselling or psychological support in respect of my hepatitis infection.

Section 7. Financial Assistance

41. Prior to the Inquiry investigator explaining to me when he made initial contact, I had never heard of any fund, trust or financial support scheme in connection with infected blood. I have certainly never been offered it.

42. I don't care if I am not awarded any money and this is not the purpose of me giving this statement, I just want my story to be heard.

Statement of Truth

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

Signed

GRO-C

Dated 16.11.2022