

Witness Name: Christian Smith

Statement No: WITN7442001

Exhibits: 0

Dated: October 2022

INFECTED BLOOD INQUIRY

FIRST WRITTEN STATEMENT OF CHRISTIAN SMITH

I, Christian Smith, will say as follows:-

Section 1. Introduction

1. My full name is Christian Andre Smith. I was born on GRO-C 1964, and I live at GRO-C Cheshire GRO-C
2. My father, John William Smith (born on GRO-C 1933), widely known as, and referred to, as 'Jack', was infected with the Hepatitis C Virus (HCV) through contaminated blood products. He died on 16th November 1996, aged 63.
3. This witness statement has been prepared without the benefit of access to my father's full medical records.

Section 2. How Affected

4. My father ('Jack' so called by everyone including me) had severe Haemophilia A. He was treated at the Liverpool Haematology Centre at the (old) Liverpool Royal Infirmary (LRI).
5. Jack had a lot of very serious bleeds (before and after I was born) and he had a lot of treatment. He was treated with snake venom when he was a lot younger, and then Cryoprecipitate, and then Factor VIII (FVII) concentrate. He didn't get on well with self-administering the FVIII concentrate as home treatment. He couldn't do it. My mother and I learned how to do it and we took over to help him.
6. As a severe haemophiliac, Jack had it very tough. He had so many bleeds into his legs that he couldn't bend them. He walked in a crab like manner. He walked with a limp too. Before I was born, Jack was involved in a major road accident. His femur broke through the surface of his leg. He spent up to two years in hospital and the injured leg ended up being three inches shorter than the other. Growing up I knew that I didn't have a father who could play football or go running with me.
7. Jack had no idea that he was infected with HCV until the early 1990s, two to three years before he died. He and my mother were at a routine appointment at the LRI. I cannot now remember the name of my father's consultant, but he was absent on that occasion and Jack saw a locum in his place. Jack had not been feeling at all well for some time. He had pains in his chest and back and he felt very tired and lethargic. When he explained his symptoms to the doctor at his appointment, the doctor said to him 'that will be the Hep C' to which my mother responded with 'excuse me, what?' He said 'yes, as you know... you've been told...' to which she said 'what are you talking about? No-one told us!' to which

the doctor began to back-pedal, and my mother then demanded to see the Registrar.

8. My mother said that my poor father's reaction to the news was that he literally slid down the chair in which he was sitting in fright. She said the Registrar came down and tried to gas light my parents into believing that they had already been told of the infection. My mother went to all my father's appointments. She would take him/drive him to them. He couldn't drive. She knew that he hadn't been told beforehand.

9. My father found out that he had HCV by accident through that casual/incidental comment by the locum at his routine appointment. My parents were sent away without any advice and/or information to help my father understand and manage the infection. They weren't even given a leaflet. Our toothbrushes were at home leaning in against each other in a cup in the bathroom. There was no discussion about treatment. There was no admission of culpability. GRO-C

GRO-C were haemophiliacs fatally infected with HIV/AIDS through contaminated blood products. I do not think that my father ever understood or appreciated the resemblance in his own infection and the magnitude of what had happened to him too. My mother and I knew nothing about the Infected Blood Campaign. My son and I work together as plasterers. I was recently plastering a lady/barrister's house when the news of the Infected Blood Inquiry came on to her television (she and my son have helped/encouraged me to become involved in relation to Jack). We now know of the others with the same shared experiences. I played my mother the podcast of another person that learned that they were infected in the same casual offhand way at a routine appointment and, even after all the years, she became really upset at the remembrance of the same awful experience.

Section 3. Other Infections

10. I do not believe that my father was infected with anything other than HCV. My father's UKHCDO record demonstrates that he tested (negative) for HIV from blood samples taken in 1987 and 1990. [GRO-C] I were tested for HCV after my father found out that he was infected with it. As HCV is known to be sexually transmissible, I often look at my mother thinking how lucky she is to still be here [GRO-C]

Section 4. Consent

11. My father was treated with blood products without adequate advice about the risk of infection. He was then tested without his knowledge and consent. If he had known of the risk, he would have had a choice in having treatment. He didn't know that he had been infected with HCV, let alone tested for it.

12. My father was given a huge amount of treatment carelessly and recklessly and arguably with criminal intent. All that they needed to do was to heat treat the blood product. If they can heat treat a pint of milk, why can't they heat treat a blood clotting treatment? If someone infected with HIV/AIDS had deliberately slept with, and infected, a number of other people, they would be arrested.

13. My father's first point of contact was always with his Haemophilia Centre, but he also had dealings with his GP whose name I remember as it was on his door, and I thought it funny 'R A W Fried' (I thought of him as 'raw food'). I remember his name better than his face. I did a plastering job for an elderly man a few years ago who wanted a lot done to his home. Whilst chatting and before long I realised it was Jack's GP. I said to him 'oh you might remember my father John,

known as Jack, a haemophiliac (there can't have been many in [GRO-C])?'. His face changed. He later and without explanation told me to 'finish what you are doing and leave'. I said to him 'have we done something wrong?' to which he said 'no, nothing, you will be paid' and he did indeed pay us in full. I remember thinking it weird to want to pay us for work we hadn't done. We knew nothing then of the infected blood scandal campaign or anything about it. We must have made him feel uncomfortable. My mother remembers that not long before Jack died, Dr Fried had said to him 'you have done well to get to 63'.

Section 5. Impact of the Infection

14. Being infected with haemophilia was bad enough for my father. Jack blamed his mother (my grandmother) for what he had to endure as a severe haemophiliac [GRO-C]. It was very tough on her. [GRO-C] [GRO-C]. Jack was one of three siblings. He had a sister [GRO-C] and a brother without haemophilia. Dad's sister never had children. It is a shame because she would have made a really good mother. It was really upsetting for her. She and my father were very close, but she didn't want what had happened to him happen to a child of her own. She chose not to have any as a result.

15. My father was a very strong, stoic and determined man. When Jack was younger, he had to have major dental work (about 10 teeth extractions) due to damage caused by long term iron tablet usage. He was strapped to the bed and turned upside down resulting in significant bruising to his abdomen and chest. For all that he struggled to walk through the damage to the joints in his legs, he wouldn't give in. He always said there is 'No way I will ever end up using a wheelchair.' Jack never complained. He was never able to obtain any insurances and he never went abroad.

16. Jack was strong and he put up with a lot, but from the day he was diagnosed with HCV it was like he gave up. He wasn't the same. He suffered with pains in his stomach and his back. I used to call around to see Jack to find he had taken himself up to bed. I would call up to him 'do you want a coffee?', 'No you are alright' became the response. I would shout up to come down because his grandchildren were there. He said he would be down but then he didn't appear. I called around the day he died, and I told him that I would be back again at 5.00 pm. I actually followed the ambulance to my parent's home on its way to Jack when he was having what Mum thought was a cardiac arrest. I didn't know the ambulance I was following was for him. It turned out to be an aortic aneurysm that they thought he was going to survive before he began to deteriorate again. They worked hard on him. As fast as they could get the blood in to him it was coming straight back out of him (my ex-wife worked at the hospital, and she told me that).

Section 6. Treatment/care/support

17. Dad was never offered any treatment, counselling or psychological support. I do not even think that his liver was even monitored.

Section 7. Financial Assistance

18. We haven't had any financial assistance from the Trusts and Funds. No-one signposted us to any help.

Anonymity, disclosure and redaction

19. I do not wish to remain anonymous, and I understand that this Statement will be published by the Inquiry.

Statement of Truth

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

Signed.....

GRO-C

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Dated.....1ST NOVEMBER 2022.....