

INFECTED BLOOD INQUIRY

EXHIBIT WITN2753010

Witness Name: Susan Gorman
Statement No: WITN2753006
Exhibits: WITN2753007 - 10
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TAINTED BLOOD SCANDAL

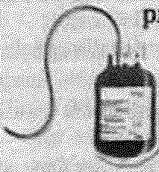
Dymond legacy

IN WHAT is being hailed as a ground-breaking inquest verdict, a coroner has ruled that haemophiliac Steve Dymond (pictured) died as a direct result of being given contaminated blood products.

Steve, 62, was one of thousands sentenced to chronic ill health, financial hardship and death by tainted blood products during the 1970s and 1980s – even though danger warnings had already been sounded. He was given Factor VIII, an essential blood-clotting protein, for what was relatively mild bruising after bleeds in 1976 and 1984.

Allison Summers KC, coroner for north-east Kent, said in a narrative verdict that Steve died from liver failure and cirrhosis as “the direct consequence of being given Factor VIII... which was contaminated with hepatitis C”.

The ruling is expected to prompt applications from other bereaved relatives to change death certificates which only recorded the disease their loved ones suffered, like HIV and hepatitis C, plus



complications, and not the original cause.

If NHS lawyers had had their way, however, Steve’s death certificate may not have been so unequivocal. The coroner resisted arguments from the NHS’s solicitor Jinal Shah to use the more neutral term “infected blood” because of the risk of prejudicing any future civil claims. But Ms Summers pointed out that this was not her concern as a coroner and that once produced, Factor VIII was, in her view, “contaminated”.

It was in any event a curious argument. Thanks to the ongoing inquiry into what has been called the worst treatment disaster in the health service’s history, interim compensation payments of £100,000 are already being paid to surviving victims and their partners, whose lives and careers were also wrecked.

The ruling was a victory for Steve’s widow, Su Gorman, who as *Eye* readers may recall battled for years alongside her husband for justice. Steve died in 2018, just before the start of the inquiry for which he had fought, but his statement to the inquiry was read out at the inquest. It described how Steve was finally diagnosed with hep C in 1994 after suffering years of unexplained fatigue and “brain fog”.

The coroner said Steve “suffered a variety of mental and physical symptoms which impacted upon his university education, career, marriage and ability to have children. There

was little or no support available and the stigma of the virus created isolation, frustration and sadness at the loss of life imagined.”

He developed cirrhosis, liver cancer and damage to the vein leading to the liver. Admitted to Margate’s Queen Elizabeth the Queen Mother Hospital with bleeding from the damaged vein on 21 December 2018, he died two days later. The coroner said there had been a rapid deterioration in his condition between 3pm and 8.15pm but there were no medical notes for the crucial period.

Su Gorman told the *Eye* she was pleased the real cause of her husband’s death had been recognised. She was, however, still struggling to come to terms with the fact that there were no medical records or test results during the last few months of his life, which might have shed light on “what perhaps could or should have been done differently”.

The problem of missing, lost or deliberately destroyed records has plagued those trying to get to the truth of the disaster – including the official inquiry itself – ever since victims started falling ill and it emerged that most had been treated with blood harvested from paid, high-risk drug users and prisoners in the US.

