

Witness Name: Leroy Scarlett

Statement No.: WITN2644001

Exhibits: WITN2644002 –
WITN2644005

Dated: 22 February 2019

INFECTED BLOOD INQUIRY

FIRST WRITTEN STATEMENT OF LEROY SCARLETT

Section 1. Introduction

1. My name is Leroy Scarlett. My date of birth and address are known to the Inquiry.
2. I am a 59 year old single Afro Caribbean man. I have 2 children aged 21 and 31.

Section 2. How infected

3. I believe I was infected with HCV during an operation to remove a 3/4inch piece of glass that had become lodged behind my knee. I was 22 years old. I had my whole life ahead of me. This operation happened over the weekend of 13/14th July 1982 at Manchester Royal infirmary in Manchester. However, Manchester Royal Infirmary confirmed by email dated 7 January 2019 that records have been destroyed in line with national guidelines.

4. At that time of my operation, I was not advised of any risks that related to receiving blood/blood products. It was 1982, and therefore, the knowledge of the risks and the fact that there was contaminated blood in the NHS blood banks was known. In addition, I believe by 1982 the risks of being infected and the impact of the infection was known about as well. I believe that it was vital that any person being given a blood transfusion should have been told about the risks of the blood being infected. I was not in a life threatening situation. No advice was given to me about the risk of being exposed to infection if I was given a blood transfusion; I was not bleeding that much.
5. If a doctor or nurse had advised me of the risks of the blood being contaminated I would not have agreed to having the blood. I would have thought about things. I would have asked then to try other treatment. I was not in a life threatening condition. I did not have the operation until the next day because I had to be started before the operation. There was plenty of time for medical staff to consent me in relation to a blood transfusion. If I had been told that there was a risk that a blood transfusion might contain contaminated blood, and therefore, there was a risk I might be infected I would never have consented to a blood transfusion. Even if the risk was low I would have been emphatic – I would have said no under no circumstances. I would NOT have given my consent to a blood transfusion. When I came out of the operation I was told that I had sticky blood; this never has never been mentioned before or afterwards.
6. GRO-D I have never used intravenous drugs.
7. It wasn't until 2009 after my symptoms led to a test where I was diagnosed with HCV. I was told of the results by my GP. **[WITN2644002]** I have the results from the Department of Clinical Microbiology department dated 14 July 2009. This confirms that I tested positive for hepatitis C. There is another test dated 17 July 2009 that indicates current HCV infection.

8. I was then asked to attend my GP surgery. I understand that it states *patient informed* status was changed from *patient does not need to be informed* on 11 July 2009. [WITN2644003]. On 21 July 2009, my GP notes state blood results explained – it was on this date that I became aware that I have been infected [WITN2644004].
9. However, I now understand that there is a note in my GP records dated 12 May 2003 that refers to Hepatitis C [WITN2644005]. No one told me anything about Hepatitis C at that time.
10. At that point no further information was given me by the GP in regards to understanding or managing the infection. The GP referred me to a clinic where I was offered treatment with Interferon. However I was not given any literature and no one say me down to really explain to me what it means to have this infection. I was left in the dark. It was frightening and I was anxious because I simply did not know what the infection was or what it means for me as a human being.
11. I wasn't given any information about the infection or how to manage it. Once I started the treatment it did not help but in fact made my symptoms worse. I also was not told about the possibility of infecting others. No one seemed to care about the bomb shell that has been dropped. No one seemed to care that the shock of this news was life changing. No one took any time to talk me through anything about the infection. It is scandalous – the NHS infected me and then just left me high and dry with no information and no support.

Section 3. Other Infections

12. If my records had been properly maintained I would have received treatment much, much earlier, but my records were not maintained and therefore I did not receive earlier treatment. I don't believe I have any other infection other than HCV.

Section 4. Consent

13. As far as I'm aware I don't think I was tested or treated but I do believe that the medical profession were aware of my infection from the start.

Section 5. Impact

14. The impact this has had on me is that I felt dirty, blamed for my own infection. I've been treated with almost contempt by some people at my GP's. The way I am treated by staff at the GP surgery is awful. I know that the way I am described is different. I feel they are building up an image of me that makes me look intimidating or threatening. I believe this has been happening since I applied for my records; it was at that time that I became public enemy number 1.
15. I feel angry all the time because of the situation, I'm tired and I physically ache some of the time. I do not sleep and I've become isolated from my friends and family. I feel depressed majority of the time.
16. I switched between anger and depression most of the time. I'm not aware of any further complications or conditions that have resulted from the infection. The initial treatment made me feel worse it magnified all the previous symptoms I had both mentally and physically.
17. Since I've been diagnosed with HCV I've lost my teeth and have received no dental treatment whatsoever since.
18. The impact of being infected with HCV has made me very isolated. I do not socialize and spend a lot of time by myself. My anger alienates a lot of people as they don't know how I feel. I've not had a sexual relationship since I was diagnosed. I do feel stigmatized because of the response towards me by some

in the medical profession, especially since making an application to the Skipton Fund. I'm made to feel as if I'm committing some kind of fraud.

19. The response to my medical records is that no-one will check what's happening with them when I pointed out there's a gap in my medical records. It has also affected me in work related, educationally related because I can't keep a thought in my mind at times.
20. There are times when I can't be around anyone. There are times when I think it's been done to me on purpose because of my gender (male) and because of my ethnicity (black Caribbean).
21. The impact of my infection on my children because they don't fully understand it's hard to explain so there's a distance between my family and children. My son is angry at what he perceives as injustice shown towards me.
22. I was often angry after I contracted HCV. I now know it was probably due to the brain fog, but at the time I didn't know what was happening to me. This was before I was given my diagnosis – I would just suddenly feel angry for no reason. I worry about my son because I see a similar thing happening with him. Had first had interferon cos didn't work made me feel worse. I did go on clinical trials. In the last three years I have developed lumps in groin; they are not cancerous. I do not know if HCV related but they might be.
23. I wasn't told about my diagnosis for 6 years. I think that doctors might have experimented on me – they let me go without telling me so they could see what happens with the virus. I do not know this for sure but that is what I believe happened. My evidence for this is the fact that there are 6 years missing from my medical records.

Section 6. Treatment/Care/Support

24. I have experienced no difficulties or obstacles in obtaining treatment; however, when it comes to care and support I've received very little as the consensus is to blame me and I don't think it's fair.
25. I have been directed towards counselling and other care but there's no understanding of how I feel, so in that respect I feel it's been far from adequate.

Section 7. Financial Assistance

26. I have not received any form of financial assistance from any of the funds that have been set up for this type of situation. I've found out about the assistance that's available from a pamphlet that was at the clinic whilst I was undergoing treatment at the clinic.
27. The process of applying for this assistance was made to seem fair and compassionate but I found it far from compassionate. Applying for this assistance made me feel worse as there didn't seem to be any support for someone like me as in my gender and my ethnicity.
28. The difficulties that I experienced and the pre conditions that were imposed for the making of the application made me feel that it didn't matter what I said or what evidence I provided it was a case of thanks but no thanks, because when I did get evidence it was disregarded and I was told that records don't go back to 1982 although these trusts spoke of compassion and charity my experience is of contempt and disdain.

Section 8. Other Issues

29. Evidence can be found within my medical records of the time and I do feel that the powers that be have operated a cover up so that they don't have to give assistance whether financial or emotional or to acknowledge a mistake

happened. I do not know this for sure but that is what I believe happened. My evidence for this is the fact that there are 6 years missing from my medical records.

30. I expect and hope that the Inquiry will be fair and impartial. I am sure there are many themes to be addressed. One common theme that I want the Inquiry to consider is why so many people were not told they had HCV as soon as the doctor knew. In thousands of cases we see individuals not finding out they have HCV for years and years – during which time their health has been allowed to deteriorate and they have not received any treatment.
31. I hope I will through the Inquiry those responsible for changing and/or altering medical records will be exposed. I hope that the reasons that people were told to alter or change or “lose” medical records will also become clear I have concerns about my medical records. My medical records are missing from 1979 to 1986 missing medical records – both GP and hospital records. I had rehabilitation on leg, but there no records from that time. There are no hospital or GP records.
32. I have always been treated fairly by hospital; staff. Until recently, individuals at the various charitable trusts have treated me fairly. However recently this has changed and I am not being treated well.

Statement of Truth

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

Signed

GRO-C

Dated

...22 February 2019.....