

Witness Name: JOHN DAVID PEACH

Statement No: WITN3896001

Exhibits: 0

Dated: APRIL 2020

INFECTED BLOOD INQUIRY

FIRST WRITTEN STATEMENT OF JOHN DAVID PEACH

I, John David Peach, will say as follows:-

Section 1. Introduction

1. My name is John David Peach. I was born on [GRO-C] 1945 and I live at [GRO-C] Norfolk [GRO-C] with my (second) wife.
2. My son, Jason Charles Peach (born on [GRO-C] 1969), was co-infected with the Human Immunodeficiency Virus (HIV) and the Hepatitis B Virus (HBV) through contaminated blood products. Jason's health deteriorated, advancing to AIDS Related Complex (ARC) and he died in [GRO-C] 1993, aged 23.
3. My son, Leigh Andrew Peach (born in 1966), was also co-infected with HIV and HBV through contaminated blood products. Leigh too advanced to ARC and he died in late [GRO-C] 1994 (five months after Jason), aged 27.

4. **This witness statement has been prepared without the benefit of access to my sons' full medical records.**

Section 2. How Affected

5. Jason and Leigh had severe Haemophilia A with a clotting factor of less than 1%. Their mother (my first wife) was a carrier and we knew that there was a 50/50 chance that our boys would have haemophilia.
6. Our boys were treated at the Oxfordshire Haemophilia Centre (OHC) at the Churchill Hospital under the care of Dr Hopkins, Dr Rizza and Dr Matthews.
7. From when they were around 11 years old, the boys attended the Lord Mayor Treloar College, Hampshire boarding alongside a large cohort of haemophiliac pupils. The boys received treatment from the haemophilia centre at school under the care of Dr Wassef and Dr Aronstam.
8. In their younger years, the boys were treated with cryoprecipitate transfused at hospital. They then moved on to FVIII (FVIII) concentrate home treatment. We collected it from Oxford and kept it in our fridge and that happened before the boys started boarding at Treloar College. I believe the boys to have been amongst the first to receive FVIII concentrate. No-one warned us of the risk of exposure to infection before the boys were given FVIII concentrate. It was thought of by everyone as a 'Godsend'. The boys would no longer have to spend hours in hospital on a drip.
9. No news came out of Treloars pertaining to any concern and/or problem with HIV. We were kept in the dark. Both boys had HBV at Treloars. We didn't know where it had come from. They displayed mild symptoms of HBV and we were given to understand that most haemophiliacs 'got that (HBV) problem'.
10. In the summer of 1988 or 1988, we took a phone call from the OHC asking us to bring the boys in for an HIV test. We had just learned from reading the

daily papers what was going on and that testing was being rolled out to haemophiliacs. I had commented to my wife June (whom I married after I was widowed) that 'no-one had (yet) called *us*'. June called me in from working in the garden to drive them from Northampton (where we lived at the time) to Oxford that same afternoon.

11. We received a phone call a couple of weeks later to return to the OHC for the results. Dr Rizza confirmed the HIV positive test result for both boys. I think that the OHC were a little in the dark themselves. There was no treatment and/or advice to offer us. We were simply told that given that the boys appeared to both be well with no symptoms, they should carry on with their FVIII treatment.

12. It wasn't long after that before the news of HIV/AIDS made the papers on a daily basis. Our whole world fell apart. We were all scared. My wife Susan had liver cancer and she died in 1983. It was hard all around.

Section 3. Other Infections

13. I believe it to be possible that the boys were also infected with the Hepatitis C Virus but without seeing their medical notes and records (and it would distress me to read them) I am unable to say.

Section 4. Consent

14. We agreed to the boys being tested for HIV.

Section 5. Impact of the Infection

15. The fear and stigma in relation to HIV/AIDS was huge at that time. Both boys suffered psychologically and it is very difficult for me to recount just how hard it was for us as a family in terms of impact. We went through hell. Certain

people didn't want to associate with them. I couldn't get dental treatment for them as nobody would touch them.

16. When they left school, the boys were always in work and only took time off when they were ill. Leigh was a graphic designer for an engineering company based in Hemel Hempstead. Jason worked for a local estate agent.

17. Both the boys trialed the AZT drug and it virtually destroyed them. You could see that it completely changed them in a matter of weeks. They experienced extreme weight loss, hair loss and could not taste or smell anything. Something that was supposed to help them made things much worse for them.

18. The boys tried to make the best of things and found some happiness with their respective girlfriends, eventually moving out to live with them. I know that they faced a lot. Dr Rizza told us that no-one survived more than a maximum period of four years once they started to display symptoms of ARC. Leigh ultimately brought his wedding forward and married when he started to become unwell.

19. Both boys (separately) contracted pneumonia and needed nebulisers to assist them to breathe before they died. I find it very hard to talk or even think about what happened to them. It is something that should never have happened and it never gets better for me over time.

Section 6. Treatment/care/support

20. We were never offered any counselling or psychological therapy.

21. The MP GRO-A was diagnosed with HIV around the same time as Leigh and Jason and he GRO-A is still alive. I have always wondered what treatment he was given and whether it was better or priority treatment than my sons.

Section 7. Financial Assistance

22. Leigh and Jason each received the £20,000 payment that all haemophiliacs got. They were the last two to sign the waiver. I advised them not to sign it but if they had not done so none of the other haemophiliacs would have received a penny and they received a letter to that effect. They signed the waiver under duress. I regard it as blackmail. The money was used by them for living expenses.

Anonymity

23. I do not wish to apply for anonymity and I do not want to give oral evidence to the Inquiry.

Statement of Truth

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

Signed. GRO-C

Dated..... 5/5/20