

Witness Name: Mr K T Roberts

Statement No:WITN1492001

Exhibits:WITN1492002

Dated: 9th March 2019

INFECTED BLOOD INQUIRY

FIRST WRITTEN STATEMENT OF KEVIN THOMAS ROBERTS

I, Kevin Thomas Roberts will say as follows:-

Section 1. Introduction

1. My name is Kevin Thomas Roberts. I was born on the 1972 and live at Cornwall with my wife and two children. I currently run a beach cafe in the summer and in the Winter I work as a Labourer and car mechanic.
2. I was infected with Hepatitis A, B, and C as a result of being given infected blood products.
3. I have some of my G P's file and some 'loose' hospital notes but I'm still awaiting the documentation for the very large number of blood tests carried out on me and my full medical records. This statement has therefore been prepared without access to my full medical records.

Section 2. How infected

4. I was diagnosed with Von Willebrand's disease classed as moderate to mild in January 1984 when I was about 12 years old. I was having quite a few nose

bleeds, but it wasn't until about 1983 when I had a tooth extraction after which my gums bled for weeks, that my parents knew something was wrong. It was an absolute butcher of a mobile school dentist that carried out the extraction. They let the gums bleed for a long time; they didn't seem to care much back then.

5. My nosebleeds became pretty regular, and heavy between the ages of 10 and 12 years old. I was having nearly weekly bleeds that could last up to a week themselves. I was eventually sent to Doctor Murrell at Truro City Hospital to be tested and it was confirmed I had moderate Von Willebrand's disease.
6. I had a hard working father who was always busy on the farm and so couldn't keep taking me into hospital which is partly the reason it took so long for me to be diagnosed.

Section 2. How infected

7. I was given Cryoprecipitate for a tooth extraction in April 1984 at the Royal Cornwall Hospital ("RCH") and that is when I think I was infected as it was soon after I started feeling ill. I had Cryoprecipitate one day prior to the operation, and on the day I was given more, pre and post the operation
8. In October 1989 according to a letter dated 3 November 1989 from a Clinical assistant at RCH (Treliske) I was treated with DDVAP when I had my tonsillectomy although in a letter dated 26 August 1992 from my Consultant Haematologist at the same Hospital she says I was treated with Factor VIII. I refer to Exhibit WITN1492002.
9. Neither I nor my parents were given any information what so ever about there being any risk of infection from blood products the doctor just said 'We've got something that will slow your bleeding, it's a concentrate and it will sort out any bleeding problems. That is all we were told.

10. I remember being told by Doctor Krueger I was Hepatitis A, B, and C positive when I was about 18 or 19 years old, he was taking blood for more tests, and took about 14-17 phials. I was shocked and surprised he needed that many, as I saw the haematologist every 6 months and they didn't take that much blood. I asked why he had taken so much", he said 'don't you know?'. I said "I'm a haemophiliac; you don't need that much. Doctor Krueger was very surprised I didn't know and told me I was Hepatitis A, B, and C positive and that he was also testing for HIV. He gave me a short leaflet about Hepatitis. I told him I knew about AIDS and that it killed , but I didn't know about the implications of Hepatitis, the Doctor said "there is a 50% chance of you dying, 45% chance of surviving with drugs and 5% chance of clearing it yourself but you may not make it to 25". The doctor also told me that I shouldn't drink as my liver was scarred. I can't remember whether I had a scan at that time. I was often never told about what the tests, scans, and examinations were for. For example I had about 10 phials of blood taken every 3-4 months up to the age of 24 and I was never told why..
11. I received a letter about my HIV results, I left it unopened for two weeks as I just couldn't face finding out I was HIV positive. When I finally opened it, it said I was HIV negative. I didn't completely understand all the medical jargon in the letter but I assumed that they would follow up if that was not the case.
12. I consider either my parents or I should have been told so much earlier and as soon as the hospital knew. I clearly had jaundice episodes or jaundice when I was younger and the Doctors would or should have known at that stage I had hepatitis. My father wasted a lot of time taking me for blood tests for which we never received the results.

13. Apart from the short leaflet handed to me by Doctor Krueger I received no information on how to manage the infection or the risks of others being infected . I only knew because I did my own research on the internet.

Section 3. Other Infections

14. I believe I may be at risk of vCJD as I have had a lot of vCJD tests as Dr Kreuger is good at keeping up with them. They have all come back negative at the moment.

Section 4. Consent

15. I believe that I have been treated and tested without my knowledge, or consent, and without being given adequate or full information, and for the purposes of research as they were constantly taking far more blood than was necessary.

Section 5. Impact of the Infection

16. I was the son of a farmer and as, [GRO-D] my father relied on me to help out on the farm and to work hard. After the tooth extraction in 1984 I was very unwell and was jaundiced within a month. I had been the 4th fastest cross country runner in the school but after the extraction I only managed to place 45th. I was just exhausted; sometimes I couldn't even lift my limbs. My father thought I was being lazy; he used to drag me out of bed. I would normally help out a lot on the farm but couldn't manage to do this anymore and [GRO-D] I had gone from being able carry hay bales around, to always feeling weak and winded. [GRO-D] as my condition continued to be undiagnosed.

17. The GP carried out blood tests but all he told me was 'I was outgrowing myself'. I went to the GP several times because I was tired, and had blood tests. I received nothing back so just carried on with life. There is no record of

the fact that the GP took blood or that I went in complaining of lethargy so my records are clearly incomplete. The GP told me it was growing pains.

18. At this time I also suffered from a poor memory although this is coming back now but my memory was very bad back then.

19. My older brother was bullied at school and it ruined his life, when I went into school I was tarred with same brush. In the beginning I could defend myself from the bullying but after I was infected I was unable to.

20. I was so tired I started wetting the bed. I felt very embarrassed about this ; I couldn't go on overnight school trips or have sleepovers with friends at our house or theirs. I had to be very careful about the smell.

21. Before being infected I played rugby and was a cross county runner. After the infection I was unable to do either, as I kept feeling winded and turning red. Before the infection I would definitely have made the rugby team but that was lost to me as well. I became a bit of a recluse and stopped socialising.

22. When we found out about my infection my father didn't know what to say, we drove home from the hospital in silence. When I told my mum all the problems I went through all those years ago was because I had Hepatitis A, B and C and I might have HIV too, she just turned around and said "well if you are positive you will have to leave, I don't want you to infect your brothers". My relationship with my mother has never recovered. My father also felt very guilty for blaming me for not doing anything.

23. I was given a vaccination for Hepatitis B when I was about 18 or 19 years old. I remember them saying you might have got rid of it but it also might come back and so it was worth having the vaccine.

24. I was never offered any treatment for the Hepatitis C. I was told that if it developed they would treat me with Interferon, luckily the Hepatitis C didn't progress.
25. I am terrified of the dentist after the primary episode and I have to go to the dental hospital for extractions, but that is down to my Von Willebrand's disease. I haven't experienced problems with obtaining treatment due to the Hepatitis C.
26. As no one knew I had Hepatitis C, I did not suffer any stigma and I only told one close friend because he noticed a difference in me. I told him when I was about 18 or 19 years old, after a few drinks and about 3 months after I found out. I was in a very dark place at the time. Whilst I also told my brothers about the infection I told them not to tell anyone as I had heard of the persecution of people with Hepatitis C infection and I would always go white at the news reports.
27. I had been told I only had about six years to live so I spent every penny I earned going out with friends and socialising. I was unable to hold down any romantic relationships, as I couldn't handle having a relationship due to my fear of death and or infecting any partner I may meet.
28. I lost what should have been my best childhood years. I should have been playing the sports which I loved and excelled at, but I couldn't as a result of the Infection. Until my 4th year at Secondary School, I struggled academically as my concentration was exceptionally low. I left school at 16 with a few GCSE's; a B, a C, and a few D's. When I went to college I did slightly better. As the infection lost its grip on me, my concentration and memory improved. I was also feeling stronger, working as a grave digger and bulking up. I studied engineering at collage and did quite well.

29. I think I was about a year behind in my studies because of my impaired concentration. I would have been more motivated and achieved better grades and social skills but for being infected. I was about 17 or 18 years old before I to socialise again but I was a duck out of water as I hadn't developed the necessary social skills.
30. When I was slightly older I felt different to when I was told, I didn't care at all. I was very in your face, and I started being angry and aggressive.
31. I think the family farm and my father's business would have been financially healthier had I been able to help out. When I was told I had such a short life expectancy I didn't care, as I didn't think I would be around for long enough for it to matter. If I hadn't been infected I may have done business studies at college to help with that side of the business. We mainly contracted for other local farmers driving large equipment like diggers, combine harvesters and hay bailers. I was trusted to do all the work at 17 or 18 years old but as I was feeling a lethargic and tired I was starting to become interested in the business side of the farm.
32. Because of the infection I started living and planning my life a lot later, I hadn't saved any money. I may have had a better paying job now or started a career or become involved in the business side of the farm. I would have started a family and saving for a house a lot earlier.
33. I never blamed anyone at the time; I thought hospitals and doctors only helped. I thought "why me"? it must be my fault." I thought it was just an accident until I knew the scope of the problem. Also I consider that I shouldn't have been given Cryoprecipitate/ Factor VIII for the tooth extraction as that was only for emergencies and I only have moderate Von Willebrand's disease.

Section 6. Treatment/care/support

34. I wasn't given any treatment for the Hepatitis C and I have now cleared the Hepatitis C naturally.

35. I would have loved to have had counseling. . A pamphlet for a kid who drives a tractor was totally inadequate I needed to be given more information; I needed someone to sit me down and explain what it was and what the impact would be. I thought if it got bad I would just have to top myself.

Section 7. Financial Assistance

36. I found out about the Skipton Fund when I was about 26 years old by seeing something in the newspapers or on the TV. When I spoke to my Haematologist, he was very surprised that I hadn't been told about it before.

37. I have not received any payments from anyone. I applied to the Skipton Fund and they replied saying that as I couldn't prove I had, had Hepatitis C for longer than 3 months and that it had affected me I did not qualify for compensation. I was also told by the Skipton Fund that they needed more information. Which information I can not obtain as I've been told part of my medical records are 'gone'.

Section 8. Other Issues

38. Someone somewhere decided that children were to be given these blood products for non emergency use, I want to know who signed off on this,, who authorized it. They didn't have to give me Cryoprecipitate/ Factor VIII. I and others moderate hemophiliacs' did not need the blood products to survive; it wasn't a life or death situation. The Penrose Inquiry was a complete white wash. In France when they sent the health minister in question to prison I thought, "finally we may get some justice" but it just got brushed under the carpet. I hope this Inquiry can answer the many questions that need to be addressed.

Anonymity, disclosure and redaction

39. I do not wish to be anonymous and I am prepared to give oral evidence

Statement of Truth

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

Signed... GRO-C

Dated... 09/03/2019.....