

Witness Name: Colin John Smith

Statement No: WITN1781001

Exhibits:0

Dated: February 2019

INFECTED BLOOD INQUIRY

FIRST WRITTEN STATEMENT OF COLIN JOHN SMITH

I, Colin John Smith will say as follows:-

Section 1. Introduction

1. My name is Colin John Smith, DOB **GRO-C** 1952 and I live at **GRO-C**
GRO-C
2. My son, Colin Smith Jnr, date of birth **GRO-C** 1982, died on 13.01.1990 at the age of 7 after being infected with HIV and Hepatitis C through contaminated blood products.
3. My wife, Janet Smith, has also provided a witness statement to the Inquiry (WITN1523001).
4. This witness statement has been prepared without the benefit of access to my late son's full medical records. If and in so far as I have been provided with limited records the relevant entries are set out in the medical chronology at the end of this statement.

Section 2. How Affected

5. Please refer to my wife's statement for information as to how Colin was infected.

Section 3. Other Infections

6. We have not been made aware of any other infections that Colin may have been exposed to.

Section 4. Consent

7. We never consented to Colin being tested for HIV or Hepatitis C. Colin was a PUP (Previously Untreated Patient). There is no doubt that they treated and tested him for the purposes of research as they would have seen him as an easy target.
8. I recall the hospital was always taking blood from Colin. There was a letter in Colin's medical records stating that the hospital were unable to send any more blood samples as 'the family have withdrawn the patient'. I assume this letter was sent to the pharmaceutical companies. I saw this letter in Colin's medical records when we were taking him out of the hospital in 1989, however this letter was not contained in his medical records when we later requested them.

Section 5. Impact of the Infection

9. I lost my job as soon as it was discovered that there was AIDS in my family. I managed to find a new job shortly after, but on my first day I was told not to bother coming in because they found out about Colin's infection.
10. I went to the Job Centre where I was told that I was unemployable. They gave me a pension book to claim benefits. I was deemed to be unemployable by

the Government because of my son's infection and they were the same people responsible for his infection in the first place.

11. The week that my son died, I received a letter from the Job Centre telling me to go back to work as I was no longer unemployable. I wrote back telling them that I would get a job when I was ready, not when they told me to.
12. We had tried not to tell people about Colin's infections but there was another local haemophiliac who was also infected with HIV, and people quickly put two and two together. The abuse we suffered afterwards was horrendous. We had crosses scratched into our door and we received calls in the middle of the night telling us that our son shouldn't be in school, they hoped he didn't sleep in the same bed as his brothers and that he should be moved to a desert island. One morning Janet woke me up and told me to quickly go outside and repaint the side wall of the house before the kids could see it; someone had painted 'AIDS DEAD' across the side of the house.
13. We didn't tell our other sons about this at the time because we didn't want to worry them, and we thought we had managed to shelter them somewhat. However, as they got older they told us that they had been having trouble at school but hadn't told us because they didn't want to worry us. They were bullied and called names like "AIDS kids".
14. This time was extremely difficult for our other three boys, and we weren't able to give them the care and attention they deserved during this time. They would be staying with friends or family frequently and most nights they wouldn't even know where they would be sleeping. As long as Janet and I ensured they had a bed and were fed every night; that was all we were able to do because we spent all our time at the hospital with Colin.
15. We felt the stigma of the infection from our own family also. One day when we were at my GRO-D house she came out with a separate plate and cutlery, announcing that they were for Colin and should not to be used by anyone else. That was 30 years ago and I still don't speak to my GRO- as a result of

this. Some of our family were okay about Colin's infection but others clearly distanced themselves.

16. When people first found out about Colin's infections, we were bombarded by press from all over the country. Fortunately, the press are a lot more supportive now. They do their best to keep the story in the public eye and to keep pressure on the Government. That is why we do our best to agree to interviews to make sure none of this is forgotten. When you do an interview it gets you down and you feel a depressed for a few days, but it's something we have to do.

17. My wife couldn't drive when all this happened so I would take Colin to all of his hospital appointments. When I had to rush Colin to the hospital we would play a game to see how fast we could get there. One time the police stopped us and when we explained what was happening, they gave us a police escort. Colin loved that!

18. A lot of the nurses were really supportive and refused to dress up in the required spacesuits to care for Colin, as did we. He was scared enough and we weren't going to make it worse for him.

19. Colin made friends with another haemophiliac on the ward. Despite Colin being much younger, they became extremely close and they were inseparable. It was a relief for us to know that Colin had a good friend with him in the hospital and it made it easier for us if we were ever unable to be at the hospital with him.

20. We took Colin out of the hospital shortly after we were told he had full blown AIDS and that he didn't have long left to live. They tried to tell us that we couldn't take him home but we didn't care what they said; we were not letting our son die in the hospital.

21. Janet and I almost split up after Colin's death. We struggled to communicate and come to terms with everything. We were mourning at different times. For a few years I would be okay and she would be down and other times I would

be down and she would be okay. It was extremely difficult to live like that, but fortunately we managed to help each other through the worst times.

22. I dread Christmas because Janet gets so depressed. It is a very difficult time which is followed shortly by the anniversary of Colin's death. The kids are older now and are very supportive. We have four grandchildren and they also come over and spend a lot of time with us. We go to Colin's grave on Christmas morning with all of the family. Even though our grandchildren never got to meet Colin, he is still a big part of their lives.

23. I spent a lot of time after Colin's death sitting in the cemetery and talking to him. It was a very lonely time and there were times that I was suicidal. We still go to the cemetery every week, but I only try to think of the good times with Colin rather than everything else he went through.

24. To watch your child slowly die is the worst thing a person could ever go through. I have seen violent death when I was in the forces, and it doesn't come close to this.

25. We should be living our lives now, but we will never really be able to until we are given the full truth. I am not willing to have gone through all of this and be told that they did nothing wrong.

Section 6. Treatment/care/support

26. We were offered some counselling from the hospital in Cardiff after Colin's death. We also received a lot of support through the Tainted Blood community.

Section 7. Financial Assistance

27. We received the Stage One payment from the Skipton Fund and have received some support from the MacFarlane Trust.

Section 8. Other Issues

28. I want to know who knew what and when. I want to know what the pharmaceutical companies knew, what the politicians knew and what the doctors knew.

29. The truth will come out eventually. If it isn't in my lifetime it will be in my children's lifetime, because they won't stop fighting either.

30. I want to know what the Haemophilia Society is hiding. We thought they were on our side and now they are refusing to give records to the Public Inquiry.

31. If the Government gets away with something of this magnitude once, they will think they can get away with it again. Justice is for all, not just for the few, and we need to make sure that justice is delivered now.

Anonymity

32. I do not wish to remain anonymous.

33. I would like to give oral evidence to the Inquiry.

Statement of Truth

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

Signed.....

Dated

Anonymity

- I do not wish to remain anonymous.
- I would like 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 27/2/19.