

# Family member testifies at blood trial

## Hemophiliac brother infected with HIV

'He couldn't believe this had happened'

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STAFF REPORTER

The sister of a hemophiliac youth described her horror yesterday at learning in the fall of 1987 that her brother had been infected by HIV-tainted blood.

"It was a pretty scary-looking disease," she told Crown lawyer Michael Bernstein. "It was a pretty awful way to die." She added that the doctors gave her brother, then about 15 years old, eight years to live.

The woman, who cannot be identified, was the first family member to testify at the tainted-blood trial, which began two months ago in the University Ave. courthouse before Superior Court Justice Mary Lou Benotto.

The trial has drawn international attention because it relates to an era in which large numbers of patients in Canada became infected with HIV or hepatitis C through tainted blood.

New-Jersey based Armour Pharmaceutical Co.; Dr. Roger Perrault, former medical head of the Canadian Red Cross; and three other doctors — Michael Rodell, Donald Wark Boucher and John Furesz — have pleaded not guilty to four counts of criminal negligence causing bodily harm and one count of causing a common nuisance.

In one of the counts on the indictment, prosecutors allege that Armour and the four doctors were criminally negligent because the woman's brother, who can only be identified as C.L., received "Armour H.T. Factorate" infected with the HIV virus, which caused him bodily harm.

A factorate is a blood product that stops bleeding in hemophiliacs.

Although the witness said life as a hemophiliac was difficult for her brother, with frequent hospitalizations, she described him as a good-natured, active youth who "took things in stride" and learned to accept his disease.

But she said that when his father told him that he was infected with HIV, "he was in shock, he was scared and also he was angry. . . . He couldn't believe this had happened."

Although the family did their best to carry on with life, she described how about six years after the HIV diagnosis, AIDS-related diseases began to set in and he plummeted in weight.

By the time he died in 1995, the witness said, he seemed to have accepted his fate.

"He was very wise for his age, he was very mature," she told the court. "I think he found peace knowing that he was leaving us."

The trial continues Monday.

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