

# ANONYMOUS

Witness Name: GRO-B

Statement No.: WITN7185001

Exhibits: WITN7185002 - 004

Dated:

## INFECTED BLOOD INQUIRY

WRITTEN STATEMENT OF GRO-B

I provide this statement in response to a request under Rule 9 of the Inquiry Rules 2006, dated 18 October 2022.

I, GRO-B will say as follows: -

### Section 1. Introduction

1. My name is GRO-B. My date of birth is GRO-B 1964 and my address is known to the Inquiry.
2. I am a beauty therapist, pilates instructor and a volunteer vaccinator. I am single, and I have two siblings, one older brother, GRO-B and my sister, GRO-B. I lived in GRO-B until I moved to GRO-B about eight years ago.
3. I intend to speak about my mum, GRO-B: M and her infection with Hepatitis C ("HCV"). My mum was born on GRO-B 1931 and passed away at the age of 62 on GRO-B 1993.

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4. I intend to speak in particular about the nature of my mum's illness, how it affected her, the treatment she received and its impact on my family and our lives together.
5. I confirm that I am not legally represented and I am happy for the Inquiry Team to assist with my statement. I wish to be anonymous.
6. The Inquiry Investigator has also explained the Inquiry's statement of approach and 'Right to Reply' procedure. I understand that if I am critical of a medical professional or organisation, they will have the right to reply to that criticism.
7. I wish to acknowledge that naturally, as time passes, memories can fade. I have provided approximate time frames as best as I can recall and from information given to me by my dad when he was alive and the minimal documents retained over the years.

### **Section 2. How Affected**

8. Sometime between 1981 and 1983, my mum required a hysterectomy. We lived in GRO-B at the time and the operation was carried out at the Royal Surrey Hospital in Guildford.
9. Before my mum's hysterectomy operation, she was diagnosed with type 2 diabetes. Due to the nature of this condition, she was prone to bleeding more if she suffered from cuts. The hysterectomy was considered a major operation and required cutting through muscle; therefore, would be difficult for the doctors to stem any blood loss without my mum having blood transfusions.
10. I cannot be sure if my mum was informed of this before the surgery or afterwards. However, the doctors confirmed that she had received a blood transfusion during the hysterectomy operation because of her type

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two diabetes. As far as I am aware, neither my mum nor dad were informed of how much blood my mum had been given.

11. I do not know if my parents were warned of any risks associated with receiving a blood transfusion.
12. I was 16 at the time of my mum's operation and was still at school, so I was not privy to the outcome of my parents' consultations with the doctors and other medical professionals.
13. Before the surgery, my mother had been fit and well. Unfortunately, this operation was the catalyst for numerous surgeries down the line. Prior to this, there had been no other occasion where my mum required a blood transfusion.
14. After my mum's operation, life continued as normal until 1986, when my mum began feeling unwell. She was suffering from poor balance and falling over a lot. She complained on several occasions, and in June 1986, she was admitted into hospital so that doctors could carry out further investigations.
15. The thought was that she might be suffering from a stomach ulcer. Dr GRO-D, my mum's consultant at the time, carried out two bone marrow biopsies on the 9<sup>th</sup> and 16<sup>th</sup> of June to confirm whether this was the case.
16. I cannot recall the results of the biopsies however, I know that my mum required another operation in June 1986, and again she received a blood transfusion.
17. In September and October 1986, the doctors carried out scans which confirmed that my mum had an enlarged liver and spleen. She was suffering from regular bleeds in her oesophagus and would have to have operations for the bleeding to be cauterised. She was also suffering from

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oesophageal varices. She was regularly vomiting blood and had to be rushed to the hospital multiple times.

18. On 14 January 1987, my mum began vomiting up blood. We rang the hospital, but the hospital could not send an ambulance out due to weather conditions, as it was snowing at the time. Finally, when the weather cleared up, she was admitted to the Royal Surrey Hospital, and on 21 January 1987, doctors carried out an operation for her veins in her oesophagus.
19. I cannot recall how long it was before she was discharged, however, by February, she was back home. On 5 and 17 February, my mum attended regular clinic appointments with Dr [GRO-D], who might have been a liver specialist.
20. From February 1987 until November 1988, my mum was admitted to hospital on several occasions due to oesophageal bleeding. In addition, she also attended multiple appointments with Dr [GRO-D], now her primary consultant at the Royal Surrey Hospital.
21. My mum had to have surgery repeatedly on 10 March, 12 May, 16 June, 21 July and 18 August 1987.
22. On 9 November 1988, the doctors started her on steroids, but about a week later, on 17 November, she was admitted into hospital due to bleeding from the oesophagus blood vessels.
23. Finally, on 20 August 1987, my mum was referred and underwent her first liver biopsy, and a year later, on 22 September 1988, the doctors carried out a second liver biopsy.
24. Following the liver biopsies, on 9 December 1988, the doctors confirmed her diagnosis of cirrhosis of the liver due to HCV and hepatitis C.

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25. It is difficult for me to know if the doctors explained the implications of HCV to my mum and dad. She often attended her appointments alone or sometimes with my dad. However, I believe that my parents were not aware of the severity of my mother's illness. This is because my dad was extremely shocked when my mum died.
26. I also suspect that my parents were not given full information about managing the potential risks of passing the infection on to others. My parents did appear to be taking any precautions or acting any differently, and they would have done so if the doctors had provided them with this information.
27. In January 1988, my mum was admitted into hospital for four days due to varicose veins. Following this, doctors suggested modification to her diet, and my mum began having a low protein diet. By this time, they were aware it was something to do with her liver, and they informed her that protein was not good for the liver, however this was off the back of her admission for esophageal varices which indicates that full information regarding her HCV and cirrhosis diagnosis was not given.
28. My mum suffered for over a decade with progressively ill health between 1981 and 1993, to when she passed away on GRO-B 1993.
29. My mum was never a drinker, and my parents were happily married from when they met at 20 years old until my mum died at the age of 62.

### **Section 3. Other Infections**

30. As far as I am aware, my mum solely contracted Hepatitis due to being given infected blood.

**Section 4. Consent**

31. It would be difficult for me to comment on matters of consent as I was too young to be involved in these discussions with my parents at the time.

**Section 5. Impact**

32. Further to the above, in the lead up to my mum's eventual HCV diagnosis, in 1989, my mum suffered from gallstones and broken cells in her bladder. My mum attended [GRO-B] and was seen by Dr [GRO-B] but no treatment was offered for her gallstones.
33. By January 1990, my mum had put on about 14 pounds, and the weight had been gained in just one month. She attended the hospital for an appointment with Mr [GRO-D] with a swollen stomach and, in February 1990, had to have another operation for this.
34. Between April 1990 and December 1993, when my mum died, she attended several appointments with Dr [GRO-] and Dr [GRO-D]. Yet, I believe they were providing temporary solutions instead of curing the root cause of my mum's illness.
35. After my mum passed away, my dad wrote a letter to the Royal Surrey Hospital, trying to understand what had happened. I exhibit as **WITN7185002** an extract from the letter my dad received in response from Miss Iris M Orr, which states that my mum "had steadily deteriorated due to her liver disease and the complications of this dangerous condition for which there is little direct therapy".
36. I believe this reply implies that my mum did not receive any treatment for cirrhosis and HCV.

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37. My mum was Victorian in attitude and would have accepted treatment if she had been offered any. Doctors were like gods to her, and she would have done whatever she was told to do.
38. For many years the doctors and medical professionals were aware she was suffering from a debilitating illness and did nothing to remedy this. I cannot imagine how terrible it was for my mum to live with this horrible illness day to day.
39. I can recall that there were many years of ill health in my mum gradually getting worse. We would have to call the ambulance at any time of the day or night, and sometimes we would even contact our GP, who lived close by, to assist.
40. On a planned day trip to the Isle of Wight, mum was feeling too ill, so stayed at home. On a day visit to Charleston, the house of the Bloomsbury set, my mum ended up staying in the car in the car park, not feeling well enough to walk around the museum. My mum was so ill that she ended up remaining in the car because she did not feel well. During this year, she stayed at home most of the time because she did not have the energy to participate in any activities.
41. In general, my parents stopped doing things they enjoyed, such as going away on weekend trips, because my mum was either feeling too sick or required medical attention at the spur of the moment, so they could not be too far away from the hospital.
42. My mum used to be a nanny, but after she had children, she devoted her time to being a housewife. However, she continued to carry out charity work and was well liked by people in the community.
43. My parents had been each other's first relationship when they met. My mum was 20 years old, and my dad was 21. They were a completely happily married couple and were married for about 40 years.

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44. My dad was devastated when my mum died. He did not realise she was going to die.
45. My dad used to work as a draughtsman, but when my mum fell ill, he took early retirement so that he could be with her and care for her.
46. In the year after my mum died, my dad went off the rails. They were both atheists, but my dad could not bear the thought that he would never see my mum again.
47. He joined a church and began attending bible study. He met a woman 30 years his junior at bible study, and within 18 months, she moved into the house with her three children.
48. My brother was in his early 30s but was still living at home at the time, however, my dad and his new partner kicked my brother out of the house to make room for the three children under five years old. It was a move that was entirely out of character for my dad.
49. My dad used half of his life savings to pay 50 per cent of the purchase price of a house for the lady he met at church, when she no longer wanted to live in our family home with him, a year or so after moving in. His solicitor urged him to have his name on the deeds, but the lady only wanted the house to be in her name, so my dad acquiesced, even though he paid half of the purchase price. By this stage, they were no longer a couple.
50. This had a massive impact on his financial situation for the rest of his life; he no longer worked and was living on what was left of his life savings. He was very bereaved and was suffering from depression and insomnia, and was acting irrationally and completely out of character.



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51. He passed away at 85 years, 22 years after losing his wife, but he was never the same after my mum's death. It had a massive emotional, financial and mental impact on him
52. I cannot go into how my mum's death further affected my brother because we are estranged, but my sister told me that he had to find a shed to rent after my dad and his partner kicked him out of the house.
53. Whenever my mum's death comes up in conversations, I have to clarify that she was not an alcoholic because cirrhosis of the liver is associated with alcoholism. My mum never drank, and I imagine it must have been difficult for her back then in explaining to people that she was not an alcoholic. Today society accepts that alcoholism is a disease, but back then, it was looked on as a problem a person brought upon themselves.
54. I was very young when my mum contracted HCV and even when she passed away. My siblings and I all lost our mother way too young. The last memorable moment my mum attended was my graduation from university. I started university late, so I did not graduate until the summer of the year she died. When I look at pictures of my mum from my graduation, I think about how old she looked – she was 62 but looked 82. It was also hard to watch our dad go off the rails following our mum's death and see him lose half his life savings.
55. When our mum died, her will stated that half of her estate should go to her three children. However, as our dad was still living in the family home at the time and we did not want him to be homeless, we signed over her estate to him, assuming it would come back to us when he eventually died.
56. After my dad passed away, we discovered that 25 per cent of our mother's estate had been given to his ex-partner (they had only been together 12 to 18 months). They were no longer a couple when he paid 50 per cent of the purchase price of a house when she moved out of our

family home. It was half of our share from our mum, and I cannot help but think of how my mum must have been turning in her grave at this.

#### **Section 6. Treatment/Care/Support**

57. I assume that my mum must have been informed that there was no treatment for HCV or the liver disease. My mum put the doctors on a pedestal and would have believed she was receiving the best care possible.
58. I do not believe my mum was informed of the availability of any counselling or psychological support following the diagnosis of HCV and liver cirrhosis.
59. After my mum passed away, my dad received bereavement counselling from a charity once a week over a short period, but this had not been offered in connection to the HCV.
60. I think both of my parents would have benefited from counselling or psychological support during the time of my mum's diagnosis and illness.

#### **Section 7. Financial Assistance**

61. In February 2011, my dad found out about the Skipton Fund from our local GP, and he applied for support from the Fund on 19 February 2011.
62. On 5 May 2011, his application was rejected and as seen in **Exhibit WITN7185003**, this was due to a lack of supporting confirmation that my mum had received NHS contaminated blood before 1991.
63. This was when my dad tried to locate my mum's medical records, however, the hospital informed him that the notes had been lost. I do not know if this was true or whether there was a culture in that period not to

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make these available to avoid taking responsibility for the contaminated blood scandal.

- 64. It is a smack in the face to be turned down for support because of a lack of medical records, which may have been deliberately destroyed. It also infers that they do not believe you.
- 65. I had also never heard of the English Infected Blood Support Scheme before speaking with the Inquiry Investigator.
- 66. If my parents had been made aware that some form of support was available beforehand, it would have been helpful to them when my mum was ill. Perhaps they could have had a better quality of life, and my dad would not have had to juggle working part-time in consultancy while looking after my mum.
- 67. The fact that it is not widely known that there were avenues for support suggests a lack of transparency about what help was out there.

### **Section 8. Other Issues**

- 68. Recently, I have also tried to retrieve my mum's records but have been told that the records were destroyed many years ago.
- 69. In September 2022, I contacted the Royal Surrey Hospital to see if I could obtain my mum's records and I received a reply that they would get back to me within a month. When I received no further response after five weeks, I chased the hospital and received a reply which confirmed that the records had been destroyed.
- 70. I exhibit as **WITN7185004** an email dated 13 October 2022 from the records department at Royal Surrey County Hospital, which states that the hospital only kept records for eight years and that my mum's records have been destroyed.

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71. Presently, I am in the process of finding out if it is possible to obtain the records from my mum's GP. The practice still exists, and the manager was very helpful when I began speaking with her about locating these records.
72. However, she has since informed me that the government, or some authority or governing body, are in the process of changing how people apply for medical records.
73. The GP practice manager explained that although there is a time limit, their record keeping in the past was disorganised, and as a result, the records may still be available.
74. It is horrendous that parents have lost children, children have lost parents, people have had to give up work, and many have suffered extreme financial consequences. Some people affected continue to live in poverty and, as a consequence, had to rely on benefits. I believe that the government needs to acknowledge that these people exist.
75. Up until recently, many people had never heard of infected blood, and it has not been treated like the scandal it clearly is.
76. I want an apology from whoever Sir Brian decides is at fault, that is, whoever thought it was okay to source infected blood from American prisoners clearly needs to be found accountable and needs to apologise to all of the people affected.

Statement of Truth

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

Signed

GRO-B

Dated

25/02/23