

Witness Name: **GRO-B**
Statement No: WITN 2603001
Dated: 19th February 2019

INFECTED BLOOD INQUIRY

FIRST WRITTEN STATEMENT OF **GRO-B**

I provide this statement in response to a request under Rule 9 of the Inquiry rules 2006 dated 12th December 2018. I adopt the paragraph numbering in the Rule 9 request for ease of reference.

1. Introduction

1. My name is **GRO-B** My address and date of birth are known to the Inquiry.
2. I am a close family friend of the **GRO-B** family. I have known **GRO-B: B1** and **GRO-B: B2** parent's **GRO-B: M** and **GRO-B: F** for over 35 years and this is how I know the boys.
3. I intend to speak about how both **B1** and **B2** came to be infected with hepatitis C (HCV) after being exposed to contaminated blood.

2. How Affected

1. I know that both **B2** and **B1** suffered with haemophilia and the kind that they suffered with was mild haemophilia A. The haemophilia was hereditary which was passed down from their grandfather.

2. They were wonderful boys and they couldn't do enough for you even though they were both very busy men running their separate businesses. It is an absolute tragedy what has happened to the family and I am not quite sure how **M** and **F** have coped over the years.
3. I remember both brothers using the Factor VIII products and it is my understanding that it is the use of these blood products that caused both **B2** and **B1** to become infected with hepatitis C (HCV).
4. To the best of my knowledge, I recall being told about the Factor VIII products during a conversation with their parents in the late **GRO-B** when we first become acquainted. I remember the boys treating themselves at home with the blood products but I think this may have been later on in the early 1980's. It could have been earlier than that, however.
5. I remember **B2** having a horse riding accident in the early **GRO-B**. He had a bleed to the hip and he had to be treated for this at the hospital. I remember he spent a couple of weeks at the **GRO-B**.
6. I recall **GRO-B** name coming up on many occasions during the **GRO-B** when the boys were being treated at the Haemophilia Centre at the **GRO-B**. He was very highly thought of among the patients at the Haemophilia centre and I remember him retiring around the early **GRO-B**. **GRO-B** eventually took over, however, I'm not entirely sure if this was immediately after **GRO-B** or a couple of years later.
7. I do not know when exactly they were infected but I do I remember **GRO-B** being mentioned and I think he was the doctor who delivered the positive hepatitis C (HCV) diagnosis. To my knowledge, **B1** was informed of the hepatitis in **GRO-B** and **B2** was told around the same time. I believe that **B2** was told after **B1**.

3. Other infections

1. In addition to the hepatitis C (HCV), both [B1] and [B2] had a number of illnesses brought on through the infection, and, unfortunately, [B2] has not survived to see our pursuit to secure an Inquiry come to fruition.
2. Both [B1] and [B2] had problems with their liver and both were diagnosed with cirrhosis of the liver and both developed liver cancer. I can't remember when exactly they were diagnosed with this but the cancer took [B2] s life in [GRO-B]. Fortunately, [B1] was lucky enough to undergo a liver transplant in the summer of [GRO-]. Had he not received a liver donor, I doubt very much that he would still be with us today.
3. In addition, I am sure that both [B1] and [B2] were exposed to vCJD, also know as mad cow disease. I believe they were told about this some time after they were told about the hepatitis C (HCV).

4. Consent

1. I am in no doubt that had [M] and [F] known of the risks associated with the blood products they were being given, they never would have consented to the treatment. They were always under the impression that they were doing what was best for their children. I know this haunts [M] as she somehow feels responsible for their illness. She should never have to live with this guilt.
2. I am confident that the consultants knew that they were putting those boys at risk by prescribing them with the contaminated blood products but they did not do anything to stop it from happening. We now know that they knew people were infected for a long time before telling them and [B1] was one of the people who would fall into this category. He carried the illness for years before they told him. I can't be sure if the same is true for [B2]

5. Impact

1. Put simply, the family has been through hell. I myself lost a daughter to cancer and so I know what it is like to lose a child. The difference is, however, that I can accept that my daughter died from natural causes; it wasn't anyone's fault. [B2] death and [B1] illness is someone's fault and someone needs to answer for the tragedies they have inflicted on innocent families.
2. Both [B1] and [B2] were back and forth the hospital with illness and in particular due to the problems they had with their liver. I remember [B2] having a terrible time toward the end of his life; it was incredibly difficult for the family. It had a significant impact on [B1] not only because he and [B2] were very close, but he probably saw his future in the suffering [B2] was going through. I have no doubt that he looked at [B2] and thought that will be me one day.
3. The cancer drugs [B2] was prescribed caused water retention and he therefore put a significant amount of weight on. He had trouble getting out of the car, it was a really tough time for him and he looked so ill. What's more, there was no provision for him when his illness got the better of him and so he would have to go to A&E which added to the stress of it all. [B2] suffered with terrible depression toward the end.
4. I know the boys were conscious of the fact that some medical professionals thought they were alcohol and/or drug addicts. It was what they associated people with liver problems with and this played on their minds regularly; they were embarrassed by their conditions.
5. The stigma associated with haemophiliacs was also something they had to deal with. Their illness was a tightly knit secret that only a select few people were aware of. The boys worried about the impact people's awareness of this

would have on the family and so they lived a life of secrecy, which I know has been very difficult for the entire family.

6. The family will never recover from what they've been through, especially [B2] death. A son, brother and father lost due to the incompetency of those involved. The most frustrating part of all of this is that they only had mild haemophilia and the treatment they had before using Factor VIII worked for them. There wasn't an urgent need for them to use the contaminated blood products.

6.Treatment/Care Support

1. The family had to fight tooth and nail for [B1] to get the new Interferon free treatment as the funding wasn't initially made available. He finally got this in [GRO-B] when the [GRO-B] relented by making the funding available for about [GRO-B] people in [GRO-B]
2. The boys also paid privately for treatment and were going back and forth to [GRO-B] and [GRO-B] for this. I know that [B1] was looking for all kinds of solutions when [B2] was diagnosed. As mentioned, [B1] underwent a liver transplant in [GRO-B] and this saved his life. He takes anti-rejection drugs for the new liver and will continue to do so for the rest of his life.

7.Financial Assistance

1. I know that the family have received payments from the Skipton Fund and the [GRO-B] I must admit that I disagree with the application process. The victims and their families should not have to apply and go through all of that emotion and rigmarole to get what they are entitled to.

8.Other Issues

1. I can think of no other issues that would assist the inquiry at this time.

Statement of Truth

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

Signed... GRO-B

Dated... 19 - 2 - 19