



Witness Name: **GRO-B**
Statement No: WITN0041001
Exhibits: WITN0041002
WITN0041003
WITN0041004

Dated:01/12/2018.

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 04 September 2018. I adopt the paragraph numbering in the Rule 9 request for ease of reference

I, **GRO-B** will say as follows: -

Introduction

1. My name is **GRO-B** and my maiden name is **GRO-B**. My date of birth and address are known to the inquiry. I am the widow of **GRO-B: H** **H** (he was known as **H**). Before we met, I was married to a--nother man and I have one son from my first marriage.
2. I met **H** in 2008, after my first marriage ended. My son was around 11 years old at that time.
3. In 2010, my son and I moved into **H**'s house and in October 2011, my husband and I committed to each other through marriage. **H** passed away on **GRO-B** 2016.
4. I am currently working as a Higher Level Teaching Assistant. I also work Saturdays in other roles at the school to top up my income.
5. I will go into detail about my husband in this statement. In particular, I will talk about the nature of his illness, how the illness affected him, the treatment received and the impact it had on him and our life together.

ANONYMOUS

How Infected

6. [H] is sure that he contracted the Hepatitis C infection during the 1980s, when he received blood transfusions at Bedford Hospital.
7. [H] was a carrier of Haemophilia A gene, which was of a severe nature. This was confirmed by his medical paperwork. I got the impression that he was not sure when he was diagnosed with Haemophilia A.
8. He took Factor 8 throughout his lifetime and certainly whilst we knew each other. I am not aware of how much he took but I am aware that it was one bottle per injection. He may have tried other products as he participated in trials.
9. My husband was initially cared for by Bedford Hospital (formerly known as North Bedfordshire District Hospital) and from 1995, he was with Addenbrooke's Hospital, which may be more specialised. When [H] was diagnosed with cancer, he was cared for by Dr. Howes and he spoke a lot to a Haemophilic Nurse, Emma. He was also a member of the Haemophilia Society.
10. My husband is sure that he contracted the Hepatitis C infection during the 1980s, when he received blood transfusions at Bedford Hospital. This is because he remembers being at school and being in and out of hospital. [H] only had blood transfusions: he never had any tattoos or took drugs intravenously.
11. When the blood transfusions were given, he was not advised on any potential risks. I know this because he said that he was absolutely distraught when he found out that he had the Hepatitis C infection later on in life.
12. There were a series of events, which led up to the discovery of the Hepatitis C infection. He said that around the early 1990s, he was not feeling well and this worsened over the next couple of years.
13. In late 1993, my husband had a number of blood tests carried out through his GP and everything was clear. Despite the all-clear, he was not happy as the signs were still there: fatigue; weight loss; he felt old before his time; and he was struggling at work.
14. In July 1994, my husband pursued a full blood test as the signs of poor health were still there.
15. In August 1994, he discovered that he had the Hepatitis C infection. The infection was severe and I know this as I have seen it in his medical paperwork.
16. I presume that he found out about the infection through his GP when he went back to the surgery to find out about his blood test results.

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17. I am not exactly sure what information was provided to my husband about his infection. However, from the conversations I had with my husband, I understood that the information provided to manage and understand his infection was not very good. He felt that he had just been given a 'death sentence' and it ruined his whole life.
18. My husband did not discuss his thoughts on whether the information should have been provided earlier. Discovering that he had the infection took over his life and he just wanted someone to take responsibility.
19. In relation to the information provided about the risk of infecting others, by the time [H] informed me about his infection with Hepatitis C we had already had sexual contact.
20. [H] said he hadn't mentioned the Hepatitis C before as he was told it was NOT possible to pass the virus onto a partner through sexual contact except through blood ie if he cut himself. This information was either given by Bedford Hospital or his GP.
21. I told [H] that from my understanding it was possible to pass it on and so we contacted his Nurse at Addenbrooke's Hospital to go and discuss this and how we can look after my son if anything happened.
22. The Nurse at Addenbrooke's Hospital did tell us that it is possible to pass Hepatitis C onto a partner through sexual contact. He was absolutely devastated that he could have passed Hepatitis C onto me through no fault of his own but through the fault of the people who told him. You can imagine how scared I was too.
23. This news upset [H] and had a huge impact on our relationship. It was not [H]'s fault that he had been given the wrong information. He was so angry and scared that he had infected me which was the starting point of him being scared to continue our relationship and that with my son.
24. I was not angry with [H] as this was not his fault. However I was angry at the poor and inaccurate information he was given. The effect that it caused on the both of us was devastating but I loved [H] and this was not going to ruin a very special friendship and relationship. When he tried

ANONYMOUS

ending our relationship, I reassured him that it was not his fault. So not only did the NHS give [H] infected blood via transfusions but put me at risk of being infected through false information.

25. When [H] and I were going through a very difficult time due to the Hepatitis C, I did go for a blood test to see if I had it.
26. I explained the circumstances to my GP who said it was possible that it could have been passed onto me. Fortunately it did not show on a blood test but I don't know if it takes time for this infection to show and be present so to this day, I still worry I could have Hepatitis C.
27. I am thinking about going back to my GP for another test but [H] always said to be careful as it can affect any insurance policy that I take out as I would be asked to declare that I have had the test. He said that Addenbrooke's Hospital told him it is best to give blood and they would contact me if it was infected. I don't think I am well enough to go through this at the minute as I have recently been diagnosed with a medical condition, which could be caused by all the stress of losing [H] .

Other Infections

28. During the last couple of months of his life, [H] did tell me that he had been tested for HIV as his health deteriorated so quickly. Addenbrooke's Hospital would have carried out this test. He said that the result was negative.
29. Therefore, as far as I am aware, my husband did not have Hepatitis A or B or HIV. I do however remember him talking about being informed of the possibility of contracting another illness CJD via his treatment. He was sent information explaining this illness but I am not sure who it was from. As far as I am aware, [H] was clear.

Consent

30. My husband knew that he was getting transfusions but did not know of any risks. He just knew that he was being treated and presumed everything was okay as he hadn't been told otherwise.

Impact

Mental effects

ANONYMOUS

31. My husband said that it was a death sentence. He was very angry. He received counselling but I am not sure if this was through his GP or the Hospital.
32. All he wanted was for someone to take responsibility. He therefore started Court proceedings. He did a handwritten statement and a typed statement was completed by J Keith Park and Co Solicitors, Alabama House, Rumford Court, 6 Rumford Place, Liverpool, L3 9BY. The investigators have taken a photograph of this statement and it is produced at exhibit **WITN0041002**.
33. I also have a letter from the Solicitors' firm dated 11 July 1995 (ref **GRO-B**) which discusses legal aid. However when his legal aid came through, he could not afford the amount he had to pay. The amount offered in legal aid was £85.20.
34. On 11 July 1995, he informed the Solicitors' firm that he could not proceed anymore as he could not afford the fees and was looking for alternative employment. The Hepatitis C infection ruined his life. He just wanted someone to take responsibility and no one did.

Physical effects

35. My husband suffered from arthritis, fatigue and joint problems.
36. In the last 5 years of his life, his day-to-day life was affected in many ways. He had more bleeds, which resulted in him spending further time in Addenbrooke's Hospital. He had problems walking, which led to visits to his Physiotherapist at Addenbrooke's Hospital. He could not go up and down the stairs so quickly anymore. He did not use a walking stick or a wheelchair but he had support on his ankles and he had to start wearing more comfortable shoes, like trainers.
37. He used to play golf but he did not play since we were married. He did go fishing but he would have to sit down and used a trolley to take his equipment as he could not carry it anymore.
38. My husband was devoted to his work. He used to work as an Intelligence Manager in the offices of a local Prison Service. His role involved interviewing prisoners but he was not a Prison Officer. He was in this role for around 20 years and he had to take early retirement in 2016. Before this, he worked as an Estate Agent.
39. When he was at the **GRO-B** Prison Service, he used to work 6:30am to 6:30pm. Gradually he reduced his hours and eventually he took days off as he was struggling with fatigue and the side effects from the treatment to eradicate the Hepatitis C infection. I was shocked because he was so dedicated to his work and he rarely took time off for being unwell.

ANONYMOUS

Further medical complications

40. Due to the Hepatitis C infection, my husband developed various medical conditions and complications. The copy of his death certificate, which is at exhibit **WITN0041003** states the following:

- Disseminated Peritoneal Carcinoma
- Hepatocellular Carcinoma
- Liver Cirrhosis
- Hepatitis C

41. My husband also had varices, for which he had to have banding and he was also diagnosed with pancreatic/ bile duct cancer.

42. My husband discovered he had pancreatic/ bile duct cancer in April 2016. He went for his regular liver test and they found a shadow on the X-ray. His biopsy revealed it was cancer and an MRI scan confirmed it had spread to various organs which included his liver.

43. During Easter 2016, my husband and I went to dinner with family. He kept getting up from the table, said that he felt sick and that he was struggling to swallow the food. A family member who was a nurse asked if he was okay as she was concerned. **H** always enjoyed his food so it was noticeable that he wasn't right. I said that he was fine as we just thought it was indigestion and we knew no different at this stage.

44. However his health deteriorated so quickly soon after. During the last couple of weeks of this life, **H** developed Ascites, which was caused by the cirrhosis of the liver and the cancer. He went to Addenbrooke's Hospital as he was in so much discomfort. During his first visit, he was sent home and told to return a few days later. I believe that it was because there was not enough fluid to drain at this point and they needed a Haemophilia specialist in the event of bleeding.

45. He did return to the Hospital again and had the fluid drained. I went to the Haemophilia Centre at the Hospital and I was told by the team that they were shocked at how ill he was and that he even struggled to walk to the part of the hospital he needed to be in: he stopped and sat down several times. Having seen how ill he was at this point, I was very surprised to see that the Hospital had not kept him in. I asked the hospital why he was not kept in and they said he wanted to come home. **H** knew that he was at the end stage and he did make me aware that it was not a good sign.

ANONYMOUS

46. On the Thursday before he died he was struggling to get out of bed and had not been able to shower for a week. He asked me around to read his latest letter from the hospital which confirmed he had cancer. He looked so ill and I only stayed approximately 15 minutes as he said he felt ill and wanted to go back to bed.
47. He passed away at his home on GRO-B 2016: I can't believe how quickly this happened.

Treatment and effects of treatment for the Hepatitis C infection

48. My husband was given the Interferon drug along with another drug to treat his Hepatitis C infection. He was not on this for long: it was probably around 8 weeks or a couple of months. I cannot remember when he took them.
49. He had bad side effects from this treatment, which included feeling more tired than usual and suffering from depression. He was taken off them as they showed no signs of eradicating the Hepatitis C infection.
50. A few years later, he was offered a different type of treatment, which I believe was in a tablet form. However I cannot remember the name and do not know the dosages. He completed the full course and I know this because he took them when we were together. He was on this course for less than 3 months. The initial blood tests after treatment showed no signs of Hepatitis C and I remember how relieved H was and we celebrated. Sadly around 6 months later when he had another blood test the Hepatitis C infection was detected. H was devastated.
51. He also suffered bad side effects from these tablets, which included itching skin all over, hair loss and depression.

Access to treatment

52. My husband had access to the above treatments. He had a good relationship with Addenbrooke's Hospital.
53. I am not aware of whether my husband thought there were other treatments, which ought to have been (but were not) made available to him.

Medical and/or dental care for other conditions

54. As far as I know, my husband informed his dentist that he had the Hepatitis C infection but I am not aware if they treated him differently after they found out. His GP was aware that he had the Hepatitis C infection.

Husband: impact on private, family and social life

ANONYMOUS

55. As explained above, my son and I moved in with [H] in 2010. After moving in, he became very worried about infecting my son and I with Hepatitis C. He started drinking more and would have a bottle of wine to himself in the evenings. He suffered from bouts of depression. It was not nice seeing [H] like this.
56. I was willing to have children but he did not want a child. My husband was scared about another human contracting the Hepatitis C infection.
57. My husband's social life was affected as time went on. He obviously could not participate in certain contact sports or activities due to his Haemophilia A condition. He had to be careful to avoid situations where he would be at risk from having a bleed due to injury.
58. He loved fishing and went with a friend. However as time went on, he was unable to stand whilst fishing and could not carry the equipment.
59. He also used to work long hours as he was that committed to his work. But this all changed due to his exhaustion. Initially he took time off as annual leave. Then he started taking sick leave. He was not known to take time off.
60. As his his physical condition deteriorated so much, he had to take early retirement. This was not easy due to all the documents he had to produce as proof. He was finally granted early retirement on medical grounds in February 2016.

Personal : impact on private, family and social

61. Due to my husband's mental state, he was hard to live with. He did go to his GP to find out about medication for his depression but felt they were not very supportive. Eventually he did get put on antidepressants but said that the GP was not helpful. [H] was argumentative but not aggressive. His drinking also worried me. With hindsight, I now understand that this was his coping mechanism. I knew that he was ill when we met and knew he would not live until he was old. However it was putting a lot of pressure on our marriage. My son was a teenager at the time and he was also

ANONYMOUS

suffering from his own depression and anxiety. As my son was suffering from depression and in order to save my marriage, I decided to move out with my son.

62. In December 2012, my son and I moved less than a mile away into rented accommodation. Initially my husband and I did not talk to each other as I felt that he needed his own space to deal with his depression. After a while, we saw each other 2-3 times a week, texted each other and called each other.

63. We stayed in rented accommodation for 6 months. At the end of the 62. tenancy period, I was still worried about my husband and my son. I wanted to remain married and give my son stability, so I decided to buy my own place near my husband to support him.

64. My son and I moved into our new home in June 2013. My husband did not move into this house but we intended to live together at some point in the future. Despite not living together, he came around to the house to spend time with us, he even did the odd jobs and we always went food shopping every weekend together: this was our marriage.

65. During [H]'s last appointment with his Consultant at the Hospital, there was mention of the possibility of [H] taking tablets to slow down the cancer. This was also mentioned in the last letter he received. I did not realise how ill he was.

66. In the last week before he died, he did not get out of bed except for a hospital appointment to have the fluid drained. During this last trip to the hospital, he stopped 3 times in the hospital before he could get to the ward. He physically struggled to walk. He commented on how exhausted he felt.

67. The last night I saw him, which was [GRO-B] 2016, he had difficulties with talking. He talked about his Will a couple of weeks before he passed, I think he knew he did not have long to live.

68. He was a very private individual and he would never let on how things really were. I was looking to take time off to take care of my husband but on a Sunday morning I received a phone call from the Police. They would not say anything to me on the phone. They would not say anything to my son either when they arrived at the house.

69. Once I arrived at my house, the Police delivered the most devastating news that my husband passed away in his house on [GRO-B] 2016. They said that a neighbour went inside and found that he passed away in his bedroom.

ANONYMOUS

70. I went to see him at his house. All I can say is that I can never go back to that house again and I am glad that we were not living there with him at that particular time. I never imagined that I would find out this way and that H would die at home. I thought that we would go into the hospice and have a Macmillan nurse. I also thought that he would live many more years just like my father who had cancer and took tablets to slow it down. I never dreamt that he would pass away this quick. The end was horrific.

Effects on education

71. I am not aware if my husband missed out on his education but I know that he did not do so well as he missed a lot of school due to his Haemophilia A condition.
72. I did not miss out on any education as I met my husband as an adult.

Treatment/Care/Support

73. My husband did not face difficulties or obstacles in obtaining treatment, care and support under the care of Addenbrooke's Hospital. He could not speak more highly about Addenbrooke's Hospital. They even came to the funeral. They were amazing.
74. I am not aware of any missed treatments.
75. He did have counselling before we met but I do not know much about it as it was a sensitive area to discuss.

Financial Assistance

My husband

76. My husband was aware of the financial assistance that was available to him.
77. My husband received the following payments from Skipton/Caxton:
- Stage 1: £20,000.00
 - Stage 2: £50,000.00 and free prescriptions
 - January 2015: £14,574.00

ANONYMOUS

- Winter fuel
78. I am not aware of the process that my husband went through for applying for financial assistance.
79. As far as I know, I do not think my husband had any difficulties in obtaining financial assistance.
80. In relation to whether any preconditions were imposed on making an application or for the grant of the application, all I know is that his health had to be at a particular stage. Otherwise I am not aware of any preconditions.
81. I do not have any other observations about the Trusts and Funds.

Personal

82. My husband made me aware of Skipton/Caxton and said that I must claim in the event of his passing. I received the following payments from Skipton/Caxton:
- £10,000
 - Winter fuel: £500.00 and then £505.00
 - Funeral payment
83. As part of the process for applying for financial assistance, I needed to show that we were living together. However as explained above, I elected to live separately to save our marriage. Although we lived separately, we remained married. H did write up a separation document from the internet but it never went to Court. It was just done when things got bad between us: H was really depressed and drinking.
84. I did not have any problems in receiving the payment of £10,000 as they believed me from my letter, which explained the circumstances of our marriage. I received full payment for the funeral payments as I wrote to them.
85. My husband passed away on GRO-B 2016. In the lead up to his anniversary, I started having panic attacks and I noticed that my work was being affected. I decided to seek counselling and I paid around £1000.00.
86. However, in June 2018, I received a letter dated 20 June 2018 from the England Infected Blood Support Scheme. A photograph of this letter is at exhibit WITN0041004. When I looked into this further, I realised that I could have also had counselling through the scheme. I also understand from this letter that I am entitled to discretionary payments. I am not happy about finding out about all of this so late. I am working 6 days a week to make ends meet and I am exhausted and my health is suffering.

