

ANONYMOUS

Witness Name:

GRO-B

Statement No.: WITN0121001

Exhibits: NIL

Dated: 16th JANUARY 2019

INFECTED BLOOD INQUIRY

WRITTEN STATEMENT OF GRO-B
(ANONYMOUS)

I provide this statement in response to a request under Rule 9 of the Inquiry Rules 2006 dated 10th January 2019.

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

Section 1. Introduction

1. My name is GRO-B. My date of birth and address are known to the Inquiry. I am now retired after owning my own company and I live with my wife, with whom I have three children. I intend to speak about my infection of Hepatitis C as a result of the blood product Factor VIII. I wish for my identity to remain anonymous.

1.1 In particular, I will go into detail as much as I am able to recall, about the nature of my illness, how the illness affected both myself and my family, the treatment received and the impact it has had on our lives.

Section 2. How Infected

2. I was infected with Hepatitis C due to being administered the blood product Factor VIII in February 1983.
- 2.1 I had a wisdom tooth taken out at GRO-B hospital, Birmingham (a private hospital). It was a normal, out-patient procedure but the bleeding would not stop. I stayed there all day, and then I was sent home with the thought that it should be ok by then.
- 2.2 The bleeding continued throughout the night and I rang the GRO-B Hospital the next morning. I was advised to go back into the clinic to get it stitched up thinking this would help, but again it didn't. I ended up at an NHS dental hospital in Birmingham, where I stayed for 7-10 days. Nothing like this had happened to me before and it was here that I found out I was a haemophiliac. Prior to this I was unaware. In hindsight, when I was younger bruises maybe took more time to heal, but I had no idea that I had haemophilia.
- 2.3 It was on this occasion that the Factor VIII was administered to me to stop the bleeding, which took a few days to work. When I was given the Factor VIII it was never explained to me how Factor VIII worked and what it did, I was just told "you have to take this". However, even if I had been informed I would not have had an alternative therefore I would have accepted the Factor VIII, in order to stop the bleed.
- 2.4 I know that it was this Factor VIII that infected me because, about two weeks after I had been given it in early March 1983, I woke up one morning with vomiting and called the doctor. They thought I had jaundice, so I was sent to Dudley Road hospital in Birmingham and put in a separate room. I stayed here for the best part of two weeks. I had booked a holiday to India but had to cancel it due to feeling unwell and staying in hospital. I was off work (I owned my own company which is

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mentioned below) for around a month overall before feeling better enough to return.

2.5 In 1988 I was feeling a bit unwell so I went for a wellbeing check at the GRO-B Hospital. I saw Dr J Neuberger who luckily and incidentally, was a liver specialist. He discovered that I had scarring on my liver, which was worrying. I was referred to Queen Elizabeth Hospital where he had a clinic and it was then that I was informed I had Hepatitis C (Hepatitis C was not discovered at this time and was then referred to as Non-A, Non-B Hepatitis, NANB). Dr Neuberger explained everything about Hepatitis to me.

2.6 I was particularly worried at this stage because it was at the time that HIV and the AIDs virus had been initially being publicised and it was a concern and worry of mine that I may be affected as a result of having the blood products.

2.7 I was later to referred to Dr Mutimer at Queen Elizabeth hospital and I had a liver biopsy on 12 February 1991. At the time of the biopsy it showed cirrhosis of the liver. I was subsequently put on a medical trial under the supervision of Dr Mutimer, which I will outline below.

Section 3. Other Infections

3. I have not received any infection or infections other than Hepatitis C as a result of being given infected blood products.

3.1. I never used to have an issue with blood pressure, but following the Interferon used in my trial, as outlined below, my blood pressure changed and I was put on tablets, Monacor. However, I am not sure if this related to the Interferon or not and it has never been stated that this is a result of taking the Interferon.

Section 4. Consent

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4. To the best of my knowledge I have not been treated or tested without my consent.
- 4.1 As mentioned, when I was given the injection of Factor VIII, the risks were not explained to me. However, even if this was explained, I wouldn't have said no because I wanted the bleed to stop.
- 4.2 The nature of why the Factor VIII was contaminated, such as importing blood products from the US, was never explained to me. I have only since found out about this from the press.

Section 5. Impact

5. Just after my liver biopsy, in early February 1991, I was put on a medical trial on Interferon injections, under the supervision of Dr Mutimer, mentioned above. This trial lasted six or twelve months, I cannot recall exactly but it involved self-administering the Interferon with a syringe which was difficult, but I became used to it during the trial.
- 5.1 The trial affected my ability to work. I founded an import and distribution company in 1973 which mainly imported electronics, for example radios and calculators. It had expanded from about 1980 and I employed about fourteen people and had a distribution warehouse in Birmingham, which was around 80,000 square foot. The Interferon made me feel very tired at that time as I was experiencing flu-like symptoms that made going to work and getting up in the morning was very difficult. I tried to go to work every day, but I could not manage full days and instead took shorter days because I would get tired. I started to work from home and started taking Mondays off completely during this period.
- 5.2 My business was thriving at this point and I had dependable people that could look after the business whilst I was ill so I did not suffer any financial hardship from my illness despite having to take time off work.

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- 5.3 Between being diagnosed in 1988 and 1992 I was unable to travel abroad at various times, particularly when undertaking the trial. I was informed by Dr Mutimer that it was not wise to travel whilst taking Interferon due to my tiredness. This was a shame because I was supposed to go to the Far East for work as I started importing from the Far East in 1986/1987 and we had a lot of stock from that area.
- 5.4 Throughout the trial I would go back to Dr Mutimer for blood tests every 1-2 weeks. In August 1992 Dr Mutimer wrote to me that the result was excellent and had cleared my Hepatitis C. The treatment I received was good; the Interferon had worked. The condition of my liver is now back to normal and, as of my last check about three years ago, there is no longer cirrhosis of the liver.
- 5.5 I continue to see a haemophiliac specialist once a year, Dr Wilde.
- 5.6 I had a stent inserted into one of my main arteries in 2010, and another in 2015. These procedures were not connected to Hepatitis.
- 5.7 I did not experience down periods or periods of depression. However, not knowing what the future was to hold was very worrying.
- 5.8 I initially only told my wife that I had been diagnosed with Hepatitis. My children did not know until I started taking the Interferon injections; they were eighteen, seventeen and twelve at the time and were all living at home and attending school. No one outside the family knew: I didn't tell anybody at work, they knew I was taking the time off but didn't know why as I did not have to report to anybody.
- 5.9 It was difficult on my family because of the stigma. This was added to by the pressure of prominence of HIV and AIDs at the time and the worry that I might be affected. This was the worst part other than the treatment, there was a huge concern and worry that I would be pulled into this as a result of having had blood products. I had my family's blood checked for

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any infections, but that turned out ok. Other than this, I do not think that having Hepatitis caused problems with the family life.

Section 6. Treatment/Care/Support

6. The treatment I received was excellent and it cleared my infection. Although it was difficult, the Interferon was very good. I couldn't thank Dr Mutimer, in particular, enough.

6.1. I was never offered counselling or psychological support.

Section 7. Financial Assistance

7. I received money from the Skipton Fund, in the form of a £20,000 lump payment on the 11th October 2004.

7.1. In December 2016 I received another one-off payment of £3500 from the Skipton Fund.

7.2. I am currently in the receipt of £333 monthly instalments from the English Infected Blood Support Scheme (EIBSS). This represents an annual payment of £4000.

Section 8. Other Issues

8. It is unfortunate that I received contaminated blood. However, I see a lot of people in a much worse position than I was, especially in the haemophiliac clinic. Blood should have been screened to stop this from happening in the first place, but I suppose this was an effect of the greed in the world. I'm thankful I have not suffered like other people.

Statement of Truth

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

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Signed

GRO-B

Dated

16-1-19