

# ANONYMOUS

Witness Name: **GRO-B**

Statement No: WITN2428001

Dated: 3<sup>rd</sup> February 2019

## INFECTED BLOOD INQUIRY

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FIRST WRITTEN STATEMENT OF **GRO-B**

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

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

### 1. Introduction

1. My name is **GRO-B** My date of birth and address are known to the Inquiry. I was born and brought up in **GRO-B** **GRO-B** Northern Ireland.

2. I live at home with my wife. I have three children aged 24, 20 and 16 who all still live at home.

3. I joined the Army at 17. **GRO-B**  
**GRO-B**

# ANONYMOUS

4. I then went to the GRO-B
5. In the course of my service with the Army I saw time in the GRO-B
6. I have also held a number of GRO-B jobs such as a Warehouse Operative, Team Leader and Health and Safety Manager.

## 2. How Infected

1. I can recall that when I was 16 I had a terrible toothache. I had been bleeding for a week. It was then I was told that I was a sufferer of haemophilia and I was told that GRO-B was a carrier of Haemophilia A – mild severity.
2. The first time I had the Factor VIII it was done when I was unconscious, I had collapsed due to the loss of blood.
3. I was treated for this at the GRO-B I was treated with Factor VIII. I had Factor VIII on some other occasions. I can recall in 1984 I damaged my shin.
4. I had some health problems in the early 1990's. I had a tumour in my liver. I was involved in a road traffic accident and as a consequence, suffered some swelling around my abdomen. A biopsy was taken. When the results of the biopsy came back, I was given a diagnosis of non Hodgkin's Berkitt's lymphoma. This was related to my Hepatitis C.
5. I found out about the fact I had Hepatitis C in 1995, due to a leak from a Health Government worker, and the Haemophilia Society informing us of the news that some people may be infected. I was given an appointment to see Dr. Elizabeth Mayne and she sent me

# ANONYMOUS

for tests. It took 14 weeks for the test results to come back. Dr. Mayne then sent for me to inform me of my diagnosis of Hepatitis C. I was not offered any further information in relation to Hepatitis C, nor offered counselling of any sort. I was just told and that was it.

6. They told me that I had been contaminated since I had the tooth bleed in 1982. I had been given contaminated Factor VII) at that time. There was also a suggestion that I had been given infected blood in 1984, but it was not such a strong dose as Hepatitis C.

### 3. Other infections

1. I have lived with the concern that I may have Variant CJD.
2. I have also suffered from fibromyalgia and arthritis and Dr. Mayne had suggested at one point that might be linked to contaminated blood.

### 4. Consent

1. As stated, the first time I received Factor VIII I had collapsed and was unconscious so was not aware of what was being administered. I believe that it was explained to my mother, after the event that they had used Factor VIII for me. She was never told of any problems or risks associated with it.

### 5. Impact

1. In early 1990 I had a tumour on the liver. I had to have chemotherapy. I was told that if the chemo had not worked, I would have died. Liver complications such as this are a well known consequence of Hepatitis C.

# ANONYMOUS

2. GRO-B

3. Fortunately the chemo did the trick. However, the chemo was terrible and I lost a lot of weight. I was down to 5 ½ stone. I was having 7 ½ hours of chemo at a time.

4. I emerged from this but my liver was badly damaged.

5. GRO-B

6. GRO-B

7. At that time, in respect of work, I was managing but was fatigued. I particularly had pain in the liver area. It made sleeping very difficult.

8. In 2006 I was offered a GRO-B I enjoyed being in the GRO-B but I knew I was not fit enough to carry on. I was never going to be able to make it. Therefore, with reluctance, I took redundancy.

9. But for my health problems I could have seen myself carrying on, maybe rising through the GRO-B a bit, and staying in the GRO-B until I was 60 years of age.

10. GRO-B Dr. GRO-D a Neurologist in the Pain Clinic gave me Gabapentin. This was to kill pain in the nerves. I was given so many that I overdosed. I collapsed. I briefly went blind.

# ANONYMOUS

11. In 2008 my health was slowly deteriorating. I was getting weaker and weaker. I got to a stage where I was confined to a wheelchair. At one stage I was on 106 to 108 tablets per day.

12. In 2006 I had Hepatitis C treatment with Interferon and Reliferon. This made me really, really ill. I lost a lot of weight, suffered with Haemorrhoids, tiredness, diarrhoea and vomiting.

13. I then went on to a second treatment called Pegylated Interferon. This had effects similar to the Interferon but they also made my behaviour extremely erratic. [GRO-B]  
[GRO-B] packed her suitcase and said she was going to leave home because I was so nasty.

14. I tended to try and hide in my bedroom. I was afraid of going out and being with people for fear I would snap and lose it.

15. It also caused me to have very bad diarrhoea and haemorrhoids. It caused my temperature to fluctuate wildly.

16. I lost a lot of weight again.

17. Eventually I was told I was negative of Hepatitis C. This was only for one month and it then came back.

18. I went to [GRO-B]  
[GRO-B] The Consultant was a Dr. O'Grady.

19. I then returned to the [GRO-B] and was discharged.

## ANONYMOUS

20. I then began suffering with problems with the bile duct as it had become twisted and caused an obstruction, so they had to put in stents to expand the twisted tubes.

21. This had been picked up on an ultrasound examination. It was causing a problem with the blood flowing. Therefore, I had to have stents.

22. After the insertion of the third stent I was told that they noticed a hernia. The hernia developed and I have now got 5 hernias. They are reluctant to operate on me because I am carrying apparently too much weight. The problem is that I cannot exercise because of the pain so I am stuck in a sort of vicious circle.

23. My mobility is very limited. I cannot walk much more than 5 metres.

24. I continue to suffer from fatigue. I fall asleep very easily. I am on a large amount of painkillers. The only time the pain slightly eases is when I am lying in bed.

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

1. I had to get permission from the Government for my last course of treatment for Hep C. I have never been offered any counselling or psychological support even though I have been prescribed anti-depressants and suffered mental health issues.

### **7. Financial Assistance**

1. I have had 2 pay outs from the Skipton Fund. £20,000 in 2005, then a further £25,000 in 2011. I have continued to receive £1500 per month.

## ANONYMOUS

2. I found out about claiming from the Skipton Fund through the Haemophilia Centre [GRO-B]. It was very easy as the haemophilia Centre did most of the work for the patients.
3. I am presently on benefits. My Disability Living Allowance is changing to PIP. I am very worried about the impact on me of this financially. I am particularly worried about losing my Motability car. Without the car I could not get around or do anything.

### **8. Other Issues**

1. My whole life has been blighted by my blood infection. I lost my career in the [GRO-B] and I lost my financial independence. It has put a great strain on family life.
2. There is also a terrible stigma in Northern Ireland, particularly as people seemed to think that I was some kind of alcoholic. People associated liver problems with alcohol, particularly after what happened to [GRO-B] George Best.
3. Also, when I was jaundiced and yellow, people would not come near me. They thought that by just coming near me, I might infect them.
4. I had problems in applying for Disability Living Allowance (DLA). I applied three times before they accepted my application. I had to seek help from the Citizens Advice Bureau and they went through the paperwork with me and helped me complete the forms. After doing this and applying once more, my application was finally granted in or around 2001. Each time they declined my application, I was given no reason for them doing so.
5. In 2018 DLA changed to Personal Independence Payment (PIP). This meant I had to re-apply for this benefit. An Assessor came to

## ANONYMOUS

my home. My application was accepted for PIP, but the care package that I receive within this benefit has changed from the "high" rate to the "standard" rate which means I am approximately £68 worse off.

6. When the Assessor came to my home, I felt as though I needed to justify myself for receiving this benefit. As the PIP benefit works on a points system, I felt that I had to really over emphasise my condition to enable me to gain enough points for my application to be successful, and obviously it was not enough, as they reduced my benefit.



ANONYMOUS

**Statement of Truth**

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

Signed

GRO-B

Dated. 03/07/2019