

ANONYMOUS

Witness Name: **GRO-B**

Statement No: WITN2514001

Exhibits: WITN2514002-WITN2514003

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 15 February 2019. 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.
2. I live with my wife **GRO-B** to whom I have been married for 24 years. We have two children together, **GRO-B** years old respectively. My son and daughter still live at home with my wife and I.

2. How Infected

ANONYMOUS

1. I was diagnosed with mild Haemophilia A in 1983 after having my teeth out at the **GRO-B**. I remember they could not stop the bleeding and I was subsequently sent to the **GRO-B** also known as the **GRO-B** for treatment. It is at the **GRO-B** that I first used blood products. The product I used in 1983 was Factor 8.
2. Since being diagnosed with haemophilia I have attended the haemophilia centre at the **GRO-B** on a 6 monthly basis for check-ups, unless told otherwise.
3. I have only used Factor 8 twice. The first time was as stated above, and the second time was following surgery to my nose in around 1994. After the surgery in 1994 it was touch and go for a while as I had lost so much blood. My entire family were called to the hospital and it was a frightening time for everyone involved.
4. Having seen my medical documents, and as a result of my only being treated twice with Factor 8, I think it safe to say that I was infected with severe Hepatitis C through the blood products used to treat my haemophilia in 1983.
5. From my diagnosis of haemophilia until the early 90s I was under the care of **GRO-B** at the Haemophilia Centre situated at the **GRO-B**. When **GRO-B** retired in the early 90s I was then placed under the care of **GRO-B**. I do not recall if this was immediately after **GRO-B** departure or a couple of years later.
6. I will never forget the day I was told I had been infected with Hepatitis C. I received a letter from **GRO-B** on the Friday exhibited at WITN2514002 asking if I could get in touch with the hospital immediately as he had something important they needed to discuss with me. After I called the hospital, I was given an appointment for the

ANONYMOUS

following Monday. That weekend was one of the worst I have had. In hindsight they should have sent the letter on a different day, it was torture having to wait to find out what they wanted. All kinds of scenarios played out in my head. I was worried sick.

7. On the Monday I met with GRO-B to discuss the reason I was called in. It was in his office that he told me that I had contracted Hepatitis C. To this day I remain flabbergasted by what he said after telling me I had contracted the virus, his words were "it could be worse, you could have AIDS." I could not believe what I was hearing, and I still cannot believe those words left his mouth. To me, it was as if he was trying to make out that it wasn't that bad, and I had nothing to worry about.
8. In addition to the clear lack of compassion from GRO-B I do not recall him telling me of the risks associated with the illness and the ways in which it can be transmitted such as through blood and so on. I am confident this is the case as I recall watching a documentary on the television around a year or so after I was given the diagnosis which highlighted the dangers involved with having the Hepatitis C. I called the hospital immediately as my wife was also worried about what we had seen. I was given an appointment immediately. It was during this appointment that my wife and I were given in-depth information relating to the virus and what precautions to take.
9. This is in complete contradiction to my medical records which state that I was informed of the risks in 1994. My wife and I would not have been so alarmed by what we had seen on the TV had we already been told of the dangers associated with the virus.

3. Other infections

1. Although I have not contracted any subsequent infections, I remember being told that I had been exposed to vCJD; also known as mad cow

ANONYMOUS

disease. Fortunately, I had did not have the disease, however, at the time I remember thinking to myself is there anything else they can do to me.

4. Consent

1. Having now seen my medical documents it is clear that they knew about my Hepatitis for years before telling me. It appears as though I acquired Hepatitis C in 1984, which at the time they referred to as non-A non-B hepatitis. In the records they appear to be so blasé about the virus which is illustrated at exhibit WITN2514003 in the letter from GRO-B to my GP where he states that "I have not made an appointment to see him in my clinic again, but if you are worried, please do not hesitate to contact me or refer him back". I wasn't referred back so my GP couldn't have been that worried about it, which amazes me.
2. Furthermore, it suggests in my medical documents that I was informed that I had picked up "the virus of a condition known as Hepatitis" and that they will check this again in 3 months. Firstly, I was never informed of this as I would definitely remember being told I had hepatitis. Secondly, it again goes to show the nonchalant attitude they had toward my condition, and probably others like me, by suggesting there will be no action taken other than checking on it in 3 months' time. My records suggest that they did indeed check up on my condition and the tests on my liver suggested that I had Hepatitis C.
3. However, in 1985 they apparently sent me another letter stating that I no longer had the condition and that it had miraculously cured itself. Again, I did not receive the correspondence; I would without a doubt have remembered receiving correspondence of this nature. Of course, the hepatitis had not cured itself and this is evident in the correspondence thereafter and my current condition, which remains Hepatitis C positive.

ANONYMOUS

4. Throughout this time, I had absolutely no idea that they were testing me for hepatitis as my bloods were regularly being taken for my haemophilia. Had I known what they were testing me for I certainly would have wanted to know the results; who wouldn't want to know?

5. Impact

1. Physically the illness has not significantly impacted on me as I still work in an environment that requires a degree of manual labour. However, the mental impact it has had has been nothing short of stratospheric.
2. Put simply, since the day I was told about the Hepatitis C I have not been the same person. I was a happy-go-lucky kind of guy before my diagnosis and my wife will tell you the same. The diagnosis has been like a death sentence hanging over me. Every time I fall ill I think that my days are numbered. I battle with the paranoia on a regular basis. Any illness I have I am straight to the hospital as I always think it's going to be the worst case scenario. This in itself is both physically and mentally draining.
3. Moreover, my condition has had a significant impact on my relationship with my wife and my children. It is only recently that I have been able to discuss my feelings about how my illness makes me feel. Before I found the courage to open up about it I would bottle it up and try to bury it. This resulted in me hiding myself away in the spare room from my family. I would turn up the TV loud and sit in there for hours as it helped me escape from the reality of what I was dealing with.
4. I would often become frustrated with the fact I have contracted this life changing illness through no fault of my own. There is only so much bottling up you can do before you crack and I in turn would lose my temper with my wife and children when I did eventually succumb to my internal torment. Anything from eating crisps loudly would set me off

ANONYMOUS

and I would start shouting and screaming at them. I feel terrible that I subjected my family to this simply because of my inability to deal with what has been done to me. I feel as though my children have had some of their childhood taken away from them as they would always be on pins around me.

5. In addition to this, having to live a life of secrecy has been incredibly difficult. Only my family and our two closest friends know of my condition. The reason for this is due to the stigma attached to the virus. When I was first diagnosed there was a lack of understanding. I heard how people jumped to conclusions because of their prejudices and so I decided to keep it to myself.
6. I have not informed my employer of my condition. There have been times where I have had to sneak off to hospital appointments without them knowing. The reason I have to do this is that the regularity of my appointments will undoubtedly raise questions, and I am not prepared to answer those questions. I have had to use holidays on occasions where I have had a couple of appointments in a short space of time. I fear that if they discover I have Hepatitis C it may jeopardise my employment and I have a family and commitments. I cannot afford to lose my job. Furthermore, if I have ever cut myself in work, I have had to try to keep it quiet and patch myself up rather than let anyone help for fear of infecting them on accident.
7. This is something I deal with everywhere I go and is not necessarily confined to when I am at work. I have to constantly be on guard to ensure that I do not contaminate anyone else. For example, whenever I cut myself, I have to act quickly, I use my own towels at home and in general I tend to have my own separate stuff just to be on the safe side.
8. Finally, I have stopped drinking alcohol as I am conscious of the impact this may have on my liver. It has been difficult at times having to lie to

ANONYMOUS

my friends about the reason why I have stopped drinking and it puts me in an awkward situation at times, especially in the pub where making fun of one another is part and parcel of the culture there.

6. Treatment/Care Support

1. I have not had any problems in receiving treatment and in fact I have rejected treatment for my Hepatitis C. The reason for this is the side-effects are pretty bad and I am not prepared to go through with it. I have been fortunate in that my liver has remained normal even though I have chronic Hepatitis C. Therefore, I have not been forced into undergoing the aforementioned treatment. However, I have decided that due to the improvements in the treatment over recent years that I will undergo the treatment. I am currently in the process of arranging this.
2. Although I have not had problems with accessing treatment, I have found the way I have been treated at times has made me feel both embarrassed and small at times. For instance, when I was in hospital for nose surgery, I was placed on the general ward which meant I was surrounded by other patients. At times the nurse would come to change my blood and I would have to whisper to remind her to put gloves on. It was embarrassing having to do this, but I did not want the other patients on the ward to know about my condition in case they treated me as some sort of leper.
3. I remember one instance where a doctor pricked himself when treating me. He ran off in a fit of anger and panic after he realised what he had done. I understand that he was worried but to make me feel like that was wholly unprofessional and I will never forget that.

7. Financial Assistance

1. I received £20,000 from the Skipton Fund in 2004.

ANONYMOUS

2. I am in receipt of the quarterly payment of £1,255 funded by the Welsh Government.

8. Other Issues

1. To my knowledge, there are no other issues that would be of any relevance to the inquiry.

ANONYMOUS

Statement of Truth

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

Signed.

GRO-B

Dated..... 19-02-19