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Witness Name **GRO-B**
Statement No: WITN2548001
Dated: 11th April 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.

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

1. Introduction

1. My name is **GRO-B** My date of birth is **GRO-B** and my address is known to the Inquiry.

2. I currently work part time at **GRO-B** and have held this role for over **GRO-B**
GRO-B

2. How Infected

1. I recall in February 1983 I had my first ectopic pregnancy. Dr Adrian Roberts was my Consultant Gynaecologist at the time and my treatment for this was based at Llandough Hospital.

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2. Prior to being admitted to hospital in February 1983 I had been back and forth to the GP and was on the contraceptive 'mini-pill'. I was in pain for a few weeks, with the majority of the pain being in my abdomen.
3. I then went to see my GP Dr **GRO-B** and in all honesty I didn't find him very helpful during this period so went back and saw a different GP, the GP's name was Dr **GRO-B**. I was never off school for period pain as a young woman so it felt very strange that I was experiencing these symptoms.
4. I recall that after seeing Dr **GRO-B** he sent me off for numerous tests. He said to me during my appointment with him that if I had anymore bleeding or pain that was intermittent then I should call the doctor. The tests were that of a pregnancy test and a blood test.
5. I remember having the tests and going home. It was that day or a few days later in the early hours of the morning that I had a haemorrhage. I called the GP and he came to my house. I recall the GP wasn't Dr **GRO-B** but a locum instead. The locum didn't send me to the hospital. I really feel as though the locum should've called for an ambulance.
6. After the locum left I recall sweating and bleeding profusely. I also turned white. The pain became so bad that I had to call an ambulance. It was only then was I admitted to Llandough Hospital and given a blood transfusion.
7. I recall the reason for having the blood transfusion was due to the amount of blood that I was losing and also due to the fact that one of my fallopian tubes had ruptured. I had a ruptured ectopic pregnancy.
8. I wasn't aware of any risks of receiving blood products and as a result it did not cross my mind to ask whether the blood that I was receiving was safe.
9. After the transfusion I did not feel normal. About 4 weeks after the transfusion I was still on bed rest. I recall one day my mother and my step-father were

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visiting, I went to let them in the house and my mother's jaw dropped, she told me I had turned bright yellow. It was then that as a family we realised that I had turned jaundice. I recall that I wasn't given any sort of aftercare following my blood transfusion.

10. I then went to my GP at who referred me to Mr Paul Smith at Llandough Hospital. I can't recall Mr Paul Smith's exact medical title. Mr Smith said I had jaundice and that it was not A and not B. At the time I had no idea what not A and not B meant, however in time those words changed to hepatitis non A non B.

11. I wasn't provided with any sort of information regarding the infection I had contracted. I feel as though at that point in time things were not explained very clearly. I was totally ignorant to the fact that I had contracted a severe condition. I recall that I completely lost my appetite and remember trying to drink lots of water in order to feel better.

12. My ex-husband started a complaint against the GP Dr GRO-B who I originally saw and who sent me home. However he didn't follow through with the complaint as I couldn't face it at the time. Both myself and my ex-husband were more concerned about my health than carrying on a complaint against the GP.

13. The jaundice was intermittent. I didn't realise how bad the jaundice was at the time. I was a 25 year old woman who had reacted very badly to a blood transfusion. When I heard of non-A and non-B I didn't think this was something that I needed to be very concerned about.

14. Whilst being jaundice I was also dealing with the fact that myself and my husband had lost a baby through the ectopic pregnancy. The loss made us closer. He was as devastated as I was.

15. The Gynaecologist then said to us that we should wait another year before trying for another baby. The very first time my husband and I had intercourse

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following me falling unwell I conceived our son GRO-B. The period I am referring to would have been May 1983.

16. I recall being jaundice whilst 6 months pregnant. As my pregnancy was classed as high risk I had to attend Consultant Gynaecologist Mr Adrian Roberts fortnightly and then towards the end of my pregnancy I would see Mr Roberts weekly. I had pre-eclampsia whilst pregnant and this is a dangerous condition to have. I didn't breast feed when I gave birth to GRO-B as I was jaundice.

17. Whilst I was heavily pregnant with GRO-B I was feeling very unwell and light-headed. I walked over to GRO-B to attend an anti-natal class. However when I arrived at the Health Centre things took a turn for the worse and I collapsed. Due to my pre-eclampsia everything was prepped for me to have an emergency caesarean. Luckily I did not need a caesarean and I had a natural birth I was in so much pain that I couldn't even feel the contractions at the time.

18. I had intermittent jaundice and on the doctors advice I wasn't to drink any alcohol. It didn't really bother me that I was told not to drink alcohol as I have never been a massive drinker.

19. I had to give up my career whilst all of this was going on and my ex-husband lost his job. I recall that I went back to work in September 1985, with GRO-B Insurance.

20. Myself and my ex-husband tried for another baby three years after GRO-B was born but I miscarried.

21. I had an early stage ectopic pregnancy in 1987. I was in severe pain at the time and a locum came to my house. I then called an ambulance and I was sent straight to Cardiff Royal Infirmary at the time. I received surgery on my

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fallopian tubes at Cardiff Royal Infirmary. I recall the Cardiff Royal Infirmary I was placed in a room on my own and I recall the doctor being unsympathetic.

22. After the Surgery the doctor told me that he had found no scarring and gave me the impression I had congenital problems. As a result of the operation my fallopian tubes were partly removed and sealed. The doctor told me that technology such as IVF would help assist me in the future if I wished to have children. If I wanted another baby then the procedure to open my fallopian tubes could be performed. I would like to add that during that specific period I really wanted another child and sibling for GRO-B. In truth I was heartbroken.

23. During the Christmas of 1989 I had terrible flu. I had been very poorly intermittently and had to give up playing hockey. My GP from GRO-B GRO-B on New Years Eve came to the house, the GP thought that I had possible meningitis. Following the visit, the GP called an ambulance and I was admitted to the University Hospital Wales and my ex-husband told medical professionals at the Hospital about my jaundice.

24. At the Hospital I was moved from A&E to an isolation ward. I was told that I had a lumbar puncture. I was in the Hospital for weeks and I was diagnosed with encephalitis. I would also like to state that during this period in hospital it was the first time I had heard of hepatitis non- a non-b.

25. I recall the ward being very strange the hospital were very careful as to who was allowed to come and see me as it was an isolation ward. I was asked by medical professionals how long I had arthritis. I never knew that I had arthritis, it was only through the hospital trying to repair my lumbar puncture did they realise that I had arthritis.

26. During this period I was off work for around 3 months in total until my GP felt I was well enough to go back. I was very confused, I was so out of it. The Hospital must have known in the 1990s that I had hepatitis C. During this time my son GRO-B was around 7 years old.

27. It was in 1994 when my stepfather called me, he had just watched a Panorama programme on the BBC. On the programme they discussed the contaminated blood people had received in the 70s and 80s.

28. I then went to the GP in [GRO-B] and discussed with Dr [GRO-B] the Panorama programme that I had watched. I expressed my concerns with Dr [GRO-B] and the fact from watching the television programme I believed that this was something that had happened to me. As a result of my concerns I was tested. During the time my son was also tested for hepatitis C.

29. When the results came through it stated that I was hepatitis C positive. The whole experience was horrible as I knew in my heart my results were going to come back positive. I recall telling my ex-husband about the results and he said [GRO-B] At the time I didn't understand how he could have been so unsympathetic.

30. During that whole period I am referring to, my marriage had broken down. I recall one day expressing my grievances to my ex-husband and he said 'you're nothing to do with me anymore'. After he said that and upon processing the news of my hepatitis C I had a complete breakdown. In January 1996 I lost my job with the [GRO-B] due to ill health. I received a £4,000 pay out when I left.

3. Other infections

1. I have had intermittent jaundice for many years and often get yellow around my eyes.
2. I itched terribly whilst on the Interferon treatment. Additionally whilst receiving the Interferon treatment I became susceptible to heavy colds and the flu. I think this was due to my immune system being very weak. I would like to add that I don't think I have ever got over the affects of the Interferon treatment. I

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couldn't eat when I was on the Interferon and felt sick constantly. The Interferon triggered my eczema and asthma. I had only suffered with this as a child so found it surprising when I developed both of these conditions. I have been admitted with issues relating to my asthma ever since I received the Interferon treatment.

3. I would often have aches and pain all over my body. I was diagnosed with Osteo- Arthritis and as a result of monitoring this I was found to have fibromyalgia.
4. In around 2000 I began experiencing pain in my liver area. I saw Consultant Gastroenterologist Mr Puntice at the University Hospital Wales. I also have had pancreatic problems and in around 2000 I had awful pain in my pancreas. I collapsed and went into hospital with a pancreatic cyst on my holidays. A blockage with my gallbladder was what caused with cyst. The blockage caused the most severe pain I have ever experienced. I had every tube imaginable going into me at the hospital. I was constantly being pumped with anti-biotic and also had a catheter in. After receiving a number of tests at the hospital it was found that I had fluid on my lungs.
5. A procedure was due to take place between July to September of 2000, however this was postponed when it was discovered that I had CDIFF. I was then placed onto an isolation ward when it was discovered that I had CDIFF.
6. My immune system was so low during that period that I was susceptible to infections, hence why I had contracted CDIFF. Eventually in August 2000 I had my gallbladder removed and my pancreas was drained regularly. Mr Puntice was a very good Consultant and was very attentive with me during my stay at the hospital.
7. A few years ago my fibromyalgia worsened, this was discovered from a scan I underwent.

4. Consent

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1. In relation to consent, I would not know if I was tested without my knowledge or consent.

5. Impact

1. When my ex-husband met me I was so strong. I held the role of a manager and played **GRO-B** regularly. Due to the hepatitis C I became the shadow of the girl my husband married.
2. Following the breakdown of my marriage I started a new relationship with a really lovely man. He was with me when I started the Interferon treatment. However this relationship broke down as I didn't want to feel like a burden to him.
3. I received quite poor treatment from some nurses during my hospital stay in 2000. I believe this was due to the stigma attached to the hepatitis C virus. I would get certain looks from the 'bank' nurses. I would even say to the regular nurses that they should wear thick gloves around me due to my infection.
4. The stigma is something that I think about everyday. I don't go anywhere without plasters, Savlon and bandages. I am paranoid and get worried about passing on the infection. Some of the adverts that I saw on the television at the time were horrendous, they made people feel like lepers.
5. Following my hospital stay in 2000 I had to learn how to walk and eat again. In total my recovery took well over a year. My son was 16 at the time. My best friend **GRO-B** would keep an eye on him and my sister helped out.
6. Whilst all of this was going on my son had his GCSE exams. My son also has **GRO-B** which made things more difficult for him. It is very difficult for my son to discuss that period. We don't discuss it with each other. However I think he

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often puts on a brave face as he doesn't want to show much all of this has affected him.

7. I really hope for my son's sake that he doesn't remember a lot of what has happened to me.

8. I have felt weak for many years that I was unable to do certain things.

9. Around 18 months later when I began to feel better I applied for a job at **GRO-B** **GRO-B** and I got the job. I never thought anybody would look at me again after what had happened to me.

10. I recall the application form for the **GRO-B** job listed a number of illnesses. I ticked the box on the form which asked if you had jaundice and to my surprise I still got the job.

11. I recall that on one occasion when I was working in **GRO-B** we were locking up one evening and I started to feel ill. I had to go to the hospital due to another pancreatic cyst. My son, **GRO-B** had to tell the paramedic in front of some of my colleagues that I had hepatitis C and that I previously had a blockage in my pancreas. I had an endoscopy when I was admitted to hospital on this occasion. A cyst had grown back and had grown bigger following this I was re-admitted to University Hospital Wales. When I was in hospital for the second time I had a stent put in. Dr Puntice sat at the end of the bed and held my hand, he said 'you're not the ideal candidate for what you have gone through'.

12. I always say I'm not going to let all of what has happened affect me, but in reality it has affected me massively.

13. I used to be so active, played a lot of sport and was very sociable. I am not the way I once was in that sense.

14. I haven't even bothered trying to get life insurance as I know I have been black-listed due to my condition. I have issues trying to get travel insurance whenever I go on holidays.

6. **Treatment/Care Support**

1. I was on the Interferon treatment for around a year but had to come off it after about 4 months. The Interferon treatment started in 1996. I had absolutely awful eczema whilst on the Interferon and would itch from head to toe.
2. When I came off the Interferon I still felt its side effects, I experienced depression and insomnia after the Interferon. In all honesty I felt completely exhausted and drained.
3. I was prescribed the Interferon treatment by Dr Andrew Friedman at the University Hospital Wales. I recall being closely monitored whilst being on the Interferon treatment.
4. In 2015 I was prescribed Abbvie and I had this treatment at the University Hospital Wales through Dr Brendan Healy. One of the tests I was given showed that my liver score had jumped from 4 to 7. When your liver has a score of 7 it's a sign you have developed fibrosis.
5. For years it was difficult trying to obtain the Abbvie treatment but then I was eventually prescribed it in 2016. I wasn't very well during the Abbvie treatment and was on it for a total of 3 months and lost 2 stone. I was off work a lot during this time and I didn't sleep a lot.
6. I am not monitored regarding the state of my liver anymore.
7. If I am admitted to the hospital I have my bloods taken and that's it. If I were to go to a liver clinic I would feel more reassured about the state of my liver.

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8. I would also like to add that I don't have any annual check ups on my liver since everything has stabilised.
9. I would like to add that I have been offered counselling. I was referred to a Counsellor by psychiatrist Matt Hoskins after I had been taken off the Abbie. However the main issue was that the counsellor didn't know anything about hepatitis C. I mainly talked about my divorce and the torment I experienced through that with the counsellor. Whilst going through this I was scared about discussing the issues I had relating to the hepatitis C as the counsellor lacked any sort of knowledge on the subject.
10. I met Lynne Kelly of Haemophilia Wales a few years ago and I had around 20/30 years of emotional torment built up in me. Lynne has been absolutely amazing. I bottled things up for many years but that's just the way that I am. A lady named Becky who works at WIBBS has also been great. She has provided me with no end of support when I was experiencing a number of problems with the DWP and PIP.

7. Financial Assistance

1. In 2004, I received a one off payment of £20,000 from the Skipton Fund.
2. In 2010, the Caxton Fund was announced; this was a means tested fund. I had terrible problems in attempting to obtain assistance from the Caxton Fund. They refused to backdate payments. I contacted GRO-B my local AM at the time who tried to assist me in receiving payments from the Caxton Fund. I have now started to receive payments from the caxton fund. In 2014 I received winter fuel allowance from the Caxton Fund.
3. I have also received monthly payments from WIBBS since December 2016/January 2017. WIBBS have been great and have also provided me with specialist welfare advice. I have attempted to work full- time however I find myself to be too weak and unwell to do this.

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4. I have encountered no end of issues with the DWP. I've had to fight tooth and nail to try and receiving payments from them. WIBBS had to get involved at one point and Becky from WIBBS had to write a grievance for me.

8. Other Issues

1. When I went to see the liver specialist around 2/3 years ago I was told that my records prior to 1996 were missing. The Doctor I saw at the time did a trace on the records and called me 2 weeks later to confirm that the records had not shown up. I haven't heard anything about the records since.
2. I would like to know the truth as to why all of this happened. I feel as though if I knew the truth then I would be able to let go of a lot of what happened. I want to get a massive weight off my shoulders. I want to know why it was kept from me that I had contracted hepatitis C.
3. Sometimes I pretend that what happened to me never actually happened. I am always told that I am a strong person but I can't see it. I have always felt that I am complaining about what happened. What happened to me completely ruined my marriage. My ex-husband said, I turned into a girl that he didn't marry.
4. I feel as though the Government should have provided more support to victims of this scandal years ago, I find it outrageous that it has taken them this long to launch a public inquiry. I want justice from this Inquiry. I have been made to feel like a scrounger in regards to obtaining help from the DWP. I hold the hope that one day I will fall in love again and meet someone who will accept me for who I am.

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Statement of Truth

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

Signed

GRO-B

Dated... 11/14/2019