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Witness Name: GRO-B

Statement No: WITN2585001

Dated: 18th 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 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 and address are known to the Inquiry. I am the son of GRO-B: M My mother was born GRO-B and tragically died on the GRO-B GRO-B I have two older sisters.

2. My mother was a widower. She was widowed twice before she was 40 years of age. My father was her second husband. My sisters father was her first husband. My mother married my father after her first husband tragically died. Unfortunately my father then tragically died GRO-B when I was 4 years old.

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3. For the above reason, my mother was, for me, my only real parent. I never knew really my father. I was wholly and totally reliant on her as I grew up.
4. My mother was a strong determined woman. She had to be to survive the losing of two husbands and have to bring up 3 children almost single handed. She was a very lively outgoing person who loved life.

2. How Infected

1. In the spring of 1977 she had to have, what was understood to be, a relatively routine hysterectomy. She attended the local hospital to her which was the GRO-B
2. At that time I was just about to turn 7 years of age and I don't remember a lot about the procedure. I didn't really understand what was happening.
3. It is my understanding now that in the first operation there had been several cuts to venous sites, therefore, she had to be re-opened for this to be fixed.
4. She had lost a lot of blood, I believe around eight pints, and had blood transfusions during the process.
5. My mother gradually seemed to recover. She put the incident behind her, and life went on.
6. During the 1990's my mother had been becoming generally unwell. She seemed to be quite run down. She had various aches and pains. Nobody could put their finger on what was the cause of this. By that time my elder sisters had moved out, they had married and had families. I still lived at home so I was very aware that she was

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slowing down and becoming more and more poorly. She was not old, [GRO-B] but she was not well.

7. Her GP referred her to [GRO-B] and she was going therefore various investigations.
8. I remember it was the autumn of 1996 and my eldest sister had gone with her to [GRO-B] when she was seeing the doctor about these investigations.
9. Afterwards, they called in to see my younger sister [GRO-B] and I was there as well. They were very upset. My mother told me that the doctor had said to her that she had Hepatitis C. She also said, quite definitely, that the doctor had told her that it was as a result of the blood transfusion from way back in 1977. This came as a total shock. I was very upset.
10. I had heard about Hepatitis C, but I did not really know anything about it. I hoped and prayed she would be alright but I knew it was a very serious condition. I was worried this could be the end for her, that she might die.
11. I believe that she was given some information booklets. She spoke to her GP about it I believe.

3. Other infections

1. I do not believe that my mother received any other infections as a result of being given infected blood products.

4. Consent

1. I do not believe that my mother had ever been treated or tested without her knowledge or consent. What is of course extremely

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troubling is that there was a 20 year gap between when she was infected by Hepatitis C and being told about it. Presumably somebody somewhere must have picked up that she had been given the infection sometime before she was told in 1996. They seem so certain in 1996 that she had been infected in 1976 that one might have thought they would be able to tell her earlier. For all those years, she had been walking around with Hepatitis C without knowing about it.

5. Impact

1. About a year after the diagnosis, she discussed with the Doctor undergoing treatment. In late 1997 she began treatment with Interferon. This went on for about a year.
2. It made her very poorly. It was like having severe flu. As I was still living with her I saw how she suffered and was wiped out all the time. She was in pain all the time as well.
3. She was a very house-proud woman but now she struggled to manage. I can remember her battling to try to do the Hoovering. It had become an effort for her now. In an afternoon she would have to have a lie down
4. I would not say that she ever suffered from any stigma associated with Hepatitis C. We did not discuss it outside the family, so nobody else really knew about it. We are very private as a family.
5. Although my mother lived for a number of years after the diagnosis, her quality of life was greatly diminished. There was always a limit to what she could do. She had to always cut things short. She couldn't be out and about all day, she had to pace her self all the time. She was no longer the strong independent woman she had been. She was now very reliant on the family and particularly my sisters.

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6. Family outings became briefer than they might otherwise have been. If she ever did something like an outing or a day out, it would exhaust her and wipe her out.
7. She had always been a very sociable woman. She liked to go GRO-B She enjoyed Bingo and liked to visit the library a lot. All of these dropped away. She didn't have the energy to keep them up. She became more and more isolated, more and more reliant on her family.
8. It became clear that she couldn't manage in her house so in approximately 2001 she moved into a small pensioners flat.
9. It was very sad to see such a normally robust and active woman reduced to somebody who had to constantly limit herself.
10. She continued to try and present a mentally strong and brave face but I think it got her down. She knew she was ill, that she would not get better and that really upset her, it also upset me. She was upset at the thought of being ill and that she might not live as long as she otherwise would do.
11. We are a close family and we all lived within a few miles of her. We were able to keep an eye on her and help her out. She was brave and courageous but was not the woman she was.
12. Although she had been poorly for a number of years her decline was very sudden when it happened. In GRO-B she collapsed and was vomiting blood. She was admitted to hospital. They found she had liver cancer and it was quite far advanced. There was nothing they could do. She came home and died at home.

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13. At that time, when she was literally dying, my partner fell pregnant with our daughter. My mother had nagged me and my partner for years about giving her another grandchild. I was able to tell her, before she died, that she would indeed have another grandchild. Of course, she never lived to see my daughter, [GRO-B] who was born in the [GRO-B]

14. It upsets me that my daughter never saw her grandmother. My sisters' children will only remember her in her later years when she was not well, but they will have some memories. My daughter has none. I tell her all the time about my mother but I cant help thinking with sadness as to the fact that [GRO-B] missed out on such a fun loving wonderful grandmum.

6. Treatment/Care Support

1. To my knowledge, my mother did not face any difficulties or obstacles in obtaining treatment, care and support as a consequence of being infected.

7. Financial Assistance

1. I can remember my mother telling me that she had heard on the radio a Professor talking about Hepatitis C and mention the Skipton Fund.

2. She sent off the paperwork off and fairly quickly got a pay out of £20,000. That would have been in around 2005.

3. We received another payment on her death in 2010 of £25,000 and a further payment of £25,000 in 2013.

8. Other Issues

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1. It remains a source of great pain to me that my mother struggled through her later years battling disease as a result of being infected with contaminated blood. Living with her for much of that time I witnessed her struggles. She tried to be brave but her quality of life was badly affected. She missed out on so much and so did I and my daughter. My mother It should have enjoyed her later years and her grandchildren, instead she suffered and died as a result of being given infected blood years previously. It is a terrible thing, a real scandal.

Statement of Truth

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

Signed. GRO-B

Dated. 18/2/19