

# ANONYMOUS

Witness Name GRO-B

Statement No: WITN2071001

Exhibits: none

Dated: 14/01/2019

## 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 5<sup>th</sup> November 2018.

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

#### Section 1. Introduction.

1. My name is GRO-B my date of birth is GRO-B 78 and my address is known to the inquiry.
2. I can confirm that I have chosen not to have a legal representative and that I am happy for the Inquiry team to draft my statement based on the statement I have submitted to them.
3. I am a GRO-B I intend to speak about my infection of hepatitis C. In particular, the nature of my illness, how the

illness affected me, the treatment received and the impact it has had on my life.

**Section 2. How infected**

4. In May 1991, when I was 13 years old, I was out playing with some friends. We were playing in a derelict building, GRO-B  
GRO-B I do not remember much about the details, but I fell whilst playing in this building, down some concrete stairs. As a result of this fall, I was rushed by ambulance to Yorkhill Hospital, Glasgow. I received an emergency operation as I had severe internal bleeding. During the operation I required a blood transfusion. I received 23 units of whole blood and I also received factor VIII blood clotting products. It was during this procedure that I received infected blood.
5. I am not classed as a haemophiliac but I do go to the clinic at the Royal Infirmary in Glasgow. When I was 4 years of age, I had to have a tooth abstraction at GRO-B dentist, during this procedure, the dentist was unable to stop the bleeding, I was referred to the haemophilia clinic at the Yorkhill Hospital. It was discovered that I did have a bleeding disorder. I had low platelets in my blood. Since then I continued to go to Yorkhill Hospital to the haemophilia clinic and then at 16 I attended at the haemophilia clinic at the Royal Infirmary for check-ups. I am not classed as a haemophiliac but the nature of my blood disorder causes me to have excessive bleeding if I am injured as it hinders the clotting process. During my emergency operation, in May 1991, I received 23 units of whole blood and Factor VIII clotting products.
6. I received my operation at Yorkhill Hospital, Glasgow, I was under the care of Dr Gibson at that time. I remember I was also under the care of a Dr Fraser.
7. It was whilst I was given the 23 units of whole blood and Factor VIII clotting product during my emergency operation, that I became infected with hepatitis C.

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8. As I was only a child at that time, my mum was the person that Dr Gibson kept informed regarding the operation and my progress. My mother was not given any information or advice beforehand about the risk of me being exposed to infection from blood products. This was an emergency situation and my mum just wanted the medical staff to save my life.
9. As a result of my blood transfusion during the emergency operation, I was infected with infected blood and contracted hepatitis C.
10. In the summer of 1997, when I was 18 years old, my mother and I attended at the haemophilia clinic at the royal infirmary in Glasgow for a regular check-up. At this time, we saw Professor [GRO-D]. He told me that a test on my blood had shown that I had been contaminated with hepatitis C. I did not know what hepatitis C was at that time. I remember he did say that there was no cure for it. He said they would keep an eye on me. I remember he said that I could have flu-like symptoms as a result. I also remember he said that I could in the future develop liver cirrhosis or liver cancer. I do remember that my mother was given some leaflets regarding hepatitis C. Professor [GRO-D] did say that the infection could be passed through sexual intercourse or from blood to blood. He gave no further information.
11. I do not believe we were given adequate information to help my mother and I understand and manage the infection.
12. I do think as soon as it was discovered I had hepatitis C I should have been told at the earliest opportunity.
13. I do not have any views about how the results of my tests and the information about the infection were communicated to me.
14. The only information Professor [GRO-D] gave me about the risks of others being infected was he said that there was a risk through sexual intercourse and that condoms should be used as protection. He also said that the mixing of blood could infect another person.

**Section 3. Other infections**

15. I do not believe that I have received any infection or infections other than hepatitis C as a result of being given infected blood or blood products.

**Section 4. Consent**

16. From the age of 16, I attended the haemophilia clinic at the Royal Infirmary, Glasgow. I believe I went there every six months and my bloods were taken. I do not believe I was treated or tested without my knowledge or without my consent or without being given adequate or full information. I do not know if I had been tested for the purposes of research.

**Section 5. Impact**

17. I have had no real physical effects of being infected with hepatitis C to date. Mentally, it has been bittersweet for me in that without the blood transfusion at 13 years of age, I would undoubtedly have died so in that sense I have enjoyed a further 27 years of life. Nevertheless, I am saddened and worried about my future health because of being infected. To date, I have had no further medical complications or conditions that have resulted from the infection of hepatitis C.
18. A few months after I was informed by Professor GRO-D that I had contracted hepatitis C, he gave me the option of having a trial treatment. I was told it was the only treatment at that time for the condition. Over a three month period I injected into my thigh 3 times a day at certain times of the day. This treatment was offered to me and therefore I did not face any difficulties or obstacles in accessing the treatment. I was told that this was a trial drug and that there was no other treatment available for hepatitis C at that time. The physical effects of the treatment I had received were quite profound and debilitating. Within 2-3 days of me injecting interferon, I had an extremely high fever and cold like symptoms. I was extremely tired and



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extremely drained. It was very difficult for me to even get out of bed I was so fatigued.

19. I do not believe my infected status had impacted upon my treatment, medical or dental care for any other conditions. I have been hospitalised for gastroenteritis a few years ago, I was treated at the Royal Infirmary. The medical team will have known I had hepatitis C, I do not believe that my infected status had any impact upon my treatment at that time.
20. The impact of being infected with hepatitis C has been quite profound on my private, family and social life. I have avoided relationships and remain single in my 40's. This is contrary to my culture where I would have been expected to be married and have a family of my own. I avoid going to family occasions, such as weddings, as I am constantly asked "When are you going to be next?." I therefore have become a very private person. Without having hepatitis C, I am sure my life would have taken another course in that I would be married and have children of my own. I have avoided this as I could not bear the thought of passing the infection onto another. As it is, I still live in a flat with my mother. My mother and brother are the only people that I believe know about my infection.. My mother was obviously present when I was informed by Professor [GRO-D] that I had hepatitis C. I did tell my brother at the time, although I avoid talking about it now with him.. I do not tell anybody I have got hepatitis C due to the stigma of this condition. I have purposely avoided going for any employment that would require me to have a medical examination. This is due to the fear of colleagues finding out my condition and how they would treat me due to the stigma of having hepatitis C. The only person I talk about my condition to is my mother.
21. When Professor [GRO-D] told me I had hepatitis C, I was in my first year at university. I did try and lead a normal life, attending lectures and seminars, however when I was on the interferon I had to take days off my educational course as I was too fatigued to attend. I did manage,

however, to complete my degree successfully. My condition has affected me financially in that I was refused a mortgage. In 2015, I was refused life insurance when I was buying a flat with my mother. This was with the Abbey National, now Santander. I was open about my condition when I applied for life insurance. The mortgage company sent a doctor to my home address and she took my blood for analysis. When the results came back that I had hepatitis I was refused life insurance and therefore could not get a mortgage.

22. The impact of me being infected with hepatitis C has affected my mother. She alone, had to get the mortgage herself as I was refused life insurance. She is also very secret about my condition, if over the years, she has had to take time off work to go with me to appointments, she tells her colleagues that I have a blood disorder. She does not tell them that I have hepatitis C because of the stigma.

#### **Section 6. Treatment, Care Support**

23. Since my diagnosis with hepatitis C, I have only been in hospital on one occasion and that was for gastroenteritis. I did not face any difficulty or obstacles in obtaining treatment or care at the hospital as a consequence of being infected. I have never been offered counselling or psychological support, it has never been made available to me.

#### **Section 7. Financial assistance**

24. I have received financial assistance from the trusts and funds set up to distribute payments. In total I have received £52,100. I have also been awarded £525 per month.
25. I first became aware that financial assistance was available in 2005. It was whilst at a routine check-up at the haemophilia clinic at the Royal Infirmary that one of the nurses, named Isobel, informed me. She told me that I could get financial assistance from the Skipton Fund. I had not heard about the Skipton fund prior to this. I applied to the fund and in 2005, fairly quickly after, I received a lump sum of £20,000. In 2017, I received a payment of £30,000, this was also from the Skipton fund.

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In December 2018, I received £2100 from the Scottish Infected Blood Forum, I was also awarded monthly payments of £525 per month. I will receive my first payment in January 2019. I have been informed that I will be assessed every 3 years and that my payments could alter depending on my condition.

### **Section 8. Other issues**

26. I wish to remain anonymous in relation to this inquiry. This is due to my profession.

GRO-B

GRO-B

GRO-B

### **Statement of Truth**

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

Signed

GRO-B

Dated

8/2/2019