

INFECTED BLOOD INQUIRY

FIRST WRITTEN STATEMENT OF

GRO-B

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

Section 1. Introduction

1. My name is GRO-B and I live alone at GRO-B.
GRO-B I was born on GRO-B.
2. This witness statement has been prepared without the benefit of access to my full medical records. If and in so far as I have been provided with limited records the relevant entries are set out in the medical chronology at the end of this statement.

Section 2. How Infected

3. On GRO-B at 3.50 am I was riding my motorcycle around a left hand bend. My passenger lent the wrong way around the bend and we crashed. I crashed through a fence causing serious injury to my right leg. I cannot remember much more about it but I was taken by ambulance to hospital.

ANONYMOUS

4. There was not much left of my right leg between my knee and my foot; most of the flesh had been ripped off. I had lost so much blood that I needed blood transfusions; I had lost 6" of bone between my ankle and knee.
5. The bone specialist had been to see me and had advised that my leg should be amputated. As I was not in a fit state to sign any consent forms it was left to my family. I did not get on well with my father. He would not consent to amputation of my leg as he did not want me to hold it against him so he would not sign the consent form. He consented to surgery to try and save my leg.
6. I therefore underwent a cross leg free flap surgery where they sewed my left leg to my right taking an artery from the left and joining it into the right leg. They took the skin, fat and muscle from my right hand side which made me look as though a shark had taken a chunk out of me. I had to have numerous surgeries.
7. Unfortunately the leg became gangrenous and I was put in an oxygen tube for 8 hours a day to attempt to get rid of the infection. This has made me extremely claustrophobic.
8. Due to infection they could not save my leg and my right lower leg was amputated.
9. I was in hospital for a total of three to four months and I calculate that I have had approximately 60 surgeries; all the blood transfusions were given in 1979.
10. In 2004 I went to my GP. I was tired all of the time. I had been suffering like this for many years. I saw GRO-B at GRO-B He took blood tests and when I went back to the doctor for the results I was told that I had Hepatitis C. I believe that this was contracted via the blood transfusions I received.

Section 3. Other Infections

11. I have only contracted HCV and not HIV or any other infection. I feel lucky that I haven't got HIV.

Section 4. Consent.

12. I was given no indication of risk about having a blood transfusion at the time but it was needed to save my life. I was not told about any issues that may affect me as a result of having a blood transfusion.
13. I consented to blood tests but I was unaware that my blood was being tested for HCV or HIV.
14. I have no knowledge of how or if the results of my tests were used in terms of research.

Section 5. Impact

15. From the year 2000 I had a partner; we had a good relationship. We were not living together but it was a long term relationship. When I got back from the doctor however I told her that I had contracted Hepatitis C. She didn't want to catch it and left me; I have never seen her since.
16. I had met her several years previously but we got together in a relationship in 2000. Since she left I have not been in another relationship; I have not felt that I have been able to.
17. I know I have two children; one of whom I have never seen. This child was born from a relationship with someone who just wanted to get pregnant and then she disappeared.
18. My other son I have only met once. His mother married someone else and went on to have four more children. They now live in Australia.
19. I am therefore very much on my own. I have not told many people of my infection; only my parents who live in GRO-B and my old neighbour and his cousin know about it.
20. As a result of the bike accident I have had numerous operations. I was in GRO-B GRO-B for around three to four months and initially was in the operating theatre every single day.

ANONYMOUS

21. I was unable to have a prosthetic leg for 4 years because the numerous skin grafts that I had would not take. I look back now and wonder whether the Hepatitis was the reason that the grafts would not take.
22. I was left feeling tired all the time; I suffer from real fatigue. I cannot walk very far without feeling out of breath and I am in constant pain.
23. In late 2005/2006 I received a call out of the blue from the GRO-B I cannot remember the person who called me but he was a nurse. He asked me to go in for treatment. I remember that I went to an old building at the hospital which we entered at the side door and then left through another door. I felt a little discarded.
24. I was given Interferon. I injected myself daily and I remember that I also took a lot of tablets at the same time. I cannot remember the name of them. I had been told that it would make me a nasty person to be with but as I was living on my own I just got on with it and do not know if I became difficult or not.
25. I have never felt the same since taking this medication. I am told that it has halted the HCV.
26. In 2018 I went to the hospital and they recommended that I have liver function tests. The results were higher than what they should have been. I was told that I should not drink any beer and if I did that it would kill me. I was told that I did not need to come back but to contact my GP if I felt any different.
27. I still feel very, very tired; I am tired all the time. I can go days without sleeping but I should be able to sleep as I take sleeping tablets. I take enough sleeping tablets to knock a horse out but I cannot sleep. I end up dosing throughout the day on the sofa. I am in pain every day. I take high doses of the pain killer oxycodone, every day and I also take cocodamol to top up. My doctor wanted to change the pain killers to morphine as it is a cheaper drug but I did not want to.
28. I get out of breath very easily; I only have to do the slightest thing which makes it difficult for me to breathe. I gave up smoking in 2004 at the same time I took the Interferon treatment. I sometimes wonder whether it was giving up smoking that has made me feel so bad.

ANONYMOUS

29. I love motorbikes and motorcycling. Even though I had a serious accident I still returned to biking after it. I even bought a brand new bike which I loved. I had to sell it when I had the Interferon treatment as my doctor advised that I should not ride a bike again. I lost a lot of money as a result.
30. I have a car but I hardly go out to drive it. It is one year old and only has 1700 miles on it.
31. I have not worked since 1979. I have applied for jobs but because I am disabled have not been accepted. I applied for a job with **GRO-B** but did not put the fact that I was disabled on the application. I got an interview but when I went to the interview I did not get the job.
32. I have very little support. My mother is supportive but she lives in **GRO-B** I am very house-proud and it upsets me that I cannot do the house work to perfection. I can Hoover a little but after a short time of Hoovering I am so fatigued. I hardly go out.
33. I have to force myself to get out of bed in the morning; I do not want to do anything. If I walk upstairs I end up puffing and panting; I was not like this before the Interferon treatment. I did feel the tiredness and that is why I went to the doctors which subsequently led to the HCV diagnosis. My blood pressure is very high and I sweat profusely. The doctors do not appear to be interested in my issues.

Section 6. Treatment/Care/Support

34. I have been offered neither advice nor counselling in respect of the HCV.

Section 7. Financial Assistance

35. In or about 2005 I received a Stage 1 payment from the Skipton Fund in the sum of £20,000.
36. I receive incapacity benefit and for the last couple of years I have received £341 per month from the Skipton Fund. I understand that from July this year EIBSS will pay £18,458 per annum.

ANONYMOUS

37. The Skipton Fund also paid for two new doors for my property. People in the neighbourhood reported me to the DSS because they could not understand how I could afford this on benefits. The DSS came out to investigate the matter.

38. The Skipton Fund has also paid £1,000 towards my mobile electric scooter; another £1,000 was paid by the Barnwood Trust.

39. I feel as though I have had to fight to receive payments from the Skipton fund and I have not found the processes easy.

Anonymity, disclosure and redaction

40. I do wish to remain anonymous and wish to apply for anonymity. I understand that my statement will be disclosed and published to the Inquiry. I do not wish to give evidence.

Statement of Truth

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

Signed... GRO-B

GRO-B

Dated... 17-6-2019