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Witness Name: **GRO-B**

GRO-B

Statement No.: WITN0831001

Exhibits: WITN0831002-003

Dated: 29th August 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 19th July 2019.

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

Section 1. Introduction

1. My name is **GRO-B** My date of birth is **GRO-B** 1949 and my address is known to the Inquiry. I am a retired **GRO-B** I am married to my wife **GRO-B** and have been for over forty years. We have two children together **GRO-B** who is thirty two and **GRO-B** who is thirty one. I intend to speak about my diagnosis with hepatitis C. In particular, the nature of my illness, how the illness affected me, the treatment received and the impact it had on me and my family.
2. I can confirm that I have appointed Thompsons solicitors to be my legal representative. I confirm that the Inquiry should send all correspondence

regarding me to Thompsons.

Section 2. How infected

3. On 28 February, 1971 I was involved in a serious road traffic accident where I was thrown through the windscreen of the car I was in. I sustained very serious and multiple injuries. I was taken by ambulance to the **GRO-B** Hospital **GRO-B** Scotland. On admission I was taken straight to surgery for an emergency operation for head injuries. My blood pressure was sixty. For this reason I was given plasma followed by two pints of blood, then a further two pints of blood in theatre. I know this is the treatment I received because I have letters of discharge and copies of operation notes from the hospital. I produce these notes and letter of discharge in evidence and refer to them as **WITN0831002** and **WITN0831003**. These documents were contained within my GP records. The **GRO-B** have destroyed their records. My father and indeed the surgeon who operated on me, told me that I had needed a blood transfusion during the surgery.
4. The blood that was given to me was contaminated and I was infected with hepatitis C.
5. I was not told before the operation about the risks of being infected with contaminated blood. The operation was a life-saving operation and I was unconscious. I was not informed after the operation about the risks of being infected either.
6. About fifteen years ago I began to have pain in my knees. I felt exhausted and I was struggling to function. I remember I was sent on a weekend course with work. At the end of the course the pain in my knees was so bad, I could hardly walk. I made an appointment to see my doctor first thing on the Monday morning. My doctor at that time was called Dr **GRO-B** (now retired). Dr **GRO-B** took my blood for testing and a urine sample. A few days later I received a letter from Dr **GRO-B** informing me that my tests had come back. It said that my PSA (prostate-

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specific antigen) had come back with a high level. This is the mark of prostate cancer. The letter said I was being referred to the Urology department at Gartnavel Hospital. A few weeks later I received an appointment to see a consultant called Dr Seaward at the Urology department. Initially Dr Seaward thought I had a urine infection but after further tests it transpired, that I did have prostate cancer.

7. In 2008 I had an operation at the Royal Infirmary, Glasgow, for my prostate cancer which was conducted by Dr Mark Underwood. I remember it was around the time that the Beijing Olympics was on, as I love sport and I was watching it as I recovered. Post operation, Dr **GRO-D** discussed my bloods with me on the day I was discharged and I recall him saying that there was something wrong with my blood work, but he shrugged it off, saying it was nothing to worry about.
8. I have been closely monitored since 2008 by my doctor. I would have regular appointments to have my blood taken and checks on my blood pressure. In November 2018 on one of my regular appointments to the doctors there appeared to be some concerns about my liver function. By this time I had a new doctor. Her name is Dr **GRO-B** she is young and enthusiastic and was keen to find out why there was a problem with my liver function. She was asking how much alcohol I drank. She sent me for ultrasound on my liver which was performed at the **GRO-B** hospital at **GRO-B** I was told there that my liver was fine and I had nothing to worry about. Dr **GRO-B** was not happy with this and sent me for another ultrasound scan on my liver at Gartnavel Hospital. My doctor took another blood test and referred me to Professor Priest at Gartnavel Hospital.
9. In October or November 2018 I attended Gartnavel hospital and saw the liver specialist nurse Heather Blair. She told me that I been tested for hepatitis A and hepatitis B and that I was clear. She then said I had also been tested for hepatitis C and I was positive. She asked me about my lifestyle whether I injected drugs intravenously and asked me about my sexual preferences. I didn't really know anything about hepatitis C. She told me it was an infection but ~~that~~ there was a treatment for it. She said there was a course of drugs available, called Maviret, that would clear the infection. She also gave me some leaflets on hepatitis C.

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10. Heather Blair was very professional but in hindsight she did not give me much information about the infection or the risk of passing it onto others. She did refer me to Professor Priest.

11. When I went home after the hospital appointment I spoke to my wife and told her that I had hepatitis C. We both read the leaflets that I had been given. My wife asked me if I had been having sexual intercourse with men. She knew I didn't take drugs of any kind. **GRO-B** then said it must have been from when I had the blood transfusion in 1971.

12. I texted Heather Blair, the liver specialist nurse and mentioned my blood transfusion to her. I asked her if I could have contracted hepatitis C from this. She replied that she agreed that it was the most likely cause of the infection.

13. I had an appointment with Professor Priest at Gartnavel Hospital after this. He did give me more information about hepatitis C and its implications. I was also informed that I could pass on the infection through blood to blood contact and also through sexual intercourse. I was advised to be careful about sharing toothbrushes or razors.

Section 3. Other infections

14. I was infected with hepatitis C.

Section 4. Consent

15. As far as I am aware, I was not treated or tested without my knowledge or consent. I do not believe I was treated or tested without being given adequate or full information or for the purposes of research.

Section 5. Impact

16. I was only twenty years old when I had my road accident. Prior to this, I

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was a fit and healthy young man. I enjoyed most sports and was very active. I did not know my infected status till 2018 but with hindsight, I have reflected back on the physical and mental effects that hepatitis C has had on me over the years.

17. Throughout my life I have suffered physically with severe fatigue. At work I would often be exhausted and fall asleep GRO-B or in cupboards. I really struggled on a daily basis. I suffered with joint pains and pains in my lower back. Mentally, I often was quite depressed because of my health and would get frustrated with myself. I have been told now that it is possible that I have had hepatitis C for nearly fifty years. I have found it difficult to come to terms with the dramatic implications of the diagnosis. It has been explained to me that I also have an increased chance of developing liver cancer. This prognosis obviously has effects on my mental health.

18. My wife and I have enjoyed a faithful monogamous relationship. We were married in 1973. I have never engaged in homosexual activity and I have never injected drugs GRO-B and I now find that we are feeling embarrassed about the required change in our lifestyles, i.e. obviously I no longer drink alcohol at any time whatsoever. However at dinner or parties it can be awkward. Does one explain this change or make up a story? Socialising notwithstanding, I have had no problem in stopping drinking.

19. As a result of contracting hepatitis C, I now have cirrhosis of the liver.

20. I started treatment in January 2019. This consisted of Maviret tablets three times daily. Heather Blair had told me that the treatment was expensive and would cost £42,000. The treatment was for eight weeks and it was successful. I am currently undetectable for hepatitis C.

21. I did have to wait a month from being diagnosed to get this treatment. I was told by Heather Blair, that I had to wait for it to be approved, as the

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treatment was so expensive. Otherwise there were no obstacles that I faced for accessing treatment.

22. I do not believe there were any other treatments available. I was led to believe that the treatment was a new treatment and much better than the old one. I feel lucky in this respect as my understanding is that the old treatment had horrendous side effects.

23. I did not have any side effects to the treatment I received. I was tired and lethargic but I was used to feeling like this.

24. My infected status has not had any impact on my treatment, medical or dental care for any other conditions. I have suffered from high blood pressure for many years. I remember last year when I went to see Dr **GRO-B** about this, I told her that I had been diagnosed with hepatitis C. She looked embarrassed and said, "*we don't test for that.*"

25. The impact of contracting hepatitis C has had a huge impact on my private and family life. I was constantly tired and had aching joints. **GRO-B** took on the majority of the burden of family life. I remember I would fall asleep all the time. My children, who were young then, would jump on me and try to wake me up. I would get very irritable and angry with them. I wasn't very pleasant to be around. I couldn't concentrate on anything, I found it difficult to even watch a film. I know that **GRO-B** brought up our children almost single-handedly. I feel guilty about that but mentally and physically I could do little about it.

26. The result of my short temper with my children, as they were growing up, has left an impact. I haven't got a good relationship with them now, despite them being adults. This is particularly true of my relationship with **GRO-B** who I see very little of. This is a great sadness to me.

27. I had to give up alcohol altogether I didn't drink alcohol to excess, but I enjoyed a glass of wine particularly with a meal. I find this abstention

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hard at times as GRO-B enjoys a glass of wine with a meal, particularly if we are on holiday.

28. I did on a number of occasions apply for promotion at work, but I was always unsuccessful. I couldn't concentrate during the interviews, mentally I had brain fog. I knew I didn't have a particularly good reputation in my work. When the chance of early retirement came up, I took it when I was sixty two. I remained un-promoted throughout thirty two years of teaching. My inertia has frustrated me.

29. I am aware of the stigma that surrounds hepatitis C. It is linked to HIV, homosexuality and intravenous drug use. It is for this reason that I do not tell anyone of my infection. I am a member of a private swimming club and gym with fabulous sauna suites. I believe because of the stigma surrounding the condition, other members might recoil from me if my medical history became general knowledge. My wife, daughter and son are all members of this club as well, so it is an important place to me and my family.

30. GRO-B and I have told our children about my infection. GRO-B and GRO-B have been supportive. This has changed the social dynamic and interaction with their own partners and wider social circle and it has had a similar impact on my life. GRO-B and I consciously decided to withhold the news of my diagnosis from anyone.

31. Having hepatitis C has impacted on my relationship with GRO-B. We have slept separately for the past ten years. I believe this is due to my fatigue affecting my libido and also my prostate issues.

Section 6. Treatment/Care/Support

32. I have not been offered any counselling or psychological support as yet. I do not know if this would be useful for me.

Section 7. Financial Assistance

33. When I was diagnosed with hepatitis C, Heather Blair, told me that I would be entitled to financial assistance from the Scottish Government. She gave me a form to fill in and I sent it off. Not long after I had sent the form off, I received a lump sum of £50,000 and I also receive £1600 a month now. The process of applying for the financial assistance was a straightforward process.
34. The process for applying was straightforward, I didn't experience any difficulties with it and there were no preconditions applied to the application. The only observation I have, is that there was no question or delay. I felt that this was a straightforward admission of guilt.

Section 8. Other Issues

35. Over ten years ago, after I had my surgery for prostate cancer, I was desperate to get home. I asked a consultant, Dr GRO-D if I could be discharged. Upon organising this, he told me that there was a problem with my bloods. He did not elaborate any further, he said there was nothing to worry about, and he let me go home. Looking back I wonder now whether they discovered then that I had hepatitis C but I have no evidence to know that.
36. I did provide a statement online to the Inquiry when I found out that the infected blood scandal was being investigated. I did provide the basic details of my case but did not go into much detail about the impact of having hepatitis C on my life. I believe this statement provides this information.
37. I wish to remain anonymous in this Inquiry.

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Statement of Truth

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

Signed: GRO-B _____

Dated Apr 21, 2020