

ANONYMOUS

Witness Name: GRO-B

Statement No: WITN2963001

Exhibits: 0

Dated: April 2019

INFECTED BLOOD INQUIRY

FIRST WRITTEN STATEMENT OF GRO-B

GRO-B will say as follows:-

Section 1. Introduction

1. I am GRO-B of GRO-B GRO-B
GRO-B I live on my own and I have two children GRO-B and GRO-B
2. I was infected with Hepatitis C as a result of being given contaminated blood during labour.
3. This witness statement has been prepared without the benefit of access to my full medical records.

Section 2. How infected

4. I was admitted to GRO-B during childbirth. I was heavily losing blood and was taken to the delivery room with blood transfusions on each arm. I was never told why I was losing so much blood and prior to labour, there were no complications with the pregnancy. I gave birth to a stillborn child and was never told why that had happened. At the time my husband was horrified that they were not doing anything to help me.

ANONYMOUS

5. I do not know what blood products I received and I was not informed of any associated risks. I received blood transfusions for three days due to the blood loss. I believe I was given approximately ten pints of blood in total.
6. A couple of days later, I returned home and my skin, nails and eyes turned yellow. My family took me back to hospital where I was admitted to the maternity ward and I was diagnosed with jaundice. At that point I was still bleeding. I was told that I could not give blood and not to do any household chores so my mother in law stayed with me for four weeks to help me. At this point I had no idea what was going on with my health, I simply trusted my doctors advice and did as I was told. I was in hospital for approximately one week before I was allowed to return home. I feel that the contaminated blood I received during labour prolonged my recovery and that is why I continued to bleed for so long.
7. In between the years 1973 and 2012 I experienced very little symptoms and so I hardly attended the hospital except for a heart attack I had in 1997. In 2012, I heard about the contaminated blood in the news and I recalled that I had received blood transfusions around the same time that those infected did; therefore I went to see my GP, GRO-B at GRO-B I asked for a detailed blood test which she did not like as she thought it was a trivial request. I persisted and I was called back by letter to discuss the results.
8. I made an appointment to see GRO-B a week later. During this appointment, I was told that I was previously infected by the Hepatitis C Virus. I was very confused as I had not heard of the Hepatitis C Virus prior to this, and my doctor did not explain what the virus was. Instead she said 'I thought you got over that.' I was told to get on with the rest of my life and to forget I had been given this blood in the first place. The doctor suggested that my children should be tested to be on the safe side.
9. On Thursday GRO-B I went for a blood test specifically for Hepatitis C. This was recommended GRO-B during an earlier

ANONYMOUS

consultation with him. He called me in the evening of GRO-B to discuss the result and he advised that my body still carried the Hepatitis C virus. He said he would refer me to the hepatitis clinic at GRO-B which I am still waiting for.

Section 3. Other Infections

10. I do not believe that I have received any other infections other than Hepatitis C as a result of being given infected blood products.

Section 4. Consent

11. I demanded a test in 2012 for the purpose of finding out if I was infected so I was aware of them carrying it out. I also had blood tests during my heart attack in 1997. I do not know if they tested me for Hepatitis C then. If they had then it would have been carried out without my knowledge, consent and without being given full or adequate information. If a positive test for Hepatitis C had been concluded in 1997 or earlier, then it had been concealed from me.

12. I have never received any treatment for Hepatitis C and I do not know if I still have it now. I was never referred on for treatment and it was not made clear if I had cleared the virus. Once a year I have a heart review and they always take my blood and test my liver. They have not noticed anything unusual and no mention has been made of Hepatitis C. Nobody has ever clarified whether or not I still suffer from the virus, and by stating 'I thought you were over that' it is even more unclear.

Section 5. Impact of the Infection

13. It was shocking to hear that I had Hepatitis C and even more shocking when GRO-B mentioned that my children should be tested. I did think that I may have mistakenly and unknowingly infected my children, but it is entirely up to them whether they wanted to be tested as they were old enough to

decide for themselves. The doctor also brought up the cause of my husband's death by implying that I may have passed on something to him. He was on the heart transplant waiting list, but he sadly died before a transplant could take place.

14. I know that I must be careful around other people, particularly given that I bleed a lot due to blood thinning medication. I am very wary around my family. Because of the stigma attached to these blood borne viruses, I kept a lot of people in the dark. I also told my children to keep it a secret. Only recently did I tell my sister and brother in law about it. They were horrified that I this had happened to me.

15. When I was not offered further tests or any treatment, I did not even consider fighting for it. I simply took the doctor's advice to get on with my life and thought that was it. I never knew there was any treatment out there on offer. It now plays on my mind everyday that I live with Hepatitis C antibodies, even though I am physically well. I live in fear not knowing when it will kick in.

Section 6. Treatment/care/support

16. No counselling or psychological support was made available to me in consequence of being infected.

Section 7. Financial Assistance

17. My daughter always scouts things out, but she never came across the Skipton Fund. I have received no financial assistance to date. I would like to know why I was never contacted as there must have been some records to suggest that I have received blood transfusions and I was infected with Hepatitis C as a result.

ANONYMOUS

Section 8. Other Issues

18. Through no fault of my own, I now carry this virus in my blood. I want to know why this happened to me and everyone else who was infected.

Anonymity, disclosure and redaction

19. I confirm that I wish to apply for anonymity. I understand a redacted statement will be published and disclosed as part of the Inquiry.

20. I do not wish to give oral evidence.

Statement of Truth

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

Signed

GRO-B

Dated

4 APRIL 2019