

Witness Name:

GRO-B

Statement No: WITN3352001

Exhibit No: WITN3352002

Dated: 11<sup>th</sup> December 2019

## INFECTED BLOOD INQUIRY

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FIRST WRITTEN STATEMENT OF

GRO-B

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I provide this statement in response to a request under Rule 9 of the Inquiry Rules 2006 dated 26<sup>th</sup> June 2019. 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 is the **GRO-B** and my address is known to the Inquiry. I live in **GRO-B** and I'm a full-time **GRO-B** for my **GRO-B** who has **GRO-B**.
2. I wish to make this statement on behalf of my partner **GRO-B: P** who was infected through contaminated blood. **P** was my partner for approximately **GRO-B** years and is the father of my daughter, **GRO-B**. **P** died on the **GRO-B**.

### 2. How Affected

## ANONYMOUS

1. In [GRO-B] [P] was viciously stabbed by a yob of football hooligans who entered his apartment and tried to kill him after a football match. They attacked him with samurai swords and machetes. I was with him in his apartment at the time of the attack. [P] told me to hide under the bed to keep me safe. I was only [GRO-B] years old at the time. I was young and really shouldn't even have been staying away from home. [P] didn't press charges against his attackers as he was concerned for our future safety.
2. I believe the attack may have been recorded on the police records but I don't know if they would still have them as it was [GRO-B] years ago. I guess in those days it was all written down.
3. [P] was taken by ambulance to [GRO-B] and received a blood transfusion. Exhibited at WITN3352002 is an entry from [GRO-B] in [P]'s GP notes which states: [GRO-B] *Beaten up and knifed. Hospitalised [GRO-B] Blood Transfusion.* On the way to the hospital he almost died in the back of the ambulance because his injuries were so severe and he needed blood immediately. He received 200 stitches for his injuries.
4. Everything seemed fine once he was in hospital but a few days later they began to give him different blood. They said stocks of the original blood were low. Instead, they gave [P] white packets of blood as well as the red blood. I recall the nurse coming to see us. She said to me that they had this other blood which wasn't from the same source as the original blood and this was because people from this country weren't donating enough. I'm sure I recall one of the nurses saying to [P] "you're lucky to get this".
5. At the hospital I asked a million questions of the medical staff about the blood they were transfusing into [P]. I'm naturally a very inquisitive person, but it was a bit of a shock, and not how I imagined a blood transfusion would be. The blood they were giving to [P] was

contained in different packaging and I think that it might have been American blood. This is when I believe [P] was infected.

6. In [P]'s GP medical notes it states that in [GRO-B] he tested negative for hepatitis B and HIV but reactive for hepatitis C. Then in [GRO-B] he tested for hepatitis C antibody positive.
7. During his stay in hospital [P] received a lot of blood over a long period of time and he was lucky to have survived.
8. I remember hearing whispers between hospital staff about something being wrong with the blood. The nurses inferred that the blood was 'questionable'. [P] actually said that he thought that the blood was 'dodgy'. I recall sitting at his bedside when he said "I bet there's AIDS in that" referring to the blood.
9. In [GRO-B] [P] underwent a liver function test. The result was hepatitis C PCR reactive geno type 3A.
10. I have been advised by my solicitors Watkins & Gunn that there is reference to correspondence within [P]'s GP notes dated [GRO-B] [GRO-B] which states that '*according to their computer they have sent out the final report re his hepatitis and it has been hidden on the computer for six months*'. I would like to know why this report was hidden and for what purpose.
11. I don't recall [P] being given any information about the risks of infection but he always knew that he could have been infected. [P] had to have the transfusion though otherwise he could have died. We had no choice and had to accept it. All we knew was that he desperately needed it. I was just there with him when he had the blood transfusion.

12. After [P] became infected with hepatitis C the doctors didn't give us any information on what the infection meant or how to protect ourselves.

13. We didn't hear anything else from [GRO-B] once we moved back to [GRO-B] [P] could have infected other people during this time but thankfully he didn't infect me.

14. Some years later, [P] became unwell which led to him getting tested. This was when he found out that he had hepatitis C. Unfortunately I cannot be specific about the date when [P] found out as many of his records have been destroyed. However he tested positive for hepatitis C during a prison sentence in [GRO-B]

### **3. Other infections**

1. I'm not aware of any other infections that [P] had, I just know that he had infected blood.
2. From his GP records it states that [P] was receiving regular injections for hepatitis B. These were given as a prophylactic treatment.

### **4. Consent**

1. I think that they might have been testing [P]'s blood. From [P]'s GP records it states that he was tested for hepatitis B, HIV and hepatitis C. I am unaware of whether this was with or without his consent.

### **5. Impact**

1. [P]'s infection had a huge impact on him educationally and employment wise. He couldn't hold down jobs or start a degree as he was unwell all the time. He endured every bad thing you can think of

## ANONYMOUS

all rolled into one. He suffered with severe stress and anxiety and was suicidal. He always wanted to do himself in.

2. His infection led him to abusing drugs and alcohol and eventually this led to his death. I think this was his way to mask the pain and because he thought that his life was over anyway. He was a mess. He just didn't want to be alive. To be honest, if I had been infected I would have been the same.
3. **P** and I had a very difficult and sometimes violent relationship as a result of his illness. It was awful living in that kind of atmosphere. **P** would get frustrated and upset and on occasions would smash up the house. He would use his illness as a weapon against me and blackmail me into staying with him when I threatened to leave him.
4. He did clear the virus with the Interferon treatment but he was never the same after that. It even affected his personal hygiene. He was dirty and smelly but he didn't care. He had lost his dignity.
5. **P** being infected with hepatitis C had an awful impact on our family. I was frightened that he would pass on the infection to me. There was a lot of stress and anxiety. It really blighted my life as everything he had, I had doubly bad. I just worried all the time about catching it. It was horrible.
6. He lost me and his daughter because I didn't want him around us. I was petrified that he would infect her when she was with him. She loved him and he loved her as she was his only child. I knew that I had to let him see her especially as I was working full-time and in college so needed him to baby sit. I used to tell him not to kiss our daughter. When we had split up, he came to pick her up and I told her not to let him kiss her because I was afraid she would become infected. I became obsessed and afraid of infection for me and my

## ANONYMOUS

daughter. I didn't dare get tested because I was convinced I may have it.

7. We would argue and I called him "disease-ridden" during one argument. I didn't want to have sex with him or be with him because he was infected. I was afraid to go near him. As a consequence, his family didn't want to talk to me.
8. Because of our difficult situation, I would often argue with his family and ended up falling out with them. Everyone fell out with me because of him. I remember an occasion when he punched me when we were in his mum's bedroom. She saw what he did and just closed the door on us. She didn't want to get involved. At [P]'s funeral we made up and are now on better terms.
9. I think the stigma was the worst part of it for me. People are more informed about hepatitis now but there was a lot of stigma back then, so we had to keep it a secret. He might as well have had AIDS. It was shocking.
10. I lost my job and my place in college because I couldn't get anyone to look after our daughter. I was frustrated with [P] because he wouldn't provide for his child.
11. He started drinking alcohol and taking drugs. I didn't get a penny out of him. I lost everything, including my daughter at one point as she went "off the rails".
12. I got 82% out of 90% at Judicial A-Levels but I didn't go to University because I was trying to get my daughter back on track. Her dad being so unwell and passing away affected her schooling. She's doing alright now as she's in the process of doing her degree and has a good job, but she suffered really badly. [P]'s illness also impacted badly on both our parents and his brother.

**6. Treatment/Care Support**

1. [P] had to have Interferon treatment which was a gruelling and intrusive therapy. He got all sorts of other health problems as a result; it had a knock on affect. The treatment compromised his immune system and by the end of it he had no immune system at all. I remember that he was on the treatment for a long time. I think it was over a year.
2. [P] faced obstacles in receiving treatment. He was waiting for the treatment for years but I'm not sure why. From [P]'s GP notes it states that he needed to be drug free before receiving treatment for hepatitis C. So this may have been the reason.
3. I'm not sure if there are treatments which he ought to have had but didn't.
4. When [P] and I had been together about 10 years I would frequently go and get tested for hepatitis C. This was because we would often break up and then get back together. Thankfully my tests came back negative. The doctors told me that it's highly unlikely that it could be passed on through sex which I was very happy about as we were having sex all the time. I loved [P] even though there was small risk of infection. The hepatitis C did ruin our relationship and I worried that I had caught it from him.
5. During the treatment [P] felt tired, cloudy-headed and relied heavily on anti-depressants. He was taking every type of anti-depressant you can think of.
6. [P] was so unhappy and became suicidal. He was awful to live with. He would get violent and even stood on my wrist on one occasion. He took out his frustration on me.

7. **P**'s infection blighted the lives of his parents and mine as well as his. It was like a cancer growing in his body. He was lethargic, yellow in colour, lazy and argumentative. He just didn't look right and his face was swollen. I think you just know by looking at someone that something is wrong. I could see it in him. You could tell that he had something wrong with his liver. His life was ruined. Everything goes through your liver; it's a very bad disease.
8. The only way I can describe the effects of the treatment was that it was like having chemotherapy and radiation. There were so many side effects such as depression, anxiety, fatigue, irritability, dark moods and he had no energy. He just felt awful. His body used to ache all over and he would get pains around his liver area. He was always in pain and always crying.
9. I think that he was on the treatment that long, that he was never the same. He got every side effect and a million more. It was horrible, but I think that was just the nature of it. I used to tell him to pull himself together but he couldn't, so what do you do? His life was done. When they cut his nipples off during an operation he looked terrible. He went bloated, yellow and had grey skin. He looked radioactive.
10. He kept quiet about his infection for a long time; I made him keep it to himself because of the stigma.
11. **P** dealt with the hepatitis C alone with the help of the doctors. It's not something he felt he could talk about with me because he knew I was scared about things like that. I was afraid of people's reactions and the stigma but they must have known just by the look of him.
12. I remember an occasion when he came to my workplace. It was a short while after he had had an operation for removal of some breast



tissue. (I am unsure of the reason why he needed this operation). I recall one of his nipples had been removed. He looked terrible.

13. He had intrusive treatment which never really made him feel normal again.

14. Counselling hasn't been offered or made available to me and I don't think that I'll get any. I think I have to just come to terms with it.

## **7. Financial Assistance**

1. [P] did not receive any financial assistance. He should have been contacted by trusts and funds that distributed payments as he could have done with that money.

## **8. Other Issues**

1. [P]'s life was ruined. He thought that he had nothing to live for. Before he was infected, he was a happy person, but his personality changed completely.
2. [P] used to be reasonably fit and play football but ended up with hepatitis C. He subsequently turned to drink and drugs to ease the pain.
3. I have had to bare the financial burden for our daughter as [P] was never in a good financial position to provide for her.
4. [P] was adamant that he caught hepatitis C from the new blood he was given. Just before he died he wrote down everything that had happened to him. He had seen in the news about the Infected Blood Inquiry and he wanted to take part. Unfortunately, [P] wasn't in the right place to do so at that time. He had lost all of his energy and was

ANONYMOUS

suffering from a breakdown. His life was severely compromised. If he was still alive he would definitely have been involved with the Inquiry.

5. I think that there should be compensation or anything that can help. What happened to [P] was out of order and the financial burdens could never be calculated.
6. [P] and I had a life full of financial hardship, chaos, and constant worry about him being infected. Neither of us were able to go out to work because of his infection.

**Statement of Truth**

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

Signed

**GRO-B**

Dated

11.12.19