Witness Name: GRO-B
Statement No.: WITN2127001
Exhibits: WITN2127002-005
Dated: 22nd October 2020

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 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 1949. My address is known to the Inquiry. I am retired. My main job prior to retirement was initially in GRO-B until I had an accident in 1988. GRO-B GRO-B. I intend to speak about being infected with hepatitis C and the impact it had on my life.

Section 2. How Infected

2. I had an accident at work in 1988. When I was working in GRO-B GRO-B. I fell from scaffolding. I suffered severe injuries and ended up losing a part of my left kidney and spleen. I was admitted to GRO-B in Cumbria. I do not remember the names of any doctors

who treated me. I was conscious at the time I was taken to hospital. I received a blood transfusion during surgery and I believe also when I was in after-care. I do not know how much blood I received. I was in hospital for around two weeks. I have identified two entries from my medical records, from Dr Metcalfe-Gibson dated 19th February 1988 and from Dr Gillen dated 3rd October 2005 which I exhibit as **WITN2127002** and **WITN2127003**. The former is a note from Dr Metcalfe-Gibson to Dr GRO-B describing the surgical removal of my kidney and spleen following my injuries from the GRO-B accident in 1988. There is no mention of my blood transfusion in this note. The latter is a letter from Dr Gillen to Dr GRO-B informing him of my meeting with him to discuss my Hepatitis C diagnosis in 2005. In this letter, while describing my medical history, Dr Gillen states he suspects I received a blood transfusion in the course of the surgical removal of my kidney and spleen.

3. I had my first transfusion in 1965. I have had Crohn's disease since I was fifteen years old and I have had four reconstructions of my bowel. I do not remember any other transfusions I may have received. I remember at one stage I was anaemic and I may have also received blood but I do not remember when this was and I cannot locate evidence of this in my records.

4. I was diagnosed with hepatitis C in 2005. I was told that the infection was likely to have come from the blood I received after my accident in 1988. I was later diagnosed with liver cancer and required to have a liver transplant which I discuss below.

5. I was in Victoria Infirmary when I was told about the infection of hepatitis C. I cannot remember the name of the doctor who told me. I do know that Dr Datta has been one of the consultants who has treated me since then.

6. When I was told about the infection I was never really told anything about hepatitis C. They asked me about my sex life and drug use. After this, they asked if I had ever received any blood transfusions. I cannot remember them

saying anything about the effects of hepatitis C. I was referred on to a nurse and I felt that she gave me a little bit more information to understand what was happening to me. I believe the nurse gave me enough information to understand hepatitis C. The nurse gave me more information than the doctors did at that point.

7. When I was waiting for my transplant I would attend Edinburgh Royal Infirmary every month. I learned more about hepatitis C from the patients there as we were quite friendly. I do believe that the initial doctor should have discussed more with me, rather than leaving me to rely on the nurse providing me with more information. I was not given any information about how others could be infected by hepatitis C for example. There was no advice such as, the importance of not sharing toothbrushes or razors. This led me to worry about infecting others and I was scared in case any of my family had been infected.

Section 3. Other Infections

8. I was infected only with hepatitis C.

Section 4. Consent

9. I was not advised I was being tested for hepatitis C prior to my diagnosis.

Section 5. Impact

10. Prior to my diagnosis, I felt tired all the time. I did not feel as fit as I should have been. Part of me did assume that this was all down to having Crohn's disease, as this causes a person to feel up and down all the time. I now think that part of this may have been symptoms of hepatitis C.

11. I suffered from brain fog and there were a few times I remember losing the plot and crying without any clear reason. This was before my diagnosis and there were times I felt very emotional. There was a change in my personality.

I've always been the type of person to get on with things but I found that over time, without clear reason, this changed.

12. I started to notice over time that I felt the cold a lot more. I am used to the cold GRO-B so this was a big change. I have also suffered from a loss of appetite as well.

13. I commenced my first round of treatment for hepatitis C in 2006 and endured a course of interferon and ribavirin, the side effects for this were horrific and I had to stop the treatment before the course was complete. This treatment was unsuccessful. I had to stop taking the treatment about twenty six weeks into the programme. I stopped because I didn't feel I could survive it. It was absolutely shattering. I would wake up feeling like I had been in a boxing ring.

14. I was diagnosed with liver cancer in 2007. The condition of my liver had deteriorated to a point where ten months later, I needed to have a liver transplant. This took place on the 29th November 2008. I have identified an entry in my medical records dated the 28th March 2008 which I exhibit as **WITN2127004.** This is a letter from Dr Charlie Lees of the Scottish Liver Transplantion Unit describing my assessment for a liver transplant. He notes that in November 2007 I had an ultrasound and a liver biopsy which found three liver lesions. Dr Lees then described the results of the CT scan I had after these lesions were discovered. The CT scan found an 18mm nodule in the right lobe of my liver. These factors led Dr Lees to conclude that given my ongoing hepatitis C and other health conditions, a transplant would be needed.

15. The doctors advised me that the liver cancer I was diagnosed with was related to hepatitis C. I have also had kidney stones which have had to be removed twice. I understand that kidney stones can also be related to hepatitis C due to the issues it causes with your liver.

16. I could not undergo any further treatment for hepatitis C until after the transplant.

17. I started taking a second round of treatment in 2013. I had to delay taking this treatment after my liver transplant to recover and because of development of kidney stones. When I started the treatment the side effects were also horrific. I stopped taking this treatment before I could successfully complete the full course. Thankfully though in 2014 I was advised that the treatment worked and I was clear of hepatitis C.

18. When I was undergoing both rounds of treatment, I suffered from sickness. I have travelled on pilgrimages as part of a group. This includes trips I went on when I was on treatment. I suffered badly from spells of physical weakness during this, where I had no energy. I fell ill on a pilgrimage during my second round of treatment and I ended up having to be pushed about in a wheelchair. I have been complaining of soreness in my legs for years, and I have had MRIs, but nothing shows up. There are some days now when I can hardly get up. I have had aches and pains in my joints since before my diagnosis.

19. I currently suffer from blood coming to the surface of my skin which has left me with blood blotches. I believe this is partially because I have thin skin now. It comes up randomly and is not brought on by any one thing in particular.

20. In terms of the symptoms following treatment, mentally I felt as though I was losing it. I started suffering from depression. I have identified an entry in my medical records dated the 9 August 2006, which I exhibit as **WITN2127005,** where the nurse specialist Christine Munro notes depression as being one of the many side effects I was suffering with because of the Interferon and Ribavirin treatment. I remember at one point having a bad fallout with my daughter because I just wasn't myself. I lost it completely at points.

21. I have had to have an ileostomy and colostomy bag, and some medications do not sit well with my bowels. Fortunately most of the doctors, after my transplant, such as Dr Datta, have been good. I was treated terribly in a hospital in Turkey though when I went on holiday. I felt like a leper. They treated me at 'arm's length' and they did not want to engage with me at all.

22. [redacted] GRO-B I have no matters about dental care that I wish to raise with the Inquiry.

23. My family life was impacted by things like my mood swings. I was quite outgoing and calm before I underwent treatment. I feel that this has changed my personality to some extent. I have a great relationship with my children but I have not been able to see my sons as much as I would have liked.

24. Only my close friends know about my condition. I don't really drink alcohol now and I don't go out to the pub as much as I would have done before. This has been a big change for me.

25. I also suffered from depression twenty five years ago when my marriage broke down. This would have been around about [redacted] GRO-B. The symptoms of hepatitis C I was unknowingly experiencing, may have contributed to this but it is very difficult to tell. It was a very volatile marriage.

26. [redacted] GRO-B

27. I do feel I have withdrawn from the outside world, but I now have a partner [redacted] GRO-B who supports me. She wishes I could be happier though.

28. I believe that I have partially become withdrawn because I want to avoid talking about my condition. I remember when I spoke to doctors about my transplant they said that I would maybe get 10 or 15 years to live. It is coming up to that

now. I am hyperaware of my own mortality, but I feel that religion has helped me get through.

29. The stigma around hepatitis C was a lot worse in the past when there was not much known about infected blood. People but did not understand it. It felt as if at some points people were apprehensive to be with you but I think that was just down to ignorance. Now people will say things like “oh I saw infected blood on TV and I thought of you” which is a change in how it was approached historically.

30. In terms of my work, I gave up working in part due to the symptoms from hepatitis C. In 2003, a family friend of mine GRO-B GRO-B GRO-B This was a much lower salary than I could have earned GRO-B GRO-B

31. I do feel that my condition has stifled my ambition. My outlook and body are not the same as I would expect them to be at this stage of my life. I feel that hepatitis C has had a big impact on this.

32. Having hepatitis C makes travel insurance more expensive. I try to get at least one holiday a year. One year I went on a cruise and the insurance was very expensive.

33. In recent years I have found that I have a problem with anger management. I have been praying for that to stop. This has been happening for about twenty years on and off. I do not get into arguments, but I don't take things lightly. My partner is very different from what I would view as the ‘Glasgow way’ of dealing with things. She is very good at helping me to calm down. I feel like my hepatitis may have played a part, as before I was infected I was a very easy-going person who enjoyed life.

34. I have spent every day in pain at times. This in part due to having Crohn's Disease as well as hepatitis C.

Section 6. Treatment/Care/Support

35. I have not been offered any support or counselling in relation to my hepatitis C. It would have been helpful at the time of my diagnosis to have support. I think support would also have been helpful during my treatment.

Section 7. Financial Assistance

36. I received money from the Caxton Fund which was a monthly payment. I would apply for things like a new fridge, but I usually did not follow these applications up as I was put off because I felt quite embarrassed. If they had made it more accessible, I could have used that more.

37. With the Skipton Fund I received £20,000 in 2008 and I received a further £50,000 in 2010. I recall this being an easy process as part of this was filled in by my doctor.

38. I receive a monthly payment now of around £1500 per month from the Scottish Infected Blood Support Scheme.

Section 8. Other Issues

39. I have not been involved in previous litigation. What was shocking about the Penrose Inquiry was that there was very little that came from it.

40. I wish my statement to be made anonymously.

Statement of Truth

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

Signed GRO-B

Dated Nov 1, 2020