



SCANNED

Witness Name: GRO-B

Statement No.: WITN2205

Exhibits: WITN2205001

Dated: 11th December 2018

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 5th November 2018.

I, GRO-B will say as follows: -

Section 1. Introduction

1. My name is GRO-B My date of birth GRO-B 1960. My address is known to the Inquiry. I have not worked since I left the army which is something I will come to within this statement. I married my wife GRO-B and we have two children. I have a son who is GRO-B GRO-B and my daughter GRO-B I intend to speak about my infection of hepatitis C through a blood transfusion I received. In particular, the nature of my illness, how the illness affected

me, the treatment received and the impact it had on my family and our lives together.

Section 2. How Infected

2. How I came to be affected starts with when I was in the Army. I was in the desert and I was going to the toilet. As a GRO-B you often get piles and I had been constipated for four days. There were no toilets, I was in open air. I tried to force it out and I felt a searing pain. I looked down and the back of my legs covered in blood and I had a walnut size lump hanging from my rear end. I was taken to the hospital and they said I had 1 pile. It had ripped part of the flesh from inside. I believe it took about 45 min to get to the hospital. I had 3 field dressings on that were absolutely soaked in blood. They had radioed ahead, doctors were waiting for me. They took me to theatre immediately. I woke up that night in the field hospital. I had no feeling from the waist down as they had given me an epidural. I recall looking up and seeing that there was a near empty bag of blood going into through a drip and a catheter fitted.
3. This all took place in the GRO-B
I received the transfusion on 10th December 1990. I'd already been given the transfusion by the time I woke up and I was sitting in an adult nappy. I was on fluids for three days and I do not know how many units of blood I was given. The blood did come from the UK. 90% of the territorial Army hospital staff came from Edinburgh Royal infirmary. I saw a number of doctors in this time.
4. I found out that I had hepatitis C in 2003. This was during the build up to the second Gulf War and I was recruiting. I had been in Germany and was sent back to Edinburgh for about a week and I was under the weather. Being a GRO-B you don't go off sick but I knew something was wrong. I was suffering from flulike symptoms, such as brain fog, lethargy, sickness, diarrhoea and I had no appetite. Prior to my diagnosis, I recall in

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2000 in **GRO-B** I did have to go off on sick parade. I recall that they did three blood tests and I had a camera in my rectum.

5. In Germany, I was living in the mess, my family were in Edinburgh, I went for a couple of pints and I woke up in a German hospital. I collapsed in the toilet and had a head wound. A driver had waited for me. The next day at the medical centre a Doctor did a blood test. I recall Dr Sherry was a civilian doctor working in the Army, he was in his 60s. He accused me of being an alcoholic and he called me a liar when he received the results of the tests. I took another blood test and 2 or 3 days later a young doctor looked through my notes and asked if I had been given blood and he said they suspected that hepatitis C. I believe there must have been something in my notes that explained this. This was at a medical centre in Fallonbosile. This had been in the January or February of 2003.
6. I have something from my notes that says on 9th April 2003, a doctor from the medical centre in the garrison that I had never seen before came, he was a young person. They mentioned hepatitis C and asked if I'd heard of HIV and AIDS. They said that it was not serious but it would destroy my liver. They said it was dangerous and can be treated but treatment was expensive. They said not to tell anyone. I recall that as part of my role in the army, I hosted the **GRO-B** that day.
7. I think they must have known in **GRO-B** because said that one copy in my medical records was too blurred to read so I think that they knew then.
8. After I was diagnosed, I phoned the major at the medical centre in Edinburgh. He was the military adviser to civilian hospitals, his name was **GRO-B** he was a former member of my regiment. He was the MAOCH. He said to get my arse back there and they would get me treated. I got sent back on medical grounds.

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9. Major **GRO-B** arranged for me to go to Edinburgh Royal infirmary to see Dr Bathgate and Dr Hayes who ran the liver unit there. They agreed to treat me if the military paid.
10. In 2003, I was subject to interferon and ribavirin treatments and they were worse than anything. It was a horrible eight months. I had stop halfway because there were issues my blood levels. I believe this treatment was successful. I now go every six months for blood tests and for liver scans.
11. My wife and whole family have had to get tested and that must have been at Edinburgh Royal infirmary. Thankfully, all my family were negative and I have been worried as my son have been using my razors at the time.
12. The only advice I was given was to not share toothbrushes or razors.
13. I did not notice any difference with how hospitals treated me but I did feel dirty. I didn't like to be tarred by the same brush as heroin addicts who were attending the same clinics who had contracted hepatitis C through their own life choices.
14. I believe that adequate information was given by I felt more was relaxed with the Edinburgh Royal infirmary doctors than the military doctors I'd seen. I felt the military doctors treated me like I was an inconvenience.
15. I feel that when they told me about hepatitis C, they didn't do anything about it. They mentioned about the liver centre and getting the infection stopped. The young doctor I saw after seeing the first doctor seemed to be more knowledgeable and it was night and day between Dr Sherry and the young chap.
16. I remember being asked if I was using intravenous drugs the first time I attended at Edinburgh Royal Infirmary. I remember there was a new nurse that asked if I was still using. She did end up coming back and apologised but I do not know her name. I never saw her again.

Section 3. Other Infections

17. I was infected with hepatitis C.

Section 4. Consent

18. I do not believe I was tested or treated without my consent, beyond my initial blood transfusion; for which I was unconscious at the time I was given this.

19. I do believe they knew in the year 2000 about my infection and just didn't tell me. The army medical base was in [GRO-B] I went to the RAF medical centre in [GRO-B] for a rear camera and I remember two doctors talking amongst themselves and they seemed to be taking quite some time. I'm convinced that they were talking about hepatitis C in retrospect, you just don't question surgeons or doctors.

Section 5. Impact

20. As I said, the day I found out that I had hepatitis C, I had to host the [GRO-B] [GRO-B]. He was an officer of the regiment and would visit once year and I was told was specifically not to tell him.

21. After I was diagnosed with hepatitis C, I was in Edinburgh and as the [GRO-B] had to take the parade in front of the Queen at Edinburgh Castle. I was told to keep on my gloves and not shake her hand. This was my last job for the military. I was disgusted and horrified with how they treated me with this and I was told not to tell her anything.

22. I knew my career was over, I was a [GRO-B] was going to go on to be a captain and beyond. I had to get a medical discharge and that was a devastating blow. I see my friends now who got promoted and continued up the ladder. My world fell apart for the first 3 years and I just

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did not know what to do with myself. Everything was much more planned when I was still with in my career.

23. The house that I'm in now had been bought 10 years before when I left the Army and this was bought as an investment and not actually for somewhere for us to live. The money for this house was going to be a deposit to buy a bigger house given that my career prospects, in terms of earning capacity, were huge.
24. In terms of the symptoms I experienced, I would say that I have those flulike symptoms that I've described and I did black out a couple times and didn't know the time was. It was not until I had liver biopsies in the year 2004 that they mentioned fibrosis and the level of five or six, I believe the highest. They then said I had cirrhosis of the liver.
25. During the treatment, I had had boils, extreme psoriasis and lost about 6 teeth at the back of my mouth.
26. In terms of the other medical complications, I have had as a result of hepatitis C and my subsequent treatment, I have had depression which started during treatment. I didn't know what to do once I was finished in the military and I believe that also contributed to my depression.
27. The only treatment I had was ribavirin and interferon as this was successful and clearing me of hepatitis C.
28. I had no difficulties in accessing treatment because the military were paying and because of Major GRO-B being very helpful. I recall that there was only two weeks of treatment in stock at a time but I would have been dead otherwise. There were two people I befriended at the clinic when I was being treated for hepatitis C that have now died.

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29. I have seen within my medical records that I was given 10 years to live and the further prognosis, other than that, was unsure. I get anxious every time I go for a blood test in case they find something.

30. I'm not aware of any other treatments that could be made available to me.

31. In terms of the symptoms of my treatment, physically I was very lethargic, tired and suffered from brain fog. I had no appetite and I had constant diarrhoea. I was surviving on porridge and soup as I was forcing myself to eat. I locked myself away for nearly a whole year. I lost a fair bit of weight and had sores on my face and body and constant cold sores. I did not keep in contact with anyone during treatment. My joints were aching, I felt that every joint I had was aching. I also now suffer from osteoarthritis. I suffered from night sweats and brain fog that caused issues with memory and forgetting names. It felt like an absolute age that this continued. I couldn't remember anything, I had to write everything down.

32. In terms of mentally, I would say that my confidence dropped severely.

33. When I was in the Army I was the on the permanent mess committee which was second-highest position in the warrant officers mess and I had to discipline the soldiers within my regiment. I was a

GRO-B

GRO-B

34. In terms of family life, as I have said, I would not be living in the house I am now if I had continued in my career. I would have been commissioned officer long ago. I don't think it impacted my children, who were both at boarding school, although we did have to explain to them some level and I believe the school nurse was told and it was kept quiet. My children were told quite quickly, my daughter was scared at first. I think the school nurse likely explained it better to her than I could have. She was intelligent enough to know not to tell anyone, my son probably did cope better at the outset.

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35. I would say that has not been much impact on my family but there are still members of my wider family that do not know about my condition. I believe that some initially thought that I had some form of cancer.
36. This did put a big strain on my relationship with my wife. She had to give up work for eight months at one stage, as I was suicidal. She is an **GRO-B** **GRO-B** When we started getting regular payments my wife was then able to give up work to help look after me. It was much better for her to be there when I was on treatment as this helped with coping with it.
37. My depression does bare its head still, three weeks ago I was in a car accident, and that brought back my feelings of depression.
38. In terms of my social life, I don't really have one now. I only really go to the cinema. I have a cousin in **GRO-B** who I am close with but I don't see often and **GRO-B** but I have not been since my diagnosis. I do not like being in crowds of people. I worry that conversation might lead back to something that could lead to people, either finding out, or me not being able to tell them about my condition. I did tell my best man to my wedding as he said I had lost a lot of weight and I told him I had been ill but I worried about him knowing the full story so I did not tell him everything.
39. My social life was military based as we live in each other's pocket when we are in the army. There are family days and things like that for people that are in the army. Those in the regiment knew that I had hepatitis C. I felt shunned by my regiment and that side of my social life came to an end. I only ever see my comrades from my regiment on Remembrance Sunday now.
40. In terms of the stigma, I would say that I don't like talking about my condition **GRO-B** and she helped look after me a few times, but only really she knows. I know she doesn't tell anyone when people ask, I just say I got a medical discharge with knee problems.

41. By now, I would have been on, roughly, probably, about £100,000 per year had I continued in my career in the direction I was supposed to.
42. I believe that it would be impossible for me to get another mortgage now with my hepatitis C and I cannot get any travel insurance. Instead of paying the massive premiums would come up with travel insurance, I just don't get travel insurance if I go abroad.

Section 6. Treatment/Care/Support

43. No counselling was ever offered to anyone in my family. I do believe we would have benefited from counselling as we were in a very dark corner at the point when everything happened. I think my wife handled it quite well as she's a very strong woman. I do believe that the support was inadequate and I felt cast adrift by military medical staff especially at the early point.

Section 7. Financial Assistance

44. In terms of financial assistance offered, the Skipton fund started at the end of my treatment. In the year 2004, I received £20,000. I believe that one of the doctors in Edinburgh Royal infirmary told me about this and helped me with the paperwork. I believe that would have been Dr Hayes or Dr Bathgate that dealt with this. Due to my being Army, I get paid through English system. I get an English payment, which is about £1500 per month, it is about £7,000 less than Scottish payments. I have spoken to the First Minister and MP and the Health Secretary but my current MP said that in his opinion victims do not deserve money. He said it wasn't the NHS's fault. In terms of the English payment, it has gone up an extra £3000, which is spread out over the monthly payments.

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45. With Skipton I got one payment of £20,000 and two of £25,000 which helped pay off my mortgage. I am 99% sure that it was Dr Bathgate that dealt with all of this. I also received money for new central heating through Skipton or Caxton. All I had to do was send my bank details and my monthly income and a quote for fixing this. They paid this directly and this was maybe five years ago.

46. I do not see why I am getting English payments because I am Scottish and I didn't receive the blood in England. I believe there are others also in this situation.

Section 8. Other Issues

47. When it came to Penrose I went for an interview and was told no my case was too complicated for them. I feel that the Penrose Inquiry was a whitewash, a child could have come to a better conclusion. I was disgusted with it.

48. I used to attend a Scottish meetings in relation to infected blood but I felt I had been treated differently as I'm not treated as Scottish in terms of any funding or anything that.

49. I was involved in litigation due to the failure the medical staff to diagnose me. Before I was discharged, I had to appear before a panel and this involved using my medical records. After looking at them someone commented saying that they had been left wide open again. This was due to a doctor's letter mentioning a liver test that was to be done but was not followed up. I believe the firm I dealt with it was Simpson Miller and they promised me the world and they said that in the early stages I could have been looking at getting a new house but 5 years later they told me that I had to take £5000 that I had been offered and they threatened to take my house through their legal costs. This litigation was against Army.

50. All my medical records from 1978 to 1991 mysteriously went missing

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when I asked the MOD for a copy during the litigation for not carrying out liver function tests when advised to by a private doctor.

Statement of Truth

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

GRO-B

Signed

Dated

19 Feb 2019