

ANONYMOUS

Witness Name: **GRO-B**

Statement No: WITN2577001

Dated: 18th February 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 12TH December 2018. 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 **GRO-B** 1957 and my address is known to the Inquiry. **GRO-B**

GRO-B: M My mother was born in 1934 and tragically died on the **GRO-B** 2010.

2. My mother was a widower. She was widowed twice before she was 40 years of age. My father, and also the father of my sister (who is 9 years younger than me) died when I was 8 years old. My mother then remarried. My younger brother was born with her second husband, but he also tragically died in **GRO-B**

ANONYMOUS

3. For the above reason, my mother was, for me, my only real parent. I was wholly and totally reliant on her.

4. My mother was a strong determined woman. She had to be to survive the losing of two husbands at a relatively early age and have to bring up 3 children almost single handed. She was a lively outgoing person who loved life. She was a housewife for most of her adult life, after she had children, she did not work. My mother had the occasional part time job, during school hours, but was always home when we were.

2. How Infected

1. My mother was GRO-B years of age when in the spring of GRO-B she had to have, what is understood to be, a relatively routine hysterectomy. She attended the local hospital to her which was the

GRO-B

2. At that time I was GRO-B years of age and I remember going to see her after she had the operation. The nursing sister told me that my mother was going to have to be returned to theatre because she had been losing a lot of blood since the operation. My mother did indeed look extremely pale.

3. It is my understanding that in the first operation there had been several cuts to venous sites, therefore, she had to be re-opened for this to be fixed. She was then returned to the ward.

4. I went to visit her again the next day. We were all relieved that she now seemed to be improving but she had lost a lot of blood, I believe around eight pints, and had blood transfusions during the process.

5. The surgeon who had performed the original operation was a GRO-B
GRO-B My mother knew him as he was a near neighbour, she

ANONYMOUS

did not want to make a fuss, so no complaint was ever made against him.

6. My mother gradually seemed to recover. We put the incident behind us, and life went on.

7. During the 1990's my mother had been becoming generally unwell. She seemed to be quite run down. She had various aches and pains. Nobody could put their finger on what was the cause of this.

8. Her GP referred her to GRO-B and she was going there for various investigations.

9. I remember it was the autumn of 1996 and I went with her to GRO-
GRO-B when she was seeing the doctor about these investigations. I can recall waiting with her in the waiting area and her being the last person that afternoon to go in and see the doctor.

10. When she came out, she was tearful and ushered me over to a quiet corner. It was very unlike her to be tearful.

11. She told me that the doctor had said to her that she had Hepatitis C. She also said, quite categorically, that the doctor had told her that it was as a result of the blood transfusion from way back in 1977. This came as a total shock.

12. I, myself had heard about Hepatitis C, but I did not really know anything about it. I knew it was something quite serious. My mother said to me "I might have a while, and they might be able to help me". When she said that, I really did realise that it was extremely serious. I thought she was going to die. It seemed to me that she had been given a death sentence.

ANONYMOUS

13. It was disappointing that she had not been given any forewarning or counselling before bluntly being given this news. I believe that she was given some information booklets about Hepatitis C but I cannot recall whether it was on that day or not. I believe that the doctor in the hospital told her that they were going to write to her GP and that she should speak to her GP about it.

14. Looking back on it, from a distance now, it does seem that she was given very little by way of guidance or forewarning.

3. Other infections

1. I do not believe that my mother received any other infections as a result of being given infected blood products.

4. Consent

1. I do not believe that my mother had ever been treated or tested without her knowledge or consent. What is of course extremely troubling is that there was a 20 year gap between when she was infected by Hepatitis C and being told about it. Presumably somebody somewhere must have picked up that she had been given the infection sometime before she was told in 1996. They seem so certain in 1996 that she had been infected in 1976 that one might have thought they would be able to tell her earlier. For all those years, she had been walking around with Hepatitis C without knowing about it.

5. Impact

1. About a year after the diagnosis, she discussed with the Doctor undergoing treatment. In late 1997 she began treatment with Interferon. This went on for about a year.

2. It made her very poorly. It was like having severe flu.

ANONYMOUS

3. She never really properly recovered from this. She was poorly from then on.
4. I would not say that she ever suffered from any stigma associated with Hepatitis C. We did not discuss it outside the family, so nobody else really knew about it.
5. Indeed, I never actually told my children. I had two daughters who were in their early teens at the time my mother was diagnosed and I never told them until my mother had died.
6. Although my mother lived for a number of years after the diagnosis, her quality of life was greatly diminished. We still enjoyed time together as mother and daughter but there was always a limit to what she could do. Family outings tended to be briefer and less ambitious than they might otherwise have been. I would have liked to spend time abroad with my mother but the only time we ever managed to do that, was when we spent a week together in GRO-B If she ever did something like an outing or a day out, it would exhaust her and wipe her out.
7. It was very sad to see such a normally robust and active woman reduced to somebody who had to constantly limit herself.
8. She continued to try and present a mentally strong and brave face but I think she was also mentally impacted by knowing that she had such a terrible disease through no fault of her own. She was upset at the thought of being ill and that she might not live as long as she otherwise would do.
9. We are a close family and my mother's children all lived within a few miles of her. We were able to keep an eye on her and help her out.

10. Her decline was very sudden when it happened. She had been suffering with kidney and liver problems. In January 2010 she collapsed and was vomiting blood. She was admitted to hospital. She had a biopsy and they found she had liver cancer and it was quite far advanced. There was nothing much they could do. She came home and died at home. She was cremated.

6. **Treatment/Care Support**

1. To my knowledge, my mother did not face any difficulties or obstacles in obtaining treatment, care and support as a consequence of being infected.

7. **Financial Assistance**

1. I can remember my mother telling me that she had heard on the radio a Professor talking about Hepatitis C and mention the Skipton Fund.
2. Together with my mother, we contacted it, sent the paperwork off and fairly quickly got a pay out of £20,000. That would have been in around 2005. Therefore, it seems to me that it would have been quite easy for the Skipton Fund to verify that my mother had indeed been affected through the transfusion back in 1976.
3. We received another payment on her death in 2010 of £25,000 and a further payment of £25,000 in 2013.

8. **Other Issues**

1. It remains a source of constant upset to me that my mother struggled through her later years battling disease as a result of being infected with contaminated blood. She always put a brave

ANONYMOUS

face on things but her quality of life was never what it should have been. We lost her long before she died.

ANONYMOUS

Statement of Truth

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

Signed.....

GRO-B

Dated.....*18th February 2019*.....