

ANONYMOUS

Witness Name: **GRO-B**

Statement No.: WITN3476001

Exhibits: none

Dated: 29th August 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 19th July, 2019.

I, **GRO-B**, will say as follows: -

Section 1. Introduction

1. My name is **GRO-B**. I am a retired **GRO-B**. My date of birth is the **GRO-B** 1954 and my address is known to the Inquiry. I intend to speak about my husband of over forty years, **GRO-B: H** and his infection of hepatitis C. In particular, the nature of his illness, how the illness affected him, the treatment he received and the impact it had on him and our family life.
2. I can confirm that I have appointed Thompsons Solicitors to be my legal representative. I can confirm that the Inquiry should send all correspondence regarding me to Thompsons.

Section 2. How affected

3. [H] and I met at [GRO-B], where we were both [GRO-B]. I think it was love at first sight for me. [H] had blonde shaven hair and dark tanned skin, he was incredibly handsome. I noticed [H] had scars [GRO-B]. He told me it was skin grafts that he needed, following a road accident. [H] didn't really talk about the road accident that much. He didn't and still doesn't like to talk about bad things in his life. I do know however that it was a serious accident and [H] was thrown through the windscreen and suffered multiple injuries including serious head injuries. The accident happened in 1971 a year before we met.
4. [H] and I were married in 1973 and moved back to Glasgow after we completed our studies in 1978.
5. It transpires that during [H]'s emergency operation in 1971 he received a blood transfusion and was given contaminated blood and as a result he was infected with hepatitis C. [H] has told me that his operation took place at the [GRO-B] Hospital, [GRO-B]. I can provide no other information, as it took place before I met him.
6. I can only assume that [H] was not given any information or advice before his operation about the risks of being exposed to infection as it was an emergency.
7. At the end of 2018, [H] had an appointment at Gartnavel Hospital. His own doctor had expressed some concerns about his liver function. His gallbladder being a problem was also mentioned. I did not go with him to the appointment. I remember when he came home from the appointment, he said to me "*well there is bad news and good news. The bad news is I have hepatitis C, but the good news is they can cure it.*" I didn't know anything about hepatitis C, so I wasn't overly concerned.

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8. I had heard from somewhere that the treatment for hepatitis C had horrendous side effects though. I was more concerned with the side effects, but [H] assured me that he would receive a new treatment that had been made available. He also had some leaflets about hepatitis C, how you get it, and how you prevent passing it on to others. We read through the leaflets together, it said you could get it through sharing needles when taking intravenous drugs. Obviously I knew [H] had not got it through that, he had never been a drug user.
9. [H] also said it could be passed on through rough sexual intercourse. I questioned [H] about it as I believed we were in a loving monogamous marriage and did not want to think he had cheated on me with anyone else. He told me that the infection could also be passed on through blood to blood contact. He received a blood transfusion in 2003, during a prostate operation, which reminded me of the operation he underwent in 1971, before we met. He told me he needed this transfusion in 1971 because he had lost a lot of blood. We both came to the same conclusion that this would have been when he was infected with hepatitis C. [H] then got into contact with the liver specialist nurse and asked if this was how he could have got the infection. She agreed it was the most likely cause.
10. In 1987 when I gave birth to my son [GRO-B] I had a difficult birth and haemorrhaged. At the time, I had to have a blood transfusion. Five years ago I remember it was on the television that people who had been given a blood transfusion between certain times could have been infected with various infections including hepatitis C and HIV. I went to my local doctor's surgery and asked to be tested for this reason. I was tested and thankfully I was clear.
11. When [H] told me that he had hepatitis C last year I again asked to be tested and fortunately I was given the all clear again.
12. [H] told me he wasn't given much information about hepatitis C at

the time he was told. He was just given leaflets to read himself.

13. It is hard to believe that from 1971 to 2018, his infection was undetected. He had surgery fifteen years ago for prostate cancer and it wasn't discovered then. Since that operation he has been carefully monitored and has had his bloods taken on many occasions. It remains a mystery why they didn't discover the virus earlier. It is shocking really as [H] now has cirrhosis of the liver which may have been avoided otherwise.

Section 3. Other infections

14. [H] contracted hepatitis C. I am not aware of him contracting any other infections.

Section 4. Consent

15. I have no idea if [H] was ever treated or tested without his knowledge or consent. I have no idea if he was tested or treated for the purpose of research.

Section 5. Impact

16. When I met [H] in 1973 clearly he had already been infected with hepatitis C. As I have stated neither of us knew this till last year. As I reflect over the years and our marriage I can now realise that [H]'s physical health was greatly impacted. [H] was always fatigued. He was a busy man by nature but always seemed to hit a wall. I know I took on the burden of family life as [H] was always exhausted. He would get very short tempered at times with me and our children. This often put a strain on our marriage but thankfully we stayed together. I do know that [H] feels he let his family down.

17. In January of this year [H] started treatment for his hepatitis C. It was a course of tablets over eight weeks that he had to take. I don't believe he suffered any side-effects as a result of the treatment and it has been successful at clearing the infection, nevertheless he still has

cirrhosis of the liver.

18. [H] did not face any obstacles or difficulties in accessing the treatment. He was informed it was the newest treatment available.

19. The effects of [H] having hepatitis C and the impact the infection had on him physically, did effect the whole family, even though none of us knew he had it. As I have said earlier, [H] wasn't really a hands-on father. I took on most of that role. He was always tired and even struggled throughout his working life with fatigue. It was frustrating at times for me.

20. I am aware of the stigma that is associated with hepatitis C. It is associated with rough anal sexual intercourse, drug users and the HIV virus. We only discovered last year that [H] had this infection, so we both decided we would keep this information to ourselves. We have told our adult children, my sister and brother-in-law, but that is all.

21. My sister and brother-in-law live in [GRO-B] and over the years [H] and I would go and visit them. As we were socialising, [H] would announce he was tired and take himself off to bed. I obviously didn't know he was ill and I often was very frustrated by this. I believe my sister and brother-in-law thought [H] was just being rude.

22. With hindsight, [H]'s infection causing him severe fatigue did have an impact on his career. [H] applied for promotion on a number of occasions but was always unsuccessful. He believes that he was perceived as being lazy and demotivated. We know now that it was the severe fatigue that he suffered as a result of the hepatitis C. I believe that without the side-effects of his hepatitis C, [H] would have finished his career in a senior role earning a substantial salary.

23. As I have mentioned earlier I took on the primary role as main carer for our children, [H] was fatigued all the time. He was also quite bad tempered and snappy with the children. This resulted in the children

relying on me for their emotional well-being. Both our children are adults now, but I would say their relationship with their father was affected by his mood swings and as a result they are not as close as they should be.

Section 6. Treatment care support

24. [H] and I have never been offered any counselling or psychological support. I am not sure if it would be useful or needed now.

Section 7. Financial assistance.

25. [H] told me that he was eligible for financial assistance. I believe he was told this when he was diagnosed with hepatitis C. I know he filled in a form and sent it to the Scottish Infected Blood Support Scheme.

26. [H] received a lump sum of £50,000. He also receives £1600 month now.

27. [H] did not face any difficulties or obstacles in applying or obtaining the financial assistance.

28. There were no preconditions imposed on making an application for financial assistance.

29. The money that [H] received has been very welcome. Nevertheless, it does not compensate him or our family for the extra money we would have received had [H] gained promotions in his work. It has helped relations between [H] and [GRO-B: S] because [S] is a [GRO-B]. He is doing very well and is successful but there are times however when his work can dry up for a period. [H] is now in a position to help [S] financially during these periods. I know this has been a great comfort to him as he feels that he has let his family down over the years.

Section 8. Other issues

30. I wish to remain anonymous in this Inquiry.

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Statement of Truth

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

Signed

GRO-B

Dated Apr 21, 2020