

INFECTED BLOOD INQUIRY

FIRST WRITTEN STATEMENT OF

GRO-B

I, GRO-B will say as follows:-

Section 1. Introduction

1. My name is GRO-B of GRO-B My date of birth is GRO-B GRO-B
2. I was infected with "*Non-Specific Hepatitis*" via contaminated Cryoprecipitate.
3. **This statement has been prepared without the benefit of access to my medical records.** I have requested my records from both my GP and the Haematology Department at Lewisham Hospital.

Section 2. How Infected

4. I was diagnosed with Von Willebrand's Disease at the age of 2.5 years.
5. I received Cryoprecipitate between the ages of 2.5 and 6.
6. I received GRO-B together with Cryoprecipitate from the age of 6 until about 20. I suffered a number of allergic reactions to the Cryoprecipitate and that is why the

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GRO-B was introduced. Once both were applied intravenously the allergic reactions subsided.

7. From the age of about 20 I was then put on a synthetic product called 2Y although I only required a handful of treatments.
8. I was treated at the Lewisham Hospital in London under Dr D N Whitmore until his retirement. His replacement was Dr GRO-D.
9. Neither my parents nor I were ever given any advice or information regarding the risk of infection in relation to Cryoprecipitate.
10. GRO-B so I have had to rely solely on my father's memory but he is adamant that my parents weren't given any advice or information regarding the risk of infection associated with Cryoprecipitate. I confirm that I was not given any advice or information in this regard.
11. I became poorly when I was aged GRO-B and was hospitalised for 3.5 weeks in the early GRO-B of GRO-B. My parents were told that I had a form of "Non-specific Hepatitis". No further information was given; I appeared to recover following my treatment and the matter was soon forgotten.
12. GRO-B when at the age of GRO-B I attended the Hospital for a check up and I recall the Sister casually mentioning to me that I had Hepatitis C, whilst she was struggling to find a vein. I was extremely shocked and upset. I remember getting the train home and confronting my mother upon my return. My mother said "No, you had Non-specific Hepatitis but you were treated for this". This check up is referred to in paragraph 17 of my statement below.
13. Shortly after this GRO-B appointment with the Sister, I received a letter from Lewisham Hospital, which was also dated GRO-B advising that I had Hepatitis C. The letter was written by Dr Whitmore's successor, who was Dr GRO-D, following Dr Whitmore's retirement in 1993. I would describe Dr GRO-D as "a lot less human" than Dr Whitmore. I remember my father going straight to the hospital to see Dr GRO-D he was very angry with him and wanted to know why Dr GRO-D had waited until I reached the age of 18 to impart such shocking news when I had in fact been "successfully cured" in GRO-B. However, my father returned none the wiser having not managed to elicit much information from Dr

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GRO-D and our family therefore formed the view that the events which occurred when I was aged GRO-B were in effect a mistake on the part of the medical professionals. My "successfully cured" understanding was due to my release from hospital with no specific Hepatitis follow up arrangements with the hospital.

14. Neither my parents nor I were given sufficient information to allow us to manage or understand my infection. Furthermore, we were not furnished with any advice regarding the risk of transmission.
15. In fact the only information given to my parents was that I should eat lots of liver and this was following my hospital stay in GRO-B. I remember this because I really hated liver and had to consume copious amounts.

Section 3. Other Infections

16. Around the age of 22, I received a letter from the Hospital advising that I had been put at risk of vCJD. There has been no specific follow up from the medical establishments with regard to this.

Section 4. Consent

17. I used to attend the Hospital for six monthly check-ups and at each check up I was specifically told that I was being tested for HIV, which seemed strange at the time. If I now put my GRO-B year old head on and apply it to what was happening back then, I wouldn't be surprised if I was also being tested for other viruses without my knowledge and therefore without my consent.
18. I am sure that the doctors were doing things to patients, of which the patients knew nothing about. I strongly believe that the doctors were hell bent on testing large numbers of recipients of blood and blood products to identify the percentage of positive and negative outcomes in relation to the various infections.
19. I don't believe that I was treated without my knowledge or consent although there is a question mark regarding my treatment and exactly what my parents were told in relation to my 3.5 week inpatient stay at aged GRO-B. It is probably correct to say that the medical professionals were "less than honest" with my parents, despite the fact that knowledge pertaining to some forms of "Hepatitis" infections was in its infancy.

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20. I don't know whether I was used for the purposes of research; my blood was taken every six months and apart from the HIV test, I don't know what my blood was used for.

Section 5. Impact

21. I recall my 3.5 week inpatient stay at aged [GRO-B]. It was a very unpleasant experience and I was put in an isolated room and the medical staff entered fully gowned and gloved up. I was treated like a modern day leper.

22. No-one in my family, including me, ever gave "*Hepatitis*" a second thought after this time as I had been "*successfully treated*".

23. The shocking events which took place when I was aged [GRO-B] certainly stopped me in my tracks and were deeply upsetting. However, my family and I believed that I was "*successfully cured*" at age [GRO-B] and therefore the events which occurred when I was aged [GRO-B] were a mistake on the part of the medical professionals.

24. I therefore got on with my life and put all thoughts of "*Hepatitis*" to the back of my mind. I was very sporty and played rugby, cricket and football. I remember coming home from matches and training completely black and blue, due to my Von Willebrand's Disease, but I loved every minute of it.

25. My father and I postulate that one of the following scenarios must have occurred:

(a) I was never infected with any form of Hepatitis,

(b) I was "*successfully cured*" in [GRO-B]

(c) My body naturally cleared the Hepatitis at some unknown point;

(d) There has been a mistake on the part of the Hospital at some unknown point.

26. My father and I are of the view that if I had Hepatitis C, the Hospital would have made a concerted attempt to contact me and offer me treatment between the years of [GRO-B] and 2019.

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27. Furthermore, my most recent bleed was only about GRO-B years ago and it was sufficiently serious for me to lose consciousness and be rushed to hospital for both blood transfusions and 2Y treatment. I recall that my bloods were taken at this time and no-one mentioned that I had Hepatitis C.

28. With the advent of the Inquiry, I became increasingly intrigued about my medical history. I certainly assumed that the NHS carried out due diligence and executed "look back" exercises. My open question is "*Do I in fact currently have Hepatitis C?*" Unfortunately, I am still waiting for my medical records. However, I am quite prepared for the possibility that the information I seek may have been removed from, or simply not be recorded in, the records.

29. It is true to say that at times during my life, I have felt lethargic. However, I have never put this down to Hepatitis C/any form of Hepatitis because I was "*successfully cured*".

Section 6. Treatment/Care/Support

30. I have never been offered any counselling or psychological support.

31. I am unable to obtain life insurance because of my "*Hepatitis C*" infection.

32. My wife is not allowed to give blood due to my situation.

33. The situation I am in now is both extremely confusing and worrying as I will question my wife and children's health if my medical records show a different outcome to my understanding.

Section 7. Financial Assistance

34. I have never received any financial or practical support from The Skipton Fund.

Section 8. Other Issues

35. I want those responsible for the decision making which led to such a catastrophic loss of life to be held accountable for their actions. Documents have clearly recorded views that were not made public at the time and this is ethically bad.

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Anonymity, disclosure and redaction

36. I wish to apply for anonymity and I do not want to give oral evidence to the Inquiry.

Statement of Truth

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

Signed.

GRO-B

Dated July 30 2019