

# ANONYMOUS

Witness Name: **GRO-B**  
Statement No: WITN2596001  
Dated: 8<sup>th</sup> April 2019

## INFECTED BLOOD INQUIRY

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### FIRST WRITTEN STATEMENT OF **GRO-B**

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I provide this statement in response to a request under Rule 9 of the Inquiry rules 2006 dated 12<sup>th</sup> 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** 1980 and my address is known to the Inquiry. I am the son of **GRO-B: F**

3. I make this statement as an affected person, as my Father was infected through the use of contaminated blood products.

4. My Father is a Haemophiliac. He was a partner in a GP Practice in **GRO-B** **GRO-B** I am also a Medical Practitioner and practice in **GRO-B**

#### 2. How Affected

1. There is a history of Haemophilia in our family. My Father inherited it from his mother and he was diagnosed with mild Haemophilia in 1956. I understand

## ANONYMOUS

from him that he was infected in 1976, whilst working at Queen Elizabeth Hospital in Birmingham, when after a bleed, he was supplied with a Factor VIII treatment from America.

2. He was then diagnosed with suffering from Non A, Non B Hepatitis. He was diagnosed with Hepatitis C in August 1992.

### 3. Other Infections

1. In 1991 I understand my Father was diagnosed with Yersinia, a bacterial infection, which may have occurred because of his immune system being compromised.

### 4. Consent

1. As I understand my Father does not recall providing specific consent for the treatment. However, I doubt that it was usual to ask for specific consent at that time. Certainly in my experience, as a doctor, consent has changed markedly over the years, to the current day when express consent is required for virtually everything. I think that consent reflected the culture of society and the 1970's and 1980's was a very different time and people had a very different approach to consent. I think we must be careful not to look at the question of consent based on how we approach it now, it must be judged in its time.

### 5. Impact

1. To the best of my recollection I had known that my Father was a Haemophiliac since I was six or seven. With regards to my father's Hepatitis C, I recall that one day I was ill and off school. My Father, who was looking after me, took me to someone else's house where he was working. However he was suddenly very ill and we had to go home where an ambulance was called. I think I was 11 or 12 at the time so it would have been 1991/1992.

## ANONYMOUS

After that incident and subsequent hospital admission, I think that my parents sat my Brother and I down and told us about my Father's condition.

2. There was no real understanding of the condition amongst the general public. I recall someone in my school saying that my father was an alcoholic, as they had noticed the yellowing of jaundice, which they associated with heavy drinking. I wasn't upset by this as I knew it was wrong. However I was angry that people were so ignorant.
3. My brother is two years older than me. He is more of a worrier. I think he struggled with it more than I did. However it is fair to say that we were all worried about my Father's illness and whether it would be life limiting.
4. In 1994, my Father was very fortunate as he was told he would be part of a clinical trial and started treatment of Interferon and Ribavirin for 6 months, followed by 12 months of Alpha Interferon and then six months of Alpha Interferon and Ribavirin. He had to inject himself in the stomach every night for two years.
5. Looking back, I think it was from when he started the treatment in 1994, that my father effectively disappeared from my life and family life in general.
6. My brother developed migraines and was diagnosed with Ulcerative Colitis and I think the stress caused by the side effects of my Father's treatment contributed to both conditions. I think it also affected his A Levels.
7. I remember coming home from school and my Father would simply be lying on the sofa and not engaging with us at all. He had to retire from his job as GP due to his health, despite the fact he was only 45. I was too young to recognise depression, so I cannot comment on whether he was depressed. I can say that he did not participate in our normal family life. I remember when I was 14 I went on holiday with just my mother to Yorkshire, as my Father did not come. Family life was no longer the same. My mother was incredibly supportive but she was very stressed by it all.

## ANONYMOUS

8. My mother was a **GRO-B** and she and my Father had never really talked about money. However with my Father not working we became a one income family and suddenly money became quite an issue.
9. My Father became a changed man and I remember that on the **GRO-B** 1998 my parents announced that they were getting a divorce. I was 17 in the first year of my A Levels and my brother was going through his A Levels. My Father divorced my mother in 2000 and married a German lady, who he had known since his school days.
10. I mostly lost contact with him, seeing him occasionally and he was funding my university education.
11. In 2007 I received a call from my aunt. She did not normally call me. She told me that my Father did not seem well and he was making strange decisions and that I should speak to him as he may need to see a doctor.
12. I called him and he sounded much more normal than he had for sometime.
13. He subsequently left his German wife and returned to **GRO-B** Wales and obtained a divorce. My mother had at this time been diagnosed with breast cancer. He supported her through it and moved back in with her. They then remarried in 2010.
14. When I spoke to my Father in 2008 it was like he was back suddenly. I think it took that long, from the time he started his treatment in 1994, for the side effects of the experimental treatment that he had to wear off sufficiently for him to recover his personality. I believe my mother does not really feel that she was divorced from him as he was a different person during and after his treatment. I believe that she considers that it was a different man, suffering from the side effects of the treatment, who divorced her, and it was her husband who remarried her when he recovered.

## ANONYMOUS

15. Although he has now recovered to a large extent he is still suffering from the permanent side effects of the treatment that he received.
16. Also my mother is still carrying a boulder, in my view, and finds it difficult to move on because of the Inquiry, bringing back all of the bad memories of what happened and causing her to reflect upon it.
17. I had believed that I had coped far better with the situation than my brother. However on my third day of working GRO-B at the age of 29, I had a sudden cardiac arrest and had to be treated with a cardiac defibrillator. Following this I was seen by Occupational Health as I did not feel able to return to work at that point and I was offered Counselling. I accepted the counselling and I had six sessions of treatment. However rather than the counselling dealing with the sudden cardiac arrest, in fact I focused virtually the whole of it on my Father's Hepatitis C infection and how it had affected the family. Therefore it clearly had impacted on me much more than I had understood. I think that is partly due to the fact that we never really talked about it as a family and didn't really communicate about it. We tended to keep it to ourselves and not share the problems that we were going through due to my father's condition.

### **6. Treatment/Care Support**

1. The infected blood that my Father received clearly had an enormous impact on my family. However, I understand that if my Father had not had the experimental treatment that he could well have died and so I am still very grateful that he was accepted for treatment in 1994, despite the consequences.
2. In my view it is extremely important that patients should be supported through treatment and offered counselling. I think this would have greatly benefited my Father, although I accept that it was experimental treatment and so they were still coming to terms with the side effects of the treatment.

7. **Financial Assistance**

I understand that my Father received some financial assistance but I do not have any details of this. I do not however imagine that it would in any way compensate him for all of his lost income and pension contributions from the time he had to stop being a successful GP in 1994.

8. **Other Issues**

Although I have set out all of the negative impact caused by my Father being given an infected blood product, I am a glass half full person. I therefore have tried to see positives even in this awful scandal. I would like to think that experiencing what my Father and my family went through first hand has made me into a better doctor as I try to be empathetic with my patients. I recognise the importance of them and their families having support and counselling where necessary and do all that I can to facilitate it.

ANONYMOUS

Statement of Truth

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

Signed.....

GRO-B

Dated.....

8/4/19