

# ANONYMOUS

Witness Name: **GRO-B**

Statement No. WITN2616001

Dated: 26<sup>th</sup> February 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** and my date of birth is **GRO-B** 1978 and my address is known to the Inquiry.
2. I am married to my wife **GRO-B** and have two daughters, aged 6 and 9. I currently work as a **GRO-B** Architect for a **GRO-B** company.

#### 2. How Affected

1. I intend to speak about my father **GRO-B: F** his diagnosis, and how he was infected with Hepatitis C through, I believe, blood products and how this affected me as his son.

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2. My relationship with my father is not a particularly close relationship, however I know that my father loves me and I feel loved by him.
3. My father was a healthy man until he became infected with hepatitis C. He had to quit his job as a Medical Practitioner in GRO-B GRO-B to cope with his illness.
4. I believe my father was offered and accepted experimental treatment of Interferon. I remember watching him injecting himself.
5. I remember an occasion when I was about 11 or 12 years old, my father had been taken ill. He was in bed when the consultant came to see him. The next thing I remember was watching my father being "carted off" to hospital. I had a feeling something wasn't right, but I was not told anything and we as a family, just did not speak about what was going on, but I knew it was something that was not "normal". I was aware that my mother and father knew what was happening.
6. I am unsure of the type of Haemophilia my father had. All I knew was that when my father became injured in some way, a course of action needed to be taken swiftly. I knew that it was bad for him to be injured.
7. I believe my father could possibly have contracted hepatitis C through using the Factor VIII blood product.
8. I believe my father attended at the Cardiff Haemophilia Centre for treatment in the 1970's.
9. I am unable to explain how my father became infected, but I believe he was given Factor VIII at the Cardiff Haemophilia Centre and this is possibly how he was infected.

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10. I remember attending GRO-B Hospital with my father for him to have a liver biopsy.
11. I have no knowledge of any information or advice provided to us or my father about the risk of exposure to infection.
12. I know my father suffered with hepatitis, but I am unsure of which virus.
13. I do not actually remember, or do not think I was told when it was confirmed that my father was told that he was infected, but I have had a relatively recent conversation with my mother in which she told me that my father was devastated when he had the terrible news. He was so worried that he might have infected/ or might infect my mother and my brother and I. He was very concerned about his children's welfare.
14. As my father was a doctor, I would imagine that he would have had some sort of "management" from the medical profession. He would have had colleagues who would have provided him with information. My father was the sort of person who would have thoroughly researched his illness, gaining as much information as possible, but I do not recall any information being given to my mother or us as children about the risks of infection.

### 3. Other infections

1. I do not have any knowledge of any other infections my father may have contracted as a result of being given infected blood products.

### 4. Consent

1. I do not know whether my father was treated or tested without his knowledge or consent or without being given adequate or full information or for the purposes of research. I do know that my father as an "informed" person would have followed the required procedures

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and believe that my father underwent experimental treatment with Interferon.

### 5. Impact

1. The impact on me as a child is that I remember my father being a quiet person, who had very few close friends due to his profession as a local GP. He tended not to encourage local friendships because of his work. Work was key in my father's life. He enjoyed working and worked very long hours. He was also very conscientious, often researching and finding out about things. He sympathised with people's hardship and often used to try to help others by "fighting their cause".
2. After my father had the Interferon treatment, his character changed dramatically. I had never witnessed my mother and father argue, there was never any shouting between them, but after the Interferon treatment I could sense there was an obvious "tension".
3. My parents split up and my father went to Germany to work.
4. I remember one day during the time when my father was undergoing the Interferon treatment, I was sitting my GCSE's and we had an argument at home. My father lashed out and punched me in the upper arm. This was totally out of character for him.
5. My father put on weight as a result of his infection. He was always a fit man, not sporty, but looked after himself. These days he has increased his body weight by about 50%. I remember as a youngster, I stood on a dry stone wall and knocked it over. My father and grandfather needed to rebuild it and did it exceptionally quickly. This is an example of his fitness before becoming infected. These days he has no energy or inclination to do anything. He shows no interest in playing with my two daughters and would rather just sit on the sofa.

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6. My father is unable to feel his hands and feet as a result of the Interferon treatment.
7. My father was referred for the Interferon trial as a result of his being infected with hepatitis C.
8. To my knowledge, I do not believe that my father faced any difficulties in accessing treatment and believe that he received support.
9. I do not believe that my father's infection impacted upon his treatment as he would have been known in the right medical circles being a local GP.
10. From my perspective, I always felt that I could not be close and open about my father's infection with people. I was too afraid that I might scare them. I always felt there was something "different" in some way in relation to my family and what was going on at home. My father's infection was always kept quiet, we did not tell people of my father's illness. It was our "secret". It was just kept within the close family
11. I feel it was hard on my mother as she always tried to protect us.
12. My father's profession always came first. We were often stuck at home because my father was working and my mother needed to be there to answer the phone should any patients call.
13. As an adult, I feel that the relationship between my father and myself is somewhat strained. I love my father but find the symptoms of his illness frustrating. When he visits my home we have to have the heating on high as he feels the cold. He is unable to interact with the children in an energetic way, he just sits on the sofa and is unable to be fully interactive. I am very grateful that he is still here, but he is not the person he was years ago.

14. I can remember doing lots of things with my own grandfather in my childhood, but my father is unable and I feel that my daughters are missing out on their grandfather.
15. I do not feel that there was any ill effect in my education as a result of my father's illness. In fact when I was doing my GCSE's my father was home a lot through his illness and I found this most encouraging. I did not see a lot of my father in my primary years as he was always working long hours.
16. My parents split up when I was at University. My father went to Germany to work. I did not see him for quite some time, but on the occasions when I did see him, the visits were strained. It meant I "had" to see him when he was back in the UK. Nothing was spontaneous. I did not feel close to my father at this time. I felt we had a "utilitarian" relationship. We did not communicate very much. I felt my father was away engrossed in his own work and dealing with his illness.
17. During my 6<sup>th</sup> form education, I was diagnosed with ulcerative colitis. My father helped me to understand my condition. He could obviously sympathise and understand as he also had a chronic illness.
18. My mother decided to go back to work but as a result of my father's illness, had to work longer hours. I feel at this time, my father seemed to lose his sense of worth. He was lost without his work. Making people healthy was everything to him.

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

1. I am not aware of any counselling or psychological support being offered to my father or my family.

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**Statement of Truth**

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

Signed

GRO-B

Dated

26/2/19