

ANONYMOUS

Witness Name:

GRO-B

Statement No: WITN4451001

Exhibits: 0

Dated: JUNE 2020

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 I was born on GRO-B and I live at GRO-B
2. I was infected with the Hepatitis C Virus (HCV) through a contaminated blood transfusion.
3. This witness statement has been prepared without the benefit of access to my full medical records.

Section 2. How infected

4. I was involved in a very serious road traffic accident on 20th January 1991 and was taken to the Queen Alexandra Hospital (QAH) in Cosham. I was transfused with 25 pints of blood. I lost one of my kidneys and my spleen. One of my two brothers fainted at the sight of the injuries and scarring I had

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sustained when he, my other brother and my mother came to the hospital just after the accident. I was in hospital for weeks.

5. I was contacted on or around 16th February 2001 (10 years after the accident) by the Blood Transfusion Call Back Service to inform me that the blood I had received was contaminated with HCV. I had by then moved to the GRO-B GRO-B I was told that I would need to go to the Royal Liverpool University Hospital (RLUH) for testing. When I was able to get to the RLUH I was informed that I had indeed been infected with HCV confirmed through the HCV antibodies in my blood. I had apparently cleared the virus.

Section 3. Other Infections

6. I am not aware of having been infected with any other virus than HCV.

Section 4. Consent

7. I was given the transfusion in an emergency having been involved in a serious road traffic accident and had lost a lot of blood. I do not believe that I was unknowingly tested for HCV.

Section 5. Impact of the Infection

8. To be informed that I was likely infected with HCV through a contaminated blood transfusion I had received 10 years previously left me sick with worry. I was initially uncertain as to what it meant to have HCV. I researched it myself and I went to see my GP but she wasn't able to offer much guidance or help. I was in a state of utter panic. My daughter was not yet three years old (having been born on GRO-B 1998). I cried and cried with the worry and fear that I had passed HCV on to my daughter. She was born with a kidney condition I thought I might have caused. It was around a week before I was GRO-B Liverpool for the necessary tests. It was horrendous.

9. **GRO-B** and went to the RLUH. No-one really spoke to me in any depth about what to expect. I was just shoved in a corner to wait to be called for tests and then to wait again in a corner for the result. At no point was I offered any support or counselling. I was told that I had been infected with HCV but had self-cleared it. I had the antibodies in my blood but they were inactive. I have had no communication with anyone in authority since the test at the RLUH.

10. I do not know what direct impact HCV has had on me. I am not a well person. I suffer with Autoimmune Hashimoto's Disease. My one remaining kidney doesn't function properly. I have asthma and diabetes. Up until recently I was producing too many blood cells (Polycythemia Vera). I have constant fatigue and I worry that this is caused by the HCV as, even if it is dormant, it is a sign of HCV. With sources saying that HCV can reoccur and never fully leaves, I also worry that I could have passed it on to my daughter. It has never been suggested to me that she should also be tested, and passing it from mother to unborn baby is a main route of transmission.

11. I have been stigmatised through having HCV. There has been a lot about HCV in the media in recent years, often linked to HIV. I wouldn't want anyone I work with to know that I had HCV. I would be treated like a leper. It's an awful thing. I lost a previous partner because I thought I knew him well enough to tell him that I had HCV. He left me after that, frightened to catch it despite my assurances that it had cleared.

12. Having been infected with HCV still impacts my life. It is something you need to declare to doctors and dentists and it's forever there on your notes and records. I was left at the back of the queue until the very last person at the end of a day when I went in to hospital for a procedure. The doctors and dentists are always masked up in order to see you. I always worry over health and holiday insurance. I never know whether or not I should disclose HCV for insurance purposes. Many sources say that there is a small chance of reoccurrence and that it never fully leaves the body anyway even after

recovery. If you disclose it and they agree to cover you, your premium goes up. If you don't disclose it, you could invalidate your insurance. My family worry for themselves as well as me given the risk of passing the virus on. My mother has been beside herself with worry about me and it is something that is always on my mind. Ultimately, without the contaminated blood transfusion, I would never have acquired HCV.

Section 6. Treatment/care/support

13. I was not offered any form of counselling or psychological support.

Section 7. Financial Assistance

14. I was not aware of the existence of any of the trusts and funds and have had no financial assistance from them. I feel that I should have been informed about any financial help available and I wonder why I wasn't

15. Whilst my GP has a record of my RTA accident (and 'likely transfusion') in 1991, my QAH records were apparently destroyed after 8 years in line with their procedures. I am in the process of seeking the requisite confirmation from the National Blood Transfusion Service.

Anonymity

16. I wish to remain anonymous.

17. I do not wish to provide oral evidence.

Statement of Truth

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

Signed. GRO-B

Dated 22nd June 2020