

Witness Name: GRO-B

Statement No: WITN1237001

Exhibits: WITN1237002-3

Dated: December 2018

INFECTED BLOOD INQUIRY

FIRST WRITTEN STATEMENT OF GRO-B

I GRO-B will say as follows:-

Section 1: Introduction

1. My date of birth is GRO-B I live at GRO-B
GRO-B with my wife GRO-B We don't have any children. I was
an assembler at the GRO-B factory in Leicester for twenty three years. I
retired at the age of 60. I am also a professional singer.
2. I was infected with Hepatitis C, genotype 1b, as a result of being treated with
contaminated blood products.

Section 2: How Infected

3. I have mild Haemophilia A. My blood clotting level is 21%.
4. In 1977, when I was GRO-B years old, my father warned me that several of our
family members had haemophilia because I was due to have an operation on
my vocal cords. I advised my doctor who then did a blood test which
confirmed I had Haemophilia A.

5. According to my UK National Haemophilia Database records (exhibited at **WITN1237002**) the only time I ever received Factor VIII was in 1980 when I had a tooth extracted and my gum would not stop bleeding. I was given two bottles of Factor VIII by Dr Mitchell, at the Leicester Royal Infirmary. My records show that the batch number of this Factor VIII was 001105.
6. I was never given any information about the possible risk of infection from using Factor VIII.
7. On 27 June 1980 I was very ill, I had to take thirteen weeks off from work, and I was told I had jaundice. The doctors did not mention Hepatitis to me at this time.
8. I was informed I had Hepatitis C in 1990, when I was GRO-B years old. A doctor working under the supervision of Dr Mitchell warned me about the risks of having children. I was told there was a 90% chance my children would have Hepatitis C, so my wife and I decided against having children. I was also advised not to have sex with out a condom. My wife was not pleased about that.
9. I was infected with Hepatitis C as a result of being given blood products. I believe this information should have been provided to me earlier. I believe the doctors were aware of the infection in my body because for ten years they tested my blood every six months. I was never told they were testing my blood for Hepatitis B, C or HIV, I was under the impression I was just having a routine blood test for the jaundice.

Section 3: Other infections

10. I believe I have also been infected with vCJD as a result of being given infected blood products.

Section 4: Consent

11. I do not know if I was tested without my knowledge; however I had routine blood tests for ten years and was not told that I was being tested for Hepatitis C.

12. I was also not aware that I was tested for HIV at the time that the tests were carried out. Luckily I am HIV negative.

Section 5: Impact

13. The impact of being diagnosed with Hepatitis C has affected my life greatly. My wife and I decided not to have any children because of the advice I was given by my doctors. Having to make that decision was, and still is, extremely painful to think about. However, I have tried to not let this hold me back.

14. My diagnosis caused me to feel stressed to the extent that I went to my GP who diagnosed me as suffering from a generalized anxiety disorder. Since 2002 I have been prescribed, Propranolol, which reduces my heart rate and lowers my blood pressure in order to counteract the effects of stress. There is now shown to me marked **WITN1237003** a letter from my GP that confirms this diagnosis.

15. I have suffered over the years with low energy levels and persistent tiredness which I believe have been caused by my Hepatitis C infection. This has, in turn, made me feel depressed. The psychological impact of my infection has been significant.

16. In 2001 I was treated with Interferon and Ribavirin which was supposed to clear the Hepatitis C; however I only took two doses because the side effects were so bad. I became depressed and had mood swings and anger issues. I had to take 10 weeks off work and I found the whole period very painful.

ANONYMOUS

17. I was treated for 12 weeks Viekirax and Dasabuvir in March/April 2018. I tolerated the treatment with minimal side effects. I felt tired and had some stomach discomfort. This treatment has cleared my Hepatitis C.
18. However, the damage to my liver remains. I have severe scarring on my liver and Stage 2 cirrhosis.
19. I refused to give up work during my adult life. However, as I approached the age of 60 and the fatigue from Hepatitis C began to effect me so I decided it was better if I left work and I took the retirement package I was offered.
20. I did not tell anyone about my infection, because I did not want people asking me how I became infected with Hepatitis C. I chose early on to do the best I could in life; I didn't want it to hold me back.
21. I chose not to tell my parents or my sister as I didn't want them to worry. I only told my wife's cousin.
22. In the last 4 years (prior to me clearing the virus) the infection has had a really big impact on me. I am too tired to go out most of the time so my social life has suffered. My wife has also suffered as a result of me not accompanying when she goes out. GRO-B also has to do more around the house because I am too tired to help.
23. I am a professional vocalist and sang in pubs. I did this full time before I worked at GRO-B I then became part time. I have more or less given this up as I am too tired and have no energy.
24. In terms of the financial effects, I have had to pay more for travel insurance and car insurance as a result of having Hepatitis C. I have also had to pay extra for private dental care.

Section 6: Treatment/Care/Support

25. As far as I am aware all applicable treatments have been made available to me. I cannot fault the support I have had from the Leicester Royal Infirmary during the treatment I received in March/April 2018 for the Hepatitis C virus.

26. Counselling has never been made available to me. My haemophilia doctor, Dr Delahook, gave me a formal diagnosis of depression and confirmed that the significant psychological consequence of having Hepatitis C was continuing to affect me. He sent me to my GP who gave me anti-depressants. I took one pill and never took it again because I had a bad reaction to it. I felt like I was having a heart attack.

Section 7: Financial Assistance

27. I received the Stage 1 payment of £20,000 from the Skipton Fund. Sister Martin from Leicester Royal Infirmary filled the form in for me.

28. From 2004 I received £3,500 a year which then increased to £18,000 a year in May 2018. This followed an appeal under the Special Category Mechanism (SCM) which was made on the basis of the state of my liver. I therefore receive monthly payments equivalent to those receiving payments under Stage 2 but I have not received the Stage 2 lump sum payment.

29. These sums are tax free. I also receive a £500 winter fuel allowance; all my current monthly payments made by the England Infected Blood Support Scheme (EIBSS).

30. The process of applying for financial assistance is not easy; one form I had to complete was 10 pages long. I had to put a lot of things on as to how I have been impacted. It certainly was not straightforward.

31. The means test threshold was set very low at £16,000 so you really had to be struggling to be offered a reasonable amount. There are times where I would

have appreciated the financial support; but sadly I was just above the threshold.

Section 8: Other Issues

32. A lot of people have died as a result of this scandal. The Government has brushed everything under the carpet. No one has admitted responsibility. I feel we have been badly let down. I believe the politicians knew what was happening; that infected blood was bought from America and absolutely nothing was done about it. People must be held responsible.

33. It has only been through years of fighting and publicity that this matter has come to light.

34. There was very little financial help for those who were infected. They should receive a fair amount of money to compensate them. This has been going on since the nineties and it has been a nightmare.

Anonymity/disclosure and redaction

35. I wish to apply for anonymity.

36. I do not wish to be called to give oral evidence at the Inquiry.

Statement of Truth

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

Signed...

GRO-B

Dated.....

19-12-2018