

# ANONYMOUS

Witness Name: **GRO-B**

Statement No.: WITN2273001

Exhibits: None

Dated: 23<sup>rd</sup> July 2020

## INFECTED BLOOD INQUIRY

FIRST WRITTEN STATEMENT OF **GRO-B**

I provide this statement in response to a request under Rule 9 of the Inquiry Rules 2006 dated 15<sup>th</sup> May 2020.

I, **GRO-B**, will say as follows: -

### Section 1. Introduction

1. My name is **GRO-B**. My maiden name is **GRO-B**. My date of birth is the **GRO-B** 1983 and my address is known to the Inquiry. I am married to my husband **GRO-B** and we married in **GRO-B** **GRO-B**. I intend to speak about my father **GRO-B: F** who was born on the **GRO-B** 1960, who contracted hepatitis C through receipt of blood products to treat his haemophilia. I will speak in particular about the nature of his illness, how the illness has affected him, the treatment he received and the impact it had on our lives together as a family.
2. I wish to remain anonymous for this statement for privacy reasons.

**Section 2. How Affected**

3. My Dad suffers from depression because of his infections, the whole situation has been very hard on the family. Dad is often unhappy and in low spirits. It is hard for me to really say what Dad was like before all of this happened because I was only two when he had his first infection. Mum says he is a different man now. I feel like I have missed out on a lot of opportunities to have quality time with Dad because of his infection. He has been so poorly and ill for most of my life, that I think I missed out on some of the normal experiences I could have had with Dad if he was healthy.
4. Dad was infected with hepatitis C while receiving blood products to treat his haemophilia A, which is moderate. To treat his haemophilia Dad has received cryoprecipitate, Factor VIII, ReFacto, plasma and DDAVP. Dad would receive his treatment at the Glasgow Royal Infirmary under the care of Professor Lowe and Professor Forbes. Due to receiving these treatments, Dad was infected with hepatitis C in 1985 and again in 1987. I cannot say exactly which of these treatments led to my Dad contracting his infections or exactly what date he contracted them.
5. As far as I am aware, in 1985, Dad had been feeling very unwell. I cannot say exactly what symptoms he had but he was inexplicably ill. During a routine blood test for his haemophilia in the Glasgow Royal Infirmary, shortly after he started to feel unwell, it was found that he had contracted hepatitis C. Sometime after this diagnosis, he was told that he had cleared the virus himself. I do not know how that happened but I assume he had somehow developed antibodies to the virus that fought off the infection.
6. In 1987, Dad began to feel unwell again in very similar circumstances to his first infection. Shortly after this, it was found that he had contracted hepatitis C again during a routine blood test.
7. I was very young when this was happening so I was not aware of whether Dad received any information about the risk of infection posed from receiving these

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blood products. From what I have been told by Dad in more recent years, he was not given any real information about the risk of infection.

8. Dad was given both his diagnoses at the Glasgow Royal Infirmary Haemophilia Unit as soon as they found the infection in his blood work.
9. Dad has not shared a lot of information about his diagnoses appointments with me, so I do not know everything that was said to him at his two appointments in 1985 and 1987. I believe it was Professor [GRO-D] and Professor [GRO-D] that spoke to him. The information he was given in 1985, for his first infection, was very limited. He was given some information about not using the same toothbrushes, covering cuts and using condoms, but nothing major or significant. I know he found the tone of the whole appointment very casual.
10. I think the level of information he was given was appalling, it was not enough for him to understand or manage the infection in any way. Mum and Dad should have been properly informed about the infection but they weren't. I know Dad was made to feel as if the infection wasn't that serious.
11. I do not know if the information about either of my Dad's infections could have been provided to him earlier than they were, but if there were any delays, then this would have inadvertently put his family at risk.
12. The way Dad was told about his infections was very poor. They were treated like casual conversations and the doctors didn't make him aware of the gravity of the situation.

### **Section 3. Other Infections**

13. In 2009, Dad received a letter informing him that he was at high risk of having contracted vCJD. The letter explained that Dad had received blood products from an individual that had died from variant vCJD.

**Section 4. Consent**

14. Dad was treated without his knowledge because he was never made aware of the risks posed from receiving the blood products he needed to treat his haemophilia. He did not receive any information beforehand of the risk of contracting any infection, so he was treated without having full knowledge of the situation.
15. I believe Dad was also treated without his consent for the same reason. He may have consented to treatment for his haemophilia but he did not give his consent to be treated with infected blood products.
16. I think it is possible that Dad could have been treated or tested for the purposes of research. I could not say exactly why, but I just feel that so much information about infected blood has been hidden or suppressed over the years that he could have been part of research as well, there is no way of knowing.

**Section 5. Impact**

17. Dad's infection led him to developing depression and that is something he still deals with today. It made him feel really low and I know that he is unhappy a lot of the time. He can be quite emotional and there are days when I can't really talk to him. He can get overwhelmed by certain situations and that can make him quite irritable.
18. Dad now suffers from executive brain function disorder or brain fog because of his infection. This can make it hard for him to remember things and has affected his memory quite a lot, over the years. I am not able to say when Dad started to suffer from this disorder.
19. Due to his infection, Dad had his gallbladder removed in 2014 at the Glasgow Royal Infirmary. I believe it was something related to his infection.
20. Dad did not receive any treatment for his hepatitis C, I know it was talked about at some stage many years ago, but I do not think anything ever came of those

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discussions. As far as I understand, treatment was never made available to him. He cleared his first infection in 1985 himself and has never received treatment for his second infection with hepatitis C in 1987. I do not know to what extent Dad has asked his doctors about treatment since then.

21. I cannot say whether Dad ever faced any difficulties in accessing treatment. It is not something he has ever discussed with me.
22. I am not aware of there being any treatments that Dad should have received, but did not.
23. Dad's infection has meant that whenever he sees a new healthcare professional or dentist, he has to inform them of his infection so they can take precautions and get the right protection before they treat him.
24. I think that Dad's infection has meant that overall, he has had a pretty poor quality of life. I know that he doesn't have much of social life and he can sometimes feel inadequate in groups of people. He has lost a lot of confidence in himself and that affects his life every day. I get a sense that he feels he has lost out on quality time with his grandchildren as well, either because of his health or his mood.
25. It's hard to describe what impact the infection had on me, especially at the beginning when I was a child. I grew up seeing that Dad was an unwell person. I think my parents tried to shield me from what was going on a lot of the time. It made me feel quite lonely when I was a child because I felt like my life was different to a lot of children my age. I remember there being a lot of upheaval when I was younger because we would be going through to Glasgow constantly to go to the hospital. Back then, hospitals weren't really spaces where children could feel comfortable. I would often just be sitting in a plain waiting room for long periods of time, it was a very clinical environment. It was always very emotional and stressful seeing your Dad require so much treatment. When Dad was at home, he was bedbound a lot of the time. If my Mum was at work, that meant I would look after him, which could be hard. It also meant that I had to learn to do a lot of things for myself, finding things to

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do, dressing myself and making snacks. Dad's health just meant that there was less time for us to spend together.

26. Professor **GRO-D** and Professor **GRO-D** told Mum and Dad not speak to anyone about his infection because of the stigma associated with hepatitis C, which made them feel quite isolated. They were both worried about what would happen if anyone found out about his infection from that point on.
27. I know that Dad stopped working sometime around his second infection in 1987, I cannot say exactly when this was. I remember there was a point when I was a child when Mum became the only one working.
28. Dad not being able to work did cause some financial strain on the family. I cannot say exactly what the effect was because I was so young at the time, it's not something I would have been told, but it's something my parents have mentioned in passing in recent years.

### **Section 6. Treatment, Care and Support**

29. Dad has only been offered psychological help in the last five to seven years. I cannot say who it was that offered him this but I know it was someone in the Glasgow Royal Infirmary. Dad has been receiving counselling for a few years now and I know he is getting a lot of help from it. I think it would have done him a lot of good if that sort of support had been offered to him from the very beginning though.

### **Section 7. Financial Assistance**

30. I do not know anything about the financial assistance Dad may have received. He is a very private person when it comes to his finances.

**Section 8. Other Issues**

31. I have recently found out in the last few years that because of Dad's infection, the option of having more children was taken out of my parents hands to some extent. At the time of his infection in 1987 it was thought that the infection could be passed on through birth. That is what they were told following his diagnosis so they decided not to have any more children. That is something I feel was very unfair. That information was not correct and how our family looks now could have been different if they had been given the right advice.

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## Statement of Truth

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

Signed

GRO-B

Dated Jul 27, 2020