

ANONYMOUS

Witness Name GRO-B

Statement No.: WITN5718001

Exhibits: WITN5718002

Dated: 30 August 2021

INFECTED BLOOD INQUIRY

WRITTEN STATEMENT OF GRO-B

I provide this statement in response to a request under Rule 9 of the Inquiry Rules 2006 dated 14 April 2021.

GRO-B will say as follows: -

Section 1. Introduction

1. My name is GRO-B My date of birth is GRO-B 1975, and my address is known to the Inquiry. I intend to speak about my father GRO-B: F His date of birth is GRO-B 1942, and he passed away on GRO-B 1987.
2. I intend to speak about his Hepatitis C (HCV) infection and how it affected him and our family. I was a young girl at the time, so I do not know most of the details of the events. My mother has also provided some information to help prepare this statement, but as these events happened a long time ago, she cannot remember many details either.

Section 2. How Affected

3. In December 1982, I remember because it was on Christmas Eve, my father began vomiting large amounts of blood. There was a lot of blood everywhere, so we called the ambulance, and he was rushed to what was then North Staffordshire Royal Infirmary. It is now the University Hospital of North Staffordshire.
4. We were informed that he had a massive stomach bleed at the hospital because he had oesophageal varices. He had to have a balloon inserted in surgery and was also given a blood transfusion to replace all the blood he had lost. I do not know precisely how much, but it had to be many units because he had lost a lot of blood.
5. My father used to be a drinker and was already being treated for this problem at the North Staffordshire Royal Infirmary by Dr Swann. I assume that it was the drinking that caused the varices.
6. At the time, however, he was going through a period where he had managed to stop drinking, but because this was an ongoing problem, he went back to drinking not too long after.
7. We were never warned that there was a risk of him contracting an infection through the blood at the time of the transfusion.
8. My family suffered through a difficult period over the next five years, and we put all of my father's illness down to his drinking problems.
9. My father passed away on GRO-B 1987. Up until preparing for this interview, my mother and I thought that he had died of either alcoholism-related hepatitis or alcoholism and HCV, given that his death certificate had listed the cause of death as "(a) Hepatic Encephalopathy" and "(b) Hepatic Cirrhosis". See death certificate **exhibited as WITN5718002**.

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10. I don't think he was aware that he had contracted HCV through infected blood while alive.
11. He had only ever received a blood transfusion that time in 1982 and did not have any tattoos or piercings.

Section 3. Other Infections

12. I do not believe that my father received any infection other than HCV due to being given infected blood.

Section 4. Consent

13. My father had many tests carried out on him. We always assumed that this was because of the nature of his alcoholism. Dr Swann worked in the gastroenterology unit at North Staffordshire Royal Infirmary and was his doctor until he passed away.
14. I don't know if my father was ever involved in research or whether he was informed of this if he was.

Section 5. Impact

15. My father used to be an organist and sell musical instruments for a living. He loved knitting, and he also GRO-B We would have wool in the fridge many times because it was easier to knit with the yarn if it was cooler.
16. He had been out of work for several years by the time he passed away, and he was no longer recognisable by this time.

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17. After the blood transfusion, my father remained in the hospital for a few weeks because Dr Swann was still treating him. By the time he came back home, he must have been fine for a bit before the problems with the alcohol resurfaced.
18. I was fairly young at the time, so it was very difficult for me to understand the full extent of his illness.
19. I know that nearer to the time he passed away, I could see symptoms that, now in retrospect, were probably connected to the HCV.
20. He was yellow all over, and his eyes had an orange tint to them. He was hallucinating, and his legs went black, and the doctors did not reason for that. He spent the last six months of his life in the hospital.
21. I don't think that he was ever aware he had hepatitis. We were never told about hepatitis B or C until it was mentioned in his death certificate.
22. As a result, we were not warned about any potential risks of him transmitting HCV through using towels, toothbrushes or sharing stuff.
23. In those days, we did not ask doctors questions because we trusted that we were in the hands of the experts.

Section 6. Treatment/Care/Support

24. Counselling or psychological support was not a thing done back in the day, so he would not have gone for that if offered.

Section 7. Financial Assistance

25. Apart from the usual benefits for widows from the government, we have never applied for or been offered any financial assistance by any organisation.

Section 8. Other Issues

26. I saw this Inquiry on the news, and I always knew that my father had HCV even though we did not realise it until after he passed away. I know I do not have a lot of details because I was very young and it was a long time ago, but I know that many people have lived with this, and I wanted my dad's story to be included.

27. He was a really talented man, an excellent piano player and musician, and the life and soul of a party. He was taken away too soon and is missed.

Statement of Truth

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

Signed

GRO-B

Dated 30 August 2021