

ANONYMOUS

Witness Name:

GRO-B

Statement No.: WITN0802001

Exhibits: Nil

Dated: November 2019

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 3 September 2019.

I, GRO-B, will say as follows:

Section 1. Introduction

1. My name is GRO-B. My date of birth is GRO-B 1996 and my address is known to the Inquiry. I am a make-up artist and intend to speak about how my father's infection with Hepatitis C affected me growing up. In particular, the effect this had on my childhood, schooling and living arrangements.

Section 2. How Affected

2. My father contracted Hepatitis C through a contaminated blood transfusion before I was born. I was only a year old when he was

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diagnosed, so his condition was a constant in my life. I don't remember when I was told, but I knew that he was given infected blood during a back operation he had had as a teenager.

Section 3. Other Infections

3. I am not aware of and do not believe my father contracted any infection other than hepatitis C as a consequence of receiving contaminated blood.

Section 4. Consent

4. I understand that it was my father's mother who consented to him receiving the blood transfusion infected with Hepatitis C.

Section 5. Impact

5. I recall having had a great childhood with my Dad. In retrospect, I think that he may have worried that he wouldn't always be there for us and so was making the most of his time with us. We often went away on family holidays, sometimes overseas. I particularly remember going to the Maldives for his 40th birthday and having an island all to ourselves for a day. He always made sure that we were enjoying ourselves.
6. I was 15 years old when my Dad received his first round of treatment for HCV in 2011. I never really understood the specifics of the treatment but I do know that he got as far as 10 weeks into his 12-week treatment. I thought he was dying as he was very thin and his skin was yellow. He also had burns on his legs. It frightened me to see how unwell he was, and I would run upstairs when my mother had to inject him into his stomach with his medication.

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7. The pain and disappointment of not being cured of the HCV after the first treatment made my father very moody, something which can still affect him to this day. I think that this was, at least in part, the reason why my parents' marriage ended in divorce. I believe that the stress and pressure of his illness was just too much for them to bear. I was 17 when my Mum moved out and I recall that it seemed to happen so quickly. I was never aware of them arguing but think they may have been keeping it away from us and behind closed doors. Both my brother and I chose to remain with Dad. He wasn't in a good way at that time and I felt that he needed someone to look after him. I remember my 18th birthday being a bit horrible as it was the first year after my parents' divorce.
8. After my parents' divorce, I would always try to attend his important doctors' appointments. When my Mum and Dad were still together I tried as often as possible to attend these appointments with them but I took on even more responsibility when they divorced. I wanted to be there and support him as much as possible. I still worry a lot about him as the HCV has made his memory foggy and he can be forgetful at times. I ensure that he takes his medication on time, remind him of his doctors' appointments and call the clinic on his behalf.
9. My brother and I still live at home with our Dad despite the fact that we are both adults. We look after and maintain the house. We have split the chores between us and each of us has our role. Dad does help us out when he is able and has his own chores like packing and unpacking the dishwasher when he is able to do them. I also take him shopping when he's feeling up to it.
10. I am the only girl in the house and do feel some pressure to stay at home and continue to care for Dad, because apart from what we do in the house, I worry that he would be very lonely without us there.

11. My father's social life is minimal due to his illness. He has one school friend who he keeps in contact with and who knows that he has had Hepatitis C. He isn't close to his mother, our grandmother which I think is partly due to the strain his condition has had on the family. We are not close to her either, in fact I only recall having met her only a few time in my entire life. Our paternal grandfather lives in Spain and although my Dad doesn't see him often, he does chat with him over the phone regularly. We usually go visit one of my Dad's aunts who lives nearby and also my Dad's sister around Christmas time.
12. My father's HCV did not impact on my education in that my marks didn't suffer, but it did have an impact on where I lived. Instead of being free to choose a university further away, I chose to study for a Fine Arts degree at GRO-B University. Although I don't regret staying at home, as I'm so close to my family, I do think that if Dad had not been infected with Hepatitis C, I would have considered moving away to have a more complete university experience.
13. I believe that if my father had not contracted Hepatitis C, his life would have been very different. He would be a different person. I see him wondering what could have been. I respect my Dad for how much he has done for us despite being so unwell. He has never allowed his illness to get in the way of his relationship with us. I think we have a 'normal' relationship with him, we have our bickers of course but we are a very tight family unit.

Section 6. Treatment/Care/Support

14. No, I had not even considered that. Thinking about it now, I feel that the Hospital or the treating doctors who I saw regularly when visiting with my Dad, should perhaps have offered me some support, especially after my Mum left.

Section 7. Financial Assistance

15. I know that my father has received some compensation for his HCV infection over the years and does receive monthly support payments, but I don't know any of the details.

Statement of Truth

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

Signed _____

GRO-B

Dated _____

14/11/19