

ANONYMOUS

Witness Name: GRO-B

Statement No: WITN0568002

Exhibits: nil

Dated: 5 February 2020

INFECTED BLOOD INQUIRY

SECOND WRITTEN STATEMENT OF GRO-B

I provide this statement in response to a request under Rule 9 of the Inquiry Rules 2006 dated 12 December 2018.

I, GRO-B will say as follows: -

1. I make this statement in addition to my statement of 15 January 2019 (WITN0568001) to add additional information.
2. In this regard: -
 - a) At paragraph 20 of my first statement I state that a newspaper report highlighted the risks to haemophiliacs from contaminated blood. I would like to add that I think in February 1984 there was a front-page story on the 'Sunday Mail' about haemophiliacs being exposed to HIV through blood products. Up until this point I was not aware of the potential contamination of HIV. I did not panic and did not contact my Haemophilia Centre after reading the article, but I received a call from the Royal Free Hospital asking if I was worried about the prospect of having HIV.

ANONYMOUS

- b) Either Dr Kernhoff or Dr Goldman explained that I was vulnerable to having HIV as a result of receiving contaminated blood products that had likely come from America. In their words, the risk of HIV was 'real' and I had probably been contaminated.
- c) In paragraph 20 of my first statement I assert that 'because I had received HCV, there was a strong chance that I had been exposed to the HIV virus'. I would like to clarify that there was a likelihood that I had been infected with the HIV virus because I had received infected blood. It was not a direct link because I already had HCV.
- d) In paragraph 45 I explain how my wife was told that she was at risk of HIV. This would have been in 1985 as we were contemplating marriage. She was advised of the reality that I had probably been exposed to HIV and the long-term issues were at best 'uncertain'.
- e) I went through a difficult time where I was tested every two weeks for about 6-12 months, to see if I went on to develop the HIV virus. The testing started not long after the article in the Sunday Mail, because the hospital had traced back one of the blood products I received as being suspect and they suggested therefore that I had been exposed to the HIV virus.
- f) I was regularly tested but never developed HIV, despite the hospital believing that I would.
- g) At paragraph 46 I state that 'most haemophiliacs who had been given the hepatitis C diagnosis were thought to later develop HIV'. It was explained to me that because I became infected with HCV as a result of receiving plasma from pooled American blood donations, there was an expectation that the pooled blood would have also had HIV positive donors.

ANONYMOUS

- h) I have been asked to provide the date when I was told I had been infected with HCV. I knew I had hepatitis of some sort from a young age, but I do not think anyone understood what it meant. I did not suffer with obvious jaundice signs but I had some inflammation of the liver and became very tired..
- i) Between 1975 and 1977 I was diagnosed with non A non B Hepatitis, which is now known as HCV. A liver function test from January 1976 has an abnormal result and the AST is inflamed. Further tests from 1976 detect that I was Hepatitis B Antibody Positive.
- j) I received a letter in 1977, which I find particularly relevant. It explains the benefits of home treatment for haemophiliacs, but states the risk of hepatitis. I strongly believe people knew there was a risk involved with the use of these products.
- k) Factor VIII was a total revolutionary treatment. My own view is that when doctors developed the ability to have home treatment, the whole haemophiliac population demanded this product. The UK blood laboratories could not manufacture enough of the product to give haemophiliacs the amount they demanded, so we started to import blood from America as a result.
- l) I was told by my consultants Dr Ritzer and Dr Matthews that American blood had risks associated with it, but the trade off was that it allowed haemophiliacs to have much more of a normal life. Consequently, I understood US blood to be riskier. If doctors had cut back on the factor products, all hell would have broken loose, with cries for more F8 from those associations supporting haemophiliacs.
- m) Due to this knowledge in 1978 I chose to use less Factor VIII, so that I could be treated with UK blood only. I pushed to go back onto UK products and it is probably the reason why I did not contract HIV.

ANONYMOUS

- n) The entire haemophiliac world demanded this blood product, so we ended up taking a substandard product to make up the shortfall in supply. I do not think people were aware of the HIV virus at this point, but perhaps the debate is whether they knew in 1983 and decided not to tell us until 1984. The consultants definitely knew that US blood was riskier and could expose people to hepatitis.
- o) At the time doctors did not understand the risk of non A non B hepatitis and there was no sign of any chronic liver problems. Use of American blood was a trade off and the factor products were saving the lives of haemophiliacs at the time.

Statement of Truth

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

Signed

GRO-B

Dated

5th Feb 2020.