

**INFECTED BLOOD INQUIRY**

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**FIRST WRITTEN STATEMENT OF**

GRO-B

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I, GRO-B will say as follows:-

**Section 1. Introduction**

1. My name is GRO-B of GRO-B  
GRO-B My date of birth is GRO-B and I am married.
2. I was infected with Hepatitis C and Hepatitis B as a result of receiving contaminated Factor IX concentrates.
3. This statement has been prepared without the benefit of access to my medical records.

**Section 2. How Infected**

4. I have severe Haemophilia B and I was initially treated with cryoprecipitate and blood plasma until the introduction of Factor IX concentrates. I was treated both on demand and prophylactically, at different stages of my life.
5. I was treated at the Oxford Haemophilia Centre, the Royal Victoria Infirmary (RVI) in Newcastle-Upon-Tyne, St Thomas' Hospital in London, the Sheffield Haemophilia Centre

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and also at Cheltenham General Hospital which sourced its Factor IX concentrate supplies from the Oxford Haemophilia Centre.

6. I was given absolutely no advice by the medical professionals regarding the risk of infection from the use of Factor IX concentrates.
7. I cannot recall the names of my consultants but the name Professor Preston rings a bell and he would have been based at the Sheffield Haemophilia Centre.
8. I was infected with Hepatitis C and Hepatitis B as a result of receiving contaminated Factor IX concentrates.
9. I remember a horrific interaction with one doctor at the Cheltenham General Hospital. I was walking down one of the corridors and a doctor brushed against me and said "*Oh you are taking that stuff that is killing people*" before going swiftly on his way. This left me devastated; in a mental turmoil and completely shocked. The internet did not exist in those days and I did not understand what this doctor meant because no one had explained or told me anything in this regard.
10. I was told by a consultant at the Sheffield Haemophilia Centre in around 1971/1972 that I had been infected with Hepatitis B from Factor IX concentrates. I believe that I was told as soon as the medical professionals became aware of my infection and I think that this was also in 1971/1972.
11. I don't know when I was infected with Hepatitis C (Non-A Non-B [NANB] Hepatitis as it was then known) but I was told about my infection in the late 1980s by, I believe, Professor Preston during a routine appointment at the Sheffield Haemophilia Centre. It was at the time when the AIDS scare stories were occupying the press. I remember being very confused about what it was that I was infected with because I was not given very much information in my appointment about the virus. I think that the devastating news was conveyed to me appallingly. The consultant did mention that I should stop drinking alcohol and to embark upon a healthy diet, ensuring that I cut out as much fat as possible.
12. I remember coming out of my appointment thinking that I was most definitely functionally unclean but not really understanding why. I was given minimal factual or practical information in relation to the risk of transmission but I did understand that I basically had to live a completely new life from now on and keep some parts of my life secret. I now had to

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adopt some type of compartmentalisation going forward. I remember giving up cooking after finding out the news, even though I loved cooking and I felt guilty and hated myself all of the time. I also hated the fact that I needed sex and love and that by participating in such, I could be putting the people I loved at risk.

13. I also recall that the medical professionals at the Sheffield Haemophilia Centre were extremely scared of both NANB Hepatitis and HIV. They had witnessed some harrowing scenes because they nursed those patients with these infections on their death beds. They got to know the patients and they then watched the majority of them die a painful death. In my view, the medical professionals were traumatised and this in turn scared the hell out of me as it dawned on me how serious the thing that I had been infected with was.
14. Most of the medical professionals had a very bleak outlook in relation to how I was now supposed to conduct my life. A very small number did actually encourage me to carry on with my life but in the main they were very negative. They were traumatised and wanted to stop any more infection in anyway they could so they basically scared their patients. I don't think that their actions were deliberate, rather it was the fact that they had seen their own careers and lives ruined due to their own psychological trauma arising from what they had witnessed. Waiting rooms were like scenes from "*Belsen*". I met one patient with my disease and HIV, who I really connected with. Sadly he died in an AIDS bloodbath in the room next to me. He had a young baby and I remember bonding with him before he passed away and even today, I have never managed to get over his passing.
15. The same doctor who had brushed past me in the corridor at the Cheltenham General Hospital also asked me to use up stocks of old factor that were supposed to be destroyed or returned to the manufacturer after they had been "*withdrawn*". He told me that all the hype was "*a scare about nothing and a waste of good factor*". Unbelievably, despite feeling terribly uneasy and worried, I agreed to use up the old stock because I kept thinking that I was helping out the poor NHS to whom I owed so much. I was sufficiently worried to have retained the labels from these bottles for many years afterwards; taking them with me when I moved house on numerous occasions. I wanted to be able to prove that there had been no proper ban or recall if anyone was interested. It felt wrong. However, no one was interested and the world moved on and it was only relatively recently that I disposed of the labels. One has to remember that some of the Haemophilia Centres issued factor to other hospitals and treating centres and that there was a cavalier attitude to safety with extremely lapse procedures.

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

16. I was told that I had been put at risk of vCJD and that I would have to notify my dentist accordingly. I believe that I received two letters from the Sheffield Haemophilia Centre regarding vCJD.

### **Section 4. Consent**

17. I believe that I was tested for numerous viruses without my knowledge or consent. The hospitals were always taking my blood and I was never told for what purpose. They used to say "*Going to take some blood today*, **GRO-B**" and that was it.

18. I have no idea as to whether I was used for the purposes of research. However, I would be surprised if the consultants were not carrying out research in order to try and find out what was happening with the progression of these viruses.

### **Section 5. Impact**

19. Medical professionals were visibly shaken at the death of people they knew well from these infections; it was a nasty death and they could not help talking about it. They would discuss the physical effects of these viruses in graphic detail which, I believe, was their way of trying to deal with the horror. However, their coping mechanisms had a very bad effect on me and other patients.

20. Finding out that I had Hepatitis C shook me up and gave me a profound sense of guilt because I realised that I could kill my beloved partner. I felt unclean and diseased; a bit like a medieval leper. It broke up my long term relationship with my partner because I could not bear to be near her and I was worried at every minor illness or snuffle she displayed because I thought that I had infected her and that it was the beginning of the end for her. The guilt was horrific and I was mentally very unwell.

21. Hepatitis C also put enormous strain on a subsequent relationship when I found someone who I disclosed my status to because I wanted to share my life, despite being fully aware of the risks that involved.

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22. Even now, which is 30/40 years down the line, I panic if I hear any mention of my ex-partners being unwell. I have never lost that sense of terror that by purely by loving others I might have destroyed their lives.
23. Hepatitis C has caused me chronic fatigue over the years and made living any sort of "normal" life very difficult.
24. In fact the cure; Interferon and Ribavirin, was worse than the illness itself. One of the sisters at the Sheffield Haemophilia Centre told me that I was the only patient who managed to complete the course due to the horrific side effects. Everyone else had given up and succumbed to a life time of being infected with Hepatitis C. I remember that during this treatment, I spent many hours just sitting in the bath trying to relieve the skin problems whilst feeling constantly nauseous and vomiting. It was truly horrific and I have never recovered from this treatment. I have lost all skin elasticity and cuts and wounds now struggle to heal. The chronic fatigue that I suffered prior to the treatment has significantly worsened, to the degree that it takes over my whole life.
25. Socially I tried to hide my illness from everyone, including my family and friends. I avoided them and any social interactions. I lived remotely and reclusively in the middle of nowhere, whilst trying to deal with the unimaginable.
26. In fact, I can count on one hand the number of people who I told about my Hepatitis C. Anyone I did tell, beyond a new partner some years ago, behaved differently towards me following my disclosure. I felt that they did not trust me anymore and they treated me very differently to how they had done pre-knowledge of my infection.
27. I have only managed to cope by having many doors that I cannot open. To list all of my problems arising from this infection is a soul destroying task in itself. Daily life is a struggle and I often become despondent when faced with a monolithic catalogue of all the things that I have to get through each day. I like to think that I can cope and get by. The inescapable conclusion when faced with cataloguing my problems is that I am deluding myself. I have to go on living my life and any optimism I display is fraudulent. This is very hard and very hard on the people who love me.
28. Hepatitis C has had a profoundly negative impact upon both my career and financial situation. I used to be a **GRO-B** at the **GRO-B** and I became fairly senior to the point where I was in sole charge of **GRO-B** over **GRO-B**. **GRO-B** However, the chronic fatigue and other Hepatitis C related symptoms made this

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role very difficult. I was unable to continue to keep pushing myself as I had too many worries connected with my infection. In fact, the straw that broke the camel's back and the thing that completely knocked me off my tracks was the "*doctor in the corridor incident*" to which I have referred to earlier in my statement. Not long after this I had to give up this role and therefore my finances took a dive.

### **Section 6. Treatment/Care/Support**

29. I was treated differently by medical professionals following their knowledge of my infection. I suddenly experienced treatment with gowning and gloving up and those treating me definitely displayed a much more cautious attitude and approach.
30. I have always had veins that were difficult to locate and therefore one can imagine how much more difficult a task it was to locate a vein with a rubber glove on.
31. The dental treatment was different due to my risk of vCJD. This meant that I was introduced to being last on the list for any appointments and having all instruments disposed of following a single use.
32. I don't think that I was offered any formal counselling or psychological assistance. I do recall talking to the odd nurse here or there though. I basically dealt with my mental trauma alone. I have doors that I just don't open now and this is how I have coped; if you can call it coping.

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

33. I received the Stage 1 Payment of £20,000 from the Skipton Fund. This amount was nowhere near sufficient given that my infection was avoidable. I can't recall any dealings with the Skipton Fund so cannot comment as to whether my interactions with the Trust were positive or negative.
34. I now receive the Special Category Mechanism (SCM) Payments from the EIBSS.
35. Any amount of financial support pales into insignificance when one compares it with the loss of career and earnings that I suffered as a result of my infection.

### **Section 8. Other Issues**

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36. I want to find out what went wrong and I would like someone to be held accountable for this tragedy.

37. The whole thing is a total disgrace and it has been terrible for those who had to live through this and for those who died as a result of their infections.

38. I am writing this statement now and seeking answers for the man who died in the AIDS bloodbath who had the young baby. I have spent my whole life thinking about him and how awful his death was. When I met this man, it was like meeting a long lost brother and we discussed our hopes and ambitions for the future, yet only three days after meeting him he was cruelly taken from this earth by an avoidable tragedy.

### Anonymity, disclosure and redaction

39. I wish to apply for anonymity and I do wish to give oral evidence to the Inquiry.

### Statement of Truth

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

Signed **GRO-B**  
Signed *[Signature]*