

ANONYMOUS

Witness Name: **GRO-B**

Statement No.: WITN0727001

Exhibits: None

Dated: 18/02/2019

21 FEB 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 29 January 2019.

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

1. Introduction

1. My name is **GRO-B** and my date of birth is **GRO-B** 1945. My address is known to the Inquiry. I was born in **GRO-B** where I spent my childhood growing up with my cousins in a large joint family. I lost my father when I was thirteen and we became dependent on my Uncle. Although my passions and interests were singing and music, my other dream was to become a doctor. Unfortunately, I couldn't pursue my education further because I was unable to pay for my university fees, and my hopes of being a doctor gradually diminished. Our lodger at that time, my future husband, was an art student and he helped us a lot. He successfully completed his course and gained residency in the United

ANONYMOUS

- Kingdom. We realised we were deeply in love and when he returned to India, we married.
2. In 1969, we both came to live in England and although it was tough to leave my brother and mother in my Uncle's care, we were happy to be reunited after such a long time and felt positive about building our new lives together in England.
 3. In 1973, our baby daughter, [GRO-B] was born; she brought us luck as my husband, [GRO-B] received a [GRO-B] at [GRO-B] [GRO-B]. In 1975, we then moved to [GRO-B] after spending six years happily in [GRO-B].
 4. In this statement, I intend to speak about being infected with the Hepatitis B Virus (HBV), which I believe I contracted through a blood transfusion, after having a hysterectomy in July/August 1987, and in particular, how my illness and treatment has affected me and my family now and after all these years.

2. How Infected

5. When my son [GRO-B] was born, I became a full-time mother and housewife, devoting all my time to my family. During this time in [GRO-B] I remember feeling unwell and decided to visit a doctor. I was diagnosed with Anaemia and soon after this, I developed high blood pressure. I tried to ignore my ailments and tried to just get on with it.
6. For a long time, I had a problem with my period. I suffered from a lack of energy, insomnia, loss of appetite, headache and was often tired. The doctor prescribed iron tablets which I had been taking for a while, but it didn't improve my situation. My period was getting heavier and I suffered from these symptoms for approximately nine to ten years. My General Practitioner (GP) sent me to see the Gynaecologist in Bolton General Hospital. There, I had further treatment for about two years but did not feel better, rather, my symptoms got worse. My symptoms gradually worsened which included my thighs and arms bruising easily.
7. Finally, my doctor recommended that I undergo a Hysterectomy operation. At that time, I was forty-two years old. A few days before the operation, I

ANONYMOUS

had a final check-up and the surgeon came to see me and brought a few student doctors. He showed them my mid-section and talked through the operation. He noticed bruises on my thigh and asked me how I got them and whether my husband beat me. He then started laughing with the students. I felt very bad and was humiliated. I told this to my husband. When I think back, I still feel bad about these remarks.

8. In approximately July/August, 1987, I underwent the Hysterectomy operation. The consultant Doctor Stevenson, performed the operation at Bolton General Hospital (now called Royal Bolton Hospital). It's my understanding that I was given a blood transfusion during this operation and was not given any information or further details about this.
9. The next morning after my operation I felt quite wet from the top of my back down to my legs, and noticed that my bed was covered in blood. I was shocked to see so much blood. I then asked myself, "did I have a blood transfusion?".

3. Other Infections

10. I stayed in hospital for approximately ten to twelve days. Ever since the Hysterectomy operation I have not felt well. I thought to myself, though my period had stopped, "why am I still feeling so unwell?" I was having bad cold and flu symptoms with a high temperature, headache, sinusitis, frequent infections, constant coughing, tiredness, weak, dizzy, gum and nose bleeding, foggy head, and a general lack of balance, which makes me fall often.
11. My GP often prescribed me antibiotics, but I would still get infections (i.e. viral infections). Soon after that, I was diagnosed with diabetes. I had to go for regular check-ups and blood tests.

4. Consent

12. One occasion that I can clearly remember was when I was informed that my blood had an abnormality. A diabetes specialist nurse named GRO-B reviewed my blood test after a routine check, informed me that there was

an abnormality in my blood. After checking with the GP next door, she told me I needed to have another blood test to confirm the initial result. The second blood test showed the same result. The nurse said the abnormality is still there but to not worry. I was curious and wondered what it could be but was not given any further information as to what the abnormality was.

5. Impact

13. Since then, I kept suffering from the same symptoms. Nothing changed, rather, symptoms got worse. As time passed, no further investigation had been done and I was not told about anything. Since my operation eighteen years ago, I have been suffering from the symptoms mentioned above.
14. In 2005, my daughter fell pregnant and was expecting her first child. My husband and I decided to move closer to her and move to **GRO-B**. This was so we could help each other. The first thing we did was to register with our local GP, who was Dr **GRO-B** at **GRO-B**.
15. My symptoms gradually got worse, and in particular, my gums and nose bled more frequently. After seeing the first set of test results, the GP sent me for a second blood test. Once these results were confirmed, he sent me to Arrowe Park Hospital to see a specialist consultant, Gastroenterologist, Dr Faizallah.
16. I was also under the care of another doctor, Dr Amit Singhal. Dr Amit Singhal took over my treatment once Dr Faizallah retired.
17. Before this time, Dr Faizallah gave me the shocking news that I had Cirrhosis of the liver, resulting in Cancer which was caused by the HBV. It was unexpected and devastating news for me and my family. I was very shocked and upset. I came home thinking: "how did this happen? Why and when did this happen? Who did I get it from?" These are the questions that were buzzing around in my head.
18. The Doctor prescribed me tablets for the treatment of HBV straight away. My family was told to take blood tests, including my one-year-old grandson. Everyone's result was all negative. Yet, I felt very bad for my whole family having to go through the trouble of taking the test. I also felt guilty for another reason, I felt guilty because I thought this was my fault.

19. Some doctors and friends assumed I was a drinker because I had Cirrhosis of the liver, but this is not true. Cirrhosis was the result of having HBV. It's a big relief to realise that what happened to me was not my fault. I can now die at peace knowing it was not my fault that I was infected with bad blood.
20. My life now, experiencing the symptoms mentioned previously, is something I endure every day. This is the way I am living now. It makes me depressed, upset and I often cry. I ask myself repeatedly: "Is it even worth living?". "What is this miserable lifeless-life of mine, dragging away, day by day?" I feel like I have a cursed life that is locked away in a gloomy confinement which will never be unlocked. All of the strong medicines that I have been taking, have side effects. These side effects are a constant reminder of the cause of my grief, from the past, present and will be for the rest of my life. When I look back and ask myself again and again, "Why is this suffering mine?", I could never find an answer to this question. Until recently, when I found out about the 'Infected Blood Scandal', that revealed an answer to my question. I had a flashback to my hysterectomy operation and when I had the blood transfusion. In fact, it compels me to believe that I was given infected blood during my operation and that was the root cause of my suffering. I now remember nurse GRO-B's comments at GRO-B when reading my test results and informing me of an abnormality that was found in my blood. I am now convinced that this is the cause of my HBV which led to me developing cancer in my liver. A liver transplant was the only option for me in the end. I have to live the rest of my life and suffer; I cannot see it any other way. There is nothing real to me but regular medication and to just try and stay alive.

Section 6. Treatment/Care/Support

21. Even though I had been taking the anti-virus tablets for a number of years, I had not noticed much change or improvement. The Doctors then found a tumour in my liver and I was eventually transferred to Liverpool Aintree Hospital for further treatment. After several MRI scans, they found the tumour growing. They increased my medication dose for the treatment.

Soon after, consultant Dr Sturges told me that my liver is so damaged that there was nothing that could be done and my only option was to have a liver transplant. He said they will refer me to Birmingham Queen Elizabeth Hospital (QEH) for the transplant. Many times we had to travel from GRO-B to Birmingham QEH for liver transplant assessments.

22. I was placed on a waiting list which required me to be on call for the following eighteen months until they found a donor-matching liver for me. After some time, I finally received the call notifying me that they had found me a liver. On 27 March 2012, I had the liver transplant. The plan was to be discharged on 3 April 2012, however, I was released early. My consultant doctor was Mr S. R. Bramhall. I believe I was released earlier than I should have. I couldn't go to the toilet and my husband needed to look after me full time.
23. Approximately nine months later, I needed another major operation, a Biliary Reconstruction, because my bile wasn't working. Again, it made me very ill and I couldn't eat for a long time. Since having the transplant, I had been taking immunosuppressant tablets and anti-virus tablets regularly (Entecavir). I have to take these tablets for the rest of my life. The side effects of these tablets have been giving me a lot of trouble; my life has been restricted, experiencing bad symptoms such as tremors, bone and muscle weakness, aches and pains all over my body, insomnia, foggy head, weak, shaky, lack of energy, less strength, lack of balance, dizziness, depression, sensitive to cold and windy weather. I get ill when I face this cold weather; it is like a sudden shock of shivering, feeling very cold with aches and pains all over my body. I have to wear thick jumpers, hats, socks; and when I sleep I need a hot-water bottle under the duvet. I also take paracetamol so that the symptoms are less prevalent and to feel better. This kind of attack happens often. This is the way I am living now.

Section 7. Financial Assistance

24. We have not received any financial support but we have never applied for it. We try and just get on with it quietly. We don't want to cause anyone any problems.

Section 8. Other Issues

25. There are no other issues covered in this section.

Statement of Truth

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

Signed

GRO-B

Dated

20 Feb. 2019