

ANONYMOUS

Witness Name **GRO-B**

Statement No: WITN1674001

Exhibits: 0

Dated: DECEMBER 2018

INFECTED BLOOD INQUIRY

FIRST WRITTEN STATEMENT OF **GRO-B**

GRO-B will say as follows:-

Section 1. Introduction

1. My name is **GRO-B** My date of birth **GRO-B** 1959 and I live at **GRO-B**
GRO-B with my husband **GRO-B; H**
and I were married in **GRO-B** but we were together for many years before we
married. I am by occupation an **GRO-B**
2. This witness statement has been prepared without the benefit of access to my
full medical records.
3. My husband **GRO-B; H** has also provided a Witness Statement to the Inquiry under
Witness Number **GRO-B; H**
4. I am infected with the Hepatitis C Virus (HCV). I contracted HCV through
unprotected sex with my husband, being unaware that he had HCV.

Section 2. How Infected

5. My husband has mild Haemophilia A, diagnosed when he was 13 years old.
6. He was treated at the Oxford Haemophilia Centre at the GRO-B Hospital under the care of Dr Paul Giangrande. GRO-B; H was treated with Factor VIII (FVIII) on less than a handful of occasions and was informed of his Hepatitis C Virus (HCV) diagnosis in the summer of 1995. The Haemophilia Centre tested him for HCV but he did not know that he had been tested until he received a positive result.
7. There is some uncertainty about the date upon which he became infected but it is generally thought likely that he was infected with the first course of FVIII treatment he received in the 1970s.
8. My husband informed me of his positive HCV result but neither of us knew anything about HCV. GRO-B; H told me that I needed to go to Dr GRO-B my GP, for a blood test. GRO-B; H tried to find out more information and it started to become clear that I too may have HCV. Our thoughts then turned to our daughter (born in 1982) and whether she too was at risk.
9. My positive HCV test result was, I believe, forwarded to the GRO-B Hospital. I was not informed by my GP of the positive test result. My memory is hazy but I believe that I was informed of my own diagnosis at an appointment with Dr Joan Trowell that I attended with my husband to be given advice on the infection and how it might be treated.
10. I recall the details of the appointment with Dr Trowell with clarity because I was shocked by what she said to me. She spoke to me about being HCV positive and told me that it was likely that I had infected my husband and not the other way round. In retrospect I believe that it may have suited the hospital and absolved them of their responsibility for our infections if that were the case.

11. Dr Trowell asked me questions about the stability of our marriage. I replied that we were happy and that our marriage was strong. We were parents of two children. I vividly remember her asking me if I was 'promiscuous' or 'a lady of the night' or had I been 'sleeping around'? She then changed tack. I was at that time at GRO-B in the evenings at the GRO-B Hospital. Dr Trowell said that I must have picked up the HCV there.

12. I was not only shocked but angry and upset when I left the meeting. She had tried to shift the blame from the hospital on to me. I never wanted to see her again, and never did. No information or advice about HCV was provided to us at that meeting.

Section 3. Other Infections.

13. I do not believe I have any other infections.

Section 4. Consent.

14. I have no reason to believe that I have been tested at any time without my knowledge and consent.

Section 5. Impact

15. I recall that I had some flu like symptoms over the years but I did not associate them with HCV at the time because I was not aware that I had it. On the whole my health was relatively good.

16. I was not monitored by the hospital nor was I offered treatment. I did not know much about HCV initially. I had annual tests at my GP practice for a few years but ultimately the HCV cleared itself naturally. I tested RNA negative in 1996, the year after my diagnosis and further tests have confirmed that I am clear of the virus.

17. Given that my husband and I have both contracted HCV, we have struggled as a family with the impact. [H] was infected through no fault of his own and has struggled with the guilt that he has inadvertently affected me whilst trying to come to terms with his own illness. [H] has a tendency to keep things to himself so as not to worry me. I worry more about what he is not telling me. I live under a cloud of worry and uncertainty. The impact of the infection on [H]'s health is always at the back of my mind. I wonder what is going on and what will happen next every time [H] falls ill. I feel anxious pretty much all the time.

18. We have kept our diagnoses to ourselves for fear of the stigma surrounding HCV and its associations with HIV. It is a big strain for us to keep it a secret from our friends and family. Until recently we even kept it from our children in order to protect them from the ignorance of others.

Section 6. Treatment/Care/Support

19. I have never been offered counselling or psychological support.

Section 7. Financial Assistance

20. I received a Stage 1 Skipton Fund payment of £20,000 in or around 2004 as did my husband.

21. In the early part of 2015, [H] received the Stage 2 Skipton Fund payment. [H] is in poor health. He said to me that he was going to buy me a new car with the money. He said "if anything happens to me, I want you to have a reliable car". I told him "I would rather have you than the car". The conversation upset me and I feel emotional when I think of it. His innocence in becoming infected and ill through no fault of his own and his love and thoughtful concern for me is overwhelming.

Section 8. Other Issues

22. The contaminated blood scandal in my eyes is nothing short of a disaster. Both H and I feel that we are the lucky ones compared to some of the other victims.

Anonymity, disclosure and redaction

23. I am seeking anonymity and would like my Statement redacted before publication. However I understand this statement will be published and disclosed as part of the Inquiry. I do not want 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

Dated..... 14 - 1 - 2019