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Witness Name: **GRO-B**

Statement No.: WITN2110001

Exhibits: WITN2110002-003

Dated: 22nd March 2019

INFECTED BLOOD INQUIRY

FIRST WRITTEN STATEMENT OF **GRO-B**

I provide this statement in response to a request under Rule 9 of the Inquiry Rules 2006 dated 5th November 2018.

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

Section 1. Introduction

1. My name **GRO-B**. My date of birth is the **GRO-B** 1958 and my address is known to the Inquiry. I am married to **GRO-B**. I intend to speak about my experience of becoming infected with hepatitis C. In particular, the nature of my illness, how the illness affected me, the treatment received and the impact it had on me and my family.

Section 2. How Infected

2. I became infected with hepatitis C when I received a blood transfusion at the time of my birth. I was born at Watford General Hospital. My mother had a rare blood type; I think it was rhesus negative. That meant that if we did

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not have a transfusion, we would all have died. I do not know what the reason for this was and I cannot remember any of the names of the doctors who treated my mother at the time of my birth. I could not tell whether or not anyone warned my mother of the risks linked to a blood transfusion.

3. The blood transfusion that I received at birth is the only blood transfusion that I have ever received in my lifetime.
4. I was diagnosed with chronic hepatitis C about eight years ago. I found out that I was infected with hepatitis C because I went for a blood test for something else and this came out. I was told that the hepatitis C was chronic and that I had had it for a long time. It was **GRO-B** **GRO-B** who told me that I was infected with hepatitis C. **GRO-B** retired last year. There is a letter in my medical notes dated the 23rd June, 2010 from the hepatology nurse specialist that states she informed me of my infected status. I produce this letter in evidence and identify it as **WITN2110002**.
5. **GRO-B** sent me to hospital for more tests and a liver biopsy. These tests confirmed that I had hepatitis C. The tests took place at the **GRO-B** in **GRO-B** Cornwall. I can't remember the names of any doctors who treated me.
6. At the time when I was told that I had hepatitis C, I was told what hepatitis C was and what the treatment would be. I was told that the treatment could last for a year, but I was lucky enough to respond well and was only on the treatment for four months.
7. I was also advised that the infection had been transmitted through blood, but no medical professionals actually linked the infection to my blood transfusion. They did say that the hepatitis C would affect my liver, but with the treatment I would be all right.

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8. In order to understand and manage the infection in day to day life, I was told to look after myself and not to drink. I was advised that the medication would make me feel ill.
9. I think that information could have been provided earlier, but I do not actually know if any doctors knew or suspected that I had hepatitis C. I didn't know I had it for a very long time. I was surprised that it was not picked up earlier and I think that it should have been, especially as I have two children.
10. I do not really have any views about how the results of tests and information about the infection were communicated to me. The medical professionals who treated me were very good and both GRO-B and the doctors from the hospital kept me updated and made sure that I was okay.
11. I was given a lot of information about the risks of others becoming infected as a result of my infection. I was told not share toothbrushes or razors and I was told how to take care of wounds.

Section 3. Other Infections

12. I was only infected with hepatitis C and did not receive any other infection.

Section 4. Consent

13. I do not believe that I have ever been treated or tested without my knowledge, without my consent, or without being given full information.
14. I am not aware of ever having been treated for the purposes of research.

Section 5. Impact

15. Before I was diagnosed, I do think that the hepatitis C could make me feel tired at times, but I did not know what it was and I did not have any other

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symptoms. Once I was diagnosed and started my treatment, it was very worrying and the treatment made me feel ill. Fortunately, I had a good response to the medication and my treatment was successful in four months. I also remember feeling quite depressed due to the medication and had to take time off work and work reduced hours. I was also given anti-depressants. This is mentioned in my medical notes in a letter dated 30th November, 2010. I produce this letter in evidence and refer to it as **WITN2110003**.

16. I do not think that I experienced any further medical complications or conditions as a result of my hepatitis C and my liver is currently healthy.
17. I had my treatment in October 9 years ago. I was on the treatment for four months. I had seven tablets a day and also had to inject my stomach once a week, but I cannot remember the names of any medications. The treatment made me feel ill and I experienced flu-like symptoms. The treatment also made me more prone to infections such as ear infections or tonsillitis, and I noticed that my hair was thinning. I was never physically sick, but I felt generally unwell and depressed.
18. I do not think that I had experienced any difficulties or obstacles in having access to the treatment.
19. I do not think that there were any treatments which should have been made available to me that weren't.
20. I think that the treatment had an impact on my private and family life because I could not do much as I felt tired all the time. I socialised and exercised a lot less.
21. I do not think that there is a stigma attached to a diagnosis of hepatitis C or at least I have never personally experienced it and all my family and friends know about my hepatitis C.

22. I do not think that becoming infected with hepatitis C had any effect on my education.

23. The treatment that I received in order to treat my hepatitis C meant that I had to reduce my work hours especially at the start. I think I came into work about one and a half hour later than everyone else and went home one hour earlier for at least a couple of weeks. I also probably took a couple of weeks off at the beginning of my treatment. However, my career promotion was not affected and I did not suffer any financial consequences as I received my full salary anyway.

24. When I went on the treatment, this had an effect on my family as my children and mother were very worried. My father was not alive at the time. I remember that my children and friends looked after me by coming round and helping out in the house.

Section 6. Treatment/Care/Support

25. I do not think that any counselling or psychological support was ever made available to me as a consequence of becoming infected with hepatitis C.

Section 7. Financial Assistance

26. I have not received any financial assistance from any of the trusts or funds set up to distribute payments.

27. I think I only ever applied for financial assistance from the Lincoln Fund. I cannot remember if this is actually the correct name. I vaguely remember that I completed an application form for compensation and it was rejected. I did not have any luck in obtaining compensation.

Section 8. Other Issues

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28. I was never involved in the Penrose Inquiry and have never been involved in any litigation or campaigning as a result of becoming infected with hepatitis C.

29. I have not seen my medical records yet.

30. I do not wish to remain anonymous for the purposes of this Inquiry.

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Statement of Truth

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

Signed:

GRO-B

Dated May 26, 2020