

ANONYMOUS

Witness Name: **GRO-B**

Statement No.: WITN2155001

Exhibits: WITN2155002-006

Dated: 4th November 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 5th November 2018.

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

Section 1. Introduction

1. My name is **GRO-B** My date of birth is **GRO-B** 1964 and my address is known to the Inquiry. I am no longer in employment as I took early retirement when my firm offered redundancies. This decision was due to my ill-health as a consequence of contracting hepatitis C. I intend to speak about contracting hepatitis C. In particular I will speak about the nature of my illness, how the illness has affected me, the treatments I received and the impact it has had on me and my family.
2. I can confirm that I have appointed Thompsons Solicitors to be my legal representative. I can confirm that the Inquiry should send all

correspondence regarding me to Thompsons.

3. I wish to say before I make my statement that I am currently being investigated for the early signs of Alzheimer's disease. I have also had hepatic encephalopathy which has been caused by my long-term cirrhosis of the liver. This results in me suffering with severe memory loss. There is mention of this in my hospital records by Dr Eleni Theocharidou and I produce this in evidence and refer to this record as **WITN2155002**. My memory loss will be evident in my statement.

Section 2. How infected

4. When I was around seven years of age I had surgery for a hernia at a hospital in London. I have a slight memory of being in a hospital but can provide no other details. I do not know what hospital I was in. I have asked my mother and unfortunately she cannot remember what hospital I had my operation. She can remember however that I was given a blood transfusion at the time of my operation. Neither myself or my mother can provide any details of the surgeon or doctors I was under the care of. My mother is **GRO-B** and she lives in **GRO-B** cannot give details of her address as she has only recently moved there and I do not know her address.
5. My mother has told me that at the time of my hernia operation she was never told that there was a risk of being infected with contaminated blood during the blood transfusion. There was no mention beforehand about the risk of being exposed to infection.
6. As a result of the blood transfusion I was infected with hepatitis C. Sometime in 2001 I went to donate blood. I had never donated blood before but my boss at the time asked if I would go with him to donate blood. As I was to be still getting paid to go I agreed to do so. I went to give blood at **GRO-B** I donated a couple of pints of blood. A few weeks later I received a letter from the blood

ANONYMOUS

transfusion service. The letter said that following my blood donation it had been discovered I had hepatitis C and should go and see my doctor. I didn't really know what hepatitis C was at that time. I did not know it was such a serious condition.

7. I went to see a doctor at my local surgery. This is **GRO-B**
GRO-B I saw a **GRO-B** We discussed my hepatitis C. I remember he asked me if I had ever been with a prostitute. He also asked me if I injected drugs. I told him I had done neither. He asked me if I had received a blood transfusion. I didn't think I had so I said no. He said those were the ways in which I could have got hepatitis C. I remember I was in total shock at the time **GRO-B** said that I had 15 years to live. I was only 37 years of age with a young family this news was devastating.
8. I do not believe that I was given adequate information to help me understand and manage the infection.
9. I believe I was told about my infection at the earliest opportunity.
10. **GRO-B** was very blunt and direct with me saying I only had 15 years to live. I left his office totally shell-shocked with no offer of support.
11. **GRO-B** did say that there was a risk of me being able to pass on my infection to others. This would be through blood to blood contact or through sexual intercourse. He did say that the risk of passing on the infection to my wife through sexual intercourse was minimal.
12. **GRO-B** did make mention of people who had got the infection through being given American blood. He didn't really use the term hepatitis C he called it 'the other one'.

13. **GRO-B** said I had two choices. He could refer me to Addenbrookes Hospital in Cambridge or King's College in London to see a liver specialist as hepatitis C attacks the liver. I chose to go to King's College in London. There is a letter in my medical records dated 24 August 2001 that refers to this appointment. I produce it in evidence and refer to it as **WITN2155003**.

Section 3. Other infections

14. As a result of being given contaminated blood I contracted hepatitis C.

Section 4. Consent

15. I do not believe I was treated or tested without my knowledge or consent.
16. I did take part in a research project at the King's College Hospital in relation to hepatitis C. I consented to this research. My consent for this research is in my medical records. I produce this consent form in evidence and refer to it as **WITN2155004**.

Section 5. Impact

17. Having hepatitis C has had a profound effect on my physical health. Looking back as a child growing up I always lacked energy. I couldn't physically keep up with the other children. I wasn't particularly physically active as a child. I remember my teachers thought I was lazy. I now put that down to having the hepatitis C virus although I wasn't aware I had it at the time.
18. As an adult and father I have been unable to enjoy physical activities with my children. I was always too fatigued. This effected my mental health and I often became depressed. My diagnosis and prognosis

ANONYMOUS

affected my moods.

19. As a result of being infectedd with hepatitis C I developed rheumatoid arthritis. There is a letter in my medical notes dated 1 November 2001 that links the association of hepatitis C with rheumatoid arthritis. I produce this letter in evidence and refer to it as **WITN2155005**. The hepatitis C caused me to have aggressive liver disease and ultimately cirrhosis of the liver. I also suffer with memory loss and have issues with my mental health function. This has been attributed to the treatment I received for the hepatitis C. There is a note in my medical notes dated 16 April 2013 that refers to this. I produce this note in evidence and refer to it as **WITN2155006**.

20. In June 2007 I started treatment for the hepatitis C. It was a six-month course of interferon injections and tablets called ribavirin. This treatment was unsuccessful. I was given this treatment by Dr Kosh Agarwal the consultant hepatologist. I am still under Dr Agarwal to this day.

21. I did have a second course of treatment for the hepatitis in 2011. Again this consisted of interferon, ribavirin and another tablet. I am not sure of the other name of the other tablet. This treatment was also unsuccessful.

22. In 2015 I had a further course of treatment for the hepatitis. This treatment was in tablet form only and was a 12 week course. Fortunately this treatment was successful although my liver remains cirrhotic, the damage had already been done.

23. I did not face any difficulties or obstacles in accessing the treatments I received.

24. I do not believe there were any other treatments available.

ANONYMOUS

25. The first two treatments I received I had severe side-effects. Physically, I had flu like symptoms. I felt extremely nauseous and generally unwell. I was so tired all the time. My skin came out in rashes and blisters. It also became really hard and tight. I found it difficult to inject the interferon. Mentally I became depressed as I was so ill. I did not want to go out or see anyone. I became extremely withdrawn and short tempered. It was a very difficult time for me and my family.

26. Having hepatitis C has impacted on my treatment. I have had to have a few operations over the years, mainly hernia operations. I have always been made to feel dirty. I remember one doctor saying to me "we have to scrub everything because of you." If I have to go to my local dentist I always have to have the last appointment as they have to clean the dental equipment. It has just made me feel like a leper.

27. Having hepatitis C has impacted on my private life. I am practically a recluse now in my own home. I have no social life. I'm extremely ill and awaiting news that I may be considered for a liver transplant. I have been told however that even if I get a liver transplant my life expectancy is five years.

28. My children have only ever known me be ill. I have not being capable of playing physically with them. Trying to knock a football around with my sons was virtually impossible.

29. I am aware of the stigma that surrounds hepatitis C. It is associated with sex workers and drug users. It is for this reason that I did not tell anyone I had it. I did tell my mother as it was her that told me I must have got it from the blood transfusion I had when I was seven. Obviously my wife knows and has been tested for hepatitis C, fortunately she is negative. It has affected our relationship and our sex life over the years. We have been through some really tough times.

ANONYMOUS

30. Eight years ago I took the opportunity to take redundancy from my work. I was just too exhausted to work. Even the travelling to and from work became too much for me. I was only 47 years of age and had always anticipated that I would carry on working until retirement age. I loved working and had a focus. I hate sitting at home all day and feel I have lost my identity.

31. My wife has been my carer for many years. She works 50 hours a week for GRO-B She still has to do the majority of the house work as I am not physically able to do so. I know she is often extremely exhausted.

Section 6. Treatment care support

32. I have not faced difficulties or obstacles in obtaining treatment as a consequence of being infected with hepatitis C. I do remember there were concerns raised when I was being considered for new replacements. The concerns revolved around my cirrhosis and clotting issues.

33. I have never been offered or received any counselling or psychological support in consequence of being infected. I would certainly have benefited from such support.

Section 7. Financial assistance

34. I have not received any money from any trust or fund in relation to my hepatitis C.

35. I did not know that any financial assistance was available for people that had been infected with hepatitis C.

Section 8. Other issues

ANONYMOUS

NOT RELEVANT

ANONYMOUS

Statement of Truth

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

Signed

GRO-B

Dated

5/6/20