Witness Name: GRO-B
Statement No.: WITN2185001
Exhibits: WITN2185002-007
Dated: 25th August 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 is GRO-B My date of birth is GRO-B 1968 and my address is known to the enquiry. I am a GRO-B GRO-B. I intend to speak about my contraction of hepatitis C. In particular, the nature of my illness, how the illness affected me, the treatment I received and the impact it had on me and my family.

2. I can confirm that I have appointed Thompsons solicitors to be my legal representative. I confirm that the inquiry should send all correspondence regarding me to Thompsons.

Section 2. How Infected

3. When I was about 7 years of age, I began to lose my baby teeth. My mouth would bleed heavily when I lost a tooth and my mother had trouble stopping the bleeding. My mother took me to GRO-B GRO-B where it was discovered I had mild haemophilia type A. There is a letter in my medical notes dated 19th January, 1977 explaining the discovery of my haemophilia. I produce this letter in evidence and refer to it as **WITN2185002.**

4. If I had a bleed as a boy, I would go to GRO-B and receive Factor VIII blood products. I do not recall which specialist I was under or the names of the doctors I saw. The head of unit as this time was probably Dr GRO-B

5. I received Factor VIII blood products at GRO-B from 7 years of age until I was 17 or 18 years of age.

6. I was transferred to the Glasgow Royal Infirmary when I was 17 or 18 years of age. There is a letter in my medical notes dated 22nd September 1977 outlining this transfer. I produce this letter in evidence and refer to it as **WITN2185003**. I was under the care of Dr Lowe at the haemophilia clinic. Up until I left Glasgow to move to London, I would attend routine appointments at the haemophilia clinic, normally every six months. I was given home treatments of Factor VIII blood products at this time. This would entail self-injecting Factor VIII blood products at home, if I needed treatment.

7. As a child, I was never given any information or advice before I received Factor VIII blood products about the risks of being exposed to infection. As far as I am aware, my mother was not given any information about the risks of me being infected before I was given the Factor VIII blood products.

8. I was infected with hepatitis C as a result of being given contaminated Factor VIII.

9. When I was 21 or 22 years of age, I believe I received a letter from the haemophilia clinic, Royal Infirmary, Glasgow from Dr Lowe. The letter was asking for my brother and I to make an appointment with Dr Lowe as he wanted to see us both. My brother's name is GRO-B: B GRO-B: B and he also had haemophilia. B is my younger brother GRO-B I remember this was unusual that my brother and I were asked to go to the haemophilia centre together. My mother took B and I to the haemophilia centre for the appointment.

10. I remember my mother was called in to see Dr Lowe first. My brother and I waited outside his office. I was then called in to see him and my mother left the room.

11. Dr Lowe told me that as a result of tests that had been done on my blood, it had been discovered I had hepatitis C. There is a letter on my medical notes dated 15th June, 1993 stating this was the date I was informed I had hepatitis C. I produce this letter in evidence and refer to it as **WITN2185004.** I note however there is a blood result in my medical records from Ruchill Hospital with a positive result for hepatitis C. This is dated the 22nd April, 1992 which suggests it was known I had hepatitis C for well over a year before I was informed. I produce this result in evidence and refer to it as **WITN2185005.**

12. Dr Lowe did not really give me much information about hepatitis C. I am a naturally inquisitive person so I know I would have asked him how I had been infected with hepatitis C and what would happen to me. I remember he said my condition would progressively get worse. I know he said there was no cure for it. He did say that hepatitis C affected your liver and that they would monitor me. There was a lot of publicity at that time regarding haemophiliacs contracting hepatitis and HIV through receiving infected blood. I cannot remember whether

Dr Lowe told me that that was how I had contracted hepatitis C at that time.

13. I assumed that my mother, brother and I were told at the earliest opportunity about our infection although my medical records suggest otherwise..

14. I remember feeling quite angry with Dr Lowe because he had told my mother before me that I had hepatitis C. I was an adult and I should have been told in my own right. I had a good close relationship with my mother and I would have told her about my infection anyway nevertheless, that should have been my choice but to tell her, not his.

15. My younger brother who was also a haemophiliac was told he also had contracted hepatitis C on the same day by Dr Lowe.

16. I cannot really remember what Dr Lowe said about the risks of passing the infection on to others. I was a young man at the time and interested in girls so I do remember he said the chances of passing the infection on through sexual intercourse were slim.

Section 3. Other Infections

17. I did not receive any other infection or infections other than hepatitis C as a result of being given infected blood products. I did receive a letter suggesting I was at risk of having vCJD through as infected blood donor. This is very worrying as there is no known test for the condition and there is no known cure. I produce in evidence a letter in my medical notes dated 26th November, 2002 that confirms this. I refer to it as **WITN2185006.**

Section 4. Consent

18. I was not treated or tested without my knowledge or consent. I do know that my blood was used for the purpose of research. I saw another doctor at the haemophilia centre, Royal Infirmary, Glasgow. This doctor was called Dr Maddock. I remember the doctor asking me if it would be all right if he could use my blood for the purpose of research. I know I agreed to this. I do not know what the research was for. I remember he took a lot of blood from me over a period of time. I remember I was in the last year at school so I must have been 18 to 19 years of age. There was a school leaving do and I remember I had a skin full (excessive amount of alcohol). I remember I had an appointment to give more blood to Dr GRO-D the following day and I was mindful that I had had a drink the previous evening. There is a letter in my medical notes dated 29th January, 1985 that suggests I was tested for the AIDS virus. I did not know that I had been tested for this. I produce a copy of this letter in evidence and refer to it as **WITN2185007.**

Section 5. Impact

19. There were no major physical or mental effects on me of being infected with hepatitis C. Physically; I did, on occasions, become extremely fatigued. At times, I had bad bouts of insomnia. Mentally, I tried to just get on with life. I dealt with the hepatitis the same way I dealt with my haemophilia, I just got on with it and tried to forget about it unless the symptom occurred or I got a bleed.

20. There were no further complications or conditions that resulted from the infection.

21. During 1996/1997 I was offered a treatment to try and cure the hepatitis C. This was organised through the Haemophilia Unit at St. Thomas Hospital in London.

22. I was given a six-month treatment of interferon injections. I had to self-inject the interferon. I believe it was three times a week.

23. I did not face any difficulties or obstacles in obtaining the treatment, it was offered to me. I was pleased because when I had been told I had hepatitis C, I was told there was no cure and no treatment.

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

25. I did suffer side-effects with this treatment. I remember I had flu like symptoms and was very shivery. I was also quite fatigued. I do not believe there were any real side-effects that affected my mental health.

26. In 1998/1999, I was offered a second round of treatment. By this time, I was living and working in London. I was under the care of Dr Savage at St Thomas's Hospital, Lambeth Road, London. My liver function tests were deteriorating and I was advised to take another course of treatment. This was another six months course of injecting interferon but also taking medication by the name of ribavirin.

27. I recall the second lot of treatment I received had the same side effects of the first, although I do believe they were slightly worse. These were being fatigued but being unable to sleep. I had flu like symptoms and was quite shivery. I was attending quite regularly at St Thomas's Hospital for my liver functions to be monitored. After the course of treatment, I was told yet again that the treatment had not worked.

28. In 2016, I was working abroad but still returning to England every six months for liver function tests. I was under the care of Dr Wong, the liver specialist, and also Dr Thompson, the haemophilia Doctor. I was told by Dr Wong that my liver functions were heading towards

cirrhosis. He told me there was a new treatment out and advised me to take it. I was working abroad at the time. Dr Wong was initially reluctant to give me three months' supply of the drugs to take with me. He made it known that the treatment was very expensive. Eventually we agreed that I could take the drugs on the proviso that I came back to the hospital every two weeks to be monitored. This treatment was in tablet form that I took on a daily basis. I cannot remember the name of tablets. This treatment was successful and hepatitis C was no longer detectable.

29. My infected status did not impact upon any further medical or dental conditions.

30. Prior to meeting my wife, I did have a few long-term relationships. Having hepatitis C was always in the back of my mind. It did affect my sex drive. I was also reluctant to settle down and have a family. My relationships broke down and I question whether my infected status played a part in this.

31. Having hepatitis C impacted on my career path. I was unable to get life insurance. It was always in my mind that in the event of a premature death, my wife could lose our family home. I was determined to provide some financial security for her and my two boys. With this in mind, I made the decision to work abroad for 15 years. The money was far greater than if I had come back to the United Kingdom. I needed to pay my mortgage off. Ordinarily in my career, you would be expected to work abroad for a few years then come back. This gives you greater prospects of promotion. My decision not to do so was largely based on my life expectancy.

32. Having hepatitis C also impacted on my wife's career. As I had made the decision to live and work abroad, she put her own career on hold to be with me.

33. I am aware of the stigma that surrounds hepatitis C. It is wrongly associated with sex workers and drug users. The stigma did not really affect me. I did not however broadcast that I had been infected. I only told a handful of very close friends.

34. As stated earlier, my decision to work abroad meant my wife's career was put on hold for 11 years. My two sons, as a consequence, have spent most of their childhood living abroad. Whilst this is not necessarily a bad thing, clearly, they missed out on spending time with family members, particularly their grandparents.

35. Having hepatitis C did not affect my education. I managed to get through college and university. It has not affected my employment, other than I believe it has influenced my promotion prospects.

Section 6. Treatment/Care/Support

36. I did not receive any counselling or psychological support, I was never offered this service.

Section 7. Financial Assistance

37. I cannot remember how I found out that there was financial assistance available for people who had been infected with contaminated blood. It may have been from GRO-B GRO-B It may have also been from the Haemophilia Department at St Thomas's Hospital, London.

38. In early 2000, I did receive £20,000. In 2016, I received a further payment of £30,000. Both payments were from the Skipton fund.

39. I found the process of applying for these payments was fairly straightforward. I just filled an application form in and sent it off.

40. I have recently received a separate monthly payment from the Scottish Government. This is separate from the Skipton Fund payments and may only last for 3 years.

41. I am grateful for the money received however, I do believe that every person, who contracted hepatitis C should have had life insurance cover paid for by the government. This would have provided financial security for themselves and their families.

Section 8. Other Issues

42. I do not wish to remain anonymous in this enquiry.

Statement of Truth

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

Signed GRO-B

Dated 25th August 2019.