

ANONYMOUS

Witness Name: GRO-B

Statement No.: WITN5859001

Exhibits: WITN5859002

Dated: 28/09/21

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 21 July 2021.

I GRO-B will say as follows:

Section 1. Introduction

1. My name is GRO-B. My date of birth is GRO-B 1939 and I live at an address known to the Inquiry. I live on my own in GRO-B and have lived around GRO-B and this area for most of my life. I intend to speak about my Hepatitis C infection, which I contracted from a blood transfusion that I received following on from being burned in 1984. I've lived in anger for 35 years over this.
2. In particular, I will speak about the nature of my illness and how it affected me, the treatment I received and the impact it has had on me and those around me including my sons GRO-B and my ex-wife GRO-B.

3. I am not legally represented in this matter. I am currently taking medication to treat my infection with Hepatitis C. I am happy for my statement to be taken at this time.

Section 2. How Infected

4. Throughout the early 80s, I worked for a firm called GRO-B where I handled scrap metal and other hard materials. In 1984, whilst at work I suffered with severe burns. At the time, I was doing a private job, changing an engine and petrol came out all over me. This ignited a fire and naturally I went up in flames. I was taken to GRO-B Hospital as an emergency and I had skin grafts on my hand, up my arm, and all over my back. 12.5% of my body got burnt. It was then that I required a blood transfusion. I have exhibited to this statement a record of my blood transfusion [WITN5859002].
5. I can't remember them telling me about the risks involved in having the transfusion. I was admitted as an emergency and I needed it, so they just gave it to me. They monitored me for about 6 months and wanted to perform surgery on my finger because I couldn't bend it, but I said no, and wanted to leave it as it was.
6. I was in GRO-B Hospital for three weeks. I came home and I went straight back to the scrap metal work. I felt fine in myself after that.

Diagnosis and information provided about Hepatitis C

7. Around 15-20 years after the transfusion, around the early 2000s, I couldn't get an erection and I went to the doctors at GRO-B Dr GRO-B tried to treat it with Viagra and another pill. He said, "*I can't get*

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your blood right, go for another test". So, I went for another blood test at Basildon Hospital and saw a Polish doctor. I couldn't understand much of what he said, but he asked if my stools were alright and said, *"I'll refer you to Addenbrookes."*

8. I went to Addenbrookes and saw a nurse there who similarly advised me that I should have another blood test. The next time I went there, I was questioned by a consultant who asked me if I had ever had sex with animals. I told him no and he said, *"Have you had a blood transfusion?"* To which I explained to him that when I got burnt, I did and he said *"Can you get the records?"*. As mentioned in paragraph 5, I was able to obtain the records of my transfusion. He said *"Oh, you've got hepatitis."* I hadn't a clue what he was on about.
9. The consultant gave me no information and didn't tell me anything. I also didn't ask him about hepatitis as I was quite shocked. I think he would've known what it was. I knew I had got it because of the blood I received. I did worry about it and particularly worried about my life expectancy; I asked how long I've got it because my eldest son was growing up.
10. I told him I'd spoken to people who said it's the same as HIV and he said *"No, it's hepatitis, it's not HIV."* I asked him *"How long have I got?"* and he said there was no immediate danger, just that I should keep an eye on my lungs and kidneys.
11. I only found out recently that you can pass it on, which I got told by friends. I suppose it would have helped for the medical professionals to tell me this, but then again, I never spoke to the doctors about my concerns and they never spoke to me about it.
12. The doctors never offered to test my family.

Section 3. Other Infections

13. Hepatitis C is the only infection that I know I was infected with from the blood transfusion.

Section 4. Consent

14. I must've signed a consent form for the transfusion but I don't remember. It is likely this was the case, as I consented to the operation for my burns.

Section 5. Impact

15. After the blood transfusion, I didn't notice anything different about my health. I felt fine. The only thing that changed was sexual-wise, as I couldn't perform.

16. I have had no further medical complications or conditions other than that already mentioned.

Treatments and their effects

17. Following my diagnosis, I was immediately offered treatment for my HCV infection and referred to Addenbrookes. From thereon, I was put on treatment, which consisted of taking various tablets.

18. I went back 3 months later for a review and the nurse informed me that there was a "*You would like this programme; it has a 95% cure rate.*" I said yes to it and I was given 100 mg of Thiamine to take twice a day. I've taken this since it was prescribed to me.

19. I've never had any treatments involving injections.

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20. As far as I'm aware, my medical health is still the same and the treatment hasn't had any effects or impact on me. They continue to monitor me to this day. They checked me out, my ankles, and my throat.

21. I don't know what the treatment is doing, even to this day. I take the pills because there's a 95% chance I might be cured. I don't know how much of the virus I still have.

Impact on family

22. GRO-B my ex-wife, and I had a brilliant life, and we did everything together. We never went out and left the boys, they were always with us.

23. I think the reason that we split up was because I couldn't perform sexually. When you can't do it, you can't do it. She was only young, 27 years younger than me.

24. She found out I had HCV because she was with me at the hospital. At the beginning, she said we'll sort it out and get over it one way or another, but we just didn't. It would be asking a lot for a woman at her age to stay with me, especially given the circumstances.

25. My ex-wife also struggled with a drug problem, which could have been my fault. She worked in a pub which was rife with it. I know she was taking cocaine and other things. This was not helped by the fact that her then boyfriend had a mother who owned a veterinary surgery. I believe his mother lost the surgery over her son taking drugs that were for the horses. She never injected drugs as far as I know.

26. Following a series of fights and one which was the final straw, we split up and that was it.

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27. It was my fault because it split the family. It split me and her up because she wanted things that I couldn't give to her, and that was it. It has definitely changed my life. I still think the world of her but it's not to be. The transfusion is the reason why this happened. Before the transfusion we had a fantastic life and then after it, everything was a struggle, and ultimately, it ruined the relationship

28. I don't think it impacted GRO-B much, he's always been with me. GRO-B he's with his mother now and has always been with her. I know that the boys struggled when I got kicked out of the house and it was a big shock to them.

Impact on private and social life

29. Since GRO-B I've never wanted to date or get involved in another relationship. I cannot explain it, but I've never been interested in anybody else or the idea of being in another relationship. It also haunts me that I can't perform and I know this would make things difficult.

30. The virus impacted me insofar as I felt that I had to keep it a secret. I wasn't sure whether I could speak to anyone about it and therefore, I didn't discuss it with anybody. Mentally I felt inferior.

31. I've told GRO-B everything but I've not even spoken to his younger brother, GRO-B about it. I spoke to one person, a good friend of mine, and they just said, "*These things happen.*"

Stigma

32. I had a bloke pull me in the pub and say "*What's this disease?*" The chap knew more about it than I did. My ex-wife must've told him. Aside from that, I've had no different treatment from people, which is most likely because I don't discuss it.

Impact on education, job, finances

33. The virus and treatment haven't impacted me much work-wise. Financially, we had enough, and there was no detriment to my lifestyle.

Section 6. Treatment/Care/Support

34. As I said, I never spoke to the doctor at Addenbrookes about my concerns and he never spoke to me about it. The nurses never offered support, counselling or any mental health support. I never asked for anything and that was never made available to me.

35. The doctor didn't ask me anything other than the question about sex with animals. At Addenbrookes and in the late 2000s I spoke to Dr Woodhouse who was very helpful and he tried 3 or 4 things to try and find out what was wrong with me, and he then said, *"There's something wrong, I don't know what."*

36. In general, the doctor at Addenbrookes is very good and treats me well. Had I asked for anything relating to my treatment, care, and support, I believe it would have been given to me. I have regular check-ups at Addenbrookes and the nurse has been doing this for 7-8 years now.

Section 7. Financial Assistance

37. At Addenbrookes they mentioned The Skipton Fund, but I hadn't heard of it prior to that. When he told me about the process to apply, I was adamant that I wanted to deal with all the paperwork, and didn't think it would be worth it. e He said it could be and convinced me to at least try, so I said okay and applied. They signed it all for me and helped with the entire process

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38. I went away for 3 months and then when I returned for the next 3-month check-up, the nurse had done it all. I got a one-off payment of £20,000, in addition to monthly payments. I then got £50,000 which I gave to GRO-B because I felt so bad about it all.

39. In terms of the process it was easy. I couldn't believe it when they sent the money through; I'd never seen that much in my life. I said to GRO-B "Look after the boys. Whatever I get, they've got."

40. I'm currently with EIBSS, as I am aware that the Skipton fund has transferred over to them.

Section 8. Other Issues

41. I often worry about whether my sons will be alright, and query whether they could spread it? Can they spread it? I know this worry stems from the fact that the doctors never offered to test my family.

42. I don't question the transfusion itself; it was a mistake and just one of those things - you can't undo what's been done.

Table of Exhibits:

Date	Description	Exhibit
14/03/1984	Record of Blood Transfusion	WITN5859002

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Statement of Truth

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

Signed

GRO-B

Dated

28/09/21