

# ANONYMOUS

Witness Name: GRO-B

Statement No: WITN2728001

Exhibits: 0

Dated: JUNE 2020

## INFECTED BLOOD INQUIRY

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FIRST WRITTEN STATEMENT OF GRO-B

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I, GRO-B will say as follows:-

### Section 1. Introduction

1. My name is GRO-B. I was born on GRO-B and I live at GRO-B.
2. My husband, GRO-B: H (born on GRO-B), was infected with the Hepatitis C Virus (HCV) through contaminated blood products. He died on GRO-B January 1989, aged GRO-B.
3. This witness statement has been prepared without the benefit of access to H full medical records.

### Section 2. How Infected

4. H had mild Haemophilia A. It was diagnosed during his childhood when he had his tonsils removed and they couldn't stop the bleeding caused during the surgery. He was 7 years old I believe. H also had polio as a teenager, leaving him with a permanent weakness in his left leg.

5. [H] was under the care of the Haemophilia Centre at the Manchester Royal Infirmary (MRI). He rarely needed treatment. He only had treatment at hospital and as a precaution ahead of minor surgery. [H] had Cryoprecipitate initially and then Factor VIII (FVIII) concentrate.
6. [H] was given FVIII concentrate in the very early 1980s when he had some teeth extracted. Some time after that [H] returned home from a meeting at the Haemophilia Centre and told me that he was infected with Non-A Non-B Hepatitis (NANB), now known as HCV. [H] was upset and frightened. He was told of the diagnosis in the presence of others as a group. He was particularly upset by that.
7. [H] always attended his hospital appointments on his own until September 1988 when he was unwell and needed my support and input. I am not aware of [H] being given any advice regarding the potential risk of infections from FVIII before he first had the treatment. [H]'s haemophilia was mild and it wasn't necessary for him to be placed at risk from such a danger. I do not believe that [H] would have ever put himself at risk if he had been aware of the risk.
8. [H] was very upset at finding out he was infected with NANB. He was so shaken by the news of it that he couldn't remember or explain much to me about what had been said. Everyone at the meeting had been addressed together. He wasn't aware of what was going to happen prior to the meeting and he had formed the impression that the clinicians were unsure of what to do about it themselves. [H] understood that it was life threatening and he should have been told the news of the diagnosis as an individual.

### **Section 3. Other Infections**

9. I do not believe that [H] was infected with anything other than HCV.

#### **Section 4. Consent**

10. I believe that [H] was tested without his knowledge and consent. I do not think that he knew he was being tested for hepatitis prior to being told he was infected.

#### **Section 5. Impact of the Infection**

11. [H] and I met at work. I was the telephone operator and receptionist for a local textile company. [H] was 11 years older than me. There were work trips at Christmas and the like but we didn't start seeing each other until my divorce came through. We first started going out together in November 1972. We were together for 17 years before he died. The first 10 years of our 17 years together were a courtship going out for meals, outings, weekends away and holidays.
12. [H] suffered a stroke just before Christmas in 1981. He seemed to realise then that we may not have much time together and said 'You had better come to live with me'. We lived together from September 1982. [H] always made me an early morning cup of tea before going to work. One morning he light heartedly said to me 'I think it's time we got married'. I didn't think I had heard correctly because my response was 'I beg your pardon'. That was [H]'s proposal of marriage. We married in 1985. It was [H]'s second marriage too.
13. My stepson and stepdaughter have also provided statements to the Inquiry (under Witness Numbers [GRO-B] and [GRO-B] respectively).
14. Being infected with HCV had a huge psychological impact on [H] but he was a very private person and he didn't like to discuss things personal to him, even with me. [H] was very stoic and never really complained even when his physical health took a sharp downturn.
15. [H] developed liver cirrhosis and suffered with bad water retention (oedema). The year before [H] died was a very bad year for me. I lost my

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father in April 1988 and my stepmother at the beginning of September 1988. I came home one day and found [H] in a coma. He was hospitalised at the MRI. When [H] came out of the coma, he didn't remember anything. He barely even remembered me and his memory never really properly came back. [H]'s decline was rapid from there and after several outpatient visits he was once again admitted to the MRI. The MRI transferred him to the Queen Elizabeth in Birmingham in the hopes he could receive a transplant but the liver cirrhosis was too far gone. I remember with great sadness [H]'s disappointment. He turned to me and told me to 'find another man to look after me'. He went into a coma on Christmas Day and was transferred back to MRI between Christmas and the New Year. [H] died in January 1989. It was traumatic for me. I lost three of the very closest people to me in less than 12 months. I was grateful for the time I had with [H] but it was cut far too short. We should have had much longer together.

16. [H]'s Consultant apologised when [H] died for liver cirrhosis being the named cause of death on the Death Certificate. People make alcohol assumptions at that. The HCV infection killed [H]. We both knew that [H] was not a drinker.

### **Section 6. Treatment/care/support**

17. [H] was a private man and I do not believe that he would have had any counselling or psychological support.

### **Section 7. Financial Assistance**

18. [H] had no financial support from the Trusts and Funds. I received a widow's pension and nothing more.

### **Anonymity**

19. I wish to remain anonymous.

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20. 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 ..... 2.6.2020 .....