

ANONYMOUS

Witness Name GRO-B

Statement No.: WITN3284001

Exhibits: **WITN3284002**

Dated: 19 SEPT 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 8<sup>th</sup> July 2019.

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

**Section 1. Introduction**

1. My name is GRO-B My date of birth is GRO-B 1970 and my address is known to the Inquiry. I live with my partner in our home, in Edinburgh. I intend to speak about my Dad, GRO-B: F who underwent heart surgery in GRO-B in 1981. During this operation, he received a blood transfusion, which is suspected to be infected as it led to him contracting Hepatitis C. I will also describe the nature of his illness, how the illness affected him, the treatment received and the impact it had on him and our lives together.

**Section 2. How Affected**

2. My Dad, was born on [GRO-B] 1940 and he had three children all boys, I am his youngest son. I was probably the closest to my Dad. Before, I was born my Dad [GRO-B]  
[GRO-B] Some of the places that I recall that he [GRO-B]  
[GRO-B]
3. After Dad left [GRO-B] he worked as a [GRO-B] in a [GRO-B] in Edinburgh. My Dad was infected with Hepatitis C by a blood transfusion that he received in the [GRO-B] in London, in 1981 when he underwent heart surgery.
4. In and around 1981, my Dad was suffering from extreme tiredness, which led to his Doctors, in the Edinburgh Royal Infirmary, recommending that he undergo triple heart bypass surgery, in London at [GRO-B]  
[GRO-B] I remember, my Dad always believed that this was where he contracted his Hepatitis C infection as he received a blood transfusion during his operation.
5. Although, I do not know the exact date of the surgery, I know that it took place in Winter as my Uncle came to stay with us, so that my Mum could be there for my Dad when he woke up from surgery. On this occasion, our fire had stopped working and I remember my Uncle noting that it was so cold in our house that he woke up with icicles on his moustache.
6. I was eleven years old at the time of the operation so the details of the surgery would not have been shared with me. What I do recall from later conversations with my parents is that it was this blood transfusion that infected my Dad with Hepatitis C.
7. I have since tried to seek my Dad's medical records but, I have been told by [GRO-B]s staff that his records have been destroyed. I don't

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believe that they have properly looked for them, but what can you do when they say they are destroyed.

8. My Dad died on GRO-B 1998 and his death certificate notes that he died of I (a) Myocardial Infarction, (b) Ischaemic Heart Disease, II Hepatitis C Cirrhosis Hepatoma. Therefore, to an extent his Hepatitis C infection played some role in his death. I have provided a copy of his death certificate to the Inquiry, exhibit **WITN3284002**, the number is GRO-B and was registered by Brodie Paterson.
9. I do not know what information or advice was given to my Dad, before he underwent his heart surgery or that he may be exposed to an infection. However, I do know that at the time, if my Dad did not have this surgery he would only live another 5 years, so he was always very grateful for the operation as he said, it gave him more time.
10. My dad contracted Hepatitis C from an infected blood transfusion, as far as I know he did not contract any other infections.
11. My Dad had one tattoo, no piercings, he did not take drugs nor engage in promiscuous sex.
12. After his heart surgery, he received Convalesce in the Royal Infirmary, in Edinburgh. When my Dad, returned home, a District nurse would come out to visit him at our home as he had an ulcer/abscess, which needed to be dressed and drained.
13. I remember that shortly after the heart surgery my Dad suffered from jaundice, which I think was spotted by the District nurse. His whole body even the whites of his eyes turned yellow. In addition to this, after the surgery, my Dad struggled to walk short distances.
14. This was a significant change in my Dad as a year before the surgery, he was relatively fit. He used to cycle 4 or 5 miles to and from work each day. Although, other than that, he lived quite a sedate lifestyle, he would just

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come home and watch tv. He was also a heavy drinker and smoker at the weekends, though during the week he wouldn't drink. I don't remember my Dad ever being ill before his surgery.

15. Then in and around 1990/1991 he started getting tired again, where he would just fall asleep on the sofa. I believe that he went for a check-up with GRO-B's medical doctor who then would have sent him for some tests to try and establish the root cause of his tiredness. It was at this point where he would have discovered that he had contracted a Hepatitis C infection. I believe that it was after this diagnosis that my Dad was medically retired from his job at the GRO-B. This is to the best of my knowledge.

16. I do not know what information was provided to my Dad regarding the infection. He was a very private man who did not discuss anything, not even with my Mother. He actually told his GP not to tell my Mum about the progression of his Hepatitis C infection and how long he had left to live so as not to worry her.

17. I am not sure if my Dad was informed regarding the risk of transmitting the infection to those who he lived with, but I do remember being told not to use his toothbrush or razors.

### **Section 3. Other Infection**

18. As far as I am aware my Dad was only infected with Hepatitis C.

### **Section 4. Consent**

19. My Dad was a very private man who did not discuss much so I am unable to answer these questions with regards to my Dad's consent.



**Section 5. Impact**

20. The mental and physical effects that my Dad suffered from, as a result of his Hepatitis C infection, varied and some are difficult to distinguish from his heart condition. For instance, he suffered from high blood pressure, which I don't think is linked to his Hepatitis C infection. Although I do recall that the main physical ailment which he would suffer from was tiredness. After his surgery he used to get out of breath a lot, so much so that he could no longer play football with us kids. The only other issue which would affect him was that his legs would swell up and would affect his ability to walk.
21. Due to my Dad's reserved nature, I don't know how much he mentally suffered from being infected with Hepatitis C. However, I remember that my Dad would get very angry, but I am not sure how much of this was due to his infection.
22. Then in and around 1993, my Dad went for further liver tests. I think it was at this point that he was offered a liver transplant but he refused it as he found the recovery process from his heart operation very difficult. I don't think my Dad received any other treatment nor do I think he asked for any. This includes taking treatment for his Hepatitis C. I never saw him injecting himself or referring to tablets that he was taking for it.
23. With regards to my Dad's infected status I don't think it impacted on any other treatment as he never went to the dentist and he never complained of getting treated differently.
24. My Dad knew he was going to die so I think this could have caused him considerable mental strain. Although, he still drank but not as much as before. He would have a pint or two of beer on most days.
25. My Dad died in his sleep at home. As his health had been declining his sister from Canada had come over to see him and was there when he

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died. I remember we went for a meal the night before but he had difficulty walking to the restaurant from the car.

26. As I remember my brother tried to resuscitate Dad at home and an ambulance was called but he was pronounced dead when he arrived at the Edinburgh Royal Infirmary hospital. I arrived at the Hospital shortly after my Dad had been pronounced dead, in a side room.
27. My Dad's wishes to be cremated were followed out. I am not sure if my brothers or my Mum wanted to see my Dad when he was at the undertakes but I know that they would not have been able to because of his Hepatitis C infection. I can't remember being actually told this.
28. I am not sure if my Dad faced any stigma from being infected, as I have said, he never talked about it to me or as far as I am aware to my family. Hepatitis C didn't seem as bad to us as Aids back then. I have told people since he has passed away and I have not noticed whether people have treated me any differently.
29. My Dad's illness with Hepatitis C affected us because we lost our Dad and that hurts because it's something that could have been avoided. It affected me emotionally the most, because I lived nearby my Dad when he was alive. I suppose I was also closer to him than my other two brothers because I spent more time with him.
30. After my Dad died, it was terrible on my Mum. I know she wished she had taken up the offer of bereavement counselling. My Mum and Dad were old fashioned and she had always looked after him cooking and washing. She must have known how ill he was, whether she was told or not.
31. It is difficult to know the financial impact of the infection on my Dad, other than he had to take early medical retirement, which was shortly after he found out about his Hepatitis C infection. Therefore, he could have been

earning a higher wage instead of getting a pension, had it not been for the infection.

#### **Section 6. Treatment/Care/Support**

32. I don't know if my Dad faced any difficulties in obtaining treatment as a result of his infected status.

33. I don't know if my Dad nor my Mum were ever offered any counselling in relation to the Hepatitis C infection but I do know that the three of us weren't offered any.

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

34. My Dad always said not to claim for compensation regarding the blood transfusion which infected him with Hepatitis C. So he obviously thought on some level that he shouldn't have got it (the Hepatitis C). However, I think he never knew the ins and outs of it, that it could have been avoided. I think he never thought about this too much as it would have made him unhappy.

35. Overall, my Dad was happy that he received the heart surgery and he loved his doctors and what they did for him. Although, he didn't realise that they could have known about the dangers of infected blood at the time of the operation, which had he known may have changed his attitude. Furthermore, my Dad's surgery and blood transfusion were known to the medical profession. Therefore, they should have performed a look-back exercise to alert my Dad to the necessity of getting himself tested in case he contracted the hepatitis infection, instead of him having to find out by chance.

36. I decided to apply for support from the Skipton Fund because of the effects of my Dad's illness on my family but was refused financial assistance as my Dad's medical records were destroyed.

**Section 8. Other Issues**

37. To date I have not engaged in any formal campaigning or taken part in any form of litigation.

38. There has been no help or advice from the government about how people in my position can go about applying for compensation and the process has brought up feelings of anger and loss that I would have preferred to have kept in the past.

39. We were not even thinking of making a claim until David Cameron came on TV and said there would be money for people affected. This led to me having to recount the fact that we lost our Dad at an early age, leaving my Mum without her husband who she wanted to spend her retirement with – she was never the same after this. The new evidence makes it look like this could have been avoided and was at the best negligent, even criminal.

40. Finding out, in our opinion, how culpable some people were is important to me and my family. These people are yet to be named and probably will never be.

41. Now we are told that we will get nothing in the way of compensation, because the evidence has been destroyed – this is a disgusting state of affairs.



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42. My Dad was a socialist and loved the NHS. He believed because of it, he had a few more years of life and time than he had expected.

43. I still love the NHS and I do not blame the NHS, I blame the politicians who let this happen on both sides of the Atlantic.

### Statement of Truth

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

Signed

GRO-B

Dated

19/9/19