

ANONYMOUS

Witness Name: GRO-B

Statement No: WITN3898001

Exhibits: 0

Dated: DECEMBER 2019

INFECTED BLOOD INQUIRY

FIRST WRITTEN STATEMENT OF GRO-B

I, GRO-B will say as follows:-

Section 1. Introduction

1. My name is GRO-B I was born on GRO-B 1957 and I live at GRO-B
GRO-B with my wife GRO-B
GRO-B and I have two sons aged 36 and 33.

2. This witness statement has been prepared without the benefit of access to my medical records.

Section 2. How infected

3. I am infected with the Hepatitis C Virus (HCV) from a transfusion of contaminated blood at the Blackpool Victoria Hospital in 1980. Without me knowing it, I have been infected with HCV for something close to 40 years. I was only informed that I had HCV in July 2019.
4. I had a serious industrial accident at work in 1980 when I was in my early twenties. My legs were crushed and I needed emergency surgery to include a

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blood transfusion. It is on my record that I had a lot of blood. My legs were very badly damaged.

5. Around 10 years after that first accident, I was involved in a serious road traffic accident and my legs were crushed again. I was in intensive care for three weeks at Preston Hospital and had my left leg amputated. I had a blood transfusion at that time too but the blood transfusion I was given at the Blackpool Victoria Hospital in 1980 has been identified as being culpable. EIBSS approved my application for the Stage 1 payment on 18th September 2019 as a result.

Section 3. Other Infections

6. I do not believe that I have been infected with anything other than HCV.

Section 4. Consent

7. I was not in a position to give consent when I had the blood transfusion(s) as I was having major surgery on an emergency basis. I then had no reason to believe that I might have HCV through the blood transfusion I was given. I am 62 years old and it is incredible to me that I have been a ticking time bomb since 1980.

Section 5. Impact of the Infection

8. I have felt unwell for a very long time and I suffer with chronic fatigue. I had a triple heart bypass in September 2010 but continued to feel tired and drained all the time. Despite feeling exhausted all the time, I suffered with insomnia and couldn't sleep. I was told that I had type 2 diabetes and I had many blood tests, the results of which kept coming back as abnormal. I was tested for a variety of things before they decided to test me for HCV. I first tested positive for HCV on 27th June 2019 and received a phone call some time toward the end of July 2019 from my GP, Dr GRO-B. She phoned me when my wife,

GRO-B had just gone on holiday (I won't get on an aeroplane). Dr **GRO-B** told me over the phone that she needed to tell me something. She said 'I can tell you now or you can come in to speak to me.' I asked her to tell me there and then and she said that I had HCV.

9. As soon as I found out that I was infected with HCV I went straight to the 'dark side of the moon' (a very dark place psychologically) and I am still there. My family is there too. To learn you have HCV is terrifying. I was absolutely terrified and thought I was going to die as did **GRO-B** and my lads. I have not travelled abroad, I do not have tattoos and piercings and I do not use or share needles. The anxiety about whether the virus was about to kill me and the uncertainty at that time as to the source of the infection nearly split me and **GRO-B** up. **GRO-B** and I were looking at each other wondering what the other had been up to.
10. I am no longer the same person I was. I feel very different about myself. I know that I can infect other people and I do not like that feeling. A sex life is out of the window. Thankfully, **GRO-B** had to be tested and was found to be clear of HCV notwithstanding that I have had HCV for nearly 40 years. I cannot get my head around any of it.
11. I started a four month course of clearing treatment three months ago. I take three Ribavirin tablets in the morning and four Ribavirin tablets at night. I also take one Zepatier tablet daily. I will not know if the treatment is successful until three months after I have completed the course. Even if I successfully clear HCV they cannot guarantee it will never come back.
12. The side effects of the treatment are awful. They make you feel suicidal. They ring me up from the hospital once a month to make sure my head is okay. My head is not okay. I am anxious and depressed as well as feeling nothing short of suicidal. My wife also says that I am a different person now. I have become very short tempered. I was formerly placid and easy going. I cannot sleep properly and have been getting up at round 3.00 am. Between

the worry of it all and the treatment side effects, my head is so full, it is bouncing.

13. Before embarking on the treatment I had a liver scan. My liver is inflamed and there are signs of scarring. Coincidentally I stopped drinking around 30 years ago. For some reason, something inside me told me to stop drinking. I did not like the smell. My doctors have told me that if I had not stopped drinking back then, my liver would have been a lot worse. I might even be dead. Now that I cannot have a drink, I want one. I feel resentful that the choice as to whether I can have one or not has been taken from me. There is also now some doubt as to whether I ever was a type 2 diabetic as thought prior to the HCV diagnosis. The diabetes has now apparently disappeared albeit the Nurse Practitioner in charge of my HCV treatment believes it possible the HCV medication has purified my blood. Again, I do not know what to think. I was tired and had been attributing my fatigue to diabetes but, in my mind now, it was the HCV.

14. We are a close, tight knit family. GRO-B has been in bits. She thought she was going to loose me. My two boys are affected as are my grandchildren. Their heads have been in bits. My oldest lad has PTSD and my youngest has mental health problems so my diagnosis has been a bomb shell to them. If I bleed I have to go out of the room for my own peace of mind. I won't let anyone near me. I worry about other people constantly. If they want to shake my hand, I worry about the sweat. I won't even hug my friends and family now. I am not sure if I will ever get my head around it and come to terms with it. It has screwed me up.

Section 6. Treatment/care/support

15. I have not been offered any counselling. We are a close knit family and rely on each other for support.

Section 7. Financial Assistance

16. Following my approved application to EIBSS in September 2019, I received the Stage One ex gratia payment of £20,000. I also receive £1,531 per month and have been accepted for the £500 cold weather payment. Liability is not in dispute. Blood transfusions containing contaminated blood were apparently rife in the Blackpool Victoria Hospital in the early eighties.

17. The EIBSS payments cannot apparently be backdated and paid out to me retrospectively. They are saying they will only pay me from when I was *told* I had HCV. I do not agree with that approach. I was contaminated with HCV from a blood transfusion administered to me 1980. I have been infected with HCV since that time and my liver has been viciously attacked by it.

Section 8. Other Issues

18. I want some accountability. I want to know why this happened and who is at fault.

Anonymity, disclosure and redaction

19. I am seeking anonymity and would like my Statement redacted before publication. However I understand this statement will be published and disclosed as part of the Inquiry. I do not want to give oral evidence to the

20. Inquiry.

Statement of Truth

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

Signed

GRO-B

Dated... 11 - 12 - 19