

ANONYMOUS

Witness Name: GRO-B

Statement No: WITN4010001

Exhibits: 0

Dated: March 2020

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 and I live at GRO-B I am a Chartered Engineer working as a Management Consultant.

2. My mother, GRO-B: M (born on GRO-B), was infected with the Hepatitis C Virus (HCV) through a contaminated blood transfusion. She died after having a cerebral vascular accident on GRO-B 2007, aged 70.

3. This witness statement has been prepared without the benefit of access to my mother's full medical records.

Section 2. How Affected

4. My mother had a number of breast cancer surgeries in 1979, 1980, 1982 and 1984. I do not know the precise stages but I believe that she had a mastectomy, and then a second mastectomy followed by a reconstruction. Unfortunately, during one (or more) of the surgeries she was infected with HCV through contaminated blood transfusions.
5. My mother had serious health issues after contracting HCV. She became very difficult to live with and my parents divorced. My mother had treatment at Addenbrooke's Hospital in Cambridge and the peripheral hospitals in the surrounding area.
6. On 30th May 2006, my parents were involved in the same road traffic accident. The Police tracked me down in Kent to tell me about the accident. My mother was unconscious and was on a high dependency ward/the brain care unit at Adenbrooke's Hospital. The consultant at the hospital informed me that my mother had tested positive for HCV antibodies. I had no prior knowledge that my mother had contracted HCV.
7. I then spoke to my father at the hospital and he told me that it was true that my mother had HCV. He told me that she had been infected with HCV when she had her breast cancer surgeries between 1979 and 1984. My parents had known for many years, but my mother had not wanted me to know. My father was not allowed to tell me. She was adamant that the HCV infection be kept from me and I had found out by accident.
8. My mother sustained a brain stem injury during the road traffic accident and was in a coma for six weeks. She ultimately ended up in a managed care facility in GRO-B She was wheelchair bound and had lost the ability to speak. We were unsure as to exactly what level of cognition she had. After about 10 months she passed away having suffered a stroke in GRO-B 2007.

Section 3. Other Infections

9. I believe my mother was also infected with the Hepatitis B Virus (HBV) but I am not aware of any further/additional infections.

Section 4. Consent

10. I am unaware as to whether my mother was ever tested or treated without her consent or knowledge as I did not know that she had HCV until she had the road traffic accident in 2006.

Section 5. Impact of the Infection

11. I was just 11 years old when my mother contracted breast cancer and had her first surgery. My mother was in poor health from that time and for the entire 28-year period until her death. I had a tough childhood. My father was self-employed, working long hours (8 am until 7 pm) daily to include Saturdays. My mother struggled to care for me. She was preoccupied with her very poor health. There was a constant barrage/stream of doctors' visits and hospital consultations.
12. My mother was always very tired and lethargic. She couldn't sleep and suffered with severe depression. My mother had bronchial problems. I remember her breathing in the mist pumped from a type of respirator. She complained of joint and muscular pain. I also remember her suffering from terrible bloating.
13. I remember my mother having to take a lot of drugs. She was in pain. She saw physiotherapists. She had an irregular heartbeat and saw a heart specialist. She used to go and stay at health spas around the UK and in Italy (where she originated from) to try and manage her health. I remember her injecting herself with what she told me was vitamin supplements. She did that for a long period of time, possibly six months to a year.

14. I had a very difficult relationship with my mother. My mother suffered with confusion and brain fog. My mother would often say confusing and irrational things to me. By way of example, she told me not to drink water because it would make me fat. It was an astonishing thing for a young, athletic teenage boy to hear from his mother. My mother made odd and illogical assumptions about many things which made it difficult for her to sustain relationships with others. I had no idea that she had HCV and did not know that her condition was having such an adverse effect on her thought process, her mood and her behaviour. My mother was so severely depressed that she was almost suicidal. My parents argued with each other for what amounted to a period of 15 years before their marriage broke down and they divorced. I did not have a supportive home environment and it has affected my life.

15. I under-performed at school. I was pegged for Oxbridge (having been placed in an accelerated stream) but my exam results did not reflect that expectation. I think I just wanted to leave home and get far away. I ended up at Manchester Polytechnic and studied engineering. I lived and worked abroad for a significant period of time.

16. I am now married but have never wanted to have children. I have no fond memories of my own childhood/teenage years. I had no idea what had happened to my mother and I just couldn't understand why she was as she was. With what I know now, I look back and I have a lot of empathy for what had happened to her.

17. It is very difficult to talk about my mother and my upbringing even to this day. I have locked it all away. I do not want to think about myself in terms of being a victim but what they did to my mother changed my home life and me.

Section 6. Treatment/care/support

18. As stated, my mother would inject herself into her hip, upper thigh or buttock with something she told me was a 'vitamin' supplement solution. I cannot say

with any certainty what it actually was. It may have been HCV clearing treatment.

19. I think that my mother did have some psychological support. At one time she sent me to a Dr Petrie in Cambridge for psychological support because she thought that I was 'unstable'. It was one of the many irrational things that she did as, after what was an hour long consultation, Dr Petrie told me that I was completely normal and had nothing to be concerned about.

Section 7. Financial Assistance

20. I am not aware whether my mother received any financial assistance from the trust and funds and cannot comment except that I doubt my mother would have been sufficiently organised to engage in the process.

Section 8. Other Issues

21. I have now some insight into what my mother went through and how that has profoundly shaped my personal journey. I am deeply disappointed that this should have happened within our own National Health Service and am keen to do what I can to prevent it from happening again.

Anonymity

22. I wish to remain anonymous.

23. I would be prepared to provide oral evidence to the Inquiry.

ANONYMOUS

Statement of Truth

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

Signed...

GRO-B

Dated... 18/3/20