

ANONYMOUS

Witness Name:

GRO-B

Statement No: WITN4712001

Exhibits: 0

Dated: November 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-C** I was born on **GRO-C** and I live at **GRO-C** with my wife.
2. I was infected with the Hepatitis C Virus (HCV) through contaminated blood products.
3. This witness statement has been prepared with the benefit of access to my medical records.

Section 2. How infected

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4. I have mild Haemophilia A, diagnosed at 7 years old. I was treated infrequently with Factor VIII (FVIII) concentrate ahead of dental extractions and procedures and, on one occasion, a hernia operation. I was under the care of the St Thomas Hospital in London before transferring to the Royal Free Hospital in the 1970s.
5. I am not in possession of my medical records but I was taken through them a few years ago by my Consultant, Dr Thynn-Thynn Yee. I was infected with HCV through prophylaxis FVIII treatment given to me when I had my wisdom teeth out in 1980. The treatment was administered via St Thomas' Hospital at the **GRO-B** Hospital although I was then with the Royal Free.
6. I was told that I had been infected with HCV (then referred to as NANB Hepatitis) in 1994. I was called in by Dr Christine Lee to tell me that it had been identified in my blood sample. It was a bolt out of the blue for me. I had annual routine appointments and thought my blood was being sampled to check my haemophilia levels. I do not remember Dr Lee's words to me. It was something along the lines of the good news being that I do not have HIV but the bad news being that I do have a form of Hepatitis. I was warned that there were health consequences, that it would affect my liver and there was a possibility of me developing cirrhosis and liver cancer. There was no treatment back then and I was told that I should modify my lifestyle and avoid alcohol.
7. Dr Lee stated that no one knew for sure how it was transmitted. She said it was important to be careful with body fluids, saliva, semen and such. My wife was called in a few months later to talk about the possibility of sexual transmission of HCV with profound consequences. We had our son in 1986. **GRO-C**
GRO-C
8. I worked in the advertising business. I was the Managing Director of a company and responsible for entertaining potential clients, taking care of clients and keeping them happy. It was almost impossible to abstain from alcohol. Alcohol was the norm in that industry at that time. Liquid lunches were the way you

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bonded with your work colleagues. If you did not consume alcohol you were not doing your job and I had a young family to support. You had to fit the mold.

Section 3. Other Infections

9. In 1994, I was contacted by the Royal Free to inform me that I had been placed at risk of exposure to vCJD. In 1997 later they wrote to me to tell me that they did not believe that I was at risk of vCJD. I could have done without the stress of having that hanging over me.

Section 4. Consent

10. I was not given any information or any form of warning about being at risk of infection before I was treated with FVIII concentrate. As stated at paragraph 6, I did not know that my blood was being tested for viruses before being informed of the result. I had no idea at all.

Section 5. Impact of the Infection

11. As stated, my marriage was almost immediately and profoundly affected through being infected with HCV. It created tension at home. When my son was 8 years old, he walked into the room having casually cut himself with my razor. It shocked and frightened us. GRO-C

GRO-C I had to be so careful around the house. Whatever I did I was overtly conscious that I could easily infect anybody. GRO-C

GRO-C

GRO-C

12. I didn't want to tell anybody that I had been infected with HCV apart from my close family and they were, of course, worried about me. Over time, I did not want to tell my parents too much about the impact on me of being infected with HCV so as to protect them from further upset. Having HCV almost certainly

makes you tired and depressed. It affected my work prior to treatment and certainly with the treatment it was almost impossible to do anything intellectual.

13. I had my first attempt at clearing the virus in 1997 with a 6 week course of Ribavirin and Interferon. It failed. It wasn't until 2012 when I read about the new protease inhibitor treatment that I got myself an interview with Professor Dusheiko at the Royal Free to volunteer to take part in that clinical trial. Because I was classified as a previous non-responder the course of treatment was a one year combination of protease inhibitor, Telaprevir and Ribavirin and Interferon. On Christmas Day 2012, after completing the first three months, I had a reaction to the Telaprevir drug and ended up in hospital with a severe rash. The rash was all over my body and in every part of my body including delicate and intimate soft tissue areas as well as my eyes. They were going to halt the treatment altogether at that point and I had to persuade them otherwise, and continued with a further 9 months of Interferon and Ribavirin.

14. Interferon and Ribavirin is an evil treatment. It was impossible to even think of working as the effects of the drugs were so debilitating. The brain fog was overwhelming and I was under a mental cloud. I had a severe bout of depression and needed antidepressants. It was by far my worst year. I then had to try and get my career back on track in a different industry but I was no longer able to sustain the same income. I am left with skin problems and have occasional bouts of depression to this day.

15. I have developed liver cirrhosis. Since 2012, I have attended at the Royal Free for regular blood checks and I have 6 monthly liver scans to detect liver cancer. I then await the results with trepidation. You cannot get travel insurance if you have Haemophilia and HCV. It is hard enough to obtain any form of insurance with haemophilia but having HCV and a compromised liver renders it impossible. There is no interest in whether you have now cleared the virus. There is no option/opportunity to clarify that point most of the time. Having had HCV is something I still live with.

Section 6. Treatment/care/support

16. I wasn't offered any counselling except for the referral made by my GP when I sought help for depression a known side effect of interferon.

Section 7. Financial Assistance

17. I received the Stage 1 ex gratia payment through the Skipton Fund albeit I recall having to sign something agreeing not to sue the Government. I was told my signature was needed for everyone infected. If I hadn't signed the waiver along with others, no-one would have got anything. I receive regular payments through EIBSS.

Anonymity, disclosure and redaction

18. I am seeking anonymity and would like this Statement redacted when it is published and disclosed as part of the Inquiry.

Statement of Truth

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

Signed.....

GRO-B

Dated.....

13.11.2020