

ANONYMOUS

Witness Name:

GRO-B

Statement No: WITN3357001

Exhibit: WITN3357002-WITN3357003

Dated: 11th December 2019

INFECTED BLOOD INQUIRY

FIRST WRITTEN STATEMENT OF

GRO-B

I provide this statement in response to a request under Rule 9 of the Inquiry Rules 2006 dated 26th June 2019. I adopt the paragraph numbering in the Rule 9 request for ease of reference.

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

1. Introduction

1. My name is **GRO-B** my date of birth is **GRO-B** **GRO-B** and my address is known to the Inquiry. I am a single mum with one child and currently working as an **GRO-B** and also studying at **GRO-B**

2. How Affected

1. I wish to tell the Inquiry about my father, **GRO-B: F** born **GRO-B** **GRO-B** and died on **GRO-B** My father became infected with hepatitis C when I was about **GRO-B** years old as a result of a blood transfusion at the **GRO-B**

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2. In **GRO-B** my father was about **GRO-B** years old. He lived with my mother (who was only about **GRO-B** years old at that time) in an apartment in **GRO-B**. My parents explained to me that there was an incident that occurred after a football match. A gang of thugs entered their apartment and attacked my father with a machete.
3. During the attack, my father was hurt and was bleeding very badly. An ambulance was called and he was taken to the **GRO-B**. **GRO-B** He had lost five pints of blood through his wounds. He nearly died on the way to the hospital. The attack left him with scars all over his body.
4. My father had many blood transfusions at this time at the **GRO-B**. **GRO-B** Exhibited at WITN3357002 is an entry from my father's GP notes dated **GRO-B** which states: '*beaten up and knifed. Hospitalised* **GRO-B** *blood transfusion*'.
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5. When my father was being transfused, apparently the blood stocks ran low and it was decided that he should receive a different batch of blood. This was possibly American blood. My father believed this was when he became infected with hepatitis C.
6. I am unaware of what, if any, information was provided to my parents about the risk of being exposed to infection.
7. My father told me in later years that my mother was pregnant with me at the time of the attack.
8. In my father's medical notes it states that in **GRO-B** he tested negative for hepatitis B and HIV but reactive for hepatitis C. Then in **GRO-B** he tested for hepatitis C antibody positive.

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9. He was a good father to me and I had a very close relationship with him. He was very much a family man. We became even closer when I looked after him during his treatment with Interferon in **GRO-B**. I did his washing, cleaning and generally looked after him but it was very hard to also try and work and attend **GRO-B**.
10. I am unable to comment on what information or advice was provided to my father about the risk of being exposed to infection. I am aware that it was only when my father became to feel unwell with the symptoms of hepatitis C i.e. weight loss, weakness, yellowing skin, many years later after the transfusions, that he sought any medical help for this. I believe he was tested during a **GRO-C** in **GRO-B** and received a positive result for hepatitis C.
11. I am unsure as to what information was provided about my father's infection, but I do remember my father placing his toothbrush on a high shelf where I would not be able to reach.
12. I understand that my father had to wait a long time before he received the Interferon treatment. I think that he should have received it a lot sooner. By the time he received treatment, he had resorted to drink **GRO-C**. He just could not deal with life. I know the treatment was a long process but I am unsure as to how many courses of treatment he had. The Interferon caused him to have mood swings and a bad temper. He received the Interferon treatment at **GRO-B** in **GRO-B**.
13. When he had the all clear in **GRO-B** he was absolutely ecstatic. He was really happy and back to his old self. There was such a difference in his personality. He even began to put weight back on. I had forgotten what he was like before the hepatitis C.

3. Other Infections

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1. I am not aware of my father being infected with anything other than hepatitis C. However I recall that at one time, he did have a problem with his heart and had an operation but I am unaware of what this problem was as I was young at the time.

4. Consent

1. I believe that my father was treated without his knowledge and consent because he was unconscious on arrival at the hospital after the attack. The staff had to treat him straight away.
2. I do not believe he was tested for research purposes.

5. Impact

1. The mental effects of my father's infection were immense. My father believed that the infection "stopped his life". He became very depressed and said that he felt dirty and an outcast. Sometimes, he would recoil into his shell and not want to bother with anyone. He would get really upset and say he "just could not deal with life". As a result of the depression, he resorted to drink GRO-C and would sometimes disappear for days on end. My mother would be frantic and everyone would be out looking for him.
2. Physically my father was very thin, having lost a lot of weight. His skin was yellow and he looked tired and fatigued.
3. I recall my father and I having a conversation about organ donation. He told me not to trust hospitals or the NHS and to not consider being a donor. This was because he had lost all faith in the NHS after becoming infected.
4. When my father was receiving the Interferon treatment, he would suffer with depression and mood swings. He would sometimes go to my

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grandparents' home and go up into the loft. He would stay there for hours and just shut himself away from the world. I felt sorry for my grandparents because he would take his moods out on them. There were often arguments with my uncle at my grandparents' home. My uncle would say hurtful things to my father about being infected. My father was embarrassed about his infection.

5. My father had the infection a long time before he had his diagnosis. As a consequence of his illness, he was unable to hold down a job. Over the years he worked as **GRO-B** in **GRO-B** and **GRO-B** but the depression, fatigue and pain was too much for him.
6. As a young child, I was aware that there was something wrong with my father, even though my parents tried keeping things away from me so I wouldn't worry. I did worry that he was going to die.
7. It became obvious to me in school that my home life was different to the other children. I knew we were not a 'normal' family and that there was something wrong.
8. My father's illness was a huge strain on the relationship between him and my mother and eventually their relationship broke down. They tried a number of times to repair the relationship but it was never successful and so they remained just good friends. It was a very sad time for me.
9. When I was about **GRO-B** or **GRO-B** was able to work out for myself what was wrong with my father. I had often overheard hushed conversations within the family and I knew that I was not allowed to touch or use his toothbrush. My mother would also freak out if anyone bled. She was terrified that one of us would become infected. I just put two and two together and realised what was happening. I recognised the symptoms of hepatitis in my father.

10. I went through a rebellious period and got kicked out of school. I tried attending a couple of different colleges but I just could not settle. Eventually I came through that awful period and decided what I wanted to do with my life. I attended college regularly and completed my course and then went on to GRO-B

11. As a child, I was told not to tell anyone about my father's illness. It was a "big secret" to be kept quiet. No-one outside the family was ever told, only our closest friends.

12. After my father died, I found some diaries he kept through his illness. He expressed how depressed he felt with his healthcare and the health system.

6. **Treatment/Care/Support**

1. My father had to wait a long time for access to treatment and subsequently turned to drink and drugs as he just could not handle his illness.
2. My father received counselling as a result of his drug rehabilitation but no counselling as far as the hepatitis C infection was concerned.
3. Counselling has never been offered to me or my mother.

7. **Financial Assistance**

1. No financial assistance was ever offered to or received by my father.
2. No-one ever suggested to him that he could apply for any financial assistance.

8. **Other Issues**

1. My father was aware before he died that there was to be an Inquiry into the infected blood scandal. He would have been a part of it had he had the chance. I would like to seek justice on behalf of my father and have this matter fully investigated.
2. I have recently become aware that within my father's GP notes there is reference to correspondence exhibited at WITN3357003 dated GRO-B GRO-B which states: *'according to their computer they have sent out the final report re his hepatitis and it has been hidden on the computer for six months'*. Questions in relation to this report have been raised within my mother's GRO-B witness statement made to the Inquiry.

Statement of Truth

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

Signed

GRO-B

Dated

11.12.2019