

Witness Name **GRO-B**

Statement No: WITN3519001

Exhibits: 0

Dated: September 2019

**INFECTED BLOOD INQUIRY**

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**FIRST WRITTEN STATEMENT OF **GRO-B****

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

**Section 1. Introduction**

1. My name is **GRO-B** of **GRO-B** My date of birth is **GRO-B**
2. I have two children aged 21 and 18.
3. **This statement has been prepared without the benefit of access to my medical records.** If and in so far as I have been provided with limited records the relevant entries are set out in the medical chronology at the end of this statement.

**Section 2. How Infected**

4. I suffer with severe Haemophilia type A.
5. Prior to 1977 I was treated with cryoprecipitate for my haemophilia. My body developed antibodies and I wasn't given Factor VIII concentrate until some time later. The first time I received Factor VIII concentrate was when I had a tooth extraction in 1977. I had this at

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The Royal Free Hospital but I am unable to recall the name of my Consultant. I didn't take any medication on a regular basis for my haemophilia because I had the antibodies.

6. When I had a bleed my joints would swell up and I would have to take time to recover without treatment. Typically it would take me a week to recover and it happened a lot.
7. I was infected with Hepatitis B in or around 1974 and Non-A Non-B [NANB] Hepatitis (which later became known as Hepatitis C) in 1977.
8. I was never given any information about any risks associated with using the blood products.
9. I don't remember being told that I was infected with either of the viruses. I must have been told but I simply cannot recall being told, although I do remember when it started to become public in the news. As a result of seeing it on the news I telephoned the hospital and asked them if I had HIV. The hospital confirmed to me that I did not have HIV but that's all I remember. I think that this would have been in the 1980s because I didn't start working until 1984.
10. I do recall at a review meeting talking about the Hepatitis but it was in a very casual way. I wasn't really given any information about how to manage the condition or what to do about it. I didn't have any symptoms at that time and treatment wasn't an option. I think because my liver function was normal there wasn't any intervention. It wasn't until years later that I had treatment.

### **Section 3. Other Infections**

11. I was told that I had been exposed to vCJD in a letter dated 12/12/2014 headed Variant Creutzfeldt-Jakob Disease and Plasma Products, which states "we confirm that you did receive UK sourced plasma derived clotting factors between 1980 and 2001."

### **Section 4. Consent**

12. When I went for my regular check ups I would be tested for a lot of things and I don't know if I was ever told specifically what they were testing for. I don't believe that I was tested without my consent.

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13. I also do not think that I was tested for the purposes of research because I always provided my consent before my blood was taken and I had to sign a consent form.

### **Section 5. Impact**

14. I was infected for a long time before I realised and as a consequence my condition was left untreated for such a long time. It wasn't until 2004 that I had treatment and I was able to clear the infection. The damage that may have been done during the time that I didn't know always plays on my mind. I have always been told my liver function is fine and I know that the liver is a robust organ. However I am also aware that damage to the liver isn't always easy to detect so it remains a worry for me.

15. As far as I know my liver is okay because that is what I have been told by the hospital. I feel well and I haven't had problems with it although I do suffer with arthritis and my joints ache.

16. I have not shown any serious symptoms of liver damage as a result of being infected with Hepatitis C. However, I have always been concerned that some damage was done because I was infected nearly 30 years ago and as I get older the damage may one day become apparent.

17. I underwent the gruelling Interferon and Ribavirin treatment for Hepatitis C in 2004 and I was told that I had "*cleared*" the virus.

18. When I went for my reviews I was always told what the options were and given the opportunity to accept or turn down treatment. The doctors at The Royal Free Hospital always spoke to me about new developments in treatment. I went for a review on one occasion and I was offered treatment for my infection. I was told that if I was to take the treatment it would be a course that would last around 6 months. I didn't want to go through that so I rejected the offer.

19. At my next review I was informed that there was an improvement in medication and the treatment time was shorter than had previously been offered to me. I decided to accept the treatment that was on offer to me at this point.

20. I went to the hospital and received all of the treatment. I did the injections myself at home. I was warned beforehand that it could be quite arduous and that it would affect my behaviour

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and mind. I was also told that my appetite would suffer. I felt that I was prepared for the treatment and that I went into it with my eyes open. I lost a stone in weight and I felt very different during the treatment. The people around me noticed that I behaved differently. I wasn't violent or anything like that but I was different. I had to be careful at work and in front of my children in regards to what I did. I used to come home and go to bed because the treatment made me so tired and in order to deal with the symptoms. I found that was the best thing to do and it lasted for about 3 months or so.

21. The treatment didn't damage my relationship but it did put a strain on it because I behaved so differently. Thankfully everyone around me knew why and knew it would only be for 3 months or so. I also warned my colleagues so they understood. It was a strain but it was something I got through. The tablets and injections weren't very pleasant because I had to inject into my stomach but it was more difficult for my wife and children as I wasn't around that much.
22. The treatment was available and I chose when to take it when it suited me. I'm not aware of any treatment that wasn't made available to me.
23. Once I stopped the treatment I went back to normal and the side effects stopped.
24. I would say that I do not feel my infections have really affected my family. Of course it was a worry and for a short period I was very unwell which had an impact on my health and my work. However it is good to know the infection has gone.
25. I do still worry about it because I had the infection for around 30 years in my system and I don't know what damage it has caused during that time. I don't know what impact it has had or whether it will possibly affect me when I am a bit older. If damage has been done then it is a worry. I am still having reviews every 6 months and my blood is tested regularly.
26. I don't believe I suffered from any form of stigma. If I had been infected with HIV I think that would have had more of an impact. At the time people didn't really see Hepatitis C as a problem and it wasn't until much later that people realised it was a killer. Thankfully I seemed to have dodged any bad association with stigma and it doesn't worry me. I don't really think the hepatitis affected my family, I would say it is the Haemophilia that has affected us more.
27. My infection has not had an affect on my education.

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28. I don't believe I have faced difficulties in obtaining care.

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

29. I was offered some support in the 1970s but I didn't feel it was necessary.

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

GRO-B

### **Section 8. Other Issues**

33. I haven't been too affected by the infection but it could have been very different for me. I hope by supporting other people who have suffered as a result of receiving contaminated blood it can help victims or their families.

### **Anonymity, disclosure and redaction**

34. I wish to apply for anonymity.

35. I do not want to give oral evidence to the Inquiry.

### **Statement of Truth**

ANONYMOUS

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

Signed..

GRO-B

Dated.....12/03/2020.....