

# ANONYMOUS

Witness Name: **GRO-B**

Statement No.: WITN2307001

Exhibits: Nil

Dated: 07<sup>th</sup> November 2022

## 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 15<sup>th</sup> May 2020.

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

#### Section 1: Introduction

1. My full name is **GRO-B** and my address is **GRO-B**  
**GRO-B** My date of birth is **GRO-B** 1960. I am single and have  
a daughter whom I do not see very much. All of my family including my parents  
have passed away. In my statement, I intend to discuss my late fiancé, **GRO-B: F**  
**F** and his infection with hepatitis C.

#### Section 2: How Infected

2. **F** last known address was **GRO-B**  
**GRO-B** and his date of birth was **GRO-B** 1948. He passed away on **GRO-B**  
**GRO-B** 2007. I do not have a copy of his death certificate.

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3. [F] was a really happy-go-lucky person. He did not panic about things - he had a rather calm nature. He was a very, very kind man and he was really good to me. We were together for 13 years.
4. [F] did not work as he suffered from COPD for a long time before he was infected with HCV. He does have other family members, but they are located in [GRO-B] and they were never really in contact with [F]
5. [F] was infected by a blood transfusion. When he was [GRO-B] (I do not know the exact date), he was out one night in [GRO-B] Park and he witnessed two men, whom he did not know, in a fight. [F] tried to break up the fight, but he ended up being stabbed and had to be rushed to [GRO-B] Hospital, Glasgow. This is the reason why he required a blood transfusion. I do not know exactly how much blood he received but according to [F] the hospital staff continued to bring out lots of blood on the tray he would use to have his meals. I would guess that he received quite a few pints of blood.
6. [F] was not provided with any advice or information at all prior to being given the blood transfusion about the risk of infection.
7. I do not know the date on which [F] found out he was infected with hepatitis C. However, it was when we were together. Therefore, it would have been quite a while after he received the transfusion. [F] took some sort of turn, and he went to his doctor as he had COPD. With this condition, he would have his blood taken every so often and that is how he became aware of his diagnosis. [F] then told me about his infection afterwards. When he came back from the appointment, he just said that the doctor told him he had hepatitis C. I do not think he knew a lot about it until I looked into the infection myself, and I explained it to him. At the beginning, it was me who gave him most of the information regarding hepatitis C. Later on, he was provided with pamphlets, but these did not contain adequate information to allow him to understand and manage his infection. He never had a doctor sit him down and explain to him what hepatitis C was and I do not think [F] realised how bad it could be. I think information should have been provided to [F] much earlier.

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8. At one point [F] had to get blood tests in [GRO-B] Hospital after he took a turn.

I was also in attendance and the doctors said that I could leave as there was nothing wrong with him. I told them to test his blood again as I knew that he had hepatitis C, but they just brushed me off. They were refusing to do a test. I wanted to make a complaint and I did so to another doctor. I told them that I was going to the media, and I was not leaving the hospital until they confirmed the test result. Within twenty minutes of my complaint, they gave [F] another blood test and they confirmed that he did have hepatitis C. The staff at [GRO-B] Hospital were not very helpful at all.

9. [F] was hard of hearing so when he was told information I would have to relay it to him again. We both attended [F] GP who was very nice and helpful. He spoke about concerns surrounding [F] and I having intimate contact and he suggested that I be tested for HCV or go to my own doctor. At first, I did not want to have a test as I was embarrassed that I could potentially have the virus. I attended the [GRO-B] in Glasgow to get blood tests. The staff there were fantastic - they spoke to [F] and me in a room and explained everything in any possible way. They advised us not to use the same toothbrush or scissors. When we got home from the [GRO-B] appointment, [F] told me that I seemed different, and I told him I was thinking about everything that had happened. I told him not to use my toothbrush or the scissors. He told me I was making him feel like he was dirty but that was not my intention. It was a difficult time, but he did understand. I felt alienated and it worried me until I got the results back in case I had contracted HCV. Luckily, I had not.

### Section 3: Other Infections

10. I do not believe that [F] was infected with anything other than hepatitis C.

**Section 4: Consent**

11. I do not believe that **F** was treated or tested without his knowledge or consent. However, I do believe he was treated without being given adequate or full information. How much information he actually took in, I do not know but I do not think he was expecting to die as a result of the infection, and this was due to the lack of information he was given.

12. I could not say if **F** was treated or tested for the purpose of research.

**Section 5: Impact**

13. At the beginning when he was first diagnosed, I do not think **F** was too sure what HCV was but then we both found out. I do not know if he just did not want to know the outcome. When I got all the information, I told him exactly what it is and what could happen. He went along with it and just got on with things. At the very end of his illness, he was bedridden and I had to look after him. I dealt with his daily care from toileting to making him dinner, to doing other housework. He was completely dependent on me by that point. Towards the end of his life, he asked me if he could move into my flat. I had a neighbour who was looking after my home as I was mainly at his house looking after him. He was quite a muscly man and did a lot of weights but shortly before he passed away, his muscles turned to fat. He realised this and he said to me that he thought he was dying. It is not easy to respond to something like that and I told him not to be silly. I reminded him that we were going on holiday, and we were going to get married. **F** even had an H Samuel catalogue, and he was trying to look out our wedding rings. However, I knew myself that things were looking really bad for him and I was even told this by the nurses too.

14. **F** hid quite a lot from me in terms of his mental health. He did not want to upset me as I was already upset enough. He was probably saying to himself that this HCV diagnosis was not good news, and everything would turn out bad. I observed him as being a bit depressed and withdrawn. Towards the end of his life, there was a noticeable physical impact. His walking deteriorated which I do



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not understand. The HCV attacked his liver, so his stomach was protruding quite a bit. However, he did not develop any further medical complications or conditions as a result of his infection.

15. In terms of treatment, **F** only received tablets, but I do not remember the name of the medication. He did not face any difficulties in accessing this treatment. I do not think any other treatment would have been of any benefit to him towards the end of his life. He was not walking at all, and a tablet would not really have done anything to help this issue. He was on a lot of tablets already as well as inhalers. I do not think his treatment had any mental or physical effect on him - he never complained of any side-effects.

16. **F** infected status did impact upon his dental care. It was his duty to tell the dentist about his HCV infection as the staff would have to protect themselves. I think this put him off going altogether.

17. With regard to the impact of his infection on his private and family life, I do not think **F** family were too bothered. As previously mentioned **F** did not have much contact with them. The infection did, however, have an impact on **GRO-B** social life. He tended to stay in all the time as his walking was really bad and his face was turning yellow due to his liver. He did not want to go out to the shops or go out for something to eat. I think he was embarrassed about the condition he was in.

18. **F** infection affected me a lot. I was always seeing him in pain. He was never a man to complain a lot, but I could see it in his face when he was in pain. Even when he was in hospital and I asked him if he was in discomfort, he would always tell me not to bother the nurses. To this day, I really miss him and I have not gone into any other relationship **F** was taken far too soon - he was only 59 years old. He had plenty of years left because besides what happened to him, he was very fit. Towards the end of his life, he could hardly pick up a cup of tea. Emotionally it has been terrible for me, and I miss him so much. As previously mentioned, we were due to get married and he even asked the Sister in the hospital about the chapel there. He wanted the Sister to find out about

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that and he said that we would get married there. Both myself and the nurses knew that he was a seriously ill man. I tried to put it aside because I knew it was never going to happen. It was certainly a rollercoaster of emotions. As a result of me caring for [F] I did not go out and I still do not really go out to this day. He has left a big space in my life and in my heart.

19. My daughter was aware of [F] infection, but it did not really have an impact on her. She actually knew a lot more about HCV than I did. I do not know about the impact on [F] family.

20. I did feel a stigma when [F] was first diagnosed, and I was scared that I would have the infection. It was nerve wracking to go every six months for a check-up. We were complete strangers to this infection. There is a stigma because people do not understand HCV to this day, and they certainly did not understand it all those years ago. They would think that a person diagnosed with HCV was dirty and must have been a drug addict.

21. [F] infection did not have any educational effects on either of us. We were not working so there was no impact on our work life.

22. I do not think his infection had any financial impact on him. He had money but I dealt with the payment of his bills. With regard to the financial impact on me, I was using taxis quite regularly as I did not like to leave [F] by himself for too long in case he needed the toilet, but I would not say that I was majorly affected in terms of money.

### Section 6: Treatment/Care/Support

23. [F] GP knew he had HCV, and he came out to see [F] shortly before he passed away. [F] had tried to obtain disability living allowance, but he was refused this even though he could not walk. We spoke to his GP and asked him to write a letter verifying [F] condition. He did this and [F] received the money the week before he passed away.

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24. F was never given any counselling or psychological support. Counselling was offered to me at the GRO-B and a counsellor was present at our appointment. F was in attendance as well, but I was there for me. They were brilliant and they would answer any of my questions.

25. The support provided to F was insufficient. The only good advice he received was when he went through the Glasgow Royal Infirmary, which is where he passed away, and he was seeing the top men. They would ask how he was and try to ascertain his understanding of the infection. I am not sure of the names of these individuals.

### **Section 7: Financial Assistance**

26. F received £46,000 from the Skipton Fund. I am not too sure when he found out about the financial assistance available, however I remember reading about it in the newspapers. It made reference to a "big mistake by NHS" or something similar. I cannot remember who actually wrote this in the paper, but they asked for people who had been affected by this to come forward. I completed an application on F behalf. I phoned the number provided in the newspaper and I spoke to someone who advised that I had to go through different channels. I filled in a form and sent it away, but I cannot remember to whom this was addressed. I just had to provide all of F details. He eventually received a letter advising that he was being awarded financial assistance from the Skipton Fund. It was quite a straightforward process; however, it took months and months to process the application and finally receive payment. I do not think there were any preconditions imposed on the making of an application.

27. I did not receive any financial assistance.

### **Section 8: Other Issues**

28. I have not been involved in any campaigning or previous litigation, inquiries or investigations.

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**Statement of Truth**

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

Signed

GRO-B

Dated

11/11/2022