

ANONYMOUS

Witness Name: **GRO-B**

Statement No: WITN3398001

Exhibits: 0

Dated: July 2019

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**
2. I was studying at university but became ill and stopped attending. I am a widow and have a son.
3. This witness statement has been prepared without the benefit of access to my full 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. My blood type is **GRO-B** and I have always had anaemia. I was given a blood transfusion in **GRO-B** after an Episiotomy whilst giving birth that made me bleed a lot. I lost 6 pints of blood and passed out due to a lack of oxygen and blood. I was only **GRO-B** at the time. I was left in the hands of a student doctor.

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5. Prior to the transfusion, during pregnancy, every time I went to the doctors they wouldn't treat me properly for my anaemia. I asked them to give me iron tablets but they refused.
6. The doctors didn't discuss anything with me prior to giving me the blood transfusion. They didn't seek my consent or my aunt's consent, who was with me during the Episiotomy.
7. After the blood transfusion, I was at the hospital for another 8 weeks as I became really sick.
8. I believe I was infected in [GRO-B] in the [GRO-B]. My consultant was [GRO-B] I believe that I was given contaminated blood during the blood transfusion, and as a result I was infected with Hepatitis B (Hep B) and Hepatitis C (Hep C).
9. I first tested positive for Hep B in [GRO-B] and received a vaccination for it in [GRO-B] I believe I received a vaccination against Hep B and C.
10. When I went to [GRO-B] on holiday in or about [GRO-B] I was told I had jaundice and a liver infection. I therefore believe that I had Hep C then. I was given treatment for it whilst I was in [GRO-B].
11. When my son was [GRO-B] in [GRO-B] he was also infected with Hep A and [GRO-B] [GRO-B] We were in [GRO-B] on holiday at the time. I believe he developed [GRO-B] when I breastfed him as a baby. I had to send him to a private hospital and spent the equivalent of [GRO-B] to treat him. My son is still in hospital as he had a brain infection and the doctors until today don't understand what is wrong with him and are testing drugs on him for the past 12 years.
12. I was diagnosed with liver enlargement in or about [GRO-B] The doctors wondered why my liver was affected in that way as my alcohol intake was very minimal and I had never used drugs. I was never told that I had Hep C at this time.

13. Approximately 3 months ago (early this year), I became poorly. I saw Collins Solicitors' TV documentary about people being infected by contaminated blood and it rang a bell to me that I could've been infected during the blood transfusion. I therefore attended the GP and had a blood test and I was then told by the doctor that I had inflammatory in my blood which was abnormal and it was possible that I was infected with it through the blood transfusion that I had in GRO-B. It was not until this point that I was provided with information about the infection.
14. I was not provided with any information or advice beforehand about the risk of being exposed to infections from the blood transfusion.
15. I believe information should have been provided to everyone earlier and we should've been told that there was a risk involved with the blood transfusion. They should have asked people whether they wanted the blood transfusions or not and told them that there was a possible risk. At the time, I was so young and innocent and just listened to whatever the doctors said. I put all my trust in them and expected them to do what was right for me.
16. I was never provided with any information about the risks of others being infected as a result of the infection. I believe I should've been told about the risks as I accidentally infected my sister when I went to see her in GRO-B on holiday. We did share the same bed and it is possible that she contracted the Hep C then. Her eyes became yellow and I took her to the hospital and she was diagnosed with jaundice and liver infection. I do not believe she was actually diagnosed with 'Hep C' or 'Hepatitis' as that term was not used in GRO-B. Initially we did not know how she got it. It was when I read about Hep C recently that I realised that I could have infected her. At the time she had to stop school and could not continue as a result. This could've been avoided if I was warned of the risks of infection.

Section 3. Other Infections

17. I don't know whether I received any other infections. I developed Type 2 diabetes, which I believe is as a result of the infection.

Section 4. Consent

18. I believe I was treated and tested without my knowledge, consent and without being given adequate or full information. I was not provided with any information as I was so young at the time, no one told me anything.

19. I don't know whether I was treated and tested for the purposes of research.

Section 5. Impact of the Infection

20. I have suffered from physical effects as a result of the infection. The first thing that happened after the blood transfusion was that I couldn't walk straight. A year after the transfusion, I got a liver infection and was urinating blood. I nearly died in [GRO-B]. It was not easy at all. My liver was also swollen according to my GP (liver enlargement). I then developed Type 2 diabetes which caused my gums to be swollen and I then got Tuberculosis (TB). The infection caused general body weakness. My body feels shaky and I suffer from hypertension and shortness of breath. Sitting in one place or sleeping the pain away made me put on weight as I was unable to exercise. I also cannot just eat anything as I react to certain types of food and fruit. I am not able to sleep properly because I get blood clots and my muscles pulls at night. All the pain killers that I am taking make me drowsy and so I am not able to work. I also believe that I suffered from brain fog/memory loss and I believe it affects me today.

21. I also suffered from the mental effects as a result of the infection. I was afraid because I did not know what was going on. I thought I would die which caused me to be depressed. Also, having no idea what was going on made everything worse and I suffered with so much stress.

22. I have been taking [GRO-B] medication for my liver disease for the past [GRO-B] years. I also received antibiotics such as Amoxicillin. Having looked at my medical records recently, it seems that I was treated for Hep C in [GRO-B]. However, I cannot recall having any conversation with the doctors about being infected with Hep C because of the health issues that I was having at the time.

23. In or about early July 2019, I was called into [GRO-B]
[GRO-B] and a [GRO-B] informed me that I had cleared the Hep C.

24. The infection had an impact on my private, family and social life. I only found out about the seriousness of the Hep C about [GRO-B] ago. Due to the tablets I'm currently taking for the liver disease, I have severe pain in my body and the medication makes me very drowsy. This has affected my ability to study and therefore I cannot go to university anymore. I stopped my university course in [GRO-B] as I was too sick to go anywhere. This has had an educational effect on me.

25. I have also suffered work-related effects because of the above symptoms. I can always feel pain in my joints and I'm constantly weak and tired.

26. I do not have many friends and I haven't told anyone about my infection including my son. I know there is still a stigma attached to the Hep C and T.B and therefore I am afraid to tell anyone about it.

27. I received the infections whilst giving birth to my son. I wasn't able to have any more children after the blood transfusion as I was too sick and I was too scared to go through another blood transfusion.

Section 6. Treatment/care/support

28. I believe that I was not provided with the care and support from the doctors as they did not understand the pain and suffering that I was going through. I was just given medication and left to deal with it.

29. I was not offered any counselling or psychological support. If it was made available to me, it would have definitely helped me.

Section 7. Financial Assistance

30. I did not receive any financial assistance from any of the Trusts or Funds set up.

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Section 8. Other Issues

31. I believe everyone should know the truth about what has happened. It has ruined my life, and now I am in constant pain and have latent TB. I would like the Inquiry to know that.

Anonymity, redactions and disclosure

32. I wish to remain anonymous.

33. I do not want to provide oral evidence to the Inquiry.

Statement of Truth

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

Signed.....

GRO-B

Dated

22nd July - 19.