

ANONYMOUS

Witness Name: **GRO-B**
Statement No: WITN4146001
Dated: 19th May 2020

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 date 27th March 2020. 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** and my address is known to the Inquiry.

2. How Infected

1. During my teenage years I went through a tumultuous phase. When I was 15 years old, I snuck out to a nightclub in our local town. When I was at the nightclub a girl became aggressive with me and this resulted in an altercation between myself and the girl. During the altercation, things became extremely violent and the girl glassed me in my neck.
2. I blacked out entirely and was rushed to **GRO-B** Hospital in an ambulance. When I woke up in the hospital, I was told I had been glassed in the main

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artery of my neck and that I was bleeding to death. I was told by the vascular surgeon that my heart had stopped twice on the operating table.

3. After the operation, I was told I had received a blood transfusion. I also received another blood transfusion when I was awake in the hospital. The oxygen supply to my brain suffered as a result of my injury and I have developed some learning needs. Altogether, I was in the hospital for around 2 months.
4. The girl who glassed me, was sentenced to prison. She served her sentence at **GRO-B** Prison. The incident and my time in hospital was terrible. I don't think there are any words that can describe how traumatic that experience was.
5. My life however, continued, and I welcomed my son **GRO-B: S** into the world in 1995. Around this period, my mother and I went to **GRO-B** for the day. During our time in **GRO-B**, I got into a row with a traffic warden who was trying to ticket us. The argument with the traffic warden became physical and she fell into the road. I was arrested and sentenced to 3 months at **GRO-B** Prison.
6. I underwent some routine blood tests in prison, and I tested positive for hepatitis C. The nurse who informed me of my test results said hepatitis C affects the liver. The nurse also told me that hepatitis C can be transmitted from person to person.
7. When I left prison, I went to the GP and was then referred to a Hepatologist at **GRO-B** Hospital and then later at **GRO-B** Hospital in **GRO-B**. I will discuss my treatment later in my statement.
8. I was diagnosed with cirrhosis in the late 1990s and it has taken me years to clear. It has been awful.

3. Other infections

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1. I was diagnosed with cirrhosis a few years after my hepatitis C diagnosis. The cirrhosis was discovered at GRO-B Hospital following a liver biopsy. I have cleared the cirrhosis now and will discuss this in greater detail in the treatment section of my statement.

4. Consent

1. I did not know that I was being tested for hepatitis C when I had a blood test in prison. I was told by the prison nurse that I was having blood tests to check my general health. I wasn't aware that I was going to be tested for hepatitis C.

5. Impact

1. When I was diagnosed with hepatitis C, I became depressed and suicidal. I felt completely worthless and that life wasn't worth living anymore. In all honesty, I felt that my life was finished and over.
2. I have been on anti-depressants most of my life since finding out I was positive for hepatitis C. However, I would like to add, that I was on anti-depressants after I was glassed in my neck.
3. The Interferon treatment made me very depressed, and I have tried to commit suicide on a few occasions. My mother saved me.
4. I have experienced the physical effects of hepatitis C and cirrhosis. I often have shooting pain in my liver area. I have felt exhaustion and often sleep in the daytime, and I attribute this to my illness.
5. During the Interferon treatment I lost all my hair. This was terrible and really affected my self- confidence. I continued the Interferon treatment even after I lost my hair.

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6. My body felt tender all over when I was going through the Interferon treatment and I lost a considerable amount of weight. I looked skeletal and my weight went down to 6 stone. Every time I moved it would hurt and I would ache all over my body. When I was told I had cirrhosis, I was also told that my liver had considerable amounts of scarring.
7. I've experienced terrible stigma. People have been horrible and made me feel worthless. I haven't been in a romantic relationship for many years. The hepatitis C diagnosis and the cirrhosis has ruined my life. Only now is my life starting to pick up slightly.
8. I have not worked since I was diagnosed with hepatitis C. I did have a few jobs before I found out I was infected but after my diagnosis, I became so unwell that I did not feel as though I could work.
9. My son [S] was diagnosed with hepatitis C around 6 years ago. He contracted the hepatitis from me. His hepatitis C diagnosis has driven a huge wedge between us. [S] is [GRO-B] years old now. He had a blood test because he was feeling fatigued when he was about [GRO-B] years old. This is how the hepatitis C infection was picked up.
10. [S] has gone through Interferon treatment and has now cleared the hepatitis C infection. Hepatitis C has impacted on [S] as he and his partner wanted to try for a baby but held off until he had cleared the virus.
11. Overall, I would not say that I have been very well educated on hepatitis C. I know that it attacks your liver and that it is a silent killer. I have learned a lot about the virus after going through it.

6. Treatment/Care Support

1. For the hepatitis C I have been on two different drugs. Interferon was one of the drugs and I believe Ribavirin was the other drug. I received this treatment at [GRO-B] Hospital and was then shown how to self-inject.

2. I haven't experienced any problems accessing treatment. I had to go on a small waiting list at **GRO-B** Hospital but this did not affect me.
3. At the beginning, when I was going through my treatment at **GRO-B** Hospital, I was travelling to **GRO-B** three times a week by train. This was exhausting but eventually I was able to treat at home when the treatment became less intense.

7. **Financial Assistance**

1. I have learned a bit more about the **GRO-B** Infected Blood Support Service **GRO-B** and I will be applying to the scheme.
2. My nurse at **GRO-B** Hospital, **GRO-B**, has been fantastic and has offered to help me fill out the forms.

8. **Other Issues**

1. There are no other issues that I wish to discuss.

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Statement of Truth

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

Signed. GRO-B

Dated... 19.5.20