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Witness Name: GRO-B

Statement No.: WITN7012001

Exhibits:

Dated: 25. 7. 2022

INFECTED BLOOD INQUIRY

WRITTEN STATEMENT OF GRO-B

I provide this statement in response to a request under Rule 9 of the Inquiry Rules 2006 dated 24 January 2022.

I, GRO-B will say as follows: -

Section 1. Introduction

1. My name is GRO-B. My date of birth is GRO-B 1964, and my address is known to the Inquiry.
2. My wife and I moved to GRO-B five years ago. We have three children, but one of them has passed away. We also have four grandchildren. I do not have any biological children, so I believe that the haemophilia gene in my family will die with me.
3. I intend to speak about my mum GRO-B. My mum was born on GRO-B 1943, and she passed away at the age of 67 on GRO-B 2010.

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4. I intend to speak about how my mum contracted Hepatitis C ("HCV") through infected blood. In particular, the nature of her illness, how it affected her, the treatment she received, and its impact on her and our lives together.

Section 2. How Affected

5. My mother grew up in a small village. She got married to my dad, who was a farmer. I am an only child, and I was a third-generation tenant farmer. I have retired from farming now. I used to work on the family farm until shortly after my mother passed away in 2010, when I decided to give up farming. I am now a small plant hire agriculture contractor, and I am doing well for myself.
6. My mother had a bleeding disorder, likely von Willebrand's disease (VWD) or haemophilia. This was not unusual in our family, and I believe her father had haemophilia too. I was tested for haemophilia in my teenage years, but luckily for me, I did not have it.
7. In 1982, my mother had a hysterectomy procedure and received 32 pints of blood due to complications during the operation. I was 18 years old, and I remember that my mother had to recuperate at my grandmother's house. When I turned up to see her, my grandmother told me to leave and go play at the local youth club because my mother needed to rest.
8. We never discussed it, but I believe my mother also experienced two miscarriages. My mum was the type of person who did not feel she needed to talk about everything and would not have felt the need to speak about these things with me.
9. It was a well-known fact that both my mum and her father had a bleeding disorder. It was the 1970s when I was growing up, so they were not officially diagnosed. My grandad's skin was like tissue paper. For

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example, if he knocked himself into an object like a desk, he would easily get a blood blister.

10. My mum was perhaps a bit better, but she took extra care around cuts and scrapes. She still used to be out and about because she worked on the farm.
11. My mum did not have any tattoos, and my parents were in a loving marriage for nearly 50 years.
12. I believe that the only risk of contracting HCV would have come from the 32 pints of transfused blood and Factor VIII my mum received from Freedom Fields and Green Bank Hospitals (now merged as Derriford Hospital).
13. I recently received a copy of my mum's medical records from Derriford Hospital, which I have given to the inquiry to process on my behalf because they are in disk format which I am unable to access.

Section 3. Other Infections

14. I do not believe that my mum contracted any infection other than HCV due to being given infected blood.

Section 4. Consent

15. I believe that the doctors may have been aware that my mum had contracted HCV and may not have let us know, so it is likely she would have been tested without her knowledge.

Section 5. Impact

16. My mum was never the same after her hysterectomy in 1982. Not long after her surgery, she began suffering from severe migraines, which

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meant she could no longer stand bright lights. Often she would lie in her room in the dark with no lights on for hours. She also believed that things were crawling under her skin. She did not have any energy anymore.

17. Aside from working on the farm, my mum worked as a nursing auxiliary in a baby unit and had regular contact with doctors.
18. Recently, I reached out to one of the doctors who had regular contact with my mum to explain that I believe my mum may have been infected with HCV during her hysterectomy procedure. The doctor, who has since retired, remembered my mum and me but could not remember if my mum had been tested for HCV in the years afterwards.
19. After my mum's hysterectomy in 1982, it was recognised that my mum had a bleeding disorder. While she was still recovering from the surgery at my grandmother's house, one of her stitches split, and she began bleeding profusely. She was rushed to the hospital, and the head surgeon at the time confirmed that her blood lacked the necessary clotting factor.
20. The doctor explained that there was a new drug called Factor VIII, and I believe my father signed consent forms to allow them to give my mother the blood products. They could also have been forms consenting to surgery to stitch my mother back up.
21. I cannot speak on whether the doctors informed my father of any risks associated with receiving Factor VIII. If they had, he would not have discussed these with me. I was 18 years old, and those were the days when parents did not speak to their children about adult matters. Nowadays, people are more open about these things.
22. About a year after my mum's operation, we noticed a significant change in her. She frequently complained of feeling fatigued and being physically drained, and some days she could not even get out of bed or

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go to work. This was out of character because my mum had always been an active person who enjoyed working hard.

23. My mum remained at my grandmother's house convalescing for a while after her operation. We had to rig up really thick blankets to prevent any light from getting in through the windows, and used a big pulpit to blank out the doors too. Her headaches could go on for many hours, and often if she had been really physically active at work or the farm it would take her longer to recover. She said the light caused her excruciating pain.
24. We called it her 'episodes' and she had these at least twice a month. Whenever she was in her room and it was all dark my dad and I would say mum was in her room with her episodes again.
25. I believe that you can see from photographs of my mum in the mid-1980s that she was in pain. Her eyes had a vacant faraway look, and her face looked puffier. She was not as happy as she used to be anymore. We tried to put it down to natural changes of getting older and things changing in life.
26. Towards the late 1980s and early 1990s, she lost her job due to the amalgamation of the baby unit to the larger [GRO-B] hospital. By this time, she could no longer work the additional hours due to fatigue.
27. Before, she could walk acres of land around the moors, but she could no longer do this even though she was only in her 40s. It was clear that her fatigue was not age-related, but we did not know what caused it.
28. Mum was a domestic at [GRO-B] Hospital in [GRO-B] in the early 1980s and studied to become a nursing auxiliary at [GRO-B] Hospital, and then [GRO-B] post natal unit, both in [GRO-B]
29. My mum made constant trips to her GP, at [GRO-B] and to the doctors at Derriford Hospital. We used to joke that they could

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wheel in her case notes on a trolley because her file was so large. Our family doctor, Dr GRO-B described her as his pest because she was always in for something or other.

30. My uncle, my mum's brother, is a lorry driver and nearly 70 years old now, but he confirmed that my mum had about 32 pints of blood during her hysterectomy procedure. When I thought about coming forward to speak about my mum for this Inquiry, I rang up his wife to discuss what she could remember about my mum. I do not want to bring up bad memories for him, so I don't want to get him involved. However, my aunt confirmed that our family believed my mum had 32 pints of blood and Factor VIII.
31. On 22 January 1993, my mum was on her way home from the shops and stopped to buy petrol. Whilst waiting, she suffered from a stroke and a brain haemorrhage. She was rushed to Derriford Hospital, where she remained for 42 weeks. Following her stroke, she was moved to the GRO-B rehabilitation unit.
32. The doctors did not think my mum would make it out of the hospital because of the severity of the strokes and the brain haemorrhage. She was partially disable on the left side of her body and never recovered after this. Due to the operation to deal with this issue, my mum was left with a depressed skull on one side and had to live with that for the rest of her life.
33. After the brain haemorrhage and the strokes, I believe that the medical professionals stopped looking into anything else as the source of her ill health. However, my mum was in and out of the hospital for many years until she passed away on GRO-B 2010.
34. Due to the years of fatigue with my mum feeling generally unwell, she was on several different types of medications.

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35. My dad suffered from a minor stroke, but ended up in a care home with mum and died [GRO-B] after my mum passed away. It was poignant because my mum had passed in room 19, and my dad died in room 29. He had not been ill beforehand, although he had lost a lot of weight after looking after my mother for so long. He used to be a big strapping farmer, but he had burnt himself out looking after my mum for many years.
36. When I realised it was too taxing for my dad to keep looking after mum without help, I had to put her in a nursing home, [GRO-B] in [GRO-B]. I believe that my dad died because he realised that he could no longer look after my mum. My mum passed away six months after being moved to [GRO-B].
37. Following a second brain haemorrhage, my mum was sent back from Derriford Hospital to [GRO-B] and put under the "Liverpool Care Package". I think the palliative care offered under the Liverpool Care Package was horrendous; she was left in a 75 degree room with no fluids. I do not know how they could call that a care package.
38. Following the second brain haemorrhage, a brain scan confirmed that there was very little brain activity. She did not have any reflexes or physical responses, except that she continued to breathe.
39. My mum's quality of life in the last seventeen years of her life was horrible. She had to have procedures, medications and frequent hospital visits. She even had brain surgery where they put a shunt in to drain the excess fluid that kept building up.
40. My parents had been together for nearly 50 years. They met when my mother was 18, and my dad was 26 and had been married since [GRO-B].
41. My grandma passed away in [GRO-B] of the same year, so the loss of my parents in November was even more devastating for me. Afterwards,

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I did not think I could go on being a farmer, and I gave up farming within the next few years.

42. When my mum passed away, there was about 400 acres of farmland leased to us as tenant farmers. It took me two years to get out of farming fully. The pressure of losing both my parents and what was going on within the farming industry helped me realise that this was the best choice. The farm was a reminder of my father and mother and what we had built through three generations.
43. As a tenant farmer, I was asset rich yet financially poor. I sold all the livestock in one day, and I could not face going back to the yard for a week afterwards. After selling all the stock, I was left with little to show for it after decades as a tenant farmer and the farm being in the family for nearly 57 years.
44. Having only moved one mile from where we used to live I can no longer see the farm, and it is my desire not to have this constant reminder in view.
45. To my knowledge, at no stage was my mum officially diagnosed with HCV. I have no idea whether she was tested for HCV. She went to the doctors regularly. She might have told my dad if she had known, and they both could have kept it from me. She was the kind of person who would keep things from you if she thought it would cause you a lot of pain.

Section 6. Treatment/Care/Support

46. My mum was never offered any form of counselling or psychological support.
47. After my mum was released from the hospital, Derriford (in Devon) and Cornwall care authority set up a palliative care package which required

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carers to come in to look after my mum and take care of her basic needs such as bathing.

48. In 1997, I challenged Cornwall Council, who had set up the care package, on radio Cornwall for an incorrect assessment of my mum as capable of doing small tasks by herself. At that stage, my mum used a wheelchair to get around at times and was partially paralysed on one side, yet they said they had assessed her as being able to cook and do small tasks for her husband.

49. When I asked them to provide the proof of this assessment, it turned out that the date they said they assessed her could not have been correct because my mum had been in an induced coma at Derriford Hospital and would not have been available for any such assessment. This was clearly a blatant lie on their part.

Section 7. Financial Assistance

50. We were unaware of any financial assistance schemes aside from Disability Living Allowance from DWP and have never applied for financial support from any of the schemes.

51. At no stage were we made aware of the existence of any financial support schemes.

Section 8. Other Issues

52. The main reason I contacted this Inquiry is because I want the Inquiry to be able to answer whether there was a cover-up regarding my mum's case. I believe that the doctors were aware that my mother had contracted HCV from at least 1993, but I cannot understand why they did not inform us of this. It seems evident that something had gone wrong by this time, but nobody told us the full story.

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53. Whilst I believe the original cause of my mother's condition was the provision of infected blood, the medical professionals chose to identify the cause of her death as the brain haemorrhage and strokes alone. My mother's family has never had a history of strokes or haemorrhages.

54. The request for my mum's medical records made to Derriford Hospital has taken an inordinately long time. We have now received two disks which purport to be the medical records, but I'm unable to access these and have now requested help from the Inquiry.

Statement of Truth

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

Signed _____

GRO-B

Dated _____

25.7.2022