

# ANONYMOUS

Witness Name: **GRO-B**

Statement No: WITN7237001

Exhibits:

Dated: October 2022

## 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**. I was born on **GRO-B** and I live at **GRO-B**

2. I make this statement as the **GRO-B** of **GRO-B: F** (also known as **F**) (born on **GRO-B**) who was infected with the Hepatitis C Virus (HCV) as a result of receiving contaminated blood. He died on **GRO-B**

3. This witness statement has been written without the benefit of access to my late father's medical records.

### Section 2. How Affected

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4. In 1989, my father and mother were on a day trip to Southend. Whilst there my father was knocked down by a car and his leg was broken. He was admitted to Southend General Hospital, Prittlewell Chase, West Cliff-on-Sea, Southend-on-Sea, SS0 0RY. His femur was broken and he lost a lot of blood so needed a blood transfusion. My mother was there at the time and she told us about this accident later on.
5. I do not know if my father or my mother was given any information about the blood transfusion, or any information about the risks of potential contamination.
6. My father appeared to become ill very quickly and he went downhill quite rapidly. I believe this was around early 1994 but I do not remember the exact date. My father started to lose a lot of weight. He was very worried about this but did not understand why he was feeling so sick. He had been very active throughout his life and in relatively good health so this fast decline was alarming. He was an avid swimmer and walked everywhere and enjoyed a very active social life. He also enjoyed gardening but had to give this all up when his health declined. His social life stopped entirely and he had to depend on my mother and myself to care for him.
7. He had jaundice and a distended stomach. He had a lot of pain in his stomach and had to have a catheter fitted. His skin turned a dark yellow

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and he suffered from enemas. He had to have his stomach drained on multiple occasions.

8. His health got progressively worse during 1994 and he was admitted into Whipps Cross Hospital in London. I do not know how he was first referred to the hospital but I can only assume that his GP raised concerns due to his rapid weight loss and yellowing skin. He was in hospital for around 6 weeks before he was discharged to die at home.

9. I went with my mother to see my father in hospital and we were told at the time that it was terminal as the HCV had destroyed his liver. We were also told that it was likely he was infected with HCV due to a blood transfusion. We were given no other information at the time.

10. I asked about a liver transplant but was told that he was not suitable for a liver transplant as the HCV had already caused too much damage. I do not think any of the information received was adequate and I do not believe any other treatments were discussed.

11. My mother didn't want to tell my father that he had HCV and that he had likely been infected by contaminated blood. She feared that he would likely refuse treatment and just want to go home to wait for death.

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12. I believe that the information should have been given earlier. As he was diabetic I imagine he had to have a lot of tests done which would have included blood work. I am not sure why the infection was not identified earlier. I like to believe that had it been diagnosed earlier then the doctors would have told us and other options would have been available to my father.

13. I was not told at all about the risks around HCV. My mother was not given any information either. We were not told about how infectious HCV was or how it could be transmitted. We were given no information.

14. I do not think my father had any treatment so I don't know if he faced any difficulties or stigma in this regard.

15. If he had been diagnosed sooner then maybe we would have had more options available to us for his treatment. If I had known that he had been given contaminated blood then I would have done something about it at that point.

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

16. I do not think my father had any other infections. He suffered a lot of illnesses as a result of the HCV and I feel this was a waste of his life.

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17. He had type 2 diabetes at age 60 but he was otherwise a very healthy man.

### **Section 4. Consent**

18. I do not think my father gave consent to any testing. He did not know that he was infected until he was close death so I do not think he could have given consent even if he had been asked about it.

### **Section 5. Impact**

19. I was very attached to my father and his death had a huge impact on me. I did not know how to cope with the grief and I still struggle to discuss it even all these years later. I did not want my father to die and in the lead up to his death I really struggled to cope. I couldn't cope emotionally or mentally. I questioned whether to even look into the Inquiry as I worried I would not be able to cope with reliving it all again.

20. I had a mental breakdown and took an overdose and nearly ended up dying myself. I just lost my mind when I lost my dad. I was even taken to Whipps Cross Hospital which didn't help my mental state as I felt like I was back there again watching my father die.

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21. Having a meltdown impacted on my ability to work and my marriage broke down. I went onto benefits and lived in privately rented accommodation which was far inferior to what I had been used to in my marriage.

22. My marriage ended and I put myself through hardship trying to get back on track. I don't think I was the same after my dad died so it does not shock me that my marriage ended. I was not the same person I was when my dad was alive and that must have been hard to see.

23. I had my daughter three years after my father died and I named her **GRO-B** in his memory. I do believe my daughter saved my life because it made me feel like my father was living on through her. It hurts me though to think that my children will not know their grandfather. He was a wonderful man and would have been a wonderful grandfather.

24.

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25. My mother was awful after his death. She had been married to my father for **GRO-B** years and after his death she had to sell the house. She struggled a lot with his death and was not the same afterwards. She died in 2015.

26. I didn't know anything about HCV and I do not think I was given any information. My mother and I took on the brunt of the grief as we were the

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main ones caring for him. It was at this point that the family started to fragment and we did not speak as much.

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

27. I do not know if my father was ever offered any sort of counselling. I was not offered counselling nor was my mother.

28. I received counselling later on but this was as a result of my breakdown and not due to my father's illness and infection.

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

29. I was not aware of any support schemes that were available to provide me or my mother or father with financial aid. I did not know about these schemes until I came to provide this witness statement.

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

30. I would like to know why Southend General Hospital did not monitor or check all of the blood that they received or transfused. I do not want this sort of thing to happen to anyone else ever again and I want to know why more wasn't done at the time to properly inform people of the risks of infections and that they were infected.

**Anonymity, disclosure and redaction**

I confirm that I do wish to apply for anonymity and that I understand this statement will be published and disclosed as part of the Inquiry.

**Statement of Truth**

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

Signed: .....

GRO-B

GRO-B

Dated: .....

28th October 2022,