

ANONYMOUS

Witness Name

GRO-B

Statement No: WITN7238001

Exhibits:

Dated: October 2022

INFECTED BLOOD INQUIRY

FIRST WRITTEN STATEMENT OF

GRO-B

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

GRO-B

2. I make this statement as the GRO-B of GRO-B: M (born GRO-B GRO-B who was infected with the Hepatitis C Virus (HCV) as a result of receiving a contaminated blood transfusion and who died on GRO-B

GRO-B

3. This witness statement has been written without the benefit of access to my late mother's medical records. I understand that her records were destroyed.

Section 2. How Affected

4. My mother suffered from Rheumatoid Arthritis in her thirties and this was treated with cortisone and steroids. This caused her long term problems, the main issue being the thinning of her skin. Her skin was so thin that if she was scratched by anything she would bleed considerably. She was also very prone to varicose veins.
5. Sometime between January and April 1985, one of the varicose veins in my mother's throat ruptured. My brother was there at the time and he described it as 'a blood bath'. All 3 of my brothers and my dad were at home.
6. My mother was rushed to Birmingham Hospital by ambulance. My dad went with her to the hospital.
7. I understand that she was diagnosed as having ruptured veins in the oesophagus and the doctors worked to cauterise the bleed and gave her a blood transfusion in an attempt to replenish the amount of blood that she had lost. I am told that it was touch and go as to whether this would be successful.
8. My mother was still recovering from the last blood transfusion when another vein ruptured and she had to be treated with another blood

ANONYMOUS

transfusion. My brother described the scene to me as 'blood spurting everywhere' as each time the doctors tried to cauterise a wound, her skin would tear and a new wound would open, meaning that they were having to deal with blood and cuts from different places and each time they tried to cauterise one wound it would make the bleeding worse.

9. I was told about this event after she had returned home and was recovered. I was pregnant at the time and my mother did not want to worry me for fear that I would lose the baby. I had my baby in GRO-B and it was at this point I was told by father about my mother's visit and the blood transfusions.

10. According to my father there was no information provided to either himself or my mother about the blood transfusion or that there could be a risk of contamination. She was never told that there was anything to worry about and I can only assume she was not given any information on how this infection would impact her life.

11. I do not know how my mother found out she was infected. My father died in 1986 so I never got to ask him if he knew. None of my brothers knew about it. I believe my mother was alone when she found out.

12. I do not know when my mother was told she had been diagnosed with HCV but believe this would have been around 1987.

ANONYMOUS

13. I do not think she was given any information about the infection once she was diagnosed. I believe a doctor - possibly Doctor Parle - told her in person but I do not know for certain. She may not have been given any information.
14. I do not think she was told anything about how to treat the infection. I believe this information should have been provided.
15. I do not think that my mother knew that she had been infected as if she had been told, she would have stopped us from coming near her for fear of infecting us. The fact that she let us all hug her and kiss her and hold her hand suggests that she didn't know she could have been infectious. She would even cuddle and kiss my children and I know she would not have done this had she known she was infectious. She was very protective of myself and my children so would not have done anything to put us in harm's way. She was a very caring person.
16. Just after my dad died my mother went downhill quite drastically. Her eyes were yellow and sunken and her skin was yellow. Her liver and her stomach were causing her great pain and she was always covered in bruises and scratches. She couldn't stand up or walk and she couldn't do anything without help. She used to love gardening and going on holiday, but when she got sick she couldn't even walk to the local shop. I was her full time carer. From 1986 until she died she was a very frail and ill woman,

ANONYMOUS

and her quality of life was terrible. She told me once that she felt like a prisoner, as she couldn't do anything.

17. When my mother died the funeral home didn't even want to treat her. They did not want to embalm her and tried to stop us seeing her in the mortuary as she had HCV. It took a lot of convincing but I did manage to persuade them to let me see her in the funeral home prior to the funeral.

Section 3. Other Infections

18. HCV was listed on my mother's death certificate as her cause of death.

19. I do not know if my mother was infected with anything else.

Section 4. Consent

20. I believe that my mother was tested without her consent or receiving adequate information. I was very close to my mother and she would have told me about something as serious as this. She was my best friend and we did everything together.

21. If she had been given any information that she may have infected us then she would have told me and my family.

Section 5. Impact

ANONYMOUS

22. I was 31 when my mother died.

23. As I had three young children I lived separately from my family, but as my mother's illness worsened I moved closer to her. This would have been around 1986/1987. I did not have a car and to see her used to take 2 buses. My mother couldn't walk and she had such a distended stomach that she looked 9 months pregnant. I had to take her everywhere as my brothers were working fulltime and couldn't be there to take her to the hospital or doctor's appointment during the week. I also felt that as the only daughter of the family it fell to me to look after my mother. I couldn't leave her on her own.

24. My children were all under 3 years of age at this point so I was still having to bottle feed them and keep them amused while still trying to look after my mother. I had to bandage her legs when the fluid would seep out and it was very hard. I remember sitting outside the hospital 3 or 4 times a week and it was not nice for the children to have to see this. It was very tough.

25. I essentially had to become a fulltime carer for my mother. As the only daughter I felt that this was my duty but I also felt it was the only situation that my mother would be comfortable with. I would have to get her dressed, wash her and all other manner of care. I don't think my mother would have wanted her sons to have to dress her and clean her so it all fell to me as her daughter.

ANONYMOUS

26. I only found out that she had HCV after I went to hospital with her a few times and heard the doctors talking about her HCV. I was never provided with any more information, nor was I ever told about what this actually meant for my mother's overall health.

27. My personal relationship also suffered. I had to look after my family with bedtimes and tea times, and I used to have to leave my husband to look after my children whenever I had to check on my mother. It was very hard for my husband as well. We didn't have any holidays or even days away. We did not have any sort of social life.

28. I loved my mother and would have done anything for her. My mother was the kindest person I knew and she would have given her last penny to anyone who needed it.

29. I lost my dad only 5 years before my mother died. I felt like I had no one left. It took me a long time to get over. It did affect all of us. My children were all very young during this time so they didn't really get to know their Nanny. My mother was so happy when she finally got a little granddaughter – she even put banners outside the house to celebrate – and it hurts that my children will have very few memories of her. They were robbed of a chance to know what a kind and lovely woman she was and what a fantastic Nanny she would have been.

30. I would have liked to work but I had to look after my mum. Had my mother not been sick she would have been able to look after my children so I could go to work, but as she was sick there was very little she could do herself. I had worked as a secretary to the chief of the ambulance service and I was on maternity leave when my mother first got sick. But I couldn't go back to work because my mother was so ill and I needed to step in as carer. I couldn't earn money during this time so this had a massive financial impact on my family.

Section 6. Treatment/Care/Support

31. I do not believe my mother was given any sort of treatment or offered any treatment. I believe that there would have been options available to her, but she received nothing. I also believe she had died just as treatment was becoming available for HCV.

32. It all happened very fast for my mother. She was only 59 when she died and that is no life. My father died of a heart attack and while it was not related to my mother's HCV, I can't imagine that the stress of caring for my mother helped his health at all.

33. I do not believe my mother received any support. She received treatment but no one came in to look after her that was all on me. I was not offered any counselling services nor was my mother. I do not know if any was available but either way I was never offered any sort of additional support.

Section 7. Financial Assistance

34. My mother did not get any financial help at all. I did not know that schemes were available to help those infected by contaminated blood, and I think the ones that were set up were done so after my mother had died.

Section 8. Other Issues

35. I feel that my mother was not told enough and so we as a family were not told anything. They may have gotten better now but back then we had no guidance or support. I do not want this to happen to another person ever again and I hope this inquiry can do that.

Anonymity, disclosure and redaction

I wish to be anonymous.

Statement of Truth

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

Signed:

GRO-B

GRO-B

Dated:

2nd November 2022