

Witness Name: GRO-B

Statement No: WITN7425001

Exhibits: 0

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 full name is GRO-B I was born on GRO-B 1943, and I live at GRO-B
2. I believe I was infected with the Hepatitis C Virus (HCV) through a contaminated blood transfusion.
3. This witness statement has been prepared without the benefit of access to my full medical records and to the best of my knowledge.

## **Section 2. How Infected**

4. I had a blood transfusion at GRO-B Hospital when I gave birth to my second son, GRO-B who was born on GRO-B 1972, and I became jaundiced 10 days later when discharged from hospital.
5. I was diagnosed with Chronic Active Hepatitis (CAH) (then referred to as Non-A, Non-B Hepatitis) in 1981.

## **Section 3. Other Infections**

6. I do not believe that I was infected with anything other than CAH.

## **Section 4. Consent**

7. I was still in theatre and had lost a lot of blood when I was given the transfusion. I wasn't in a position to consent. They had cut my bladder during the caesarean (resulting in the need for me to have a catheter). Neither of us were pre-warned of any possible risk of infection through the blood transfusion.
8. I was tested (in 1981) and treated the following year (with Prednisolone and Azathioprine) without being given much information about it. I am uncertain as to whether the virus is still active. CAH hasn't been mentioned at all by my doctors for quite some many years. I continue to take Azathioprine as a 15 mg dose.

## **Section 5. Impact of the Infection**

9. My two sons were both born by caesarean section. My uterus doesn't dilate more than two inches. After I was discharged from the hospital after **GRO-B**'s birth, I noticed that my arms were yellow. When the District Nurse called for a visit, I discussed it with her. We never got to the bottom of it as she sadly died (she committed suicide) not long thereafter. The jaundice went away, and I dismissed it from my mind as being something and nothing.
10. I think that I was jaundiced on 4 or 5 occasions over the years but let it slide. By sometime in or around 1980 I didn't feel at all well. My GP thought I was having some sort of mid life crisis and treated me for menopausal symptoms. I was prescribed HRT and I remember saying to **GRO-B** 'I will take this, but I am going back if I am no better'. I was tired. I lacked energy and, whilst I looked OK, I was worn out. I took the HRT (for about 6 months I think) but I kept going back to my GP until June 1981 when I became really unwell and was (again) jaundiced.
11. I was admitted to hospital, given 4 units of plasma, and was even given the last rights. I started treatment 60 mg Prednisolone the following year in 1982. By then I had had lots of tests and four or five biopsies (one of them at the Queen Elizabeth Hospital in Birmingham). I was told that I had liver cirrhosis and asked a lot of questions about my lifestyle. I was made to feel like some sort of intravenous drug user. I did tell them about the blood transfusion, but they weren't listening. They wrote 'CAH' on all my medical notes. I asked them 'what's that?' to be told that it was Chronic Active Hepatitis' (Non-A, Non-B).
12. I do not think that I was given much advice and/or information to help me understand and manage the infection. I was told not to drink (alcohol) and to follow a low-fat diet. Some time much later I remember asking if I could have the occasional sherry or something. My consultant paused to think about it and said I could have an 'occasional shandy'. The last proper drink I had (over 40 years ago)

was a dubonnet and lemonade. I have kept going all these years by sticking to the low-fat diet from the start. I have had to be sensible. If I am not, I become very sick. I do allow myself an ice cream or a bag of pork scratchings (I am partial to both) very occasionally. I worked out that if I am really, really good all week long that I can have a roast dinner with my family on a Sunday. That way, I still felt like I was part of the family. It hasn't been easy.

13. In terms of treatment, my Prednisolone dosage was gradually reduced, and I was then put on to Azathioprine which I still take to this day. The Azathioprine drug over nearly 40 years has caused thinning/deterioration of my skin. I have been told that I can't sit in the sun or go out at all without spf 50 face cream. I have a suspected skin cancer spot on my face and am undergoing tests.

14. My life has been hugely impacted. I had to reorganise my life. I used to do office work. I couldn't commit to it when I was bringing the boys up. I had to juggle their needs and my fatigue with the need to earn a wage. I was very determined, so I did seasonal work potato picking and sorting and apple picking. That way if it all became too much for me and I was worn out, I could forego a day's pay without losing my job. I would do a lot of cooking and baking in batches and freeze it for a 'go to' meal when I was too tired to cook. I relied heavily on GRO-B to get in promptly from work to help me cook the tea and other household chores. GRO-B was an Agricultural Machinery Sales Rep. He would often have to forego a sale to get home to me. It has been a struggle.

15. The worst of it for me (to this day) is the fatigue I feel on a daily basis. I have my best energy in the morning, but I can't do too much without being affected. By way of example, I went shopping the other morning and I helped an elderly neighbour, who had had a fall, go for a walk in his frame in the afternoon, and I was in bed at 8.30 pm asleep. If I want to go somewhere for the day for example the Three Counties Show, I have to rest up the day before and the day after. I need to get

on and paint the doorways to my hallway, but I can only think about that at the moment. Right now, it feels like too daunting a task.

16. I have liver checks with my GP every three months. For a long time I used to have to travel as far as GRO-B and GRO-B to see my consultant every other fortnight previously.

#### **Section 6. Treatment/care/support**

17. I was never offered any counselling or psychological support.

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

18. I haven't had any financial assistance from the Trusts and Funds.

#### **Anonymity, disclosure and redaction**

19. I do wish to remain anonymous, and I understand that this Statement will be published by the Inquiry.

**Statement of Truth**

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

Signed.....

**GRO-B**

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Date.....29 Nov 2022.....