

# ANONYMOUS

Witness Name: **GRO-B**

Statement No.: WITN7534001

Exhibits: Nil

Dated: 29 November 2022

## INFECTED BLOOD INQUIRY

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WRITTEN STATEMENT OF **GRO-B**

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I provide this statement in response to a request under Rule 9 of the Inquiry Rules 2006 dated 5 November 2018.

I, **GRO-B** will say as follows: -

### Section 1: Introduction

1. My name is **GRO-B** My date of birth is **GRO-B** and my address is **GRO-B** I am retired and I have been married for 39 years and I have two children. In this statement I intend to speak about my infection with Hepatitis C following a blood transfusion. In particular, the nature of my illness, how the illness affected me,

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the treatment received and the impact that it had on my family and our lives together.

### **Section 2: How Infected**

2. I believe that I was given a blood transfusion during a hip operation in 1972. A six-inch pin was inserted into my hip at Killearn Hospital to treat a slipped upper femoral epiphysis. I was under anaesthetic during this operation and a child at the time and it is possible that I may have received a blood transfusion without my knowledge. I do not know whether my parents or I were advised of the risks of receiving a blood transfusion.
3. My wife, GRO-B: W was also infected with Hepatitis C, I believe that this was by way of cross-infection.
4. I was diagnosed with Hepatitis C in the late 1990s after giving blood. I had given blood often prior to joining the police in 1986, but during my time working for the police, the police station would hold blood drives for officers, and I would give blood at these. I recall on one occasion; I gave blood, and I was then sent a letter from HR. I opened this letter in front of the inspector. This letter advised me that I had Hepatitis C. I believe that this is the earliest that my infection was known.
5. At the point of receiving the letter I did not have any information on what Hepatitis C was or how to understand and manage the infection. I then arranged an appointment with my GP as a follow up to the letter and to have my wife and my son tested for Hepatitis C. My son was clear of the infection but unfortunately my wife was also infected.
6. When we attended the GP, I remember being advised about what Hepatitis C was. The family doctor would have explained this to us. If I recall correctly, the explanation was not very nice. We left this appointment worried, as our son was only young at the time. The GP arranged for us to attend hospital where treatment for Hepatitis C was discussed, and a liver biopsy was arranged. I am

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not sure exactly why a liver biopsy was necessary at this stage, but I recall having to stay at Gartnavel Hospital in Glasgow overnight.

7. The hospital did advise us of risks of cross-infection. We were given advice about safe sex, and advised to be careful to avoid passing the infection on to our children. It was explained that it would be difficult to pass on the infection.
8. I believe that it could have been possible to advise me of my infection earlier, ultimately, had I not given blood I may not have discovered my infection. I understand that the Hepatitis C could have caused some health issues over time, and I do have some issues with my heart, but I do not know whether these are related.
9. I did not have any difficulties or obstacles accessing treatment, following my diagnosis I was prescribed a course of Interferon and another tablet. It was explained to my wife and I that there could be some side-effects to treatment. We then decided not to begin treatment at the same time as each other, as it did not seem to make sense for us both to be unwell at the same time. It was explained to us that we would be prescribed the treatment for a certain amount of time, and then they would assess us and check whether we were reacting to the treatment. If we reacted positively, we would be able to continue. If we did not, the treatment would be stopped.
10. I do not think that my diagnosis was communicated to me in the way that it should have been. I received a letter to my workplace enclosing my diagnosis. I felt that I had to open the letter immediately, but in hindsight I would have preferred to have taken it home. I felt like a leper, the Chief Inspector wanted a report from Public Health and did not want me to work with other officers, even though it would not spread this way. I found the letter from Public Health embarrassing and felt that the Chief Inspector was covering himself at my expense.

**Section 3: Other Infections**

11. I do not believe that I have ever received any infections other than Hepatitis C as a result of my blood transfusion.

**Section 4: Consent**

12. I do not believe that I have been treated or tested without my knowledge, without my consent or without being given adequate or full information.

13. I do not believe that I have been treated or tested for the purposes of research.

**Section 5: Impact**

14. Having Hepatitis C had a significant mental impact on me. I thought about it all the time, especially when I was around my children and family. I was constantly worried that someone would say something about my infection. I found myself lying to people to hide my Hepatitis C, I understand that this was for a reason but this still bothered me.

15. I did not want people to know about my infection as I did not want to risk being treated badly because of it. It was on my mind all the time. I did not tell anyone about my infection until recently, I told my best friend. We have been friends for years, and I only told him because he knew that something was wrong and wanted to talk about it. No one at work was close enough to tell.

16. During my treatment I had to inject interferon once a week and take tablets daily. Most of my physical impacts of Hepatitis C came from the treatment. I was warned of side effects prior to starting the treatment.

17. The treatment was not a pleasant experience. I injected in both legs and different sides of my stomach. The side effects were significant, and I was not sure if the treatment would work.

18. I lost a lot of weight; I had an upset stomach and diarrhoea. I was tired and not eating properly. I felt terrible after each injection, but this did wear off

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throughout the week. This became a problem at work because I would have my injections on my day off work, this sometimes coincided with a weekend, which I felt looked suspicious if I was frequently unable to work on a Monday. It was impossible to work when I felt the worst effects of the treatment. I didn't want to eat, so I was lethargic and losing strength. I struggled with concentration and at times driving to work was difficult.

19. I was keeping a secret, but I was also losing weight, and colleagues at work noticed this. I understand that any comments were made in jest, however I was able to notice that I was looking different from when I started the treatment. I do not believe that any comments would have been made had my colleagues known that I was on treatment for Hepatitis C.
20. I used to enjoy fishing, walking the dogs and socialising. My social life came to a halt when I was on treatment. I had lost a lot of weight and I did not look well. I did not want to be asked about this and need to make up a story about why I looked so poorly.
21. My first course of treatment was successful, I was on this for 48 weeks and then I was tested and was found to be clear. I do not recall if there were any follow up appointments. My wife's treatment was unsuccessful.
22. When my wife was advised that she would be unable to continue treatment this was difficult for us. [w] had begun her treatment when I was in the middle of mine. Three weeks into [w] treatment she was advised that she would be unable to continue it. It looked as though I was going to be cured and my wife wasn't.
23. My children did not know about my infection until they were older. It was kept a secret from them until they were old enough to understand.
24. I was concerned about the stigma surrounding Hepatitis C. This was particularly an issue at work. I recall on one occasion being called into a meeting with my Inspector, my Chief Inspector and HR. It was explained to me that there were issues with my sickness absences, and I was asked if I was

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willing to explain this to my Inspector under these circumstances. I said yes and explained the situation. My Inspector was mortified because he had been chasing me up for being off sick. When he realised the problem he could not apologise enough. He apologised to me and my wife when he met us outside of work.

25. I was not able to put in any overtime at work and I would do as little as possible. I found courses provided to me through work to be more difficult than they would have been otherwise.

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

26. I have not been offered counselling or psychological care or support due to becoming infected with Hepatitis C, however I did not feel that I needed it.

### **Section 7: Financial Assistance**

27. I have never received financial assistance as a result of becoming infected with Hepatitis C.

### **Section 8: Other Issues**

28. I wish to remain anonymous throughout this Inquiry.

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## Statement of Truth

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

Signed

**GRO-B**

Dated 29/11/2022