

Witness Name: GRO-B

Statement No: WITN7572001

Exhibits:0

Dated: December 2022

INFECTED BLOOD INQUIRY

FIRST WRITTEN STATEMENT OF GRO-B

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

Section 1. Introduction

1. My name is GRO-B I was born on GRO-B I live at GRO-B
GRO-B
2. I am divorced, live alone and work as an GRO-B
GRO-B
3. I make this statement in relation to my late mum, GRO-B: M who
was born on GRO-B, and infected with Hepatitis C Virus (Hep C) via a
contaminated blood transfusion, and sadly passed away, GRO-B aged
GRO-B of liver cancer caused by Hep C.
4. This witness statement has been prepared without the benefit of access to
mum's full medical records.

Section 2. How Affected

5. My mum underwent a [GRO-B] in the [GRO-B] at the Royal Free Hospital (RFH) London, in the early [GRO-B]s. The surgery was botched because the gynaecologist surgeon severed an artery but failed to notice. My mum managed to tug at a nurse's dress, post-surgery/during recovery as she walked past, as my mum could feel warm liquid running down her leg but was too weak to talk.
6. The nurse pulled back the sheet to discover that my mum was bleeding severely. She was rushed back into theatre and given a blood transfusion due to the significant amount of blood she had lost from the severed artery.
7. The blood transfusion was contaminated, and the result was that my mum was infected with Hep C following this transfusion.
8. As far as I am aware, my mum was given no information or advice regarding the risk of infection from blood transfusions.
9. I believe that the date of my mum's first positive test was in or around 2000/2001/2002 which was also when she was told about the Hep C infection. I think mum started having some symptoms such as lethargy and I believe that her GP referred her to the Hepatology Department at RFH. I am not entirely sure of exact sequence of events in this regard. Mum was under the care of a female consultant, Marcia Morgan, at the RFH, and [GRO-B]
[GRO-B].
10. I believe that it was Marcia Morgan, or a member of her team, who told my mum that she had been infected with Hep C. My mum was incredibly shocked when she found out about her infection. I don't know exactly what information or advice was given to mum about Hep C, but I do know that she was told that she only had 2-3 years to live and was informed that a harsh treatment regime, called Interferon, may have a chance of making her better. This was not offered as definite cure with any guarantees, in fact, far from it. It was offered more in

the form of *"it had a chance of making her better"*. As mum was told that she would only live for 2-3 years she chose not to have the treatment because she decided she would prefer to have a shorter but better quality of life rather than a *"possibly"* longer but poorer quality of life. She did not want to endure punishing side effects with no guarantee of a cure.

11. Following my mum's meeting with Marcia Morgan or a member of her team, I was told that I was going to be tested for Hep C. It was a really scary time for me as my mum had been walking around with this infection for the best part of 20 years. When she contracted it, I would have been about GRO-B, and not long after this she started looking after me a single parent during the GRO-B's, which was not a particularly modern time and I worried about things like sharing a razor. Hep C was such a nasty sounding illness and was slightly lumped in with HIV at that time. It instilled so much fear into me because I didn't really understand things at that time, coupled with the fact that I was acutely aware that my mum would only be living for another 2-3 years. The conversation I had with Marcia Morgan's team regarding my test was literally as detailed as *"you had better be tested"*.

Section 3. Other Infections

12. As far as I am aware, apart from Hep C, my mum was not infected with any other viruses from the contaminated blood transfusion.

Section 4. Consent

13. I don't know whether my mum was tested for Hep C without her knowledge or consent. I know that my mum was incredibly shocked when she was told that she had Hep C so from that I would surmise that it was likely that she was tested for Hep C without her knowledge or consent.
14. I don't know whether mum was tested for any other viruses without her knowledge or consent.

15. I don't know whether mum was used for the purposes of research without her knowledge or consent.

Section 5. Impact of the Infection

16. My mum firstly developed cirrhosis of the liver and then liver cancer as a result of her Hep C infection.

17. My mum was a victim of the Contaminated Blood Scandal and she died [GRO-B] [GRO-B], from liver cancer secondary to Hep C, in a distressed, agitated and miserable way at the [GRO-B] with me by her side.

18. She did not have a partner after her divorce from my dad. She acquired Hep C from a blood transfusion after a botched gynaecological operation at the RFH in the early [GRO-B]s. She was not diagnosed until 20 years later, and I had to be tested as well as I had been living with her as her youngest child for at least [GRO-B] years while she was unknowingly infected. Thankfully I tested negative.

19. I am pleased that after 40-odd years, some people are getting 'compensation'. Victims, of course, but why only partners of the bereaved? I am an [GRO-B] [GRO-B] and have/had been through her journey through illness, treatment, tests, deterioration since the very beginning. During Covid, I took annual leave for every one of her blood tests, scans, appointments, interventions and went with her as she was too frail to go alone, because [GRO-B] [GRO-B]. I got her into the Hospice when she was in so much pain she could not manage in the community and watched her fight and lose her final battle for life. [GRO-B].

20. I am furious that the Government have grudgingly decided to pay this interim compensation after she finally could fight no longer, [GRO-B] after she died, I can tell you she was so furious about everything that had happened to her, she would have clung on just to ensure she got her fair share. In the meantime, I'm

left with grief and nothing else to show for all the misery this heaped upon us. She was told in 2000/2001/2002 that she only had 2-3 years left to live so both she and I spent all this time with the Grim Reaper hanging over her wondering when it would happen. It was her feisty personality that somehow kept her going, but I put my life on hold thinking I couldn't travel, live abroad, or have an adventure because I didn't want to be away if anything happened to her. That continued for over 20 years. This also affected my mum's decisions regarding the Hep C treatment.

21. My mum also had to endure a painful biopsy, to check how bad her liver damage was, at the RFH between approximately 2008 and 2011. I remember going up to the ward to be with her during the biopsy. In those days, they still had charts on a clipboard at the base of the patients' beds. I remember still GRO-B and I picked up the clipboard and was horrified to see that it had written on it to the effect of "*Hepatitis C, cirrhosis due to ETOH*". ETOH means alcohol abuse and I was so upset and angry on seeing this because I knew that it was totally untrue in relation to my mum. I remember furiously marching into the nurses' station clutching the clipboard, demanding to know why ETOH had been written. Their response was to just cross it out.

22. Following this, when I attended mum's next consultant appointment at the RFH, instead of it being with Marcia Morgan, it was with another consultant who I can only describe as "*an arrogant git*". I challenged him about what the ETOH which was written on mum's chart on the clipboard. I said something like "*you put that mum's problems were caused by alcohol in her medical records when you knew that this was not correct*". He smiled at me and held up just two pages of notes which were all that remained for mum now. He said that the others had been archived.

23. Following this, I wrote a letter of complaint, via email, to the RFH. This was in the days before email was regularly used so I do not have a copy of the email or the response from the RFH as I don't have the same email account anymore. Essentially, I complained about the fact that mum had been infected with Hep C in the first place following the botched operation by the gynaecologist, who

interestingly disappeared into doing only private practice shortly after mum's operation, and it also covered the erroneous recording of ETOH in the medical records. Their response was something along the lines of there was nothing they could do about the Hep C infection as the blood given to mum was not tested and they said that mum now had a new set of hospital records which did not contain reference to ETOH.

24. However, further down the line, the RFH did accept that they had been the cause of mum's infection, and she did receive funds from the Skipton Fund (SF).

25. While my mum was in GRO-B, she said she wanted to *'go and throw an egg at the statue of Thatcher'* who she blamed for the import of the infected blood products, although she also had her issues with the RFH and the GRO-B who nearly killed her. Mum had a breakdown after the surgery, and I lived with my aunt and uncle for 3 months. To wait all this time for some acceptance at a government level of responsibility of what, to the non-legal eye, feels like corporate manslaughter. This is appalling and she couldn't hang on any longer to see the initial interim payment, it's a tragedy and a travesty what we have all been through.

Section 6. Treatment/care/support

26. In terms of obstacles and difficulties with mum's treatment, I am of the view that mum declined Hep C treatment because she was told that she only had 2-3 years to live. It is correct that the treatment did not come with any guarantees, but it is likely/possible that had mum not been given such a poor prognosis in terms of life expectancy, that she would have undergone the Hep C treatment.

27. In terms of discriminatory behaviour, in relation to mum's Hep C, I am of the view that there are two examples of this 1) the insertion of ETOH as being the reason for mum's liver problems when this was entirely untrue. This gives a totally different perspective as to why someone is ill. When challenged by me,

ANONYMOUS

a new set of medical records were produced and 2) as mum almost hung on until her 90th birthday I felt that she suffered age related (and possibly Hep C related) discrimination in that because she had by far outlived her prognosis (2000/2001/2002: 2-3 years) and made it into her late 80s, the RFH didn't see the point in continuing with any active treatment for her.

28. As far as I am aware, mum was not offered any counselling or psychological support in consequence of her Hep C infection. I have not been offered any either.

Section 7. Financial Assistance

29. My mum kept her financial affairs fairly private, but I am aware that the SF offered her the choice between either a lump sum of around £20K or monthly payments. Mum chose to take the monthly payments.

30. I believe that the RFH were on board and assisted with mum's dealing with the SF. Mum wasn't brilliant with forms and the like which makes me think that the RFH had some sort of input into matters.

31. Once mum was in the system, she was very happy with her dealings with the SF.

32. I have never received any financial assistance from any of the Trusts or Funds set up to distribute payments.

Section 8. Other Issues

33. Ultimately, the most important thing is that the Inquiry ensures that the Government takes responsibility for what has happened. I also believe financial compensation must be given to relatives but that this would be secondary to the admission of wrongdoing and also an acknowledgement of the devastation which has been caused to those both infected and affected by this tragedy.

Anonymity

34. I do wish to apply for anonymity.

Statement of Truth

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

Signed

GRO-B

Dated.....15/12/22.....