

INFECTED BLOOD INQUIRY

**FIRST WRITTEN STATEMENT OF
ANNE MARIE LUMBER**

I, Anne Marie Lumber, will say as follows:-

Section 1. Introduction

1. My name is Anne Marie Lumber of GRO-C Bristol, GRO-C My date of birth is GRO-C 1968. I currently juggle two part time jobs; I work for Bristol City Council as a Guide Escort and Briarwood Special School where I help disabled children and young adults. I have four grown up children including two stepchildren.
2. **This statement has been prepared without the benefit of access to my medical records.**
3. I was infected with Hepatitis C as a result of receiving contaminated blood transfusions.

Section 2. How Infected

4. Immediately following the birth of my son on GRO-C 1989 at the St Michael's Bristol Maternity Hospital, I suffered severe Post Partum Bleeding which meant that I required numerous blood transfusions (11 units of blood). My son had been in the breach position and was delivered via forceps; I was torn to such a degree that I suffered internal bleeding.

5. I was not given any information or advice regarding the risk of infection from the blood transfusions. The transfusions were in my arm, neck and groin.
6. I was infected with Hepatitis C as a result of these blood transfusions.
7. I did not find that I had been infected until September 2005. Shortly prior to this time, I had been suffering badly with my rheumatoid arthritis and I also had severe back pain. I was therefore undergoing investigations in the Rheumatology Department at Bristol Royal Infirmary (BRI) in connection with these problems. Some tests were undertaken, in or around June/July 2005, which included a Liver Function Test (LFT) which produced a worrying reading. The medical professionals accused me of drinking alcohol in the weeks leading up to the LFT. I denied this because it was not true. The medical professionals at BRI suggested that I make an urgent appointment with my GP for further tests.
8. I therefore attended my local GP practice (Fishponds Family Practice, Beechwood Road) in or around June/July 2005 and completed consent forms for a number of blood tests. The tests were completed the same day and I then dismissed the matter from my mind.
9. In September 2005 I developed an eye infection and therefore booked an appointment with my GP, Dr GRO-D. Whilst I was in the consulting room discussing my eye infection, she suddenly said something like *"oh your blood test result is here and you have got Hepatitis C"*. I was totally taken aback; completely gobsmacked. She then said *"do you know how you have contracted this?"* I replied that I had no idea. I asked her how it was transmitted and she said *"blood to blood contact"*. I immediately thought about my 1989 blood transfusions and asked her if I could have contracted it then. She replied with something like *"No, blood was being screened in 1989 so you could not have contracted it via that method"*.
10. I left the GP surgery in a complete daze and headed home to tell my husband that I had contracted Hepatitis C.
11. My husband was very angry with me and accused me of being unfaithful. He never really spoke to me again after that, GRO-D.
12. GRO-C
13. GRO-C

14. I received absolutely no information from Dr [GRO-D] in relation to how to understand or manage Hepatitis C. I therefore carried out my own research. I was flabbergasted to discover that blood was not being screened in 1989 and I then became very angry. I remember trying to tell my husband this but he was not interested; as far as he was concerned I had been unfaithful and that was that.

15. I went back to my GP surgery because I was so angry with the service that had been provided by Dr [GRO-D]. This time I was seen by a senior doctor, Dr Anstey, who was absolutely brilliant. My appointment with her was in or around October/November 2005. She told me that it was very likely that I had been infected via my 1989 blood transfusions. She immediately referred me to BRI for treatment of my Hepatitis C. She told me to come straight back to her if I had not heard from the BRI within a month. I waited a month and had heard nothing so I went back to her and she chased the BRI for me. Shortly after this, the BRI contacted me in relation to treatment for my Hepatitis C which I deal with in Section 5 below.

Section 3. Other Infections

16. As far as I am aware I was not put at risk of any other infections such as vCJD.

Section 4. Consent

17. I don't think that I was tested, treated or used for the purposes of research without my knowledge or consent.

Section 5. Impact

18. I, unknowingly, lived with Hepatitis C for 17 years. I was lethargic and exhausted but I just put that down to having two jobs and being the mother of young boys. When my boys were very young I do remember waking up at stupid hours in the very early morning with excruciating pain on my right hand side. It was so painful that it used to take my breath away. I used to have to employ breathing tactics until it subsided. I believe that this pain emanated from my liver.

19. I used to feel very low and depressed for no obvious reasons.

20. Finding out that I had Hepatitis C was like being hit by a bus. When I received the bombshell news in September 2005 I felt mentally numb. I was in complete shock and I felt mentally tortured. When Dr [GRO-D] told me that I could not have contracted it via my 1989 blood transfusions, I was shocked and puzzled. I had not done anything that would have led me to becoming infected. I was scared and petrified of breaking the news of my infection to my new husband. The thought even ran through my mind that my husband had been unfaithful. I started questioning everything and I came up with no good answers.

21. [GRO-D]'s reaction to my infection was horrific.

[GRO-D]

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25. **GRO-D**

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27. **GRO-D**

28. I also remember being petrified that my youngest son, who was born on **GRO-C** 1991 had been infected with Hepatitis C because I breastfed him for 2 ½ years but thankfully he had not contracted the virus.

29. 2005 was probably the worst year of my life because I was diagnosed with Non Hodgkin's Lymphoma in the January and received the news that I had Hepatitis C in the September. **GRO-D**
GRO-D

30. In relation to stigma, I believe that I have been relatively fortunate in this regard. When I found out that I had Hepatitis C I was working in the same jobs that I have now. I disclosed my virus to the head teacher at the School and my boss at Bristol City Council; both were supportive and offered me time off for hospital appointments and the like. As far as I am aware only those who needed to know were told about my infection, following my disclosures to the relevant people. I remember discussing Hepatitis C with one of my close work colleagues at the School. She was supportive but she did not know anything about the virus.

31. Although I did not suffer any stigma I remember being very worried that I could infect one of the disabled children or young adults because they often exhibited challenging behaviour such as biting. I was terrified that I would be bitten and infect someone in this way. I do recall cutting myself on a door at the School and I literally ran to the bathroom as fast as I could and washed the wound until all of the blood had gone. I then found a glove which I wore for the rest of the day.

32. In relation to the treatment for Hepatitis C I confirm that I underwent a first course of Interferon and Ribavirin in June 2006 but unfortunately this was unsuccessful, despite the

fact that I remained on the treatment until April 2007. The side effects were awful. I remember throwing up whilst I was at work on the school bus and having constant brain fog, forgetting things and feeling very sad. I also experienced night sweats which prevented me from sleeping and I recall just lying on the floor feeling horrifically poorly.

33. I embarked upon a second course of treatment for my Hepatitis C in December 2016 which consisted of Viekirax, Exviera and Ribavirin. This 12 week course was successful and I suffered minimal side effects aside from increased depression. Both treatments were under Dr Gordon at BRI.

34. In terms of the financial impact, I just plodded on. I managed to keep both my jobs which I am proud of. GRO-D

35. My physical health today is quite poor. I have Fibrosis and am also constantly exhausted. I also suffer from Sjorgren's Syndrome which is a disorder of the immune system, characterised by dry eyes and a dry mouth. I have had my fair share of health problems when you also factor in Non Hodgkin's Lymphoma and Hepatitis C. I also understand that a lot of the problems I have suffered with throughout my life could have been caused by the Hepatitis C which was in my system for 27 years before I was declared "*clear of the virus*".

36. Sadly, I lost contact with my oldest son (who was born on GRO-C 1989). He married an American girl and resides in the US. We had an argument which upset me but he will come around eventually.

Section 6. Treatment/Care/Support

37. I did not experience any difficulties accessing medical or dental treatment and I have already outlined my views regarding Dr GRO-D.

38. Prior to my diagnosis with Hepatitis C, I was already receiving counselling from Bristol City Council as I had some family issues and was then diagnosed with Non Hodgkin's Lymphoma.

39. When I disclosed my Hepatitis C to Bristol City Council, my co-ordinator who was called Robin told me that although he did not know a lot about the virus he would refer me for as many counselling sessions as I wanted/needed.

Section 7. Financial Assistance

40. I received the Stage 1 Payment of £20,000 from the Skipton Fund in March 2006. I had found out about the Fund via Dr Anstey and she helped me with the application procedure.

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GRO-C

42. I received no grants or monthly support from the Skipton Fund.

43. I have not received any support from the EIBSS.

Section 8. Other Issues

44. I want the Government to apologise and acknowledge that this tragedy was their fault. They should not have imported the blood from the US in the manner in which they did.

45. The Government also need to stop treating the victims of this tragedy so appalling; it is unbelievable that they are still treating us so poorly in this day and age.

46. I am extremely disappointed not to have been awarded CP status meaning that I cannot fully participate in this Inquiry nor have access to confidential documentation. This is like suffering a double blow; firstly I am infected in the manner in which I was and then I am told, by those investigating the matter, that I am not allowed to be a CP. I trust that this decision will be reversed.

Anonymity, disclosure and redaction

47. I do not wish to apply for anonymity and, if I am asked, I will give oral evidence to the Inquiry.

Statement of Truth

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

Signed... GRO-C

Dated... 7/08/2019