

ANONYMOUSWitness Name: **GRO-B**

Statement No.: WITN0856001

Exhibits: **WITN0856002-****WITN08560011**

Dated: 9 October 2019

INFECTED BLOOD INQUIRY**WRITTEN STATEMENT OF **GRO-B****

I provide this statement in response to a request under Rule 9 of the Inquiry Rules 2006 dated 6 April 2019.

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

Section 1. Introduction

1. My name is **GRO-B** My date of birth is **GRO-B** 1944 and my address is **GRO-B**
GRO-B I am widowed with two children and used to work with children with special needs.
2. I can confirm that I have chosen not to have a legal representative and that I am happy to provide the Inquiry team with a written statement.
3. I intend to speak about my late husband, **GRO-B:H** who was infected with the Hepatitis C virus. In particular, the nature of his illness, how the illness affected him, and the impact it had on our lives together.

Section 2. How Affected

4. I met [H] when I was 18 and we married on [GRO-B] when I was 20 and he was 21. We were both born and raised in [GRO-B] we went to the same school together, I was christened there, and we were married in [GRO-B] church. My son [GRO-B] was born on [GRO-B] 1965 and my daughter [GRO-B] on [GRO-B] 1966.
5. [H] had Von Willebrand's disease and first knew about his bleedings when he was 7 years old. He went head first into a dustbin when he was playing and cut his arm and had a big scar there. His father who died at the age of 52 had Von Willebrand's disease, and his grandma had it too. [GRO-B] and one of our granddaughters, [GRO-B], also has Von Willebrand's disease.
6. [H] was born into an agricultural background and his grandad was the pioneer of stump chopping in the UK, so [H] was in the wrong job working with lots of heavy machinery with his condition!
7. The first time we had problems was just after we were married and he had a tooth out and they gave him snake venom, which was the only way to stop haemophilia bleeds at that time. He got hit in the mouth by a bit of machinery and at the [GRO-B] hospital at Ascot they gave him a tetanus injection, which seized him up as they didn't realise he had Von Willebrand's.
8. In 1973, [H] walked into a latch at the front gate of his mum and dad's which resulted in him being close to having his leg amputated. He had a bruise on his thigh and he bled and bled – he didn't realise how bad it was, he couldn't put his finger on his leg because of the blood. He also cut his head open once on the machinery.

9. He had a haemorrhoidectomy in 1980 and four tooth extractions in 1986. That's when we started finding out he was being given Factor VIII, but I don't know exactly when he first started having Factor VIII. The default hospital he went to was the [GRO-B] Haemophiliac centre in [GRO-B] Hospital where he saw Dr O'Brian.
10. From our medical records, we have a letter that said he was first tested for Hepatitis C on 1 August 1995, but we have another letter stating he had been tested for hepatitis on 30 January 1986. In December 1995, he was in hospital for a liver biopsy and the results was that his liver functions was entirely normal (WITN0856002). He tested negative for HIV between 1986 and 1988 (WITN0856003).
11. In 1997, [H] found out about his infection with Hepatitis C at a routine appointment at [GRO-B] Hospital. The only information they told us was that it could be passed on by bodily fluids, kissing people and sharing toothbrushes. We had a letter to say you may have been infected with Hepatitis C and not to let friends or family know because you would be social outcasts. He was told he could have cirrhosis of the liver but they didn't give him any dietary advice. He was never warned of the risk of haemorrhaging as a result of Hepatitis C.
12. Apart from that, nobody explained the implications of the infection to us. We didn't know anybody else with it.
13. I had to ask my doctor in October 2018 to be tested for Hepatitis C after I found out about the Inquiry. Neither myself, nor my family, were ever offered a test for Hepatitis C after [H] had been diagnosed.

Section 3. Other Infections

14. I do not believe [H] had any other infections as a result of being given infected blood products. [GRO-B] and [GRO-B] tested for Hepatitis C during

an annual check-up and were found negative. I was also tested in October last year and was found to be Hepatitis C negative.

4. Consent

15. We don't know if they were testing him without his consent or knowledge. But we have records to show that they were testing him for HIV since 1986. A medical report dated 9 April 1980 also said that the chance of having Hepatitis C was close to 100%.

16. I remember [GRO-B] used to go with [H] to give blood to Professor O'Brian in his little cabin off to the side of the hospital, I think it was called the Infected Diseases Department. We used to get a call to give blood for the doctor but he never told us what it was for. This was before Hepatitis C was a scandal, before we knew of anything. We don't think it was to do with infected blood, at least not that we know of. Our understanding is that this was to assist him with his personal research and this was voluntary.

17. The hospital requested that [GRO-B] be tested for Von Willebrand's when he was 8 years old and he fainted when they took the blood. I didn't ask for him to be tested. The outcome was that he could still be a carrier although he doesn't suffer from the condition.

Section 5. Impact

18. We have never told anybody of the Hepatitis apart from close family, after we received the letter telling us not to tell anybody otherwise we would be social outcasts. We live in a small village community and none of our friends in the village know. Both of us were involved in village life. I would knit for the church, sew on buttons for charities and any fundraising event happening in the village. [H] was doing everything, like the Young Farmers' Association. People in the village knew we had Von Willebrand's in the family, we organised a carol singing for the Blood

Disease Fund, but we never talked about the Hepatitis. I suppose I've been living this big lie. We have carried on as normal because we didn't realise the seriousness of it, but I worried about it all the time. It was dreadful and I've always felt stressed about it. We were told not to tell anybody. I won't tell anybody now.

19. After [H] diagnosis, [GRO-B] ended up in intensive care following a post-partum haemorrhage caused by the retention of placenta, two weeks after the birth of her daughter. This required an emergency hysterectomy and she received ten pints of blood within four hours. [H] mother was also ill during that time. It was so stressful I ended up collapsing and was taken to hospital. They said it was from total exhaustion and stress.

20. Six years after my daughter's emergency hysterectomy, she received a letter dated 20 September 2004 from her Consultant Mr Hirri at Portsmouth Hospital informing her that she may have received blood containing vCJD (**WITN0856004**). My daughter followed up with a letter because she wanted to know if she had received an implicated batch. I cannot recall the exact dates, but my daughter asked her Consultant Haematologist for further news and he told her about all the information having being lost because of some computer blip. She did not pursue this at the time but wishes she had. No further information was ever given to her.

21. Whenever my daughter goes to the dentist, she has to state that she was at risk of vCJD.

22. I started saving things from newspapers after [H] diagnosis in 1997. I kept these at the back of the wardrobe until now because I didn't want to look at them as it affects me so much.

23. [H] was never someone to make a fuss and just carried on. He was so laid back and didn't question anything, he would carry on working. He

was a very sociable person and everyone in the village knew him. It was only after he died that I remember him saying when he was driving around he had to stop along the road sometimes because he had headaches which were so bad. He also couldn't have a drink with his friends and it upset him. He loved socialising, the family occasions, the new tractors, the new animals. After the diagnosis it had an impact on his social life.

24. In June 2000, we went down to the Eden project because it had just opened. When we got there we always used to go down to our favourite restaurant. [H] said he felt tired and unusually he slept through until the next morning. He didn't wake up that evening so we couldn't go for the meal. He slept for a total of seventeen hours. That wasn't like him at all, it was very unusual. It makes you think something wasn't quite right at the time.

25. When [H] business went bankrupt as a result of his illness, we lost the house we rented as a result of the bankruptcy. I couldn't get a mortgage and we had to move in with [H] mother. He couldn't get life insurance because of the Hepatitis and I couldn't get health insurance either. Eventually, [H] mother wanted us to move out and move into a flat, and the plan was that he would have his name on it, but he died before she was able to do it.

26. We had just been to Poole before his brain haemorrhage on [GRO-B] 2000. He went to pick up his paper that day and sat at the pub talking about timber for the bonfire night and it happened just like that. No warning, nothing. It feels like it just happened 5 minutes ago. It was a nightmare for us.

27. He was there at the pub at 9 pm, the ambulance came, and by 11 pm we were told that they were sending him to Southampton hospital. They said they couldn't operate on him because of the Von Willebrand's, they put him in intensive care and said there was nothing they could do.

28. He was put on the life support machine and they asked for my permission to turn it off – I was told he would be gone either 2 hours or 2 days. Family and friends came to see him, the hospital chaplain came to see him. [H] sister worked in Intensive Care and gave us a family room but we couldn't sleep. He died in the morning at 8 am on [GRO-B] 2000.

29. I had to give permission for the life support machine to be turned off and I still ask myself today, should I have done it? I still think about it, was it the right thing to do? He looked so healthy at 57. The next day people thought it was his brother who had died. He was so well-known in the village. Just the day before he was showing off his new machine in the village.

30. I phoned my dad up to say [H] was in hospital and that he had died. My dad had a heart attack that day. My parents didn't come to the funeral because of the shock of it. [H] died 18 months before his own mother passed away.

31. We phoned the Haemophilia Society ourselves after [H] died. The hospital didn't suggest anything to us. We've had no help.

32. The death certificate says he died of intracerebral haemorrhage. It wasn't until [GRO-B] read in the Daily Mail dated 7 August 2011 that Hepatitis C could be a contributing factor to brain haemorrhage did we know about that (WITN0856005). It was also shown on BBC news online after the Panorama programme about contributing factors (WITN0856006). There was another article in the Daily Mail on the issue dated 11 April 2015.

33. [H] never had the opportunity to retire, he was working all his life. We were planning to do all these things – we were going to have this cruise, he loved boats and we were going to have a boat. [H] loved the idea of going on cruises, sailing along the Thames, taking the grandchildren

on holiday. We never got to do any of it. After [H] died, our grandchildren have no other great grandparents or grandads left.

34. We bought a beach hut especially for the grandchildren. After [H] died it was vandalised and we thought of selling it but [GRO-B] said, "I'd rather sell my body!" than get rid of the hut as it was [H]

35. My dad died after [H] One of these silly things – [H] was going to buy me a Rolex watch because I had wanted one for years and years, but he never did before he died. So, my dad bought it for me for my 60th birthday, he sent me the money before he died. I waited 20 years for that.

36. I used to work with children with special needs for 14-15 years and I loved it. I retired from that in 2016 when I had to have 3 months' compassionate leave when my mum died, I needed so much time off for my mum that I gave up my job. Since I couldn't get a mortgage, [GRO-B] and her brother contributes every month to pay the mortgage.

37. I collapsed again a few weeks ago before this interview due to the stress and thinking about it again. It was [H] birthday and we were going out for a nice lunch, and I just passed out. I was so embarrassed. We still try to celebrate his birthday and anniversaries, but ended up with the ambulance coming out. I didn't tell anyone in the village about what happened, nobody knows. I told everyone it was a lovely birthday for [H]

38. I wanted to go to the [GRO-B] local meeting to see who else had been affected. I didn't tell anyone in the village I was going, I told them I was going to my sister's and then when we got there I was worried I would see someone I knew.

39. When I went to get my Hepatitis C test done last October, I didn't tell anyone. I hate going to the doctors; I had to go with my hood up and book a late evening appointment so I wouldn't see anyone. I told my

doctor to keep me alive so that I can hear the results of the Inquiry because we want justice.

40. My daughter mentioned at a recent check-up to a haemophilia nurse that I had been engaging with the Inquiry to which the nurse replied, "Oh, I must ring you and have a chat to you about that". It seemed like quite an odd comment. But my daughter has never heard back from her.

Section 6. Treatment/Care/Support

41. When we found out that [H] had cirrhosis of the liver in July 2000, we were told that he couldn't have Interferon because there wasn't enough money in the National Institute in [GRO-B] until January. I wasn't very happy when they said there wasn't enough funds, but [H] wasn't a complainer. It was the first time they offered it and I think Dr Colin-Jones spoke to us. [H] couldn't wait that long, he died in August.
42. They said Interferon would help him – it wouldn't make him better but it wouldn't clear it, but they didn't go any further because he died. The point was he didn't get the opportunity to have any treatment.

Section 7. Financial Assistance

43. I first contacted the Haemophilia Society in 1995 after his diagnosis and the Society gave me contact numbers for solicitors. I went to the solicitors and they told me to get his medical records. Eventually, they said they couldn't prove negligence for the hepatitis. The doctor in charge of preparing a preliminary report for the hepatitis litigation concluded that there was no negligence in administering cryoprecipitate or Factor VIII concentrate to a patient who required treatment before 1980 (WITN0856007).
44. In 2004, the solicitors also told me that the Department of Health's ex-gratia payment scheme for individuals infected with Hepatitis C from

blood was only made to people alive on 29 August 2003 (WITN0856008). Since [H] died earlier, we were not eligible.

45. I rang my local MP and they came to see me after [H] died as I was trying to do something because I felt cheated. On 9 May 2007 my MP wrote to me about compensation for my husband's death (WITN0856009). He told me about the Skipton Fund, but even then, there was nothing they could do because you couldn't get help if you died before 2003 and I felt cheated again after hearing about it. It wasn't [H] fault that he died too early. How can you put a date on when somebody should die to get help?

46. I didn't put an application to the Skipton Fund because we were told we wouldn't get anything by our solicitors and later our local MP at the time. There wasn't any point about doing anything about it so I didn't. I got to a stage where I thought everything was against me.

47. My daughter mentioned to Dr Hirri and the nurse a few years ago that we didn't get any compensation from the Skipton Fund for [H] HCV infection and they both expressed surprise that we had not received anything.

Section 8. Other Issues

48. I have been following all the news and discussion in the Commons when they said 750,000 people have been impacted, something should be done.

49. I want justice. I want people to know that it was wrong and I would like some sort of financial help as well, definitely. They knew blood was infected and they still carried on importing blood from America when they said this country was supposed to be self-sufficient. Thousands of people's blood was mixed. The Panorama image sticks with me – all the faces of the people infected, and we are living with it.

50. I recently wrote a letter on 26 August 2019 to Prime Minister Boris Johnson, because it was coming up to the anniversary of [H] death and I wanted to do something (WITN0856010). I wanted the Prime Minister to realise that this was important, I knew he was busy but I still wanted to write it. I received an acknowledgement, holding letter, from the Correspondence Officer dated 30 August 2019 (WITN0856011). I hope to get a reply after the 31 October.

Statement of Truth

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

Signed _____

GRO-B

Dated _____

9th October 2019.

ANONYMOUS

INFECTED BLOOD INQUIRY

WRITTEN STATEMENT OF GRO-B SCHEDULE OF EXHIBITS

EXHIBIT NO.	DESCRIPTION	PAGES
WITN0856002	Letter from P. J. Green to Mr H dated 19/12/1995.	1
WITN0856003	Series of letters from P. J. Green to Mr H dated 30/1/1986, 23/9/1986, 13/7/1987, and 7/6/1988, Re: Hepatitis and AIDS tests.	4
WITN0856004	Letter from H. M. Hirri to Mrs GRO-B dated 20/9/2004, Re: vCJD and Plasma Products.	6
WITN0856005	Newspaper Article from The Daily Mail dated 7/8/2011, entitled "Tainted Blood".	2
WITN0856006	Article from BBC News online dated 11/4/2017, entitled "Blood contamination tore my family apart".	4
WITN0856007	Letter from Bolitho Way to Mr H dated 4/2/1999, Re: Potential Claim, with attached Preliminary Report of Dr Mike Makris for the High Court of Justice, Queens Bench Division.	22
WITN0856008	Letter from Bolitho Way to GRO-B dated 2/8/2004, with attached letter from Blackett, Hart & Pratt dated 21/7/2004, Re: Department of Health Ex-Gratia Scheme.	3
WITN0856009	Letter from Mark Oaten MP to GRO-B dated 9/5/2007, Re: Skipton Fund.	2
WITN0856010	Handwritten letter from Mrs. GRO-B to Rt. Hon. Boris Johnson dated 26/8/2019.	1
WITN0856011	Holding letter from correspondence officer of 10 Downing Street to Mrs GRO-B dated 30/8/2019	1