

ANONYMOUS

Witness Name: **GRO-B**

Statement No.: WITN2711001 Exhibits:

[WITN2711002 – WITN2711018]

Dated: 15 September 2022

INFECTED BLOOD INQUIRY

FIRST WRITTEN STATEMENT OF **GRO-B**

Section 1. Introduction

1. My name is **GRO-B**. My date of birth is **GRO-B**, my address is known to the Inquiry

Section 2. How Infected

2. I had my appendix removed on 9th November 1980 **[WITN2711002]**. Following the operation, I suffered adhesions that caused the bowel to wrap around and strangle itself. I became very poorly in March 1981 and eventually had a laparotomy. My records include a consent letter dated 26th March 1981 **[WITN2711003]** On 14th May 1981 I had a second laparotomy during which parts of my bowel were removed **[WITN2711004]**. All of these procedures took place

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at **GRO-B** in Chelmsford. I was 12 years old at the time. I was in hospital for over a month.

3. It was during one of these operations that I had a blood transfusion. A letter within my records dated 30th December 2010 indicates that a blood transfusion was given to me during my 'bowel surgery' **[WITN2711011]**
4. I think the transfusion may have been started during the operation but was still going when I came around from the anaesthetic. I have a memory of waking up and seeing that I was hooked up to blood. I do not know how many units of blood I was given.
5. In January 2001 I had a total abdominal hysterectomy **[WITN2711006]**.
6. In April 2006 I was admitted to Broomfield Hospital a couple of times after having severe abdominal pain, I was in hospital for nearly two weeks. I was very unwell and at first the doctors couldn't tell me what was going on. They eventually told me they thought my immune system was compromised **[WITN2711007]**.
7. During my admission, I was tested for Hepatitis B and HIV, which both came back negative, the results are noted in the discharge summary dated 25 April 2006 **[WITN2711008]**.
8. I was told that I was tested for HIV as they felt I had some sort of immune compromising disease **[WITN2711009]**. In the discharge letter it states my diagnosis upon discharge was oesophagal candidiasis. I understand that this is a common symptom in people with HIV which may have been part of the reason for the decision to test me for HIV at the time.
9. When I was discharged, I was told just to go and see my GP if there was anything wrong. They told me to take vitamins which I could buy from a health food shop. I took these for months and months and it cost me a fortune.

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10. A further letter in my medical records from Consultant Gastroenterologist Dr Saverymuttu dated 9th December 2008 states that following 'routine blood tests' my liver results were slightly raised. The letter further states 'I can't see a hepatitis screen, but it is most likely non-alcoholic fatty liver disease' **[WITN2711010]**.
11. Within my records there is also a letter dated 30th December 2010 from Dr Islam that states I had 'all along had normal liver function tests' **[WITN2711011]**. This contradicts the above letter from Dr Sayermuttu **[WITN2711010]**.
12. I started midwifery training in 2010 and as part of this we all had to have blood tests. We were tested for HIV, Hepatitis A, Hepatitis B and Hepatitis C. My Hep C test result came back as equivocal **[WITN2711012]**. The doctor told me that this might mean I had Hepatitis C in the past.
13. I was standing in the middle of the ward with my friend when the doctor told me. They asked me whether I had ever shared a needle, or had ever had sex with foreigners, I had been married for some time by then. I was mortified. My best friend was with me at the time thankfully, but I was horrified.
14. Following this result I had two further tests for Hepatitis C in 2010, both results were equivocal **[WITN2711013]**.
15. At the time I was not given any advice or information by the doctor who gave me the result, other than that it could mean that I had Hep C in the past. I was distraught and went to my GP.
16. My GP wrote a referral letter dated 27 October 2010 to Broomfield Hospital following the first of my equivocal tests **[WITN2711014]**. In this letter my GP states I 'did have a couple of transfusions in about 1981'.
17. I have never been given any information about Hep C or any detailed advice about what the equivocal result means or how it might affect me. I don't believe

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I have been given enough information to understand the result and whether I or my family are at risk of illness.

18. When I first read about contaminated blood in the press, I started to carry out my own research and put the pieces together. I believe the equivocal result is as a result of the blood transfusion I had in 1981.

Section 3. Other Infections

19. It is just the Hep C that concerns me. As described below, a few years ago I was told that I could not give blood because the transfusion I had in 1981 meant there was a risk transmitting vCJD. This was the first I had heard of this risk.

Section 4. Consent

20. I don't believe I have been treated or tested without my knowledge or consent, or without being given adequate or full information, or for the purposes of research.
21. My mum does not remember being asked to consent to me being given a blood transfusion. However I think it was a life-or-death situation so she would have given her consent to anything the doctors said might help. She was not given any information about any risk of infection.
22. Within my medical records there are consent forms for my appendicectomy, my first laparotomy and my second laparotomy [**WITN2711015, WITN2711016 and WITN2711017**]. These consent forms are all signed by my mother however they do not specifically mention the risk of receiving blood products or blood transfusions or the risk of infection that this might have.

Section 5. Impact

23. I had a gall bladder problem for many years. I was admitted to hospital on several occasions however I was told that they could not operate due to my deranged liver function result. Eventually in 2018 I had my gall bladder removed [WITN2711018] but even after that I had deranged liver function test results and a burning sensation in my liver area. This pain comes and goes. Sometimes when it gets worse, I will go to see my GP who just says that my liver function is deranged again and there is not much they can do. They tell me to take pain relief until it passes.
24. If the pain is really bad, I take paracetamol and co-codamol and sometimes Gabapentin. I would say I have the pain a couple of times per week and it lasts all day. It's been going on for over ten years, I've just learnt to live with it.
25. At around the time I had my gall bladder removed there was some talk about me being referred to a liver specialist, however in the end I was not referred. I have not asked my GP to refer me.
26. I have not ever had any treatment for Hep C.
27. When I was given the equivocal result, I was horrified because I was thinking I had given it to my kids, and I thought I wouldn't be able to finish my midwifery training. However, it was never an issue in terms of my training, they were happy for me to continue and didn't ask me to return for further tests.
28. My main concern was that I could have given it to my kids. My GP told me not to panic and that I wouldn't have given it to my kids, she said it was highly unlikely. They were not sent for tests. My daughter has asked me more recently whether she should be tested, I don't know what to tell her.

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29. A few years ago, I went to donate blood and was told that I couldn't because of the transfusion I had in 1981. They said that this was due to the risk of passing vCJD, they did not mention anything about HIV or Hep C. Not being able to give blood is a massive thing for me; my life was saved because I received a blood transfusion, I would like to save someone else's life by giving blood myself.
30. This was the first I had heard of the risk that I may have vCJD. My attitude is that it is not affecting me now so I am not going to worry about it.
31. I have discussed the equivocal test result with my family and with my best friend. They have been supportive. I wouldn't discuss it with everyone because of the stigma around Hep C. The result has not had a big impact on my family and social life or on my working life. I am extra careful at work and have always built this into my practice.
32. When the Inquiry first started it brought lots of memories back. My daughter had a son a few years ago, he had liver problems. I couldn't help but think that it had something to do with me.

Section 6. Treatment/Care/Support

33. I have not faced difficulty obtaining treatment, care and support in consequence of being infected.
34. I have never been offered counselling or psychological support. It would have been helpful to talk to someone when the first equivocal result came back. I had loads of questions and did lots of research but still did not really understand how I might be affected.

Section 7. Financial Assistance

35. I have never received any financial assistance. I was not aware of the Trusts and funds until I found out through the Inquiry. I have never tried to apply.

Section 8. Other Issues

36. Through my work as a midwife, I see patients getting blood transfusions every day. Half the time they are not consented properly and do not know that having the transfusion will mean that they won't be able to give blood in the future. I want us to give the patients this information, quite often it is borderline whether they need a transfusion or not and it is just given to them anyway, just in case. There needs to be more awareness of the ongoing risks.

Statement of Truth

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

Signed GRO-B

Dated 15.9.22