

ANONYMOUS

Witness Name: **GRO-B**
Statement No: WITN3718001
Dated: 18th November 2019

INFECTED BLOOD INQUIRY

FIRST WRITTEN STATEMENT OF **GRO-B**

I provide this statement in response to a request under Rule 9 of the Inquiry rules 2006 dated 17th September 2019. I adopt the paragraph numbering in the Rule 9 request for ease of reference.

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

1. Introduction

1. My name is **GRO-B** but I am known as **GRO-B**. My date of birth is **GRO-B** **GRO-B** and my address is known to the Inquiry.
2. My brother is **GRO-B: B** who was born with severe haemophilia A and infected with HIV and hepatitis C as a result of receiving contaminated blood products **B** passed away on **GRO-B** aged only 25.

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2.How Infected

1. The statement of my sister **GRO-B** goes into the full details about how **B** was infected and exhibits some of **B**'s medical records but I will briefly summarise how **B** was infected as my statement will focus on the impact of the infection.
2. **B** was born on **GRO-B** and there is a small age gap of less than two years between us. **B** was diagnosed with severe haemophilia A aged around six months.
3. Around the age of three **B** had a bleed on his brain and this left him with learning difficulties. **B** was diagnosed with HIV between 1984 and 1985 but I don't remember the exact date.

3.Other infections

1. My sister **GRO-B** discusses the hepatitis B and C information found in **B**'s medical records in her statement. I do have a vague memory of hepatitis C being mentioned by my parents but this would have been in the 1990's at the earliest.

4.Consent

1. I believe my parents would have been given some information about the blood products but I'm not sure as to how much. **B** needed the blood to keep him alive so I'm sure my parents would have felt they had little choice but to consent.

5.Impact

1. I remember some things differently from my siblings as I was living at home for the majority of the time that **B** was ill. I think it had a bigger effect on me as I saw everything but I have put it all to the back of my mind and have

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tried to forget the exact details. **B**'s diagnosis of HIV devastated us as a family and the completing of this statement is bringing it all back and it is very upsetting.

2. **B** was angry all of the time and couldn't understand why he had the HIV disease on top of the haemophilia and the bleed on his brain when he was three. **B** was not in a good mental state after being told he had HIV. He couldn't understand why him. His mental age was lower than that of his physical age due to the bleed he had on his brain. When he passed away his mental age was that of a twenty year old so when he was told he had HIV at fifteen or sixteen years old his mental age would have been that of around an eleven year old. **B** was definitely at a disadvantage due to his health issues.
3. **B** couldn't understand why he had haemophilia and HIV and our older brother **GRO-B** didn't have either. **B** wanted someone to relate to who shared the same experiences as him and this wasn't his older brother. This did cause a rift between them as **B** was angry that his brother didn't understand him.
4. When **B**'s diagnosis became public, my sister **GRO-B** has discussed the details of how this happened. **B** really wasn't treated right and the stigma was awful. We lived in a small town and everyone knew that **B** had HIV and there was even a march in the town against HIV because there was so much fear around HIV in the 1980's.
5. I remember on one occasion **B** had a fit on the floor at home and an ambulance was called. The ambulance came from our nearest hospital which was **GRO-B** in **GRO-B**. When the paramedics arrived and were told that **B** had HIV they wouldn't touch him. A second ambulance had to be called from **GRO-B** where the Haemophilia Centre is based and the paramedics took him there. In the 1980's even the paramedics were frightened of HIV.

6. Personally I was working in a factory in **GRO-B** at the time it became public that **B** had HIV and I remember several people talking about **B**. One person even said to one of my friends not to go near me as **B** had AIDS and she may catch it from me. People didn't know the difference between HIV and AIDS back then they just automatically assumed AIDS and associated it with all of the awful things the media portrayed about AIDS at the time and that it was a homosexual disease.
7. **B** was my younger brother and I loved him dearly. I didn't want anything to happen to him and I was very protective over him. Our family used to be so close and **B**'s death broke the family and we have never been as close since. I also lost my daughter who was twelve not long after **B**'s death so this has also had an effect on the whole family.
8. The stigma really wasn't very nice. People used to talk behind our backs and would stare at us. We lived in a small town where everyone knew everybody. Haemophilia singled **B** out to begin with and other kids couldn't relate to him.

6.Treatment/Care Support

1. As a family we knew we had to be careful of **B**'s infection. Dad was injecting **B** with the Factor VIII before and after he was diagnosed with HIV and knew that he had to wear gloves but I don't think we were given specific information just that we had to be careful. In time **B** wanted to inject himself so he was taught how to give himself the Factor VIII which meant my father then didn't have to do it.
2. **B**'s depression was terrible and it affected him and the family as a whole. We didn't know what to do for him or how to help him. **B** could be difficult at times but that was because he just didn't know how to express his anger and feelings. **B** had no social life or friends in our town after moving around different Boarding Schools during his school age years. Our father was **B**'s best friend.

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3. **B** had a lot of health problems. HIV attacks the weakest part of the body and for **B** this was his brain. Mum always said that she believed that **B** had a brain tumour in the run up to his death. She saw a change in **B** and just knew it was something in his brain. A tumour was found in the middle of **B**'s brain following a post mortem after he passed away.
4. Physically **B** was a big and strong boy. **B** was ill for the two weeks he was in hospital before he passed away. He didn't lose much weight before he died so didn't have the full blown AIDS look.
5. I know one of the hardest things for our parents was that they couldn't say a proper goodbye to **B** after he passed away. He was taken away in a black bag and they weren't allowed to see him again because of the HIV infection. I know that this affected our father particularly badly.
6. There was no specific psychological support relating to the HIV to either **B** or my family. I think the whole family could have, and still could, benefit from this as we have all blocked a lot of what happened out as it is just too painful.

7. Financial Assistance

1. **B** had something before he died but I'm not sure what. Mum had two payments I think after **B** passed away. The last payment was about seven years ago just before my father passed away. After Mum passed away we had to give most of the compensation she had received back. As Mum was on benefits the Government said that she hadn't declared the payments and they classed it as savings. Mum saw it as compensation which is why she never declared it as savings. Mum and Dad never felt comfortable spending the money as it wasn't going to bring **B** back.
2. Our mother and father always said that money wouldn't bring back their son. They wanted someone in power to own up and admit they were at fault. They wanted answers and for someone to say sorry.

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8. Other Issues

1. As a family we just want answers. All our parents ever wanted was answers as to why [B] was given the contaminated blood. As the remaining family it is up to us now to get the answers for [B] and our parents.

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Statement of Truth

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

Signed.

GRO-B

Dated 18.11.2019

