

ANONYMOUS

Witness Name: GRO-B

Statement No.: WITN0104001

Exhibits: Nil

Dated: 26th January 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 13 November 2018.

I, GRO-B will say as follows: -

Section 1. Introduction

1. My name is GRO-B. I am a married woman and live together with my husband and our three young children in the United States.
2. In this statement I intend to speak about my late father, GRO-B: F's infection with Hepatitis C (HCV) and the impact his death has had on my family and me. I understand that my mother, GRO-B GRO-B has provided a statement to the Inquiry, which details the nature of my father's illness, how he came to be infected and the subsequent consequences. Additionally, she has discussed the inquest into his death and the investigation carried out by North Wales Police.

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3. I do not, therefore, consider it necessary to repeat the information she has already provided to the Inquiry.

Section 2. How Affected

4. How my father came to be infected has already been recorded in my mother's statement.

Section 3. Other Infections

5. I do not believe that my father was infected with anything other than Hepatitis C as a result of infected blood products.

Section 4. Consent

6. I have no knowledge of any consent issues in relation to my father's infection or subsequent treatment.

Section 5. Impact

7. My mother has addressed the treatment my father received for Hepatitis C, the course of this treatment and what happened to him. I will not therefore repeat what she has detailed but will add what I am able.
8. Dad had to inject himself with Interferon three times a week. He would dread these injections and knew full well that in the following 24 hours, he would feel awful. He suffered with flu-like symptoms, including a fever, shivering, constant tiredness and loss of appetite.
9. I recall on one occasion trying to counsel him through the injections, emphasising that in the long run, they would make him feel at least a little better. I remember his tears as he explained that he did not want to feel so ill for the entire year.

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10. The feeling that I pressured him into injecting himself irks me to this day. I know the injections were designed to help but Dad was becoming increasingly weak and feeble as a result of them and it was extremely difficult for me to cope with the situation.
11. Dad was no longer able to help me with any of the things a young woman leaving home needs. He could not help me move house, or shift furniture, he could not help when I needed to buy a car, nor help decorate my house. He advised me as best he could, but I could feel his frustration and knew that he felt terrible for not being able to provide for me either emotionally or physically.
12. He was a relatively social person, and although he did not go out a great deal, he really enjoyed the company of others. We would regularly have family friends over to the house, rather than going out; money was tight, so babysitters and fancy dinners weren't possible.
13. I remember my parents would laugh and joke with their friends in one room, whilst us children would play board games in another room. I remember one particular conversation in which I recall my dad saying to one of his friends that there were no more pleasures left in life and that his illness had taken away the last one. My dad was not a big drinker, but did enjoy an occasional Port and Lemon or Brown Ale when his friends came over, in spite of his Hepatitis C infection.
14. His feelings were completely understandable: his job was gone, he could not be the father he wanted to be to his children, he couldn't even help with routine home maintenance jobs. He had previously enjoyed mechanical and hands on work, and was an expert toolmaker, but now, thanks to his illness, he could not do the things he loved, including tinkering with cars.

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16. My dad always wanted to visit the Rocky Mountains but, due to the physical effects that flying could have on his breathing, he was considered too ill to fly. Consequently, family holidays would start with a very long road trip. Mum and Dad would drive around Europe to get to holiday destinations. I remember on one occasion, the car was broken into whilst on holiday. We later found out that it was a drug dealer, who had stolen all of my dad's needles and syringes that he needed to administer his medication whilst he was away.
17. We had no choice; we had to get on with our lives and we did. My dad was not there to give me away when I got married in GRO-B 2005. This weighty role fell on my brother, and was an extremely emotional occasion. My three children never met their Granddad, which hurts so much, especially as my son is like him in many ways. It hurts me that these important milestones in my life could not be shared with my dad.
18. I do not remember there being any stigma associated with Dad's diagnosis but I also don't remember discussing it outside of the family.
19. Once my father became severely unwell, my mum had to become the major earner in the family, as Dad was unable to work. She had to do this whilst simultaneously bringing up my younger brother, GRO-B who was also suffering due to the situation at hand.
20. Mum was also responsible for getting my dad to his regular doctor's appointments, which left her with very little time or energy for her to help me deal with the issues I had.
21. In 1988, I went to study GRO-B in full knowledge of my father's diagnosis. Being away from him during this time was really

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difficult and was only made more difficult by visits home, during which I could see his deterioration.

22. When I did visit home, I became Dad's principal carer, which allowed my mum to have some free time or to do simple household chores and cook meals. Being his principal carer on these occasions did take its toll on me.

23. I struggled at college, and constantly felt guilty for being away from home. I worried that my Dad would die and that I would not be there when he did. It was a phone call I dreaded.

24. My grades were okay but I increasingly found myself skipping classes due to stress. I was suffering physically, by eating and drinking excessively. However, I suffered more psychologically and consequently required counselling to enable me to continue with my studies.

25. I was lucky enough to meet both a life-long friend and my husband at college and relied on them heavily to pull me through what I would describe as a very difficult and - at times - dark phase in my life.

26. Now that I live in the USA, I worry constantly about my mum being alone and unsupported. My brother is there and looks after her brilliantly, but I can't help but feel that this should have been my dad's role.

Section 6. Treatment/Care/Support

27. Any counselling I received was through my college and initiated from a standpoint of being a new college person who was struggling to cope. I was not offered counselling related to my father's illness or diagnosis.

Section 7. Financial Assistance

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28. I understand that the financial assistance my Mum has received is addressed in her statement.

Section 8. Other Issues

29. Everything was so much harder than it needed to be. My family were devastated to learn that better checks and balances on imported blood could have helped to avoid the infected blood issue. I can't help but think that I could have had a relationship with my dad, which is a normal expectation to have. My children have also missed out on knowing their Granddad. Instead, this has been taken away from us and I have been unable to share all of my milestones with my dad, much like he has been unable to share his with me.

Statement of Truth

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

Signed

GRO-B

Dated

26th Jan 2019