

ANONYMOUS

Witness Name: GRO-B

Statement No.: WITN0603001

Exhibits: WITN0603002 - 005

Dated: 9th February 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 28 November 2018.

I, GRO-B will say as follows: -

Section 1. Introduction

1. My name is GRO-B My date of birth is GRO-B 1984 and my address is known to the Inquiry. I am a married woman with three children and live together with my husband. I work as a teaching assistant in my local area. I intend to speak about GRO-B: M and GRO-B: B and their infections with HIV. In particular, the nature of their illnesses, how their illnesses affected them, the treatment they received and the impact it had on them and our lives together.

Section 2. How Affected

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2. I will firstly address [M]'s infection, and then [B]'s. I understand that [GRO-B] (W0822) has also provided a statement to the Inquiry, which provides the circumstances in which [M] came to be infected and other matters of which I would otherwise be unaware. I do not, therefore, consider it necessary to repeat her.

Section 3. Other Infections

3. To the best of my knowledge, [M] and [B] were infected with HIV only.

Section 4. Consent

4. I have no knowledge of any consent issues relating to [M]'s transfusion and subsequent treatment. Nor do I have any knowledge of consent issues relating to the treatment [B] received for HIV.

Section 5. Impact

5. As a child, life seemed pretty normal to me, but we didn't know of [GRO-B] [M]'s illness. When I was between the ages of 5 and 10, [M] would be in and out of hospital [GRO-B] [GRO-B]. For as long as I can remember, [M] has always had infections. I remember on one of my Nanna's birthdays that [M] wasn't there because she was in hospital. It did lead me to question why [GRO-B] didn't have to go to hospital regularly, too.
6. When [M] would be admitted in hospital, I would stay with my grandparents. I never wanted to go to school at these times and would pretend to be ill so I didn't have to go.

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7. As we got older, life became harder. I remember in the summer before I started high school, every time [M] ate, she was sick and there were kidney bowls all over the house. Towards the end, [M] couldn't eat at all, and would have to additionally take food supplement drinks.
8. When term started, [GRO-B] couldn't take us to school or pick us up. She would be terribly fatigued and suffer from migraines and had to have an IV drip at nighttime for medication.
9. I remember going to visit [M] one night when she was in hospital. She was having another transfusion. However, as she was being transfused, she became covered in rashes, and the transfusion stopped immediately.
10. [M] died on [GRO-B] 1995. Dad told us she had leukaemia, which is what we told our friends. However, her death certificate, exhibited as **WITN0603002** lists (1) Pneumonia (2) Acquired human immunodeficiency virus and (3) Cyto negalo virus encephalopathy as causes of death. Most of our family knew about her illness by the time she had died.
11. Life became harder still. Dad would start work at 6.30am and so [B] and I had to get ourselves up and ready for school, before getting a taxi to take us. One of the nuns at [B] school said that he was being dropped off far too early, before the school gates were even open. She would then make a point of getting him inside and would mother him. Dad would later take [B] to [GRO-B] Clinic during school lunchtime for treatment.
12. During school holidays, our aunts and grandparents would look after us. I don't recall [B] having friends to sleep over, which may have been due to his strict medical routine, but he otherwise had an inclusive childhood within the family.

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13. Mum and Dad tried to keep [B]'s life as normal as possible and I don't recall ever being told not to touch his blood. I do remember one occasion when we were on holiday in Italy, [B] climbed over a barbed wire fence and cut his leg open. Mum and Dad ran to him immediately to cover the wound.
14. I remember going on the computer we had received from the Eileen Trust one night. I opened Word and saw a letter written by my Dad. It said [GRO-B] and [GRO-B] have HIV'. This was before [B] was told he was HIV+ and was the first time HIV had ever been mentioned in the house. I didn't know what it was, but I knew it was bad. I asked Dad if it was true and he said it wasn't. I asked him to promise it wasn't true, which he did. I believed him. When I went on the computer the next day, the letter was gone. This was around a year before [B] was told of his illness.
15. [B] was told he was HIV+ when he was 14 or 15. It was the same time we were told about [M] having HIV. We had spent the day at the beach with my dad's girlfriend, now wife, [GRO-B]. I had been told the week before that they were going to tell [B] and that they were going to get someone in to support Dad. The conversation began with talking about [M]'s illness, before moving on to [B]'s. [B] turned to me and asked if I knew, so I said 'yes'. He then asked Dad, 'does this mean I can't have children?' I never told [B] about the letter I had found and I don't think he was pleased that I knew before him.
16. Around a year later, I had a friend over to stay the night. For some reason I went into [B]'s room at around 11pm, I think after hearing a "clonk". I saw [B] in his bed and loads of alcohol bottles under it. Dad told me to call Jackie Rogers or Mary Reece and then the hospital. Either Jackie or Mary was a counsellor, and the other was a doctor based at [GRO-B] Clinic. [B] had his stomach pumped and remained in hospital for a couple of days. [B] didn't drink before he

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found out about his illness, so I attribute his drinking to his diagnosis. He was on a lot of medication that was affected by alcohol. I think he felt quite isolated, as he couldn't talk to his friends about it.

17. On one occasion when [B] was a teenager, he got shingles. Dad took him to his GP, Dr [GRO-B] at [GRO-B] Surgery. He was told he had a virus and was sent home. A few days later, [B] wasn't getting any better and we realised he had shingles. I think Dad must have taken him somewhere else for treatment.
18. My relationship with my Dad had always been normal when [M] was alive. However, a couple of years after [M] died, Dad told us about a "female friend". I became very off with him, and he stopped seeing her. This was [GRO-B] I knew who she was because she was a TA at my secondary school. When I was around 15 or 16, she came on the scene again but during this time my relationship with Dad remained okay. Dad later proposed to [GRO-B] I told him that if she moved in, I would move out. I moved out of our family home just before my 18th birthday, which coincided with [GRO-B] moving in.
19. [B] however, didn't have a choice, and had to stay behind. He studied at [GRO-B] College and got a qualification in [GRO-B] which allowed him to obtain an apprenticeship in [GRO-B]
20. I moved in with my boyfriend at the time and when we split up, Dad offered for me to move back in, which I declined. I have often wondered if my issue was solely with [GRO-B] or whether I would have had an issue with any woman. I think it might have been better if Dad had moved into another house with [GRO-B] instead of staying in our family home.
21. My relationship with my dad was very on and off after that. I began talking to him again after I met my now-husband, [GRO-B] We would only ever be off because of [GRO-B] she would stir something up. I

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- remember one father's day going over to my dad's house. [GRO-B] was offended that I didn't say hello to her individually and told Dad. He shoved the gift I had given him back at me and I left. It would always be silly, pathetic things that caused arguments.
22. Dad did give me away at my wedding and things were still fine after my first child was born but after my second, things went bad. Dad would start texting my husband, asking for him to take our eldest child around. I didn't understand why he wanted to know my children, but not me. I made sure that he knew he was welcome to come to our house, but that the children wouldn't go to his without me.
23. One Sunday morning in May 2013, [GRO-B] rang the house and [GRO-B] answered the phone. He took a note, which I still have and have showed the Inquiry team. [GRO-B] threatened to call social services if we didn't allow them to see them. I called my aunts and grandparents and told them. They were furious. To this day, I don't know if my dad knows that phone call took place.
24. The final straw came shortly after that, when I went to collect my car from the garage next to where my dad works. I got in the car and saw my dad stood on the other side. He looked in and asked where the children were. When I said they were at nursery, all he said was 'Oh' and walked away. It was then that I realised he didn't want to know me. We haven't spoken since. I don't know where he lives and have deleted both his and [GRO-B]'s phone numbers.
25. When they later got married, Dad's relationship with [B] became toxic. [B] moved in with our Auntie [GRO-B] and worked for her for a while, when he could, before buying a caravan in the area, which he moved into aged 19.
26. On one occasion, [B] missed a hospital appointment because he was unwell. The doctor called Dad's home and [GRO-B] answered.

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- [B] became angry and they fell out, [B] came to hate [GRO-B] for things like this.
27. [B] had to inject himself in his stomach, but hated needles, and eventually stopped taking his medication. He also became very anaemic, fatigued and looked withdrawn and pale.
28. [B] had a lot of friends stay with him in the caravan and they would frequently drink and later, smoked cannabis together. It became evident to Dad that [B] wasn't taking his medication, but he couldn't ring up the hospital to find out, given [B]'s age.
29. When he had a bout of illness in 2005, he was admitted to the specialist ward in Brighton. [B] didn't want us to see him. I did go to visit him, however, and I remember the nurses watching me walk into the room. I was frightened. [B] was wearing shorts and lying on his front; he couldn't even turn around to face me. He was skeletal. When he did see me, he was so angry and I left crying.
30. His colleagues assumed he was at our local hospital, [GRO-B] and asked which Ward he was on, so that they could send him a card. He didn't tell them where he was.
31. It got to a point where he could no longer work and he had to give up his job. He had never disclosed his HIV status on his job application. He worked for a local engineering company; he was really clever, and could rebuild an engine. However, he was mainly office based, which was not what he wanted, but it suited his capabilities.
32. During this time, [B] had a girlfriend, who knew about his illness. [B] was obsessed with her. When they broke up [B] didn't take it very well. [GRO-B] [B] and whilst they were together, [B] was subject to a series of assaults. He had his car, a mini that he [GRO-B] had done up, "interfered with". He was

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driving along when the car suddenly span out of control and the bolts on one of the wheels came off. No car [B] ever worked on had a problem like that.

33. On another occasion, [B] was glassed in the eye in a pub in [GRO-B]. He told us an ambulance had collected him from the pub. A week later, I went in to ask if anyone had called an ambulance there the week before, but there was no record of one attending at the pub. When he was in hospital recovering, [GRO-B] was always at his bedside. I think she was involved in these and it was her guilty conscience keeping her there. One day my dad went to the hospital and asked her to leave.
34. On a third occasion, [B] was hit on the hand with a crowbar. There were so many things happening, that it was hard to keep track of what was going on. The odd thing in all of this was that the whole time, [GRO-B]'s brother, [GRO-B] and cousin, [GRO-B] were very good friends with [B].
35. One night, [B] went to [GRO-B] with [GRO-B]. He wasn't drinking, though didn't have his own car with him. He took [GRO-B] van, and went home to get his car. All the while, he was calling [GRO-B]. She contacted me to say that she was worried as [B] kept calling her to tell her he was going to kill himself. He would regularly get drunk in his caravan and call Dad, saying the same. Each time, Dad would run around and find [B] asleep.
36. On this night, however, [GRO-B] 2007, CCTV showed him driving out of the caravan park in his car, and he drove to Beachy Head, 20 miles away. He had been seen up there before. When he got there, he called Dad and said, 'This is it, I'm going to kill myself', though he wouldn't tell Dad where he was. He also called and texted [GRO-B] multiple times. He then jumped off Beachy Head.

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37. Dad went around that night and called the police because [B] wasn't there. I don't know if [B] ever sought help for his mental health. He had made comments to his friends like, 'I won't be around for my 22nd birthday', and 'If something happened to me, would you speak at my funeral?'
38. An inquest into [B]'s death was held at [GRO-B] Civic Centre, on my birthday. Dad didn't want anyone to go, so only he, [GRO-B] and myself attended. The toxicology showed evidence of cocaine and alcohol in [B]'s system. I exhibit [B]'s death certificate as **WITN0603003**.
39. I didn't tell my friends about [B]'s HIV status, or why he killed himself. It wasn't until the inquest that they found out. The result of the inquest was reported on the front page of the [GRO-B] as [GRO-B] which is exhibited as **WITN0603004**. The journalist from [GRO-B] was in the room. We were talking to her afterwards and I wanted to grab her notebook from her. We asked her to respect our wishes regarding [B]'s HIV status. However, she disclosed it anyway.
40. There was also a journalist from [GRO-B] present, who we invited to the house so we could give our account to him. [B]'s death was on the front page with the headline [GRO-B] and is exhibited as **WITN0603005**.
41. We were always aware of the stigma attached to HIV. We weren't allowed to talk about it or tell anyone about [M] or [B]
42. [B]'s death had an awful impact on the family. Some people must have had their ideas about [B]'s HIV, but we didn't have any real retaliation. A couple of my friends rang up and asked if it was true that [B] had HIV. I haven't spoken to one of those people since then.

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43. I found out after he died that [B] had been to the [GRO-B] clinic with one of his girlfriends to enquire as to how he might have children.
44. At the time of the inquest I worked with around 1000 people and dreaded talking to them. I met with a couple of people and asked them to tell other people and to tell them not to ask questions. I took two weeks off after [B] died, but went straight back to work after the inquest.
45. The first Christmas after he died was horrendous, with another person missing at the table. My children already ask questions about [B] [M] and [B] I tell them that [M] was ill and that the doctors couldn't make her better, as there wasn't any medicine available then. I say the same thing about my brother. They have also asked if that means I am going to die, because [B] was so young when he died. I hate lying to them, but don't want to tell them what happened yet.
46. If I meet someone new now, I don't mention [B] if they don't already know about him.
47. I didn't know I had been tested for HIV as a child, and neither my auntie nor dad could remember when I had been tested. After meeting my husband (when I was around 20) I went with my dad to be tested. The test came back negative.

Section 6. Treatment/Care/Support

48. When I was around 12 or 13, my dad would see a counsellor at our home. She encouraged Dad to tell [B] of his diagnosis, though this didn't happen for some years. Dad would also try to get [B] and I to speak to the counsellor, though I don't think [B] did. [GRO-B]
[GRO-B]

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49. I did accept some counselling sessions from work because of how I felt about [M] and my insecurities. I feel like I have been lied to again and again and have been let down by those closest to me.
50. Due to the circumstances of how [M] came to be infected, I was terrified of giving birth to my first child, and refused to sign the consent form to an emergency transfusion, should I have required one. I had to have counselling to help me cope with giving birth.
51. The Inquiry Team have made me aware of the support provided by the British Red Cross.

Section 7. Financial Assistance

52. Two to three years before [M] died, she received around £60,000-£80,000. My grandfather has since told me that a small group of people had to sign a waiver, agreeing that they would not seek further compensation in the future, which [M] signed. She used the money to pay off the mortgage on the house and we went on a few family holidays in the final years before she died.
53. We received a computer from the Eileen Trust after [M] died. We had asked for family flowers only, and that funeral donations were to be made to the undertaker, to be given to the Eileen Trust.
54. I'm sure I remember being told that Dad was buying several TVs for the [GRO-B] Ward, which I think he paid for with money received from the funeral.
55. I think [B] received around £20,000 from the Government at some point. He used it to buy his caravan and his car. He would also claim funds back from the Eileen Trust, such as the cost of his flights to go on holiday.

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Section 8. Other Issues

56. There was a nurse on the [GRO-B] Ward called either Jill Stimpson or Jill Simpson. She became close with [M] When [M] died, Jill came to the funeral. Later, she would come around to our house and we would go around to hers. She would stay late into the night and would drink with, and confide in Dad.

57.

[GRO-B]

58. Neither [GRO-B] nor I have told anyone in the family that we are making statements to the Inquiry.

Statement of Truth

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

Signed

[GRO-B]

Dated 9.2.19