

ANONYMOUS

Witness Name: Tom GRO-B

Statement No: WITN1497001

Exhibits: 0

Dated: February 2019

INFECTED BLOOD INQUIRY

FIRST WRITTEN STATEMENT OF TOM GRO-B

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

Section 1. Introduction

1. My name is Tom GRO-B DOB GRO-B and I live at GRO-B GRO-B. I am married with one child and two step-children.
2. My father, GRO-B: F DOB GRO-B died on GRO-B at the age of 50 after being infected with HIV as a result of treatment with contaminated blood products.
3. Other members of my immediate family, including my mother, will also be providing statements to the Inquiry. I am one of five siblings.
4. This witness statement has been prepared without the benefit of access to my late father's full medical records. If and in so far as I have been provided with limited records the relevant entries are set out in the medical chronology at the end of this statement.

ANONYMOUS

Section 2. How Affected

5. My father suffered from Haemophilia A and was treated with Factor VIII.
6. I was only a child when my father was infected so I do not have much information about this time. This will be covered in detail in my mother's statement.

Section 3. Other Infections

7. Given what I have learnt about the Contaminated Blood Scandal over the years I believe that my father was also exposed to Hepatitis C along with all the other haemophiliacs who received contaminated factor concentrate.

Section 4. Consent

8. This is not something that I am able to comment on. My mother's statement will address this issue.

Section 5. Impact of the Infection

9. I first became aware of my father's HIV status around 1990. I think I was told because he had to stop working and he lost a lot of weight, and it was therefore becoming more difficult for my parents to hide what was going on.
10. I believe he told my older siblings before me. I understand their reasoning in not telling us as we were very young.
11. Dad told me that he had HIV and that it had developed into full blown AIDS. At that time I was unaware that he had been infected several years before. I believe he was mainly treated at the Queen Elizabeth Hospital in Birmingham.

ANONYMOUS

12. My younger brother (Matthew) and I were approaching our GCSEs when we found out about Dad's infection.
13. As we were a catholic family and due to the stigma attached at the time, it was a difficult thing to get our heads around. We closed down as a family and cut ourselves off. We were told not to tell anyone and we didn't; not even our best friends. As a result I felt very isolated, particularly at school.
14. My teachers were only informed what had happened after Dad died
15. My older siblings had moved out to university and came home sporadically, so it was up to me and Matthew to help Mum to care for Dad. Towards the end it was horrendous. We simply had no choice but to watch him deteriorate on a daily basis. We had to carry him to the toilet and I know this would have been hugely embarrassing for him. Mum bore the brunt of it and she was a full time carer to him.
16. He lost his faculties. Matthew and I often heard him calling out for us but Mum didn't want us to see him like that; she wanted us to remember him as he had been – strong and gregarious.
17. He died in GRO-B 1993 at home. They had moved a hospital bed into the house and Dad had a catheter installed in his chest to help administer medication which was extremely uncomfortable for him.
18. I didn't tell anyone at the time but I had to see him one last time so I snuck in to see him. They had already put him in the body bag and that is my last memory of my father; seeing him in a body bag. I almost wish I hadn't done it. It was absolutely horrific.
19. Dad worked at Porsche before his health deteriorated to the point that he could no longer work. Cars were his passion; he was crazy about them.

ANONYMOUS

20. As a family we all dealt with Dad's death individually; it was never something we were able to talk about together.

21. Dad was at the prime of his life when this all happened to him. He was a funny man and a great Dad; we all loved him. I wish I could have said goodbye to him properly and talked to him more towards the end. I know Mum was trying to protect us by keeping us away but I regret now not having tried harder.

22. I don't think I did as well as I could have done in my GCSEs. I struggled with my A Levels as I couldn't concentrate and suffered from depression. I had to go to night school after my A Levels to get enough UCAS points to get into university.

23. It took me a long time to break into who I was. I was very depressed and shy throughout my twenties and early thirties, and it is only now that I feel I have actually come through losing my Dad and settled into my own life.

24. I got married in 2010 and I currently work at University as a library systems officer. Prior to that I had a similar job working for Cheshire Council.

Section 6. Treatment/care/support

25. I think my mum told me there may be some counselling available through the MacFarlane Trust however I was a self-conscious teenager and didn't want to take this up. For the most part I just wanted to deal with everything myself. I never spoke to anyone and I never took anti-depressants.

26. Mum took a lot of strength from the Church and her faith. She is the bravest, most courageous person I know. I don't know how she has managed to carry on given everything she has been through.

ANONYMOUS

27. More recently, when I have been able to open up about my Dad, it was very heartening to find how supportive people were.

Section 7. Financial Assistance

28. I have not had any dealings with the various Trusts/Funds.

Section 8. Other Issues

29. My Dad was cheated out of a really good life. He worked hard and he provided for his family. He was well loved by his friends and he should be here now. My family are still feeling the effects of his death. It has a decimating effect spreading out across the family life.

Anonymity

30. I wish to remain anonymous – I agree to my first name being used only.

31. I will be able to give oral evidence to the Inquiry subject to my availability on the dates in question.

Statement of Truth

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

Signed GRO-B

Dated 26/2/19