

ANONYMOUS

Witness Name GRO-B

Statement No: WITN3664001

Exhibits: 0

Dated: September 2019

INFECTED BLOOD INQUIRY

FIRST WRITTEN STATEMENT OF GRO-B

I, GRO-B will say as follows:-

Section 1. Introduction

1. My name is GRO-B and I was born on GRO-B I live at GRO-B
GRO-B I am married to GRO-B: H
who has also provided a witness statement for the Inquiry. One of my four
children, GRO-B has also provided a witness statement for
the Inquiry.
2. I make this statement as an affected wife of H, who was infected with
HIV, Hepatitis C and Hepatitis B from contaminated Factor VIII concentrates.
3. This witness statement has been prepared without the benefit of access
to my husband's medical records.

Section 2. How Infected

4. My husband has severe Haemophilia A with a zero percent clotting factor. He
initially received Cryoprecipitate before progressing to Factor VIII

ANONYMOUS

concentrates when they became available; receiving large quantities of the same throughout the 1970s and 1980s.

5. He was treated at the York District Hospital ("the Hospital") under Dr Wiley.
6. He was not given any information or warning in relation to the risk of infection from Factor VIII concentrates.
7. My husband was infected with HIV, Hepatitis C (Non-A Non-B [NANB] Hepatitis as it was known then) and Hepatitis B. I believe that he was infected with all three viruses in the 1980s. As far as I am aware his first positive test for all three viruses was in 1984 and this was when he was told about his infections.
8. My husband received a letter from Dr Wiley in mid 1984 advising that he had been infected with HIV. He therefore telephoned the Hospital because he was really frightened as the media was portraying AIDS in a terrible light at this time. Dr Wiley did not want to speak to him and it was a real struggle to obtain an appointment with him. However, he finally agreed that he would see my husband, but for a maximum of only 10 minutes.
9. I accompanied him to the meeting with Dr Wiley, who was very rude and dismissive and it was plainly evident that he had no time for my husband, despite the enormity of the situation which we were both facing. He asked what was it that my husband wanted to know. My husband replied *"is it ok to kiss or do I need to separate myself from my wife"*. Dr Wiley just said *"oh yes you have got it just use extra protection with your wife, good day"*. We received absolutely no information or advice to allow us to understand or manage my husband's HIV.
10. We returned home in complete shock not knowing what to think. We were both petrified because we had only got married in the May of 1984 and we had young children.

ANONYMOUS

11. I remember my husband and I attended a further meeting with Dr Wiley in 1984 where he broke the news to us that my husband was infected with both NANB Hepatitis and Hepatitis B. He was very curt, matter of fact and completely dismissive in the manner in which he imparted this news.
12. It was not until the late 1980s, when my husband and I travelled to the Churchill Hospital in Oxford to see Dr Rizza and Dr Matthews, that our minds were put at rest in relation to the infections. My husband was provided with, for the first time, solid factual and practical information and we felt that we actually mattered. I was tested, I believe for all three viruses, at this time and thankfully my results were negative.

Section 3. Other Infections

13. My husband received a letter advising that he had been put at risk of vCJD. I am unsure as to the date of this letter.

Section 4. Consent

14. My husband was tested for various viruses without his knowledge and therefore without his consent. Evidence for this is the fact that my husband had no idea that he was being tested for HIV, NANB Hepatitis and Hepatitis B in 1984. Furthermore, given the above it is preposterous to think that he was only tested on these three occasions.

Section 5. Impact

15. It has been so hard to watch my beloved husband suffer as a result of these viruses. The physical and mental effects have knocked him for six. When I look back at our life before tragedy struck, I remember a man with a fantastic sense of humour who made me laugh and laugh. We used to drop the children at school and go out for coffee or lunch together. We had such a happy marriage and now we don't really have any quality of married life. We

ANONYMOUS

also argue a lot now which was something we never really did prior to the infections.

16. I didn't work because I had to look after the children and also care for my husband once the infections adversely affected his health. I had to have very broad shoulders and sometimes I wonder how I appeared to cope so well.

17. I found it very stressful having to live an "almost covert life". We lived in a very small town called [GRO-B] and everyone knew everyone and my [GRO-B] which only added to this. Apart from my husband, the only person I could discuss the infections with was my late aunt. I trusted her with my life and I knew that she would never tell a soul.

18. It broke my heart when my husband made an attempt on his life which happened about 8 years ago whilst he was having treatment for his Hepatitis C. I returned from the hairdressers to find him unresponsive having taken an overdose of tablets. I called our GP, Dr [GRO-B] who attended immediately. He arranged for an ambulance to take my husband to the Hospital.

19. While we were at the Hospital with my husband, my daughter [GRO-B] turned up and she was still unaware at this time that her father was infected. She was aged about 30 at the time and while she was in the room with us, a nurse blurted out about her father's HIV despite the hospital records clearly recording that this must only be discussed with my husband or me. [GRO-B] was completely shell shocked; it was such a horrid way to find out. She was also really upset with me keeping such a secret from her for so long. Once the shock had worn off [GRO-B] said she wanted to help and she had had no idea that for all those years while she was at school, I was caring for her infected father. [GRO-B] is the most wonderful, caring and helpful daughter. She wanted to do anything she could to help her father and me.

20. Shortly after [GRO-B] found out, one of my sons confronted me and said something like "I have brains mum, I know what dad has got". He had worked it out but he never mentioned it again.

Section 6. Treatment/Care/Support

21. My husband was treated like a leper by the NHS as a result of his infections. He was given plastic plates, knives and forks to eat his meals with when he was an inpatient at the Hospital. The medical professionals who dealt with my husband were fully masked and gloved. This was upsetting, not only for me, but for my husband. The Hospital also insisted that I wear a mask when I visited my husband which was nonsensical as I did not do the same at home.
22. My husband and I were not impressed with the Hospital's serious breach of patient confidentiality which occurred in relation to my husband's viruses. An employee of the Hospital telephoned our home in the latter part of 1984 to advise that they had erroneously sent us a "*bad batch*" of Factor VIII concentrates and were therefore requesting return of the same. I answered the telephone and told them that my husband had already started using the "*bad batch*". The employee told me that it would not matter because "*he is already infected*". I could have been the cleaner or anyone else who happened to answer the telephone that day. The Hospital employee never asked who she was speaking to.
23. Neither myself nor my husband were offered any counselling or psychological support. My husband and I supported each other and dealt with matters alone, although I did disclose my husband's infections to my late aunt who took the secret to her grave.

Section 7. Financial Assistance

24. My husband received a payment, in connection with what had happened to him, for £20,000 which arrived into his bank account about 30 years ago but I am unsure as to where it came from.
25. I can't really recall much about the support he received from the Skipton Fund and the Macfarlane Trust. I do remember that he went without any support for

ANONYMOUS

many years and when he did receive anything it felt like he had had to beg for it.

26. He now receives just over £3,666.66 per month from the EIBSS together with a £500 winter fuel payment.

Section 8. Other Issues

27. I want the UK Government to finally tell the truth and I want to know why they intentionally destroyed so many medical records.

28. I want an apology and I want assurances that such a tragedy will never reoccur.

Anonymity

29. I do want to apply for anonymity and I do not wish to give oral evidence to the Inquiry.

Statement of Truth

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

Signed...

GRO-B

Dated.....

2 - 10 - 2019