

Witness Name:

GRO-B

Statement No.: WITN6990001

Exhibits: Nil

Dated: 8th July 2022

INFECTED BLOOD INQUIRY

SUPPLEMENTARY STATEMENT OF

GRO-B

I provide this statement in response to a request under Rule 9 of the Inquiry Rules 2006 dated 10 January 2022.

I, GRO-B will say as follows: -

Section 1. Introduction

1. My name is GRO-B. My date of birth and address are known to the Inquiry.
2. After leaving school I served abroad in the Army. Following that, I joined the Metropolitan Police where I currently serve as a Police Constable. I have two sons from my previous marriage, as well as three stepchildren from my second marriage.
3. I had one brother, GRO-B, whom I believe was infected with HCV via blood-based hormone treatments, administered either by injection or at some stage by blood transfusion, during his time at Great Ormond Street Hospital. These were used to treat the physical defects he was born with as a result of my father, GRO-B's (See statement WITN6991001) exposure to radiation in Operation GRO-B - the British Nuclear testing programme in the GRO-B the GRO-B.

4. I intend to speak about [B]'s infection with HCV. In particular, the impact that the infection had on him, and our family.

Section 2. Impact

5. Growing up, I remember most of my childhood being spent travelling to and from Great Ormond Street Hospital where [B] was being treated.
6. As [B] was so unwell, his health was the number one priority. As a result, growing up I felt that all the attention was on [B] which did lead to some acrimony at times between us but nothing that was never soon forgotten.
7. [B] was my older brother and only sibling. However, due to [B]'s illnesses, the sibling roles were reversed.
8. Growing up, I played the role of the older, protective brother to [B]. As [B] was often perceived as 'not normal', he would often get picked on, and I would get involved to defend him. Often, it was older, bigger people picking on [B] which meant I ended up with a lot of cuts and bruises whilst growing up.
9. It was difficult growing up with a 'backward' brother. Whereas I loved him and looked up to him, I constantly had to look out for him, and as a result of his lack of development both physically and mentally, we did not grow up together - as brothers should do living in the same household
10. There were often times when I wanted to do something that [B] himself wanted to do but could not. For instance [B] had dreams of becoming a chef, so when I became a chef myself, although he was happy for me and very proud, he was also very frustrated. This same frustration surfaced again when I joined the military. Our father had been in the RAF and had served for 12 years. It seemed natural to me to follow in his footsteps. However, [B] could not enlist and I think that fact hurt him inside quite a bit.

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11. I often feel that I lived [B]'s life for him. [B] was always upset that I got married and had a family, and although he was a very loving uncle to my offspring I know that this rubbed on him. His condition and the related effects ensured that he could never have a family of his own and this was something that he always wanted and found very difficult to deal with.
12. Growing up, I would occasionally accompany [B] to the hospital when my parents could not. This included attending the hospital with [B] to have his testicular implants put in. I remember this being a regular occurrence, and [B] would have to go in every three months to be monitored and have the implants checked out.
13. One instance stands out when I was about 15 years of age. I went with [B] to GRO-B hospital, to the A & E, I think [B] was treated there by the doctors who cut a small hole in his stomach and implanted a hormone capsule or at least that is what I understood it to be. He was then given a couple of stitches and we went home.
14. I have not been tested for HCV, and I do not remember anyone ever mentioning [B]'s infection and the risk of cross-contamination to me. I have helped with care for [B] in the past but only sparingly and the risk of exposure I believe is low.
15. I left home in 1984 when I was 18 and went overseas. When I returned, I was never involved with the day-to-day stuff relating to [B]'s illnesses. In the early days, I was too young, and in the later years, I was busy raising two children of my own and was subconsciously distanced from helping [B] by an ex-wife who did not want anything to do with him. She was not sympathetic to his condition or the drawbacks it could pose thus to an extent my contact was limited.
16. I did try to support my parents where I could and I could see the toll that years of providing care and assistance had taken on my mum and dad. But with

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Forces life and a family to look after my contribution at that time was only occasional.

17. I am not sure when I first became aware that **B** was infected with HCV although it must have been around 2009/10. It was a bitter blow considering the problems he already had. I myself can remember being gobsmacked. I knew what HCV was and how it could be contracted and it was not something that **B** would come across in his everyday life. I know my parents were shocked. None of us could understand how he could contract such an infection. I don't personally recall any particular symptoms that **B** complained of although I am aware from my dad that he suffered with lesions and mottling on his skin.
18. I know my brother and he never used drugs of any type nor did he have any tattoos. He was never medically treated overseas. There are no other risk factors for him other than this hormone treatment which lasted for many years.
19. Whilst **B**'s death in 2011 was upsetting for all of us, there was an element of 'we can be normal now'. Coupled with the feelings of sadness was a tinge of relief. This was especially true due to **B**'s condition in the later years when he could not be left alone.
20. I mentioned the toll it took on them not only emotionally but on both of their health. My mother in particular went downhill fast. She struggled before and was often very low and had turned to alcohol but after **B** passed away, she seemed to give up on life. I can't say his death hastened her demise as it was 10 years later but her quality of life was never the same again.

Section 3. Financial Assistance

21. I believe that I heard about the Skipton Fund through Dad himself. He probably picked it up on the news on the television or in the paper.

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22. I have now applied to the Great Ormond Street Hospital for copies of [B]'s medical records, and have received a response from them. The records are extensive and have yet to be examined. I want answers about the hormone treatment and how it was given. Was it solely injection or was a transfusion used?

23. In December 2011 I applied with [B]'s information as it was known then. However, in March 2012 the application was refused.

24. I do not believe that much information was given to me regarding the reason refusal. I am aware that the letter mentions that [B] cleared the infection without treatment and that there is no "evidence of chronic infection after the cure phase". Once I received the refusal, I did not know what the appeals process was or how to go about it. I really only wanted answers. I did not need the money, nor was it about the money, and as such I did not bother further. It was just that I thought if there was some type of payment it may help my parents after all they had been through. Besides that, it was simply prolonging the suffering for my mother and father, continually dragging up the past.

25. No amount of money will make up for losing [B]. Nothing can atone for the hurt my parents have suffered but it would have been nice to get them answers as to what killed their son and maybe something financial if they were due it.

26. Part of the reason for applying for the medical records is that there was never much information provided about what actually happened to [B]. How did he become infected? When exactly? Why was it not picked up until so late?

Section 3. Other Issues

27. I do not know what the outcome of the Infected Blood Inquiry will be. However, I am not happy about what has happened. [B] was let down by

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the system, and in my opinion the HCV infection may have contributed to his other illnesses or may even have had a negative impact on the medication he was prescribed for them. It is strange that he deteriorated so quickly after that condition was diagnosed

28. I do not understand why the UK was not testing for viruses such as HCV in the products they were giving patients, especially when the UK has one of the best healthcare systems in the world.

The facts in this statement are true to the best of my knowledge.

Signed

GRO-B

Dated

X 8th July 2022