

ANONYMOUS

Witness Name: GRO-B

Statement No: WITN2896001

Exhibits: 0

Dated: May 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 of GRO-B
GRO-B was born on GRO-B My father is GRO-B: F
who contracted Hepatitis C as a result of contaminated Factor VIII. My mother
is GRO-B I have a younger sister, GRO-B My father, mother and
sister have all provided witness statements to the Inquiry.
2. Due to financial difficulties, I currently reside with my parents while I struggle
to save for a place of my own and I am currently planning a career change.
3. **This statement has been prepared without the benefit of access to my
father's full medical records; my father's witness statement contains a
number of exhibited medical records.**

Section 2. How Affected

4. My father has mild Haemophilia A with a clotting factor of 9%.

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5. He received Factor VIII concentrate from 1978 onwards.
6. My father's consultant was Dr Savidge and his treating hospitals were St Thomas', Guy's and King's College.
7. I believe that my father was infected with Hepatitis C on 27th October 1986 when he was given Factor VIII concentrate during a hip replacement operation.
8. My father was given absolutely no information in relation to the risks of receiving Factor VIII concentrate.
9. My father was told that he had been infected with Hepatitis C in or around the summer of 1993 during a routine appointment with Dr Savidge. My father was told that there was nothing to worry about and he actually said "*half the country is infected*". Dr Savidge did not give my father sufficient information to allow him to understand or manage his infection. He was given no information regarding the risks of transmission.

Section 3. Other Infections

10. It was not until 2013 that my father received a letter, in connection with a colonoscopy, which confirmed that he had not been exposed to vCJD.

Section 4. Consent

11. My father was tested for Hepatitis B (5th December 1991), Hepatitis C (5th December 1991) and HIV (27th October 1986 and 6th January 1987) without his knowledge and therefore without his consent.

Section 5. Impact

12. My father's infection with Hepatitis C effectively ruined what could have been the happiest childhood for my sister and me.
13. From a very young age, I watched my father being too fatigued, ill and in pain to be cognitively present and patient throughout my childhood.
14. I watched him lose his mobility, hair, sleep, independence, happiness, energy, self worth and self esteem.
15. My father then went on to develop bowel cancer in 2013 and I believe that this was brought about by the constant mental fatigue, stress, insomnia and weakened immune system which all arose from his infection with Hepatitis C.
16. My father undertook different iterations of the Interferon treatment in an attempt to neutralise the Hepatitis C. These were vastly unsuccessful and under these treatments my father would be sprawled out on the sofa, violently unwell and "zombified". My father's mental acuteness virtually disappeared overnight and he was fatigued, unsocial and very depressed.
17. Due to the fact that my father was in no fit condition to work, my mother had to assume the role of "*the man*" in the household while my sister and I grew up. My mother was also effectively a "*single mum*" and was further burdened with responsibility, pressure and stress. My mother also took on the role of a "*nurse*" in caring for my poorly father whilst still administering his thrice weekly Factor VIII injections. Furthermore at around this time, my stroke afflicted grandfather also lived with us and my mother had to care for him as well as doing all of the above.
18. I have witnessed my parents struggle and argue through significant debt to cope and get by raising my sister and me. Costly school trips, family holidays and gifts were totally out of the question. Burdened with the financial responsibility to earn, I recall my mother having to work night shifts through the evening at GRO-B to break financially less than even. I remember her

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being all groggy and fatigued trying to run and organise the family home in tandem with caring for my father, sister and me. This affected the quality time and memories I have of her.

19. My parents never drank or went out. They had to rely upon help from my grandparents to assist with childcare for some of the father's hospital appointments. If my mother could not get a relative to look after us, she would have to drive to the hospital once the school day had finished and this was a three hour round trip to London.
20. My childhood has been immensely impacted growing up under the shadow of my father's infection. I remember this as a very difficult, dark and confusing time.
21. Growing up I have never had a natural male role model which still has repercussions today in terms of seeking out mentors and direction. Due to my father being so poorly, both physically and mentally due to anxiety and panic attacks, he never taught or played any sport with me. He never took me to watch a football game, despite the fact that I was an avid sportsman and both of us were massive Crystal Palace fans. This was really upsetting and a childhood friend's father took me instead but it did not compare to being taken to such events by ones' father.
22. Growing up I have missed out on those key "*father and son*" activities which many sons simply take for granted. I have had to make mistakes discovering being a "*man*" on my own. I helped my mother with all the heavy lifting, DIY, decorating, garage and loft storage, gardening and the like. In not having a male role model, I experienced problems in adolescence with anger, maturity and a cynical world view which has stunted my own growth and development.
23. Even at the family level, I always felt that there was a level of ostracisation from my father. My mother would always make sure that mine and my sister's toothbrushes and razors were stored separately, in case of using our father's in error.

24. I have seen my mother burdened with stress and over responsibility trying to cope with everything. I do not know how she has managed to do so. She would occasionally have panic attacks and break downs.
25. Throughout school, I always had a lingering and dark understanding of the situation and that affected both my school and college studies and my resultant performance. I was focused on the fact that my father could die and I developed a fatalistic outlook on life and basically underachieved academically.
26. Due to my family's financial debt, my sister and I could never afford to go on foreign school or college trips, which was something that our peers simply took for granted. I therefore had to get into debt myself in order to do such things.
27. I am still paying back student loans and struggling with career direction whilst also saving for a deposit on a flat.
28. Many families were able to capitalise on buying their council houses incredibly cheap in the 1980s and get a foothold on the property ladder and further cement their financial freedom and futures towards social mobility. However, my family were unable to take this route, due to my father being too ill to work and thus my family accumulated significant debt instead.

Section 6. Treatment/Care/Support

29. As far as my father and I are aware, he has not suffered any obstacles in relation to accessing medical or dental care.
30. I was not offered any counselling or psychological support.

Section 7. Financial Assistance

31. It took 19 years before my father received any payment from the Government and it took 25 years for him to obtain a monthly payment.

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32. My father received the Stage 1 Payment of £20,000 from the Skipton Fund in 2005.

33. After a long bureaucratic and nightmarish process involving semantics and the wording surrounding a radiologist's diagnosis regarding the cirrhosis of my father's liver due to the Hepatitis C virus, he finally received the Stage 2 Payment of £50,000.

Section 8. Other Issues

34. I understand that my father has been active on the Tainted Blood Facebook Group.

35. Too many people have already died with the truth still buried. This Inquiry is the biggest chance to date for all the affected families to obtain justice and closure on this Tainted Blood Scandal.

Anonymity, disclosure and redaction

36. I wish to retain my anonymity and I do not want 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

27/5/2019