

ANONYMOUS

Witness Name: GRO-B

Statement No: WITN1542001

Exhibits: 0

Dated: November 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 the GRO-B 1968. I live at GRO-B. I have recently been widowed, and I have three adult daughters.
2. I make this statement in relation to my late father, GRO-B: F who had Severe Haemophilia A and was infected with Hepatitis A (Hep A), Hepatitis B (Hep B), Hepatitis C (Hep C) and HIV as a result of contaminated blood products. My father was born on the GRO-B 1938 and died on the GRO-B 1994 as a result of infections caused by contaminated blood products.
3. I am aware that my Mother, GRO-B (WITN GRO-B), and my two sisters, GRO-B (WITN GRO-B) and GRO-B (WITN GRO-B) have provided statements to the Inquiry.
4. I make this statement without full benefit of access to my late father's medical records.

Section 2. How Affected

5. I would like to rely on my mother's statement in relation to how my father was infected, the circumstances in which he was informed about his infections and the information he was provided in relation to the diagnosis. I was too young at the time to recall such information, but a summary of my recollection is stated below.
6. I recall my father being bed-bound a lot of the time. I know he received cryoprecipitate as well as Factor VIII (FVIII). I do not recall exactly when either of the treatment started as I was very young at the time.
7. My mother started to treat my father at home with FVIII from about the mid 1970s, through to the 1980s. She was a GRO-B and was trained to give him FVIII. I recall my father receiving regular treatment, and prior to starting FVIII at home he often went to hospital to have treatment. I also remember my mother having to call for ambulances because of his bleeds.
8. We never questioned the treatment that my father received. I knew it was just something that he had to have. I believe my father received his FVIII treatment from the Queen Elizabeth Hospital in Birmingham (QEH).
9. I do not believe that my father was given any information or advice beforehand about the risk of being exposed to infection from using FVIII.
10. I believe my father found out he was infected with HIV from Dr Franklin at the QEH, and was told in a very blasé way like 'you know you're infected with HIV'. This information should have definitely been provided earlier. I believe there was no adequate information given on how to manage the infection. Nobody wants to be told anything in that manner. To put it so casually, as if it's nothing and doesn't matter was outrageous.
11. I was told about my father's infection soon after he was diagnosed, but I don't think I ever really understood the enormity of it. I just remember that we weren't allowed to tell anybody. I recall that, as a result of my father's infections, my mother had to be tested. It took months to get my mother's

ANONYMOUS

results back, and it was hanging over our heads the whole time. Luckily, she tested negative, but it was a terrible time for everyone.

12. I recall that my father was also infected with Hep A, Hep B and Hep C, but I do not recall when I was told about the above infections. I wish to rely on my mother's statement in relation to this.

Section 3. Other Infections

13. I wish to rely on my mother's statement in relation to this section.

Section 4. Consent

14. I believe my father was tested and treated without his knowledge and consent. I do not believe that my father received any adequate information about the infections.

15. I believe he was tested and treated for the purposes of research.

Section 5. Impact of the Infection

16. As a child I recall that there was a lot we couldn't do as a family because of my father's infections. However, we never felt any less loved, we never missed out on anything, we had everything we needed.

17. I remember my father having to take all sorts of medication because he was suffering from bad anxiety. He became quite dependent on Valium, soon after his diagnosis. It seemed like everything came to a halt. Eventually the doctors took my father off Valium. I remember that he became violent when he was withdrawing. I remember waking up and he tried to hit my mother, which was not in his nature at all. I believe it all stemmed from the infections. I didn't know what to do. I was so young at the time. It was a millstone around our necks.

18. In the final year of my father's life I wasn't living at home, but I do remember my father being in and out of hospital a lot. Even back then I naively thought he would be okay. Every time he went into hospital he used to come home,

ANONYMOUS

apart from the last time. I had seen him very poorly and in bed. You just always think that your parents are going to be there, and suddenly my father was gone. I remember the last time he was in hospital my mother told me not to come, she didn't want me to see him like that.

19. I know my father felt he couldn't talk to anybody, friends or other infected Haemophiliacs. We became isolated from the community, and we never really understood why we couldn't talk about what was happening.

20. I am fairly sure that my father's infected status impacted on his dental treatment. I believe all his dental work had to take place at the hospital.

21. The impact on our family and social life was huge. We were made to feel ashamed of our situation because we were told not to tell anyone about what was going on. We had no-one to talk too, and we became isolated. People probably did know what was going on because everyone knew my father was a Haemophiliac. As a teenager, I felt like our neighbours were talking about us. Our whole world was in our house and there was nothing we could do about it. I couldn't see a way through it. It felt like there was no way out. I know it was really hard for my mother and father, and I feel like they were so focused with getting through it all that we were left to deal with it ourselves. My father often didn't want to talk about what was happening to him, and my mother was so busy looking after my father and grandmother that she just wasn't there. I felt alone in it all.

22. There was no end to it, it was all so hushed. To listen to people making jokes about AIDS used to really upset me. I wanted to shout out that the innocent caught it too and there was nothing wrong with it! But I couldn't say anything, I was silenced. It was only much later that I felt I was able to start dealing with it because people started to open up about it.

23. There was a definite stigma attached to the infections. I remember my sister had told one of her close friends when she was very young, and a rumour started going around the estate that there was a deadly disease going round. I never told anyone anything.

24. I felt like I needed more guidance through school after my father was diagnosed, and needed someone to push me to do better. I feel like I could have done better if my parents had been there to support me. I regret leaving school so early. I did get some O-levels but they weren't reflective of how well I could have done.

Section 6. Treatment/care/support

25. My father received care from my mother, but professionally I don't think he received anything.

26. I do not believe any form of counselling or psychological support was made available to me or my family. I do believe it would have helped at the time.

Section 7. Financial Assistance

27. I wish to rely on my mother's statement in relation to this section.

Section 8. Other Issues

28. I am sad because my father hasn't been able to see the lives we have made for ourselves. I know he would have been so proud of all we have achieved. He never got the chance to meet his grandchildren. He has great-grandchildren now, and when my daughters' graduated from university he would have loved to been there.

ANONYMOUS

Anonymity, disclosure and redaction

29. I wish to remain anonymous. ✓

30. I do not wish to provide oral evidence to the Inquiry. ✓

Statement of Truth

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

Signed...

GRO-B

Dated

22/11/19