

ANONYMOUS

Witness Name: GRO-B

Statement No: WITN1072001

Exhibits: 0

Dated: March 2019

INFECTED BLOOD INQUIRY

FIRST WRITTEN STATEMENT OF GRO-B

GRO-B will say as follows:-

**Section 1. Introduction**

1. My name is GRO-B  
GRO-B
2. I am currently unemployed. I had a girlfriend who I was with for over twenty years but we separated three years ago. I now live by myself.
3. I was infected with HIV due to contaminated blood. My younger brother GRO-B: B  
GRO-B: B is also giving a Witness Statement GRO-B He too was infected with HIV.

**Section 2. How infected**

4. I suffer from Severe Haemophilia A. My brother was one when he had a fall. At that point he was taken into hospital and it was discovered that he had Haemophilia. Consequently, I too was tested and it was discovered that I also had Haemophilia A.

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5. Our diagnosis and tests were carried out at [GRO-B] I believe I was under the care of [GRO-B] until I left the hospital.
6. As a child I was bleeding almost every other day and was in hospital approximately three times a week. Initially I was treated with Cryoprecipitate for cuts and bleeds and at that time no home treatment was available. In or around [GRO-B] when I was eight, I had to undergo an operation to insert a plate in my leg. I had banged my hip and as I was a haemophiliac, one leg ended up being shorter than the other. I believe that I received Factor VIII during this procedure. I believe this was the first time I was treated with this product, but I do not recall if my parents were informed that my treatment was changing from Cryoprecipitate to Factor VIII. All I remember is that the doctor kept going on about a 'wonder drug' which stuck in my head
7. When I turned sixteen, in [GRO-B] I moved to the [GRO-B] however I had a massive argument with a consultant there and requested to move to [GRO-B]
8. My parents found out I had HIV on [GRO-B] by letter. I have never seen this letter but in it was discussed that the HIV was caused by Factor VIII treatment. I do not recall attending hospital with my parents regarding this. I was told by my parents about my infection, but I never full understood what HIV was aside from what I had heard on the television. I do not believe I was ever called in for a follow up appointment to discuss the infection.
9. [GRO-B] told me that I would need to take regular blood tests to monitor the risk of HIV seroconverting to AIDS.
10. I was never given any direct advice about the risk of transmission or how to manage my infections. It was only when I saw the tombstone advert on television which made me realise the extent of the virus.
11. I was also infected with Hepatitis C. I did not know about it until later on in life. My brother was tested positive in or around [GRO-B] I believe I too was tested then, although I was never told about it. Next thing I knew, [B] was tested,

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needed treatment and I was told by [GRO-B] that apparently my body had cleared the Hepatitis C itself, though I was not informed how long I had had the antibodies prior to that. All the medical correspondence I received thereafter stated that I had Hepatitis C.

## Section 3. Other Infections

12. I received letters from hospital stating that there may be a risk that I had CJD, but this was never actually diagnosed.

## Section 4. Consent

13. I do not know when I was tested for HIV or Hepatitis C so any tests would have been conducted without my knowledge, without my consent, and without being given adequate or full information.

14. I felt that my brother and I were the biggest guinea pigs in the world. The staff at the hospital knew about the risks of Factor VIII, but they chose to ignore the obvious danger.

## Section 5. Impact of the Infection

15. Mentally, it was on my head all the time. None of my friends knew what I had. Approximately seven years ago, I used to play [GRO-B] for the [GRO-B] [GRO-B]. I was fairly good at it and had to travel all around the country with training sessions happening on a weekly basis. It was a disabled sport and my status as disabled had to get classified in [GRO-B] by a classification doctor. He saw HIV on my medical records and said that there was no way I should be allowed to play in national competitions. I could have had the chance to play if I did not have HIV. This was a personal hobby of mine and it helped me cope with my conditions. As a disabled team every one was in the same boat, we were all normal. They understood me, although my teammates never found out I had HIV.

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16. I was offered treatment for HIV, though I cannot remember the name of any tablets except for Intelence. I recall trying a variety of drugs in an attempt to find drugs compatible with my body. The side effects of many of them were quite severe. I felt suicidal, I lost my appetite, felt nauseous, and I did not want to see anyone. I just wanted to be alone, I stayed indoors all the time and I would often snap at my parents because I did not know what was going on. One tablet had a particularly bad effect on me as it affected my liver a lot.
17. I met my ex-wife in [GRO-B] and we married in [GRO-B] after my HIV diagnosis. Disclosing that I was HIV positive was nerve racking. She was a nurse so she was okay with it, although this was a very big surprise to me. It was tough leading up to that conversation as I had concerns on how she would react, that perhaps she would end the relationship, or even that she would tell everyone she knew. I could talk to her about how I was feeling, but I would usually bottle it inside until it got too much and I exploded. I was married for eight months in total and then it went face forward, though we stayed friends for a while.
18. During my time in [GRO-B] I had a massive argument with a consultant there which prompted my move to [GRO-B]. At the time I was with my ex-wife and we were thinking of having a child, so I asked a consultant which was the best way to do it, and he said to me that 'you cannot do it at your age, you are far too old'. I felt deeply insulted and asked for a transfer to [GRO-B] immediately. After this experience, we stopped trying for a child, but [GRO-B] was a condom baby. No discussions were provided of the risk of transmission though we knew little from the news. Both my ex wife and my son were tested clear.
19. My wife found out she was pregnant with [GRO-B] my son, in [GRO-B] and five months into the pregnancy, we divorced. I would say that some of the HIV related stress did impact our relationship.
20. After our divorce, my ex-wife cut me out of her life. I was not involved in anything. In fact I did not even get invited to my own son's christening. All I

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wanted was to have my son every weekend but, she made that very difficult. Eventually she took my son to [GRO-B]

21. When my son was twelve, with my long-term girlfriend, I went to [GRO-B]. At this time, my son did not know anything about my conditions. I thought now that he is a little older he deserved to know the truth and I was prepared to tell him about my HIV, but I was worried as to how he would react. I thought that he would either think I was dirty or that I was dying. By the time I had reached [GRO-B], my ex-wife had already told him. Obviously, I was furious as I felt it was my place to tell him. My son did not take it well as I had kept him in the dark for so long. It was never my intention to be secretive around him, but I did not know to tell a young boy about such matters. He was clever so he understood everything and took it on board. He was fully supportive whenever I needed him.

22. I met my ex girlfriend in [GRO-B] and was with her for 25 years. I was concerned about how she would react when I told her. I would not commit to anything sexually as I could not get my head round how to tell people, even now I struggle. I told her three to four months into the relationship. She was asking why we had not been intimate yet so I explained to her that I was HIV positive and thankfully she too was very supportive. She got me through the infections and the treatment. We had tried starting a family, but she had two miscarriages. Unfortunately the relationship came to a stalemate.

23. Common opinion was that if you have HIV you are either a drug dealer or homosexual. I recall hearing rumours on the television about the origins of the virus such as people having sex with monkeys. I got a lot of that and I still get it now. I was in hospital less than a year ago. The doctor saw HIV on my notes and asked, 'How did you get that, are you gay or on drugs?' I try to be positive and put on a brave face in front of people, but when I am alone, I do a lot of thinking as I have no one to talk to. I try not to talk to my parents as every time I mention it I can see them going under. They get so upset hearing it as they feel responsible for everything.

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## **Section 6. Treatment/care/support**

24. Only in the last two years have I been offered counselling. I went for two to three sessions, but after that if I wanted more I had to reapply. I found it ludicrous how a counsellor can assess you in a mere twenty minutes. In any event, the sessions I attended did not help me. I would feel so depressed afterwards, the counsellor asked me far too many questions and I gained absolutely nothing from it.

## **Section 7. Financial Assistance**

25. I received a payment from the MacFarlane Trust in the early GRO-B for GRO-B I also receive monthly payments. I have applied for grants. I required help for a deposit on a mobility care, and GRO-B to fix my bathroom up as the council had messed up the installation.

26. The application was fairly straightforward but before paying me for the bathroom, the Trust required me to hire tradesmen in order to get a quote. This was a hassle.

27. I made a claim in relation to Hepatitis C, but I did not receive anything.

## **Section 8. Other Issues**

28. It was a massive pain obtaining travel insurance. I had to disclose that I was HIV positive. Sometimes I would have to go without the security as the premiums would be far too high. I never tried obtaining life insurance. I would have liked to have owned my own house, but it would have been far too difficult and onerous to obtain a mortgage.

29. When I see contaminated blood on the news I feel disgusted by the fact that they are doing nothing about it and I get very depressed. This has been going on for far too long.

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**Anonymity**

I would like to remain anonymous and would not like to give Oral Evidence at the Public Inquiry.

**Statement of Truth**

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

GRO-B

Signed

Dated 27/3/19