

# ANONYMOUS

Witness Name: GRO-B

Statement No: WITN2943001

Exhibits: 0

Dated: April 2019

## INFECTED BLOOD INQUIRY

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### FIRST WRITTEN STATEMENT OF GRO-B

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I, GRO-B, will say as follows:-

#### Section 1. Introduction

1. My name is GRO-B, born on GRO-B and I live at GRO-B, GRO-B with my second husband.
2. My ex-husband GRO-B: H passed away on GRO-B after being infected with HIV, Hepatitis B and Hepatitis C from contaminated blood products.
3. I met H at the GRO-B where I was nursing. We married on GRO-B GRO-B and divorced on GRO-B. During our marriage we had our son GRO-B, born on GRO-B, and our daughter GRO-B, born on GRO-B.
4. I remarried in GRO-B I retired in GRO-B.
5. H was employed as a TV engineer who was working for GRO-B until his diagnosis after which he started his GRO-B, but this was after we divorced.
6. This witness statement has been prepared without the benefit of access to my late ex-husband's medical records. If and in so far as I have been provided with limited records the relevant entries are set out in the medical chronology at the end of this statement.

Section 2. How Affected

7. [H] was diagnosed, shortly after birth, as a severe Haemophiliac A with a clotting factor of 0-5%. Due to his bleeds, he was frequently admitted to hospital. In his adult life this was the [GRO-B]. In this period of time of my knowing [H], he had fresh frozen plasma, then Cryoprecipitate for bleeds before the introduction of the American products. I was given training to administer the treatment as an outpatient at the hospital with the view of home treatment but this was put on hold for a few years as [H] had severe reactions to his Factor VIII for a number of weeks. At that time it put having children on hold (or in question). Eventually by controlled treatment with Factor VIII he started the home treatment programme.
8. I estimate that [H] was first treated with Factor VIII concentrate in or about [GRO-B]. Three months after he fainted in the car they gave him a lot of Factor VIII to stop his reactions to the Cryoprecipitate, otherwise he would continually bleed. Eventually his body became resistant to the problem.
9. In [GRO-B], [GRO-B] was born after which he was back on home treatment was started and this was all Factor VIII products. I was sterilised shortly after giving birth to [GRO-B]. This was to prevent a further passing of the hereditary gene to future daughters.
10. When a young man [H] was treated at the [GRO-B], until the building of the new hospital – [GRO-B] – where in about 1978/1979, the Haemophilia Department and staff, including Professor Preston, move to.
11. In [GRO-B] the hospital invited all the haemophiliacs and their partners for a meeting to discuss the risk of HIV to all of us, but they did not know exactly who was infected. It was advised that we should use protective contraception during sexual intercourse. As I had been sterilised, we had not been using contraception. Professor Preston wanted to call all haemophiliacs individually for blood tests. Prior to this, haemophiliacs would undergo blood tests every six months. [H] was invited in late [GRO-B] for a blood test and had to wait three months for the results. In February 1985, he was told that he had been infected with HIV three years previously and so it was suggested that I too should be tested. I had my tests which were followed up by a letter disclosing that I was negative. They recommended that I be tested again in a year's time and thankfully that test was also negative.

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12. After his diagnosis I was aware that the contaminated blood had been imported from the US as it was cheaper and the NHS had concerns with costs and budgeting. I believe that I discovered this through the media.

13. [H] was also infected with Hepatitis B and Hepatitis C but I cannot say for certain when he was first tested positive, nor when he was first told. I am sure that [H] told me about the Hepatitis B when we were married, however the Hepatitis C came to light after our divorce. He had told me about it as we remained open with each other even after our separation.

14. I still saw [H] fortnightly as he would take our children for the weekend. He was still able and well enough, but there was a very sudden and rapid decline in his health. I visited him whilst he was in hospital in his final few days. He was unconscious at my last visit. Apparently he had chest infections which caused breathing difficulties.

### **Section 3. Other Infections**

15. As far as I am aware, [H] never had any other infections except those aforementioned above.

### **Section 4. Consent.**

16. I know that [H] and I both consented to the tests for HIV as we had been informed of the risk at the meeting.

17. I do not know if [H] provided consent to the tests for Hepatitis B or C.

### **Section 5. Impact**

18. The mental and emotional trauma is vivid and will never be forgotten. As I have mentioned, a group of haemophiliacs, Christmas disease patients and their partners were called to the hospital to a meeting to be told of the possibility of HIV infection; both to patient and partners, and that we should all use protective contraception. This was stomach churning and for us it was a major concern as following the birth of our daughter, who was by genetic make-up a carrier for haemophilia, we had made the decision that I would be sterilised. In doing so, from [GRO-B], we had not used contraception, so to be told in [GRO-B] that for the

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previous three years I had been at risk of HIV just added to the trauma. We had to wait three months for [H] results (which were positive) and then another three months for my results (which were negative). I had to have a second test a year later as at that time it wasn't known what the 'conversion' time was from negative to positive following exposure. All that waiting was almost unbearable for us and made us feel very anxious.

19. That was a very dark time but we had to carry on. I was worried the children would be bullied as [H] had appeared in a TV programme with [GRO-B] (TV + radio doctor). On the day of filming, it was said that the film crew could not record the programme in the studio as the cameramen were refusing to be in the same room as [H] and a fellow Haemophiliac. As a result, he and another infected man were isolated. We were very concerned about the stigma as prior to the programme airing nobody knew that he had HIV. We lived in a small town and were very well known by the residents, but thankfully everybody was very supportive.
20. Upon being informed that he had HIV, [H] was not told how it would progress as even the hospital did not know much about it.
21. In April 1987, our marriage ended following a relationship [H] had with another woman. The children saw his fortnightly.
22. Due to media coverage, attitudes changed towards haemophiliacs and even my own colleagues (in the health service) brought their own cups to use at work.
23. The children were fully aware of what was going on as we did not want to keep them in the dark. They had to grow up without their father. My older son refused to go to his funeral and insisted that I not tell anyone at his school. I only informed the headmaster. A couple of years later, I took him to London two weeks after the funeral of Princess Diana to walk some of the funeral route and at that point he spoke of his father's death. My daughter on the other hand was more openly upset and wanted to go to her father's funeral. She would rather face it head on. I know they were both hit hard by this loss.
24. Financially it was a struggle. I was working so I had my income and [H] did pay me child maintenance, but this was minimal and it ended at his death.

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### Section 6. Treatment/Care/Support

25. I was told that I could contact any medical or nursing staff for support or counselling, but this I declined.

### Section 7. Financial Assistance

26. [H] was party to the 1991 litigation. After his death his estate received [GRO-B] half of which was put on trust for his children to receive on their maturity while the other half went to his wife. My son received a lesser sum as he was closer to adulthood than my daughter. I was offered the interest on the children's account; effectively I used this as child support.

27. Thereafter, I could ask the Trust holding that money for payments. With that, [GRO-B] got a little car to get to her Saturday job and [GRO-B] wanted to go on a skiing holiday with his friends.

28. To the best of my recollection, I believe that [H] received £[GRO-B] from the MacFarlane Trust (MFT) and a further £[GRO-B] after his death, however having researched, [GRO-B] believes that he received £[GRO-B] from MFT when he was alive. With the £[GRO-B] [H] went to the [GRO-B] with [GRO-B] I do not know if [H] ever signed a waiver.

### Anonymity, disclosure and redaction

29. I wish to remain anonymous and I do not want to give oral evidence at the Inquiry

### Statement of Truth

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

Signed..... [GRO-B] .....

Dated..... 9.4.19 .....