

ANONYMOUS

Witness Name: GRO-B

Statement No: WITN2946001

Exhibits: 0

Dated: July 2020

INFECTED BLOOD INQUIRY

FIRST WRITTEN STATEMENT OF

GRO-B

GRO-B

will say as follows:-

Section 1. Introduction

1. My name is GRO-B and I was born on GRO-B
GRO-B I live at GRO-B I am married and we
have an GRO-B year old daughter. I work in GRO-B
GRO-B and am currently working from home due to Covid 19.
2. I make this statement as the affected daughter of my late father, GRO-B: F
F who was co-infected with Human
Immunodeficiency Virus (HIV) and Hepatitis C (HCV) from contaminated
blood products. He died from AIDS on GRO-B aged only GRO-B
3. My mother, GRO-B and my brother GRO-B have both
provided witness statements to the Inquiry under witness numbers
GRO-B and GRO-B respectively.

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4. **This witness statement has been prepared without the benefit of access to my late father's full medical records.**

Section 2. How Affected

5. My father had severe Haemophilia A which was diagnosed at birth following bleeding from the umbilical chord.
6. My father was treated at various Haemophilia Centres to include St Bartholomew's Hospital (SBH), Kings College Hospital (KCH) and St Thomas' Hospital (STH). He was under the care of Dr Cathrie, Dr Clark and latterly Dr Savidge at STH.
7. My father was also treated at the Oxford Nuffield Orthopaedic Hospital (ONOH) in 1971 for a hip replacement and for a further hip (revision) operation in the 1980s. He was also taken to University College Hospital (UCH), London, for treatment for a damaged knee following a fall at work in 1984.
8. My father was initially treated with plasma, fresh blood and cryoprecipitate before receiving Factor VIII concentrates from the early 1970s.
9. My father was infected with HIV and HCV via contaminated blood products.
10. I refer to my mother's witness statement for further information pertaining to this section.

Section 3. Other Infections

11. As far as I am aware my father was not exposed to, nor received any other infections apart from HIV and HCV.

Section 4. Consent

12. I refer to my mother's witness statement.

Section 5. Impact

13. My father was an incredibly kind and caring man and I could not have wanted for a better father. I had a tough time when I progressed from primary to secondary school. I had come from a small and close knit primary school where I knew everyone, to being accepted into a very good secondary school, where I did not know a soul. This was because my new school was much further away than the local schools which my peers all progressed to.
14. Understandably I experienced some settling in problems at my new school and I thought I would feel more at ease if I had someone I knew with me. My wonderful father, therefore, took it upon himself to drive me to school every morning and he would then sit outside in the car with a newspaper and a flask of tea. He waited until break time every single day that I was at school until the day came when I had forgotten that he was outside and that was the day he knew that he had cracked it.
15. My father was a GRO-B so he was around much more during the week than a lot of my friend's fathers were; he used to work nights and at the weekend. In addition to taking me to school, I always remember him collecting me from school and we would then go and pick my brother up from his school. We always used to have some waiting time between the pick ups and this was "*our special reading time*".
16. My father had such a presence in the house; he was always there and did so much for my brother and me. He was extremely involved in my school life and extracurricular activities. I feel really lucky that I had a father that was so interested in my life and gave me such a good grounding and upbringing. We were a very close knit family and the type who always sat down for family meals at the end of the day.
17. My father's illness was always in the background but I had no idea of the gravity of the situation and I don't remember a moment, as a child, when either parent sat me down and told me about my father's failing health or the

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reasons behind this. However, my mother never lied to us and I think my brother and I slowly worked out that my father's health was getting worse and not better.

18. I am an asymptomatic Haemophilia carrier which has meant that I have had to have Factor VIII concentrates on a number of occasions. My levels are very low for a carrier. In October 1989, when I was aged 13, I was rushed to STH with appendicitis. Dr Savidge told my mother that I would require Factor VIII concentrates for the operation. My mother was, understandably, extremely worried and initially told Dr Savidge "*in no uncertain terms*" that I would not be receiving Factor VIII concentrates. I remember this incident as it was extremely stressful because my father was very poorly and wheelchair bound at this time and was at the foot of my bed whilst the issue was thrashed out between my mother and the clinicians. Eventually my mother was persuaded that I would need the treatment and I was given the Factor VIII concentrates.

19. This was a poignant moment as both my mother and I realised how desperately ill my father was and how much his illness had progressed, to the extent that he was unable to participate in any of the heated discussions with the clinicians about my treatment, which meant that my mother had to take the lead role. My father was losing it mentally as well and I don't think he grasped much of what was going on. From this moment on, I think the enormity of the situation and the realisation of what it presented going forward dawned on my mother. She was going to have to make all of the decisions in relation to the family and finances; everything was going to be down to her and this reality was both sad and scary.

20. I was not at the hospital on the day that my father passed away as I was staying with a friend. However, my mother and my brother took me back to the hospital on the Monday so I could see his body, which was downstairs in the mortuary. The male staff member in the mortuary flatly refused to move my father's body, which was in a plastic bag, due to what he had died of. It was the remarkable Haemophilia Team who moved and dealt with my father's

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body. It was at this point that the enormity of the stigma which surrounded HIV hit me and this was further reinforced when my mother told me that we could not tell anyone what my father had died from.

21. My brother fainted when he came out of the mortuary and I remember going to the Haemophilia Unit where he was given digestive biscuits. The situation we were presented with in the mortuary was truly shocking and deeply upsetting.

22. When I returned to school the story was that my father had died of cancer. I lived a life of pretence; I could not be, and did not know, who I was before my father died.

23. At the point I returned to school I had a lot of coursework that had to be in, failing which, I would have had to retake the year. Against the odds, I did really well in my GCSEs but I later rebelled in my A-Level years and particularly struggled between the ages of 17-19. I thought the world was really unfair and I kicked back. Looking back, I realise that it was my way of trying to grieve; due to what my father died of it was almost impossible to properly grieve for his loss.

24. I remember my brother stepping up and trying to adopt the position of *"the man of the family"* which can't have been easy for him although I remember this caused its own problems as I used to say things like *"you can't make me do that, you're not my dad"*.

25. I have now managed to grieve and offload some of the anger. I am older and wiser now and my attitude today is that if people have a problem with HIV then *"that is their problem"*. However, I am still angry about what happened to my father. Luckily my partner is extremely supportive and he just lets me *"talk away"* which really does help me process and deal with upsetting memories that routinely *"pop up"* in my head. I sometimes think of what the outrage would be, in this day and age, if someone was injected with 10 bags of Covid 19. That is exactly the sort of scenario that we have been living with

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for decades yet somehow the Contaminated Blood Scandal is routinely and consistently "*brushed under the carpet*".

26. To date, no clinician has been able to categorically confirm that history will not repeat itself and my real fear for the future health of any son I may have had, led me to having two terminations when I fell pregnant with boys. I was under the Haemophilia Team who conducted tests on me as soon as I fell pregnant so that an early decision could be made in relation to the terminations.
27. My mother supported me throughout this very difficult time and it came to the point where we decided to go down the route of gender selection which was going to be carried out and overseen by the Haemophilia Team. Whilst I was waiting for this to happen, I fell pregnant and all the early tests and indications suggested that I was carrying a girl and that proved to be the case.
28. Once I had my daughter I made the decision not to have any more children. What happened to my father deeply affected me and dictated some of my major life decisions.
29. My daughter is now aged 8 and a Haemophilia carrier herself and one of my biggest fears is that, when the time comes for me to discuss the past with her, I will unduly influence her with my views. She will have to go through all of the thought processes that I did when I had her, if and when she decides to have children. We will cross those bridges, together, when the situation arises. It will be very important to me to be able to say to her that someone was held accountable for the travesty, that change has taken place and that history won't repeat itself. I am hopeful that the Inquiry will achieve that for both our sakes.
30. We talk about Grandad all the time; he is very much part of her life but for now it is all positive. However, when she is old enough I will tell her everything that happened.
31. My mother and I are incredibly close after what happened to my father. If my father had still been around when I left school I think that I would have

progressed to university. However, I am really lucky as I am from "*that last generation*" who were able to join a company at the bottom and work their way to the top. I sit on a GRO-B and I am the only one who does not have a degree.

Section 6. Treatment/care/support

32. I refer to my mother's witness statement in this regard.

33. I confirm that I have never been offered any counselling or psychological assistance in consequence of my father's infections or subsequent death. However, the Haemophilia Team at STH has been brilliant and I am sure that they would have provided me with counselling if I had requested the same.

Section 7. Financial Assistance

34. I received £16,250 from the HIV Litigation which concluded in 1991. This payment was held on trust for me until I reached the age of 18.

35. I refer to my mother's witness statement for further information pertaining to this section.

Section 8. Other Issues

36. I would like the Inquiry to achieve both peace of mind and financial stability for my mother. She has "*been through the mill*" as a result of what happened to my father. She is a brave and strong woman but I am sure that she has kept a lot of the struggles and painful memories to herself; some of which are likely firmly ingrained in her. She now suffers with anxiety which is something new for her to contend with. I have absolutely no doubt in mind that this was brought on by the Contaminated Blood Scandal.

37. My mother is an Old Age Pensioner (OAP) now and should be enjoying her life as an older person and devoid of any financial worries. Due to my father's

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infections, they were not able to purchase their own house and this lack of financial security has understandably gravely affected my mother's financial situation in later life.

38. The Inquiry must provide answers and validation to those who have suffered, through no fault of their own. This will give my mother the long awaited peace of mind; something which, I believe, she has not experienced since my father passed away.

39. I also refer to the contents of paragraph 29 of my witness statement above.

Anonymity

40. I wish to apply for anonymity and I want 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.....

28/7/20

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