

ANONYMOUS

Witness Name: **GRO-B**

Statement No: WITN3262001

Exhibits: 0

Dated: March 2020

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** I live at **GRO-B** I work full time and I am married.
2. I make this statement in relation to my late father, **GRO-B: F** was born on the **GRO-B** and passed away on the **GRO-B** at the age of **GRO-B**. My father was infected with HIV and Hepatitis C (HCV) as a result of contaminated blood products.
3. I am aware that my mother, **GRO-B** and my sister, **GRO-B** have also produced witness statements to the Inquiry.
4. This witness statement has been prepared without the benefit of access to my father's full medical records.

Section 2. How Affected

5. I wish to rely on my mother's statement for the majority of this section.
6. My father suffered from severe Haemophilia A. I am not sure when he was infected with HIV but I do believe he was diagnosed sometime in 1985.
7. I believe that my father was treated at GRO-B in the 1970s and then his care was transferred to the GRO-B. I do not recall my father having home treatment but I was just a child and I was protected from a lot of what was going on. I do recall my father being in the hospital frequently.
8. I am not sure if my father was treated with anything else other than Factor VIII (FVIII). I only ever remember him being treated with FVIII. I do not know the names of the FVIII treatment that he received.
9. I do not believe that my father was given any information or advice beforehand about the risk of infection from FVIII products. I remember him asking the doctors about the rumours which were circulating surrounding the infections but they just laughed at him.
10. I was not aware that my father was infected with HCV or HBV; however my mother and sister believe it is possible that he was also infected with HCV or HBV.
11. The doctors definitely should have provided my father with information earlier. As soon as they knew there was a risk he should have been warned.

Section 3. Other Infections

12. I wish to rely on my mother's statement for this section.

Section 4. Consent

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

14. I do think it is very possible that my father was used for the purposes of research. I also think it is likely his two brothers were used for research purposes as it seems a common occurrence back then. I also believe my father was not given adequate or full information and I believe he was treated and tested without his knowledge.

Section 5. Impact of the Infection

15. I wish to rely on my mother's statement for parts of this section.

16. As stated above my father was a severe Haemophiliac and as I remember he was in and out of hospital regularly throughout my childhood. I can't remember exactly when I found out about his Haemophilia but growing up I always knew he wasn't 100% healthy.

17. When I was a child we had a great relationship, he really was the most loving father anyone could ask for. He used to tuck me into bed every night; it's a very clear memory. I remember sitting on his knee when my tooth fell out and him cuddling me and reassuring me. He really was full of love for me and my older sister. He used to get us up every day for school, making sure the fire had warmed up the room sufficiently before getting us up and he always used to make our breakfast. Growing up, we never had a lot but we did have some lovely caravan holidays; my father loved anything to do with nature and I'm sure would have been much more outdoorsy had it not been for his Haemophilia.

18. It was in the late 1980s I started to notice things were changing and my parents seemed to be arguing a lot more. When I was around 15 years old my father seemed to change towards me. He didn't want me to go out anywhere with my friends and hated the idea of me having a boyfriend, we argued constantly to the point where I left home. I felt as though he hated me and I hated him too. I believe it would have been around 1988 that our relationship became virtually non-existent. I was back and forth sometimes staying at home, sometimes staying with friends. I remember it being around the same time as the tombstone adverts which seemed to be almost constantly on TV,

as was the news that Haemophiliacs were at risk from contaminated blood products.

19. None of my family discussed what was on the news. I was very worried, as I am sure the rest of my family were. At that time I didn't have the type of relationship with my family to ask any questions about it. It sort of felt obvious that I shouldn't mention it, but watching that tombstone advert everyday terrified me.

20. I wasn't stupid and my father used to hide some of his belongings in a separate room such as his toothbrush, soap, razor, towels and wash bowl and got very angry if anybody went in that room or touched his stuff. As the years went on I just put it to the back of my mind; I could see my father losing weight. I remember when he started drinking complan, which was a weight gaining nutritious drink, to me it was a confirmation to me that he had AIDS. Still, no one mentioned it to me.

21. On GRO-B we were called up to the hospital where my father had been admitted (I can't recall how long for) and they told us that my father was very ill. He was asleep in a private room, barely coming into consciousness but he didn't seem to be in any pain. When it got to night time somebody told me to go home with my cousins and get some sleep. We headed home but around 5 or 6am. Then somebody came in and woke me up saying we had to go to the hospital as my father did not have long left to live. We got to the hospital and at some point my father woke up. He knew I was there and I held his hand and we told each other that we loved each other.

22. My father passed away from AIDS at GRO-B on GRO-B aged GRO-B. After he passed we were taken to a relative's room where a doctor came in to speak to us. He told us that "the AIDS had just become too much for his body". Everybody in the room jumped up towards me telling me it wasn't my father's fault and that he had done nothing wrong. I felt angry with everybody as they still hadn't realised I'd already made the connection

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between Haemophiliacs and AIDS and I knew exactly why and how my father had died.

23. My father had two brothers who also had Haemophilia and over the next few years all three went to their graves as a result of receiving contaminated blood; their lives were cut short through no fault of their own. They were robbed of the chance to see us grow up, get married, have children and enjoy their grandchildren. I have two Haemophiliac sons and I know how much my father would have absolutely adored them, especially bonding over Haemophilia and football.

24. I would say the worst part of my father's diagnosis of HIV was his mental health issues. Looking back I think one of the hardest things for him to deal with was coping with the death sentence that he had been given. I think he had totally broken down mentally and he was just about functioning day to day. His infections had obviously broken him and he just wasn't the same person I knew growing up. Looking back now this is horribly obvious and its one of the many things about this tragedy that breaks my heart. To think he struggled alone, tortured by what he knew would be the end result with no one really to help him but his brothers who were also living with this death sentence.

25. I believe the reason that my father and I had started to argue constantly was because he couldn't bear the thought of me having a boyfriend and I'm sure the thought of me having a sexual relationship must have petrified him. I am sure he probably would have thought I would have become infected too. I can certainly empathise why he would be so paranoid about this because of his fragile state of mind at that time.

26. I also struggled with this mentality for many years. I thought I was probably infected. I'm sure now, looking back, it had something to do with the trauma of what happened to my father - that's pretty obvious to me, but at the time I thought it was a valid concern.

27. In [GRO-B] I refused a HIV test when I was pregnant with my first child as I was petrified what the result could be. Fourteen years later the same thoughts are still swirling around my head. We, as a family, have really only recently started to discuss what happened to my father. We did not really discuss it for a long time, and it seemed that after he had passed away it was the end of the matter for all that it concerned. Over more recent years, I've come across many more distressing stories, sometimes googling on the internet. I knew this wasn't right, it wasn't fair and I always felt I had to know more.
28. Around two years ago I stumbled across a Facebook support group called 'Tainted Blood'. I feel like finding this group has been a turning point in my life and I believe it has helped my family and I talk more openly about what happened. We realised the horrors of what other families had also been through and that we aren't alone in this. I remember finding out about the Treloars boys, little [GRO-A] and about [GRO-A] and whilst I don't know any of these people personally, I do know their horrific stories along with others on that group. They really are too much to bear sometimes.
29. I have learnt about the story of 'PUPs' and the fact that certain people in government and hospitals were aware of the contaminated blood products but still chose to ignore the risks and use them. I also learned of the phrase '*cheaper than chimps*' and I find this incredibly difficult to deal with as I have two young Haemophiliac boys. I just could not fathom the cruelty of this and it is probably one of the worst things I have ever heard in my life. I sometimes struggle to give my boys their Factor VIII as I feel frightened this could happen again and it sometimes overwhelms me. Finding out babies were knowingly infected had a massive mental impact on me and I feel guilty for being thankful that it was 'only' my father infected and not my two boys also.
30. I really do not know how the mothers of the infected children have the strength to carry on. I had a chance meeting in a beauticians with a lady who told me her son was treating her to a birthday party, I asked her how many children she had she told me she had three but that two had died. I asked her what had happened and she asked me I had heard of Haemophilia. I told her I

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had. She told me of her boys who had both been given contaminated blood and had died as a result. I told her about my father and she asked to see a picture of my boys, she said they were beautiful and we hugged and cried. I think about this lady often. It upsets me immensely; I find it very hard when I think about her and her sons and the cruelty that was purposely dealt to them. I am very aware this could have been me separated only by the luck of time.

31. I had never had anyone close to me pass away before so I am not sure what the 'normal' grieving process is but many times after my father's passing I used to go to the hospital and just stand outside the ward or wander around the hospital. I think now it was probably due to having nobody to talk to about what happened.

32. As time went on and everyone was getting on with their lives I think maybe in or around 1996 there was an article that appeared in our local newspaper- a widely circulated local newspaper (possibly on the front page). The article featured my cousin giving an interview on how it was unfair that Haemophiliacs and their families were being given unequal amounts of payments depending on which infections they had contracted. My uncle was infected with hepatitis and I think in the **GRO-B** my cousin became a fairly prominent speaker on this matter. I feel this was around the first time I started to suffer with my mental health as I always felt it was wrong to speak out or tell anybody as my father was such a private person and would not have wanted this. I was also wary of people's ignorance and attitudes as I was still only young. The day the story appeared in the paper was the first time I told someone about the details of my father's death. I told my friend **GRO-B** because I was so distraught over this article. She came to me and we talked a lot.

33. There was no help offered to me around the time of my father's death and beyond, and I am sure if there had been I would not have suffered as much with my mental health over the years the way I have. I have suffered with severe anxiety for probably over 20 years. I stopped taking my medication in late **GRO-B** but by **GRO-B** I was again suffering from severe anxiety. The

result of this was catastrophic and I believe I had a nervous breakdown of some kind.

34. When I have been talking to my mother she also believes that my father's illness and diagnosis severely affected his mental health. She believes this was the hardest part of the illness at times.

35. I remember my mother telling me a story which left me horrified but sounds very typical of the attitudes of that time. My father had gone to the local hospital, maybe for FVIII or a routine appointment, I'm not quite sure, and he questioned the young doctor on whether the Factor was safe to be using as he had heard all the rumours about it being unsafe and contaminated. **GRO-B**

GRO-B

GRO-B but I thought this needed mentioning in my statement as I feel this was typical of the contempt the Haemophilia community was treated with.

36. I have so much anger in me towards the people who purposely infected children and adults, I struggle with this knowledge and it makes me very sad. I hope the Inquiry will bring the people who allowed this to happen to face justice swiftly as the haemophilia community has waited far too long for this. The infected and affected are dying. One person dies every ninety six hours - they will never see justice.

37. Murderers are put in jail for a very long time and I feel the same must happen to every single person who knowingly let this contaminated blood be used to kill and maim innocent Haemophiliacs and others. I do not feel as if I can get any closure on the matter and move forward with my life until the guilty parties are brought to justice. This has already taken far too long.

38. The scale of what's happened, the cover up, the using people as guinea pigs and the contempt our families have been treated with must all be properly investigated. These people ripped many thousands of families apart and I

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cannot measure my anger towards them, it's time for them to pay for the crimes that they have committed.

Section 6. Treatment/care/support

39. To the best of my knowledge my father did not receive any form of counselling or psychological support.

40. I'm not aware of any counselling being offered to my father or mother and I know my sister and I have never been offered any even though on numerous occasions we have suffered with our mental health.

Section 7. Financial Assistance

41. I wish to rely on my mother's statement for this section.

42. I never received anything from any of the Trusts and Funds that were set up.

Section 8. Other Issues

43. I just want justice and I want to know who is responsible for all of this. Why has it taken so long for anything to happen? It all seems like a massive cover up. It's criminal.

44. "THE DEAD CANNOT CRY OUT FOR JUSTICE, IT IS A DUTY OF THE LIVING TO DO SO FOR THEM".

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Anonymity, disclosure and redaction

45. I wish to remain anonymous.

46. 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 27-3-2020