

ANONYMOUS

Witness Name: GRO-B

Statement No: WITN3508001

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 but everyone knows me as GRO-B. I was born on GRO-B and I live at GRO-B GRO-B.
2. I make this statement as an affected mother of my late son, GRO-B: S S, who was born on GRO-B and passed away aged only GRO-B, on GRO-B.
3. My late son contracted Hepatitis C via contaminated blood transfusions.
4. My late son's daughter, my granddaughter, GRO-B has also provided a witness statement to the Inquiry under Witness Number GRO-B.
5. This witness statement has been prepared without the benefit of access to my late son's medical records and I understand that these have now been destroyed. The hospitals made it very difficult for us to attempt to

access the records, firstly because I was not the next of kin and secondly, because the next of kin did not know the name and address of my late son's GP.

Section 2. How Affected

6. My late son received two blood transfusions; the first was as a result of a broken ankle in or around 1976 at the [GRO-B] in [GRO-B] when he was aged 13. The second was as a result of a broken leg in the 1980s at Kings College Hospital, London, following a hit and run incident.
7. The 1976 transfusion took place before the advent of mobile telephones and by the time my husband, [GRO-B] and I reached the hospital the transfusion had already taken place. I confirm that at no time were we advised of the risk of infection from the transfusion.
8. At the time of the second transfusion, my husband and I were living in [GRO-B] and our late son was living in London, following his move to the city aged only [GRO-B]. Unfortunately, I only had sporadic contact with my late son at the time of the second transfusion and he never spoke to me about whether he received any advice regarding the risk of infection from this transfusion.
9. I am unsure as to when my late son found out that he had Hepatitis C but I believe it was not until 2010. My late son was a [GRO-B] but used to go [GRO-B]. His friends told me that in or around April 2010 he was unable to last a full [GRO-B] without becoming desperately tired. He was completely exhausted, started sleeping more and losing a lot of weight which resulted in his friends insisting that he attend his GP. I think that the Hepatitis C diagnosis came shortly after his visit to the GP and I understand that he commenced treatment almost immediately; however I don't know the name of the treatment.
10. My late son collapsed in September 2010 and was admitted to St Mary's Hospital in Paddington before being transferred to Addenbrooke's Hospital in

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Cambridge for a liver transplant. However, he was too poorly to undergo this and was sent back to St Mary's Hospital on [GRO-B] 2010 with the aim of building him up so that he would be well enough to withstand with the transplantation. Sadly he passed away [GRO-B] later on [GRO-B]

11. My late son's death certificate records the cause of death as 1 (a) Hepato Cellular Carcinoma (b) Cirrhosis (c) Hepatitis C (chronic).

12. It was not until my late son's funeral that I found out that he had contracted Hepatitis C from contaminated blood transfusions.

Section 3. Other Infections

13. I do not know whether my late son was exposed to, or infected with, any other viruses.

Section 4. Consent

14. I am unaware as to whether my late son was tested, treated or used for the purposes of research without his knowledge and therefore without his consent.

Section 5. Impact

15. It is difficult for me to comment on the mental and physical impact of the Hepatitis C on my late son because our contact was sporadic following his move to London. Unfortunately, following this move, he fell in with the wrong crowd and got into drink and drugs which resulted in us having a fall out as I, understandably, did not want the drink or drugs around my grandchildren.

16. It is less painful for me to recall some of the wonderful memories I have of my late son from the earlier years. He had an extremely high Intelligence Quotient (IQ) and when he was aged around 15, I was told that he was definitely in the top 2 percent in the country and most likely to be in the top 0.5

percent. He kept being moved up a year at school and he started becoming disruptive. He secured a grammar school place but did not do much with it. He was assessed by an educational psychologist who advised that he was always going to be more intelligent than any teacher or lecturer that he would encounter in his lifetime.

17. Our grandchildren loved being with him because he had such a marvellous collection of books and would tell them wonderful stories and facts. He was extremely interested in GRO-B and he would set up a tent for the grandchildren in the garden and sit out with them late at night to identify and explain what they could see in the sky. He was also very interested in animals and insects and spent hours explaining about colonies of ants and their life cycle to the grandchildren which fascinated them. They were mesmerised by him and his knowledge and it is wonderful that they too have such warm memories of my late son. It is of great comfort to me now that the grandchildren held him in such high regard.

18. When I discovered that my late son had been killed by contaminated blood it devastated me and left so many unanswered questions. I still struggle with this today. I have been very open with people about what happened to my late son and I have experienced nothing other than support and kindness from people.

19. It was deeply upsetting to learn that my late son had been looking for my husband and me when he fell ill. He had wanted to contact us but we had moved to GRO-B and were ex-directory at that time. I still get upset today when I think about this.

20. Currently my life is taken up with caring for my husband who has Dementia. My husband keeps getting angry because he can't understand why our late son has not visited. He keeps asking for him because he has forgotten that he died. This is very hard to deal with and I feel like I am dealing with an impossible situation. However, I do now have carers who come in to get my husband up and dressed on three mornings per week and he goes out for day care on three days per week so I have some time to myself; just to be.

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Before the floods came I used to try and go for a walk for one hour each day. I also do two hours of yoga on a Thursday. I am trying to be kind to myself.

Section 6. Treatment/care/support

21. As far as I am aware my late son was not provided with any counselling or psychological support and I confirm that I was not provided with the same.

22. I do not know if my late son faced any difficulties or obstacles in obtaining treatment, care and support in consequence of being infected with Hepatitis C.

Section 7. Financial Assistance

23. As far as I am aware my late son never received any assistance, financial or other, from the Skipton Fund and I never located any paper work following his death which suggested that he had been the recipient of any such support.

Section 8. Other Issues

24. I became involved with this Inquiry to support GRO-B and to seek justice for my late son. I also want compensation for GRO-B because it will be the only thing she can receive from her father.

25. The last time my late son saw GRO-B was when she was only 11 months old and he spent his whole life desperately searching for her and longing to see her. Every time he started building a case and thought that he was getting somewhere, her mother GRO-B would disappear with GRO-B almost "into thin air". It turned out that she had taken GRO-B to GRO-B GRO-B before GRO-B was taken into care aged GRO-B I used to have to watch my son cry for GRO-B and I saw how his heart broke in two.

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26. An American friend of GRO-B used to send me updates and photographs of GRO-B but when GRO-B got wind of this she ceased all contact with this friend and sadly our updates and photographs stopped.

27. Ironically, had my late son not passed away I don't think that we would have ever been reunited with GRO-B. It was another tragedy that she spent her life searching for him and he for her. I believe that it was in or around GRO-B that GRO-B told GRO-B that she thought her father had died and disclosed his name to her and said that he originated from the GRO-B area. GRO-B therefore looked in the GRO-B searching for the names of people who had passed away. Despite the fact that we were living in GRO-B I had put a notification in with any enquiries to be directed to the undertakers. GRO-B contacted the undertakers in or around GRO-B which was when they contacted us and gave me her telephone number. I telephoned her the same evening that I received her number. She had no knowledge of her father and I had no knowledge of her but we have now built a lovely relationship and I am ever thankful for that.

Anonymity

28. I wish to apply for anonymity and although I would like to give oral evidence to the Inquiry I am precluded from so doing given that I am the full time carer for my husband.

Statement of Truth

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

Signed..

GRO-B

Dated... 16 November 2019