

ANONYMOUS

Witness Name:

GRO-B

Statement No: WITN4457001

Exhibits: 0

Dated: June 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 I was born on GRO-B 1973 and I live at GRO-B
2. My brother, GRO-B:B (born on GRO-B 1972), was co-infected with the Human Immunodeficiency Virus (HIV) and the Hepatitis C Virus (HCV) through contaminated blood products. He died from chronic hepatitis on GRO-B GRO-B 1994, aged 22.
3. My mother has provided a Witness Statement to the Inquiry under WITN1428001.
4. This witness statement has been prepared without the benefit of access to my brother's full medical records.

Section 2. How Affected

5. [B] had severe Haemophilia A. He was treated with Cryoprecipitate initially at the North Devon District Hospital (NDDH). He then moved on to Factor VIII (FVIII) concentrate from around the early 1980s. My mother administered it to him at home. When [B] was about 9 years old he was offered a boarding place at the Lord Mayor Treloar College (LMTC) in Alton. The school had its own Haemophilia Centre there.

6. [B] was told that he was infected with HIV in November 1988 at LMTC just after my mother was also informed of the diagnosis by Dr Attic at the NDDH. [B] was 16 years old at the time. It has recently come to light that [B] first tested positive for HIV on 11th October 1984 (four years before we were told). I refer to my mother's Statement in that regard. We do not know when [B] was told that he had HCV.

Section 3. Other Infections

7. I am not aware of [B] being infected with anything other than HIV and HCV. I believe that the HIV had advanced to AIDS at the end of [B] life.

Section 4. Consent

8. [B] was tested without his or our mother's consent. [B] had regular blood tests that my parents thought were for monitoring his haemophilia levels.

9. [B] may have been treated for the purposes of research as he was treated in a controlled environment at the LMTC alongside other boys in a similar situation and out of sight of their parents. There was a lack of transparency about what was happening there.

Section 5. Impact of the Infection

10. My mother always treated B differently to me because of him having haemophilia. B was away at LMTC during school term time. Being 18 months younger than B I was, at first, naïve to there being any problem at all. When B and my parents were told that B was infected with HIV I didn't really know what was going on for some time but B had obvious anger issues. He would snap for no apparent reason and we would often come to blows. Boys being boys, we had quite a few tussles and scraps and our mum would have to separate us. After one particular fight, my mum told me that B was 'not well' and did 'not have long to live'. It was a shock to me and I didn't know what she meant at first. In retrospect B's anger is now understandable.

11. I had just turned 15. I was confused at being told that B was dying and I do not remember anyone subsequently ever telling me much about it at all. My parents did their best but the entirety of their focus was on B and I was pretty much left to my own devices. There was no support and no counselling. I had been jogging along doing quite well at school but in my last year I went off the rails and I did not do as well as I could have done. I couldn't tell anyone that B had HIV because of the stigma. It was something that I had to keep to myself.

12. B succumbed to a lot of opportunistic viral infections and I was often left with my aunts and uncles if B needed to go into hospital. Luckily mum came from a big family. I dropped out of school and I was sent to live with two aunts, GRO-B approximately 15 miles away from my home. It took me away from what was going on at home and, in retrospect, I believe it was a way of gagging me and ensuring that I didn't say anything about B to anyone. I was away for many months and I lost precious time with B and I was isolated from my friends. The isolation affected my own friendships.

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13. My formative teenage years were disruptive. From the age of 17/18, I spent less time with my aunts on [GRO-B] as I could drive then. I just wanted to hang out with friends and it was difficult. I didn't have very much money because I couldn't get a job.
14. It was like an emotional pressure cooker at home. I remember having to physically restrain [B] after a family meal on my 18th birthday. I had to pin him to the bed after he lost it out of pure anger and frustration. [B] also suffered badly with paranoia. He used to think that people were following him at watching him. He would point them out to me and I would look but there was no one there. I didn't know how to talk him through it all because I was little more than a child myself.
15. [B] suffered so much psychologically. I would be out with friends and someone would come and tell me that [B] was at the park drinking, taking drugs and kicking off. [B] got himself into a lot of trouble causing aggro by kicking off or saying something to someone he shouldn't. Sometimes he was cutting himself. People didn't understand why he was so angry and off the rails because they didn't know what was going on with him. I was trying to find my feet socially and make friends but I would have to find him, calm him down and/or defend/protect him from others. I would have to go and sort him out before all hell broke loose. I got myself in a lot of trouble fighting and getting into arguments. I started drinking and taking drugs too just to try to fit in and block it all out.
16. The stigma associated with HIV/AIDS was just awful at that time and people did find out that [B] was infected. [B] had his own flat. A local lad broke into it and stole [B] [GRO-B] [B] had [GRO-B] living with HIV [GRO-B] that was how it all came out. They were very dark days as the news spread around the town.
17. [B] lost weight and lost his hair as his health deteriorated. He became doubly incontinent. He lost the ability to drive towards the end of his life. I would drive him to visit our Gran. I remember him accidentally soiling himself

and having to clean him up. He was so gaunt and thin and people would recoil from us when they saw us, knowing that [B] was infected with HIV/AIDS. I was the barrier that prevented anyone saying anything about him. I would strike first and ask questions after. I got myself into trouble with the Police. I ended up with convictions for ABH, criminal damage and speeding. There was no support for me and I needed help.

18. My parents struggled massively through all of this. They split up just after [B] died. My mum couldn't cope anymore and just one week after [B] funeral she had moved out. Within a three week period I had lost both my brother and my mother. She had to deal with it as she saw fit and I know now why she did it but at the time it was very difficult. I got left alone with my father then and I didn't have a close bond with him.

19. I ultimately moved away from the area because of the stigma. I married my high school sweetheart. She studied to be a nurse in [GRO-B] and persuaded me to move there with her. I was in self destruct mode and might have ended up in prison. In moving away, I had to cut ties with my previous life and associations and had to make new friends. I now have two children and do alright for myself but it was a very long slog to get there. If things had been different, I would have carried on with my education and gone on to college. As it is, I struggled on a low income with a young family before going to college later in life. I am by occupation an [GRO-B] working in the

[GRO-B]

Section 6. Treatment/care/support

20. I was never offered any form of counselling or psychological support. It was badly needed for a long time and I would accept it to this day.

Section 7. Financial Assistance

21. [B] was a party to the HIV litigation that ended in 1991. A waiver had to be signed by all the parties to the litigation otherwise the money would have been held back. I think I remember being informed that [B] received a sum of approximately £22,000.

Anonymity

22. I wish to remain anonymous.

23. I do not wish 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 ..

17/07/2020