

# ANONYMOUS

Witness Name: GRO-B

Statement No: WITN2812001

Exhibits: 0

Dated: April 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 I was born on GRO-B and I live at  
GRO-B GRO-B  
GRO-B
2. My mother GRO-B: M was infected with HIV after receiving a blood transfusion during a hysterectomy. My mother died GRO-B
3. This witness statement has been prepared without the benefit of access to M 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 infected**

4. **GRO-B** my mother was a woman in her early forties of relatively conservative lifestyle. She was happily married with two sons **GRO-B**
5. My mother suffered from bad menstrual pain and opted to have a hysterectomy to alleviate the monthly distress as she did not wish to have anymore children. In the spring of **GRO-B** my mother visited the **GRO-B** **GRO-B** for her routine Hysterectomy. During the course of the operation she received a blood transfusion.
6. I am unsure of the exact circumstances or the reason why she received a blood transfusion during the hysterectomy. I am not aware of my mother being provided with any information about a risk of being exposed to infection in regard to receiving blood.
7. After the operation my mother recovered and set about her daily life. She did suffer some minor unusual post operation effects, notably night time sweats, but these were not considered significant at the time, and only flagged later in the proceedings. I do not know how long they persisted.
8. My mother was infected with HIV as a result of receiving contaminated blood products during the blood transfusion. I am not aware of any immediate issues or symptoms after the surgery.
9. Many years after the operation in the early 1990's my mother started to experience some health issues; she became so easily tired and had lots of different tests for a variety of possible causes. These included LUPUS, Cardioliapin Antibody syndrome and various other auto immune diseases.
10. During this time I went to university **GRO-B** so I was free to take my mother to hospital appointments. I can recall taking her **GRO-B** **GRO-B** to have an uncomfortable bone marrow sample taken.

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Nothing seemed to be conclusive, and she was put on steroids and monitored. She was distressed, but put on a brave face.

11. **GRO-B** my mother went for a blood spinning treatment which required some standard blood tests prior to being undertaken. It was at this point, 10 years after the transfusion, that she was diagnosed with "full blown" AIDS. The Consultant traced her infection back to the hysterectomy operation. I was never really told the details of the meeting that took place when she was diagnosed with AIDS. I have a letter from her Consultant detailing their conclusions.

12. It is so unfortunate that in the course of all the previous examinations and tests that no blood test was previously taken for HIV. Having said that, it seems likely that it would not have changed the outcome.

13. I understand that both my mother and father were put in touch with the appropriate support team to help them come to terms with the diagnosis. However I am unable to provide any further details.

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

14. I do not believe my mother received any other infections other than HIV through contaminated blood products.

### **Section 4. Consent**

15. I do not know if my mother was tested or treated without her knowledge or consent. I do not think that my mother would have agreed to the operation if she had been told that there was risk that she would be infected with HIV.

### **Section 5. Impact of the Infection**



16. When my mother found out she had AIDS [GRO-B]  
[GRO-B]

17. This was before we had the benefit of technology and the ability to send e-mails and use smart phones. Communication was limited to infrequent and expensive phone calls and airmail letters. My parents eventually revealed the diagnosis to my wife and me when we visited that summer [GRO-B] I remember being in the front garden when she told me. I do not remember the exact words but it was very emotional and there was a lot of hugging and tears.

18. When my mother found out she has full blown AIDS it was a devastating blow. The social climate around AIDS was still very negative and my parents chose to initially hide the diagnosis, to allow them to come to terms with it and protect themselves and us.

19. My parents wrote a lengthy airmail letter to my brother and his wife before managing to speak to them on the telephone. It was such a traumatic time, both getting to grips with the apparent randomness of the infection, and the relatively short life expectancy for my mother. All efforts were taken to make my mother comfortable.

20. Unfortunately my mothers decline was relatively rapid; my wife stayed for a while and helped my father care for her in the following weeks. My mother very quickly became confined to a wheel chair more and she struggled on long car journeys. My wife and I were able to go on a holiday with my parents in October [GRO-B].

21. Following the holiday my wife and I returned [GRO-B] on the Sunday. That evening we received a phone call to say my mother was going in for some respite care on the Monday. We then received a call in the early hours of Monday morning telling us that she had died during the night. She never even made it into respite care.

22. I remember very little of the period shortly after she died. I remember useless information like the hymn that we sang at her funeral. It was so hard emotionally. We were sat there while people visited knowing we were not talking about what had really happened as they were not aware that my mother died from AIDS.

23. When I found out my mother was infected it made me feel so very vulnerable. I felt like things could crumble at any moment for no reason. My mother was such an important person in our life who I realised I was going to lose. I also found it difficult knowing my father was going to have to cope on his own.

24. To know she would miss out on so much and we were going to miss out on having a grandmother for our children was devastating.

25. I am an artist, and when my mother was diagnosed and subsequently died I was on a scholarship [GRO-B]. It was a once in a life time opportunity.

[GRO-B]

26. My father really struggled after my mother passed away and it was so tough as I was torn between [GRO-B] and my family life. We were going back and forth to the UK monthly and my father would come and stay with us too. Little did I realise that my father's struggles would also become struggles of my own.

27. We made the decision to move back to the UK at the end of 1995. My wife and I became very significant people in my father's life. I think we prioritised looking after my dad over ourselves. We spent a lot of time with him to compensate for him being on his own.

28. It wasn't helped by the fact that my brother and his wife were so far away. **GRO-B**

**GRO-B** so my wife and I felt we were closer to hand to care for my father.

Tragically my brother's wife was also diagnosed with breast cancer within months of my mother's death so they were vulnerable themselves. His wife went through some serious treatment. We were not a close family at this point.

29. My father was also suffering with his own health problems. **GRO-B**

he had a knee operation. We had hoped that this would enable him to be more interactive with my children. However, my father became very passive and his tolerance levels with being around my children were very short. He was in an increasing amount of pain so he was not there to take on a grandparent role. My father passed away in 2012 as his heart and lungs stopped functioning.

30. I really feel that since the death of my mother emotionally I do not have anyone to talk to and I feel the affect of not having my mother. My mother passing away was very damaging for our entire family because she held everybody together.

31. In a way my parents were lucky in that they had 10 years of ignorance, because if they had known about my mothers infected status it would have dominated their entire life. My parents were so incredibly close. To give you an example my father would return home from work every lunch time to eat his lunch with my mother.

32. I cannot underestimate the stigma and the impact it had on our family that my mother died of AIDS. My parents were so very private about the matter and only told my aunt and uncle and my father's business partner. Thankfully they were very supportive. My parents decided to bury the whole AIDS diagnosis and we were asked to do the same. Concealing the trauma had such a



devastating chain of events. I think most people actually believed my mother died of cancer.

33. I cannot also underestimate the impact that my mother being infected with HIV has had on my wife. [GRO-B]  
[GRO-B] She wanted to work in the legal system in Europe and beyond but we had to move [GRO-B] I think sometimes she resents what happened but we cannot go back. It is hard to know what my life would have been like had my mother not been infected with AIDS.

34. I find it so terribly sad when I think about the impact that this has had on my children and them never having a grandmother. We missed what was normally quite a powerful role in raising children. I am so very conscious on that the children have missed out on so much by not having a Grandmother.

#### **Section 6. Treatment/care/support**

35. I do not think my mother received a lot of treatment as there was not much that could be done as it was advanced by the time she was finally diagnosed. It was really mainly the case that the doctors were just keeping her comfortable. Maybe if we knew about the HIV earlier she could have had more treatment but it was all too late by the time we found out.

36. I think that both my mother and father received brief counselling. They just had a piece of paper and a conversation. However I am not really sure of any further details at all

37. I can confirm that I have not been offered any support.

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## **Section 7. Financial Assistance**

38.I was not involved in any litigation and I did not receive any financial assistance.

## **Section 8. Other Issues**

39.I have lost a valuable member of my family who would have been a tremendous influence on our lives and our children's lives. What we have lost it not tangible. My mother died very prematurely, missing out on so much.

## **Anonymity, disclosure and redaction**

40.I wish to apply for anonymity but I understand a redacted statement will be published and disclosed as part of the Inquiry.

## **Statement of Truth**

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

Signed.....

GRO-B

Dated

29/04/19.



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## MEDICAL SUMMARY

**(This summary is not intended to be exhaustive but sets out key points in the records relevant to the Statement)**

This witness statement has been prepared without the benefit of access to my mother's full medical records. .