

ANONYMOUS

Witness Name **GRO-B**

Statement No: WITN1466001

Exhibits: 0

Dated: January 2019

INFECTED BLOOD INQUIRY

FIRST WRITTEN WITNESS STATEMENT OF **GRO-B**

I, **GRO-B** will say as follows:-

Section 1. Introduction

1. My name is **GRO-B** My date of birth is **GRO-B** and I am 39 years old. I live at **GRO-B**. I married my wife **GRO-B** in **GRO-B** and we have 2 children, a boy aged 4 and a girl aged 7.

2. I am a shareholder and managing director of my family's pharmaceutical company. I inherited shares in the company from my grandfather **GRO-B**

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3. My mother **GRO-B: Mother** **GRO-B** and married **GRO-B: Stepfather**

GRO-B

in

GRO-B

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

Section 2. How Affected

5. GRO-B GRO-B SF had haemophilia and as a result I understand he was treated with Factor VIII. I believe SF was diagnosed with HIV in 1984. Unfortunately he infected my mother with HIV. My mother also tested positive for HIV in 1984 when she was 26 or 27 years old.

6. I was 4 or 5 years old when my mother was diagnosed. I was not aware of her illness; she shielded GRO-B me from it. She died of AIDS on the GRO-B GRO-B at the age of 33. I was 11 years old. I was not informed of the specific nature of her illness and cause of death until I was about 15 or 16 years old.

Section 3. Other Infections

7. I am unaware of any other infections that my mother received as a result of my step-father being given infected with blood products.

Section 4. Consent

8. I am unaware whether my mother was treated or tested without her knowledge or consent or without being given adequate or full information.

Section 5. Impact

9. As stated above GRO-B and I were shielded from her illness though I do remember that she had a severely bad foot that she injured in a car crash in America. It was difficult for her and after SF GRO-B I recall that she was stressed looking after two small boys as a widow with a bad foot and what I now know was

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a terrible, debilitating illness. My mother's ability to work was diminished by the infection and as a result she was supported financially by my grandfather and had help looking after GRO-B and me from family and friends. Aside from her foot injury I do not remember her being chronically ill until towards the end of her life, due to the aforementioned shielding of GRO-B and me from the difficult truths of the situation.

10. After my mother died GRO-B and I went to live with our aunt GRO-B and her husband. They lived reasonably close to where my mother lived in GRO-B but they purchased a larger house so as to be able to accommodate my brother and me as well as their two children who were younger than the two of us.
11. When we moved in to live with my aunt and uncle, I did not have to move schools as they lived close to my school. I had already moved schools a couple of times. My mother thought my first school was rough and at the second school it was felt that I was not being stimulated enough, so I was moved to a Prep school. At 13 I moved on to the Prep school's senior school where I remained until I went to University.
12. I did quite well at school academically but I did struggle to cope with the loss of my step-father and mother. After my step-father died I had counselling; I thought he had died as a result of something I had done and that it was my fault. I do not recall exactly how long I received counselling for but I probably attended counselling sessions at least once a week.
13. I suspect I suppressed a lot of feelings and it was hard for me socially. I constantly craved affirmation; perhaps because I did not have the maternal support and sense of nurture anymore GRO-B and I were in a difficult situation and our relationship with our aunt and uncle was strained and quite tempestuous. We did not get on and had arguments. It must have been very difficult for them also; my aunt had lost a sister and had taken on her children as well.

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14. **GRO-B** I went to live with my maternal grandparents due to my poor relationship with my aunt and uncle. **GRO-B** I told my grandparents I was not going back to live with my aunt and uncle. **GRO-B** **GRO-B** **GRO-B** and I continued living with them until my mid 20s. **GRO-B** soon followed me to live with them.

15. It was not nice for my grandparents to have two moody, depressed teenagers living in their house. They did not have enough energy to deal with us. It was an extra burden on them. They had already finished raising their children. They had also suffered the loss of not only a daughter but also, after we had moved in, **GRO-B**. They went through ridiculous amounts of pain and were the kindest, most fundamentally decent people I have ever met.

16. This situation put a lot of stress on them and my grandfather ended up having a stroke a few years later. I am sure that both their bereavement and the subsequent consequence of **GRO-B** and me living with them contributed to his ill health.

17. When I left school I went to University. **GRO-B** **GRO-B** Due to ongoing depression caused by the circumstances surrounding my life since losing my parents I found it very hard to focus and apply myself and this was part of the reason why I changed my degree course. In the end though the change was not enough to stave off the internal difficulties I was still experiencing and I ended up not finishing my degree, despite my academic credentials and potential. I have always regretted not obtaining a degree and having a proper university experience. This lack of a degree has affected my career path and the amount of options available to me.

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GRO-B went back to live with my grandparents for a few more years. Despite the difficulties we all faced I had a good relationship with them. **GRO-B**

GRO-B

19. I used to suppress a lot of my emotions because it was difficult for me to face them. It was a steady process; I bottled everything up and my depression came out when I was about 20.
20. The catalyst for my depression was the breakdown of a relationship. Following the breakdown I had a sense of abandonment and loss which I and others attribute to my childhood bereavement and reacted far more negatively to the break-up than I might otherwise have done. I was not emotionally equipped nor did I have the resilience to deal with it at the time. That would have been different had my mother and step-father not passed away when I was so young.
21. I was admitted to the Priory for a few weeks when I was 21 years old and was prescribed medication for a while. I had health insurance paid for by my grandparents so fortunately I was able to access immediate help.
22. I have not had ongoing counselling since I left the Priory but I am still prone to depression. For me, trying to recover included occupying myself, getting a job and trying to live life in a positive manner as far as I could. Marriage and children have helped a great deal, but depression and anxiety still surface fairly regularly and I suspect always will.
23. After I left University I had a couple of jobs through a recruitment agency, including with **GRO-B** I could not hold down these jobs because my sleep pattern was poor and I fell asleep at work.
24. Whilst I was at the Priory I made friends with a woman and through that contact I was offered a job in her partner's company which provided search engine optimisation. I worked there for a few years. The job was ok but I faced similar

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issues as I had in my previous position. I was very tired sometimes but I managed to hold onto the job because my employer understood my condition.

25. There was an overlap between that job and **GRO-B**
GRO-B However I decided to leave the search engine optimisation job as I had done it for about 7 or 8 years and there was no opportunity for progression. I concentrated on my grandfather's company. When he had a stroke, I became de-facto head of the company. I helped to re-negotiate an agreement with a business partner that was signed in 2012 and have worked there ever since. I was extremely lucky that I had my **GRO-B** to work in. I managed to make it successful with lots of hard work but if I had not had this opportunity, I would have possibly attempted to go back to university to complete my education.

26. HIV had an impact on my whole family **GRO-B** and I did not know anything about our mother having HIV. I do not believe there is any rational reason for there to be stigma attached to HIV and usually my actions are in line with that. However, I sometimes get overwhelmed with irrational thoughts and I avoid telling people the cause of my step-father's and mother's death because I am worried about peoples' reactions.

27. However, a couple of months ago **GRO-B** I was slightly reticent about doing it due to the potential stigma but I did it in order to help further the cause of the Inquiry, and spoke about how this situation has affected me.

28. The deaths of my step-father and mother threw my childhood into turmoil. I ignored the psychological effects of it for some time and it dented my confidence. It made me more sensitive and increased my need for affirmation. I was reasonably strong academically and I wanted praise which gave me some sort of validation. It affected me socially; at times as I would come across as needy or arrogant. It made it harder for me to form social relationships. I had hang-ups and

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neuroses that made it difficult for me to form friendships with those my own age as well as making every aspect of life more challenging for me.

29. The situation has affected me as a parent. It did not make me a worse parent but most families have help from their parents. Grandparents often help to babysit the children, to afford parents some time to themselves as a couple, and help with school runs. My wife's parents live quite far away and consequently have never been able to provide much practical assistance nor spend the amount of time with my children that children should have with their grandparents. The relationship between children and grandparents is really special and important and my children will never have that with my mother and step-father. They do not know that they are missing out but they are missing out. I never got to show off my children to my mum and see her enjoyment for them and it plagues my thoughts. I have a lack of emotional and logistical support.

Section 6. Financial Assistance

30. When I was 18 years old and at University I received a payment of about £8/9,000. I was aware the money was available to me shortly before I received it; it had been held in trust for me. I do not know the source of the payment and I never signed any documents. When I was 21 years of age I received around £35,000. The money was not remotely commensurate with the effect that the blood scandal had had, and continues to have, on my life.

Section 7. Other Issues

31. David Owen, the health secretary in the 1970s, advised during his tenure that the UK should become self-sufficient in blood products due to the potential for infected blood making its way into these medicines and infecting patients. His warnings were not heeded.

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32. By the mid 80s, the government was still buying the blood from Arkansas prisons, despite the fact that the US Food and Drug Administration had banned its sale in America in 1983. During the smaller Inquiry several years ago, David Owen stated that almost all the papers from his time in office were lost or destroyed, implying a cover up, and to me it seems strongly likely that he was right. Many things point towards the fault of the successive governments but they have been either covered up or ignored, which is reprehensible.

33. In 1983 Dr NS Galbraith, founding director of the Communicable Disease Surveillance Centre in England and Wales, wrote to the Department of Health and Social Security, saying: "All blood products made from blood donated in the US after 1978 should be withdrawn from use until the risk of Aids transmission by these products has been clarified." But they were not withdrawn. The fact that the government repeatedly ignored the situation in the first place despite warnings from various authoritative and well-informed parties is evidence that they played with peoples' lives. It makes me feel intensely angry to think how this disregard for patients has decimated my life, my brother's life and the lives of so many others.

34. In 2017, the former health secretary Andy Burnham said, in his final speech in the Commons, that the use of contaminated blood was a "criminal cover-up on an industrial scale" and threatened to pass his evidence to the police if the government did not act. Shortly after, this present Inquiry was announced. The previous two inquiries are regarded by most, including myself, as whitewashes. It is my fervent wish that this Inquiry genuinely holds those responsible to proper account and provides justice to the multitude of victims resulting from this travesty of callous negligence and subsequent self-serving deceit.

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Anonymity, disclosure and redaction

35. I confirm that I wish to have anonymity and that I understand this statement will be published and disclosed as part of the Inquiry.

36. I do not wish to be called to give oral evidence.

Statement of Truth

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

Signed

GRO-B

GRO-B

Dated

10th

January 2019