

Witness Name: GRO-B

Statement No: WITN1227001

Exhibits: WITN1227002

Dated: April 2019

INFECTED BLOOD INQUIRY

FIRST WRITTEN STATEMENT OF GRO-B

GRO-B will say as follows:-

Section 1. Introduction

1. My name is GRO-B
GRO-B My date of birth is GRO-B I live alone and I have been
retired since I was aged 55. I have lived in GRO-B
2. I prepare this statement as the widow of GRO-B: H who passed away
as a result of receiving contaminated blood.
3. This statement has been prepared without the benefit of access to my
late husband's full medical records.

Section 2. How Affected

4. In the 1970's, my late husband was diagnosed with mild Haemophilia A and in
1976 he was seen by Professor Stewart at Middlesex Hospital with a clotting
factor of 4.2% and registered at that time.

ANONYMOUS

5. In 1981 or 1982 my late husband, under the care of Mr Winstock, underwent several tooth extractions at Middlesex Hospital near Oxford Circus. People with Haemophilia bleed a lot through the mouth during a tooth extraction and the hospital prepares them with Factor VIII. My husband knew that he was going to be given Factor VIII prior to the procedure. He was advised that all the products were being screened and although general heat-treatment had not begun the dentist advised that the risks of contracting any type of infection were very low.
6. My late husband was infected with both HIV and Hepatitis C. I refer to **Exhibit WITN1227002** which is a copy of his death certificate which specifies the causes of death as: 1a) Liver failure, b) Cirrhosis, c) Non A Non B Hepatitis, 2) Haemophilia A.
7. The hospital admitted to infecting my late husband and stated that many people were infected by this specific batch however I do not have the batch numbers.
8. During the 1980s my late husband had been working in Singapore and when he returned, everybody spoke about AIDS which was attracting considerable publicity. In July 1985 he also noticed a series of hard nodules on the back of his head. He was worried having seen the news that he was one of the infected people so he went to Middlesex Hospital to be tested and to reassure himself.
9. I remember vividly when the hospital called regarding the results. They called at 5:25 pm on a Friday and requested that my late husband call them back. I called my husband at his office who then tried to call the hospital but the department was closed which meant that we had to wait the entire weekend. It was so cruel having to wait so long and in fact they actually said to us that the wait gave us some time to prepare for the fact that something was wrong.

ANONYMOUS

10. We went to see Dr Machin on the Monday and after my late husband had his consultation with him he came out looking grey and pale in the face and I knew he had received bad news. Dr Machin confirmed the diagnosis that he had been infected with HIV. I was later tested but thankfully my results were negative.
11. During this time there was so much media publicity surrounding HIV and AIDS which meant that we knew a little bit about what it was. During the appointment Dr Machin said that we could continue to live our normal life but not to share the diagnosis with our friends or children as it would change our social life and relationships. Dr Machin also pointed out the dangers in sharing a toothbrush. We carried on living more or less a normal life with the burden of the secret.
12. I do not think anybody knew much information in relation to the risks relating to the infection and I don't think even the medical practitioners did either. I feel very strongly that the way in which this information was communicated was unacceptable. Receiving a phone call so late in the day meaning that by the time we phoned them back the department would be closed.

Section 3. Other Infections.

13. I do not believe that my late husband was exposed to risk of any other infections.

Section 4. Consent.

14. I do not believe that he was treated or tested without his knowledge or without his consent.
15. My late husband underwent the AZT trial and was clearly given the real medication instead of the placebo which damaged his lymph nodes.

Section 5. Impact

16. My late husband was absolutely devastated when he was diagnosed with HIV. I was also devastated and our main priority was to protect our children and to try and lead as much of a normal life as possible.
17. My late husband had just started his own business in London prior to that he had been working in Singapore. He was an GRO-B
GRO-B We were worried about his energy levels because he really needed to be focusing on the new business if he were to make it a success. Unfortunately, it was so hard for him to focus as he was mentally distraught and physically his health deteriorated so quickly.
18. In August 1984, he underwent a probable sero-conversion illness with extreme lethargy which presented with the symptoms of glandular fever. During this time he returned to Singapore for a business trip and whilst he was there he was tested for both types of Hepatitis and for glandular fever. All test results were negative.
19. In 1986, he developed shingles in his groin, leg and backside. In 1987, he developed a dry cough and had difficulty speaking on occasions especially on the telephone. He also suffered with shortness of breath which was diagnosed as a nervous disorder.
20. By August 1987 during our time on holiday in France his health started to deteriorate rapidly. We returned to the UK and he was admitted to Middlesex Hospital where he was diagnosed with bacterial pneumonia which resulted in him losing 10 kilos in weight. He remained in hospital for the latter part of August and most of September. Thankfully he recovered from the pneumonia and regained some weight. There was a short intervening period where he didn't feel too bad and he managed to carry on for approximately a year.

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21. He continued to go into the office and attempted to work but he ended up having to take long rests in the conference room. He went through the motion of going to work but not really achieving anything. This had financial implications on our family because he was not making any money. As a result his new business suffered and he really only managed to deal with his existing contracts but it wasn't long before he couldn't work at all.
22. Then things got worse rapidly and he developed candida oesophagus with drastic weight loss and he had to be admitted into hospital again in February 1989.
23. He came home in late March for about a fortnight but during that time he was totally bed ridden and plagued with a constant irritation of the skin due to the bile giving him a yellow complexion, a side effect of his liver being badly damaged.
24. He then had to return to hospital for the final time and he was so very ill. He was also very confused and his memory really suffered. He stopped eating and he said that there was no point in force feeding him because he was not absorbing any nutrients. By this time the most important thing was to ensure that we made him as comfortable as we could as he didn't have long to live.
25. He did receive the Interferon treatment in February 1989 but after a short time we were told that it was an expensive treatment which was not making him any better so they stopped.
26. There was no treatment available to him. I was obsessed with getting him to eat, but the hospital told me that he wouldn't and he was completely confused.
27. He then went slowly into a coma and never recovered. As a result of the Hepatitis he suffered with cirrhosis of the liver and I was told his death was predominantly caused by liver failure.

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28. In relation to the HIV, there was little the medical practitioners could tell us but we were told that it had progressed to AIDS.
29. Whilst my late husband was battling with his health he kept telling me that we would all be better off financially if he was dead. Our children were in private education at the time completing their A-Levels and the respective schools were kind not to charge us for part of their education. He encouraged the children to take their exams and not to let his illness effect their education.
30. The impact on our family was very sad. I was left to bring up our GRO-B twins on my own. We were offered counselling but the children did not want help and my daughter closed down like an oyster and became very difficult. My son did not do very well at his exams however he managed to get into University but he should have done so much better. Their father passed away in GRO-B and their exams were in June.
31. My daughter would not talk to me about her father. She closed down completely and was difficult for quite a few years following this. My son did speak to me about his father. He went on to study Architecture at GRO-B GRO-B He is now an Architect living in New York City where he lives with his wife and child.
32. My daughter went to the GRO-B to study a bilingual course involving international law. She went on to marry happily and currently has a good job and two children. They both live their lives and miss their father.
33. The death of my late husband and their father burst the family apart. I see my daughter regularly, as she lives in GRO-B only see my son once a year if I am lucky as he lives in New York and has very short holidays.
34. The consequence of my husband's infections followed by his passing was that I carved myself a life without a marriage and instead I became surrounded by friends. This nearly killed me with tiredness as they would not leave me alone.

ANONYMOUS

Gradually, my life simply went on. I stayed in GRO-B London for approximately 4 years and I was still working part-time until my mother became ill. My job was not really a career and my mother needed me so in approximately 1993 to 1994 I moved to GRO-B and I have stayed here ever since then. I went on to the sell the house in approximately 1994 to 1995.

35. My mother passed away in 1994 and I had to sell her flat to share the inheritance with my brother. I bought a place with a friend and we wanted to open a bed and breakfast. Unfortunately our idea did not work and when we sold the place I was able to buy a small place in GRO-B I then also sold my flat in London.

36. Had my late husband been alive my life would have been significantly different. He was efficient at his job and we would have most likely still been living in London in our family home. When he died the mortgage was paid off with life insurance and that is how I was able to survive for all those years.

37. In terms of the stigma of my late husband's death it was devastating that we could not tell anybody. We had to pretend that everything was normal but of course it was not. After he had passed away I told my friends the truth. Some of them had guessed what was going on when he went into hospital. They have all been so supportive with me and to my children.

38. My children found it difficult to talk about the reason behind their father's death. They never took any risks with sexual partners and they never entered into any serious relationship without their partner first being tested. Everyone had to be tested as far as they were concerned. By the time my late husband had died we could talk openly about it within the family. My mother was devastated for me as she saw me as a widow with two children and was very worried about me.

39. The medical staff knew about risks but they were directed to use all of the blood stock that was available. We knew that blood could be bought from

ANONYMOUS

- dubious sources. They took a gamble and I do not think they realised the magnitude of the risks.
40. A friend of mine, who is a doctor, showed me a report in The Lancet which suggested that the blood products carried risks. I believe they certainly knew about the risks and that treating the blood was too expensive.
41. I did go on to have a partner but I never wanted to get married again as I could not face being a widow a second time. Sadly, my partner also passed away. I now once again enjoy the company of my friends.
42. I cannot undo what has been done but my life has not been sad all the way. I have managed to make a life for myself however I often think that my life would have been very different. I am happy for my children's success as they do have good jobs, they have married and they are parents.
43. I often ask myself whether this all could have been avoided and I think the answer is in the affirmative. Particularly, it could have been avoided in cases such as my late husband who had very little transfusions. He could have been given cryoprecipitate, although admittedly it was not recognised as good as Factor VIII at that time.

Section 6. Treatment/Care/Support

44. I do not know what other alternative treatment he could have had. At that time, there seemed to be no treatment.
45. The nurses were very nice towards us and he was treated very well. They tried to make him comfortable.
46. We did not receive psychological support. At the time, the attitude was to '*get on with it as best as you can*'.

Section 7. Financial Assistance

47. The MacFarlane Trust provided us with £2,000 in approximately 1988. They also paid for my late husband's funeral.

48. Financially, we knocked on a few doors for social security but we were completely ignored. When my late husband was shortly at home in 1989 between his hospital stays, a nurse told us that we should apply for loans as I was a night carer, but I was told I was not qualified despite our financial hardship. On paper, we had a house and therefore we were not eligible. This was a very serious worry for us at that time and the bank did loan us some money but with huge interest. I managed to pay off this debt after my late husband passed away. However, I found myself under a great amount of pressure. My late husband was terribly worried and he was so apologetic to have to leave me in that state. He died a very disturbed man.

49. In 2011, I received a payment of £70,000 from The Skipton Fund. This was divided into two payments. Firstly, I received £50,000.00 in June 2011 and secondly I received £20,000 in July 2011.

Section 8. Other Issues

50. I wonder about what he would look like now. It is very personal.

51. I was involved in the 1991 litigation, we were preparing a case and we wanted to go to trial as at the time Margaret Thatcher and Kenneth Clarke did not want to listen to any complaints and they certainly did not want to offer any help. By the time John Major received so much bad publicity, he decided to make an offer which we accepted based on the precondition that we sign a waiver. In my case, I had two children and the allowance for them was £16,000, which equalled £8,000 each, and I received £44,000. This helped but it did not represent the earnings of my late husband. I also signed my husband's medical documents away and I did not receive them back.

52. I would like a public recognition of the mistakes that were made and to know that someone is held accountable and it is important for me and my children that someone justifies what happened.

53. I would also like for us and all the victims as well as their families to receive adequate financial compensation.

Anonymity, disclosure and redaction

54. I would like to apply to retain my anonymity.

Statement of Truth

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

Signed..

GRO-B

Dated.....

30/04/2019.