

Witness Name: GRO-B

Statement No: WITN1599001

Exhibits:0

Dated: February 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 DOB GRO-B 1970, and I live at GRO-B GRO-B
2. My brother GRO-B: B DOB GRO-B 1968, died on GRO-B 1993 at the age of 24 after being infected with HIV, Hepatitis A, Hepatitis B and Hepatitis C.
3. My mother GRO-B has also provided a statement to the Inquiry, which can be found at GRO-B
4. This witness statement has been prepared without the benefit of access to B 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 Affected

5. As I was only a child when B was infected the information regarding how he was infected has been covered in my Mum's witness statement.

6. I found out about [B] HIV infection when I came home from school one day and Mum was on the floor crying. Me, Mum and my step-dad all sat there and talked about it. We had been told that we were not allowed to use the same towels or cutlery and to not discuss this with anyone- I was a child I was scared
7. Before this, [B] was infected with Hepatitis A. [B] was kept in isolation at hospital and I would have to wear a spacesuit to go and see him. His only friend at the [GRO-B] was a cockroach in his room; it was a horrible hospital.

Section 3. Other Infections

8. I am not aware of what other infections [B] may have been infected with. However I am aware of having to have some medicine the same as him as a child I do not remember what this was for

Section 4. Consent.

9. [B] was only a child so he could not consent to any testing, but I do not believe my mother was aware that [B] was being tested.
10. Throughout my teens I was sent for blood tests as they said it was part of the genetic screening but I think they were just checking to see if I had caught the virus as well.

Section 5. Impact

GRO-B

12. I had a friend [GRO-B] who asked if I wanted to go on holiday with her family, but when the news about [B] illness [GRO-B] they uninvited me. Even our extended family began to drift away from us.

13. I used to protect B at school and out of school as he was picked on due to his health. I had been in top sets in everything at school but when B became ill my grades really suffered. I became very isolated at school and I was only really friends or accepted by the BME pupils at school because we were all treated horribly and could relate to each other.

14. B got married to GRO-B in GRO-B just before he started taking morphine.

15. I am a lesbian and at times B could be homophobic towards me. I think deep down he blamed the homosexual community for the spread of HIV. He would say to me he doesn't like what I am and I would deny it, I never came out until after his death as I didn't want to hurt him.

16. There were times when I would take him to Oxford-once I thought he was going to die and I broke speed limits getting him there-I carried him in my arms into the "AIDS unit" as he called it.

17. The relationship between the family and GRO-B became fractious

18. In GRO-B 1993 my Mum and Step-Dad and biological dad turned up at my door, I had just finished work, to tell me that B was dead. He had died in his bed. When we rushed round to his house, GRO-B would not let me in to see him, as we had argued earlier that week. This resulted in an argument and as a result none of our family were allowed to go to his funeral. We therefore had to arrange our own memorial service to which we invited the GRO-B students. Many of them came and sent flowers to mums house.

19. After B death, I contacted social services as I was aware GRO-B was placed in care, I then commenced an adoption process, once I went to see GRO-B who was at a children's home where he had been placed by social services as respite from foster carers. When I arrived there were no staff in sight and just a child running around hitting the other kids with a stick. I picked up GRO-B and took him home, when I explained to social services what happened they let him stay with me.

20. I officially adopted GRO-B in 1995 GRO-B was born healthy but got a respiratory disease when he was 4 months old, the complications of which caused him to suffer from cerebral palsy. I

believe he contracted the infection because his immune system was so weak as B had full blown AIDS when he was conceived.

21. I struggled in life for a long time. I left school early with no qualifications and abused alcohol but when I adopted GRO-B my entire life changed; I became a Mum GRO-B and I had an amazing time together. I always continued to work and struggled to get some financial assistance so that he could have a good life, prior to his death he had just had a new wheelchair, a new bedroom and I had bought an adapted car to take him round which he loved.

22. GRO-B died on GRO-B 1999. I absolutely fell apart when he died, I had a breakdown. I had anger management via the NHS, My whole life was always about GRO-B so when GRO-B died I was mourning for both of them I had never really grieved for GRO-B until then.

23. GRO-B had a lot of medical problems and problems with his breathing. I sometimes think it was selfish of GRO-B to bring a baby into the world when he had such a serious illness, and it is one of the reasons I have never had a child of my own. The fear of losing them as I did with GRO-B I often felt that whom ever I loved or cared for were stolen from me

24. I phoned GRO-B after GRO-B funeral to let her know that he had passed away. She said GRO-B 'who?'. When I reminded her that it was her son, I said that I wanted to give GRO-B half sister some pictures of him so she could remember him. I sent photos to GRO-B and spoke to her over the phone.

25. There are a lot of us who are emotionally damaged as a result of GRO-B death. My step-brother GRO-B really struggled and went to prison a few times after going off the rails. My step-dad GRO-B went through it all as well GRO-B has passed away now and was a wonderful step dad to both of us.

26. My GRO-B was also badly affected. She developed OCD as a result of dealing with GRO-B infections and not knowing how they were caused. She would constantly be cleaning and there was bleach everywhere in the house. GRO-B
GRO-B

Section 6. Treatment/Care/Support

27. We received no psychological support as a family. We were invited to a few Macfarlane weekends and went once. The only support we have really received is through Tainted Blood who we found when looking for GRO-B school friends on Facebook.

Section 7. Financial Assistance

28. GRO-B was a party to the 1991 litigation. When he received the money, he asked me and Mum if there was anything we needed. He gave Mum £1000 for his funeral and we told him to spend the rest enjoying himself and to make sure he put some money aside for GRO-B he said GRO-B mum would look after him. He would be devastated if he knew she did not.

29. I have no way of knowing if it was true, but I have been told that once GRO-B got angry and burnt some of the money he had been given from the 1991 litigation as it was no good to him.

30. GRO-B and I got payments from DLA and MacFarlane Trust to help me care for him. They stopped his payments as soon as he died. I had to sell my family home to consolidate the debts I made in giving GRO-B the best life I could

31. The MacFarlane gave me some money to go on a holiday to India in 2004.

32. The Haemophilia Society gave me £5000 towards a house extension which helped accommodate GRO-B needs.

Section 8. Other Issues

33. We want justice. They had a duty of care to look after everyone that suffered and they have not done that. Both the NHS and school should take some responsibility for ruining GRO-B life his sons and ours and all of the others affected and infected

34. The effects of what happened devastate an entire family, it isn't just the infected person that suffers and it is important that the Inquiry does not forget about everyone affected.

35. GRO-B need to take some responsibility and it needs to be properly looked into what happened at the school and why nothing was done at the time.

Anonymity, disclosure and redaction

36. I do ☐ want to be anonymous.

37. I do not want to give oral evidence.

Statement of Truth

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

Signed.....

Dated.....24/4/2019.....