

ANONYMOUS

Witness Name:

GRO-B

Statement No. WITN4145001

Dated: 15th June 2020

INFECTED BLOOD INQUIRY

FIRST WRITTEN STATEMENT OF

GRO-B

GRO-B

I provide this statement in response to a request under Rule 9 of the Inquiry Rules 2006 dated 27th March 2020. I adopt the paragraph numbering in the Rule 9 request for ease of reference.

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

1. Introduction

1. My name is **GRO-B** my date of birth is **GRO-B** **GRO-B** and my address is known to the Inquiry. I am married and have a son, a daughter and four grandchildren.
2. I am a retired **GRO-B** and I take care of my husband **GRO-B** who suffers with **GRO-B**
3. I make this statement in support of my brother, **GRO-B: B** **GRO-B: B** **GRO-B** who has also provided a witness statement to the Inquiry.

2. How Affected

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1. There is a history of haemophilia in our family and **B** was diagnosed in **GRO-B** as a mild haemophiliac. I am a carrier of haemophilia as are my **GRO-B** **B** and I were close when we were growing up as there is only a year between our ages.
2. I can recall some occasions from our childhood when **B** had bleeds. One day we were helping with hay making at a nearby farm and **B** stepped on a pitchfork that went right through his foot. Then there was the day when a lollipop stick pierced the roof of his mouth. When incidents like these happened, I remember my father would take **B** to the **GRO-B** now known as **GRO-B**. My father was a **GRO-B** so would take **B** to the **GRO-B** for treatment. At the time, the name of this treatment was unknown to me.
3. During **B** childhood and before he reached the age of 18, my **GRO-B** would administer his treatment under the supervision of **GRO-B** **GRO-B**. In those days no-one seemed to even understand haemophilia and the risks involved. I believe **B** GP was kept updated on what treatment he received.
4. When **B** was about **GRO-B** and before he went to **GRO-B** he had terrible bleeding episodes after the removal of his wisdom teeth which also required treatment. I felt so sorry for him, it was awful for him having to eat only 'baby' food, as the tooth sockets remained unhealed for some six weeks.
5. As **B** and I progressed into adulthood we grew apart. We developed our own interests and I eventually moved to **GRO-B** to train as a **GRO-B**. When I returned sometime later to study **GRO-B** in **GRO-B** we rekindled our friendship. Then in **GRO-B** I moved abroad but returned in **GRO-B**.

6. In [GRO-B] [B] was working as a [GRO-B] at the [GRO-B] [GRO-B] in [GRO-B]. Here he [GRO-B] patients with haemophilia to self-medicate with Factor VIII. From [GRO-B] [B] also worked at the [GRO-B] and [GRO-B] [GRO-B] under [GRO-B] before he became a [GRO-B].

7. In [GRO-B] I remember receiving a telephone call from my father to tell me that [B] was seriously ill. [B] had been given the American Factor VIII treatment for a bleed from his pelvis into his leg and it had turned his skin a very weird shade of yellow/orange. It was quite frightening and lasted for approximately ten days. I believe It was in about [GRO-B] of that year that [GRO-B] at the [GRO-B] [GRO-B] told [B] that he had become infected with non-A, non-B hepatitis. I don't have detailed information as to how [B] was informed but he describes this event in more detail in his witness statement.

8. Even though [B] was a [GRO-B] he was not diagnosed with hepatitis C until [GRO-B] by [GRO-B] Consultant Haematologist at [GRO-B] [GRO-B].

9. As a GP in [GRO-B] I recall [B] had the nickname of [GRO-B] as his special interest was [GRO-B]. He and a medical friend made an informative disc for colleagues. He was very dedicated to his job and enjoyed his work.

3. Other Infections

1. To my knowledge, it was only hepatitis C that [B] became infected with as a result of the infected blood products, but he also suffered with liver problems resulting from his hepatitis infection.

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2. As a young child, [B] became infected with Scarlett Fever which caused damage to his heart. He has recently undergone surgery to repair the damage.
3. In [GRO-B] [B] was diagnosed with the bacterial infection, Yersinia.
4. I recall [B] always complained of being cold. He suffered with neuropathy in his hands and feet and would need to wear thermal clothing. He also suffers with deafness, lethargy and impaired immunity which are all permanent side effects of the treatment he received.

4. Consent

1. [B] has provided his own explanation in relation to consent – please refer to his first witness statement to the Inquiry.

5. Impact

1. I believe the impact of [B] infection with hepatitis C took its toll on his wife and his children, as well as other close family and possibly contributed to the breakdown of his first marriage. The strain was enormous and all-consuming. The family seemed to become 'insulated'. No-one seemed to be able to penetrate that close family circle.
2. In [GRO-B] [B] was receiving Alpha Interferon and Ribavirin treatment. His personality appeared to change, he became hard and dictatorial. He was hard on himself as well as his family. I believe this may have been a form of self-preservation. I found it extremely distressing to see my brother suffering in this way because of the treatments.
3. After [B] divorce from his wife [GRO-B] we became close again. We spent more time together and spoke regularly on the telephone. I helped [B] to work on our family tree.

4. In [GRO-B] I had a [GRO-B] at [GRO-B] (now known as [GRO-B]). I was given tranexamic acid prior to the surgery by the Haematologist [GRO-B]. Post operatively, I needed IV blood and was given two pints. It wasn't until approximately [GRO-B] when I attended a routine appointment with [GRO-B] for my daughter, that I was given the opportunity to ask him whether I should worry about the blood I had been given after my operation. [GRO-B] reply was a question; "does the thought keep you awake at night?" Naively, I replied "not really". So no further investigation was suggested.
5. At my yearly appointment at the Haemophilia Centre at the [GRO-B] [GRO-B] I asked whether I had ever been tested for hepatitis C or HIV. I was told by the doctor that there was no evidence in my records to suggest this, but that the computer records only go back as far as four years. That day I was offered a test at the hospital but declined on that occasion, as I needed to get home quickly on that, particular day. As it was still bothering me, I later got myself tested by my GP and tested negative for hepatitis C and HIV.
6. During my years as a [GRO-B] in [GRO-B] I worked at [GRO-B] [GRO-B]. Part of my job was to work on 'the district' within the community. Whilst working on the district, my colleagues and I were not supplied with a second pair of gloves to inspect the [GRO-B] after the [GRO-B]. This process was always carried out with bare hands. When I told my father, who as I explained previously, was a [GRO-B] [GRO-B] that I had carried out this procedure with bare hands, he said that I should never do that again, and insisted that I ask for rubber gloves to be provided in future. Once I asked for this to be put in place, it actually happened with immediate effect. My father was obviously aware that there was an element of risk, but we [GRO-B] were not informed of any risk to the [GRO-B] or ourselves, at the time.

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7. Being married to [GRO-B] who is [GRO-B] and living in [GRO-B] I am very aware that hepatitis C and HIV has affected people within the [GRO-B] [GRO-B] community here, as many suffer with Thalassaemia.
8. Since the Inquiry began, I have tried to raise awareness about the Inquiry by contacting their local newspaper and radio station, unfortunately with no effect, and have understood that these people unfortunately are reluctant to come forward due to the stigma associated with not only their Thalassaemia, but the added diagnosis of HIV or hepatitis C. I recently became aware of one young [GRO-B] woman, who made a statement to the Inquiry on behalf of her mother, whom I knew, and who died of hepatitis C even after having a liver transplant. When this lady was first diagnosed, I helped [GRO-B] for her hepatitis C infection, as she was very nervous about how to give herself the [GRO-B] It was a tragic set of circumstances, compounded by the fact that even now, this young woman has not been able to tell the rest of her family the 'whole' story and especially, that she has made a statement to the Inquiry.

6. Treatment/Care/Support

1. In [GRO-B] I believe that [B] received Alpha Interferon treatment subcutaneously and Ribavirin in tablet form. While he was on this treatment, he slept all day for weeks and weeks, unfortunately isolating himself from his family and friends and barely speaking to anyone apart from a couple of family members who were a [GRO-B] and a [GRO-B]
2. In [GRO-B] it was our mother's [GRO-B] birthday. I remember her crying because she hardly saw [B] and wasn't sure whether he would be able to even get up out of bed for any length of time to see her on her birthday. He was only managing to get up out of bed for approximately one hour each day at that time. Mum was totally distressed but also angry about what had happened to [B]

Fortunately, he was able to make the effort on that day for her birthday and managed to stay for forty-five minutes, or so. It must have been a difficult experience for him.

7. **Financial Assistance**

1. **B** has provided information on financial assistance in his statement.

8. **Other Issues**

1. I think **B** has been demoralised by his infection of hepatitis C. I try not to think about it, but I believe the infection has, on the whole, devastated my brother.
2. I feel very angry, that such a strong, well educated, conscientious person could be dealt such a tragic blow in life, ruining great possibilities and dreams with little fruition.



Statement of Truth

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

Signed.

GRO-B

Dated

June 15th 2020,