

# ANONYMOUS

Witness Name: **GRO-B**

Statement No: WITN4449001

Exhibits: WITN4449002-5

Dated: June 2020

## INFECTED BLOOD INQUIRY

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FIRST WRITTEN STATEMENT OF **GRO-B**

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

### Section 1. Introduction

1. My name is **GRO-B** and I was born on **GRO-B** I live at **GRO-B**

2. I make this statement as the affected son of my late mother, **GRO-B: M** **M** who was born on **GRO-B** and passed away, aged only **GRO-B** on **GRO-B**. I would like it noted that my mother's birth certificate incorrectly records both her date of birth and age at death **GRO-B**

3. My mother was also known as **M** and **M**. Her **M** name was **M**, her first married name was **M** and **M** was the name of her **M**.

4. My mother was infected with HIV and Hepatitis C via contaminated blood and/or contaminated blood products. I attach a copy of my mother's death certificate at **Exhibit WITN4449002**. It is disgraceful that the word "*Haemophilia*" was initially spelt incorrectly and had to be scrubbed out. I also

## ANONYMOUS

find it somewhat obtuse that no further details or information has been recorded in relation to the cause of death.

5. **This witness statement has been prepared without the benefit of access to my mother's full medical records.** I discovered some limited information in the sparse medical notes which I possess.

### Section 2. How Affected

6. My mother had severe Haemophilia A, with a clotting factor of 2% in 1974, which required treatment with both blood and blood products.
7. My mother was admitted to the Joyce Green Hospital (JGH) in Dartford, Kent, in 1970 for treatment for her Haemophilia.
8. My mother was also registered with the Haemophilia Society (HS) and, by 1974, with a number of Haemophilia Centres, namely Dr Katherine Dormandy at the Royal Free Hospital (RFH) in London, Professor Davison at Kings College Hospital (KCH) London and Dr C A Holman at Lewisham Hospital (LH) in London.
9. My mother also attended the Haemophilia and Thrombosis Centre at the Churchill Hospital (CH) in Headington, Oxford up to 1979. The Director was D R Biggs, the Clinical Consultant was C R Rizza and the Consultant Haematologist was Dr P L F Giangrande. My mother was known as M M at this hospital. **Exhibit WITN4449003** is a copy of a letter dated 27<sup>th</sup> March 1996 from Dr P L F Giangrande to me which states "*Thank you for your recent letter, enquiring about your mother* M M *It is true that your mother attended the Oxford Haemophilia Centre on some occasions in the past, but according to our notes she has not been seen here since 1979.....I am sure that you will understand our duty of confidentiality to all our patients, and all I am prepared to do is to confirm that you mother did transfer to the care of doctors in the* GRO-B *area some*

## ANONYMOUS

years ago. I will be writing to Dr Aronstam, the Consultant Haematologist at the North Hampshire Hospital in [GRO-B] ....to investigate the matter”.

10. Post 1979 my mother's care was transferred to Dr Aronstam and Dr Aston, who were Consultant Haematologists at Basingstoke District Hospital (BDH) which is now known as North Hampshire Hospital (NHH), situated in Aldermaston, Hampshire. During this time, my mother was known as [M]

[M] and was living in [GRO-B] having moved from [GRO-B] where her GP was Mr [GRO-B]

11. **Exhibit WITN4449004** is a copy of a letter dated 1<sup>st</sup> April 1996 from Dr A Aronstam to me which states “I have been contacted by Dr Giangrande from Oxford about a former patient of mine who I knew as [GRO-B: M] ...I would like to be of help and if at all possible would like to talk to you about your mother and feel the most sensitive way to do this would be face to face”.

12. At this time I discovered, via the Salvation Army, that my mother had already been dead for [GRO-B] years and the thought of travelling that distance to go and meet a clinician face to face in the mentally fragile state I was in was simply untenable. I would have definitely jumped at this offer had my mother still been alive. Although the clinicians offered to meet me face to face, I found it odd that the letter failed to mention that my mother was dead especially as she had been dead for a number of years. I would also like to add that when I telephoned the NHH and spoke with one of the clinicians (whose name I cannot recall), I was told that my mother had been “cured” of her Haemophilia. Naturally, I was somewhat dumbfounded by this comment which, at very best, could be described as “flippant”.

13. In relation to the treatment my mother received, it was noted in an extract from my mother's medical records entitled “Special Medical Card” that “immediate reactions to plasma transfusion have been severe suggest Chlophenirastine 10mg I.V before transfusions”. I attach a copy of this extract at **Exhibit WITN4449005**.

## ANONYMOUS

14. I believe that my mother received Factor VIII concentrates and plasma transfusions either at the JGH in 1970 and/or at the RFH and/or CH in 1974. I am unsure as to how often or in what quantities my mother received Factor VIII concentrates and plasma transfusions.

15. I am unable to pinpoint the exact date on which my mother was infected with HIV and Hepatitis C. However, medical records assist with the latter. **Exhibit WITN4449005** records "*Infective Hepatitis Nov 1970 (Jaundice) Nov 1970*"...*Joyce Green Hospital, Dartford, Kent*".

16. I am unaware as to whether my mother was given any information or advice regarding the risk of infection from Factor VIII concentrates and/or plasma transfusions. I was very young at the time and was only aware of her Haemophilia due to the frequency of hospital visits and in-patient stays.

17. I do not know in what manner, when or by whom my mother was told about her HIV and Hepatitis C infections.

### Section 3. Other Infections

18. As far as I am aware my mother was not infected with any other infections, such as vCJD, apart from HIV and Hepatitis C.

### Section 4. Consent

19. I do not know whether my mother was tested without her knowledge and therefore without her consent. It is possible that blood was taken from her during her many hospital visits and that she was not made aware as to the precise reason(s) for which the blood was being taken.

20. I am unaware as to whether my mother was treated without her knowledge and therefore without her consent because I don't know if she was given any warning or advice regarding the risk of infection from Factor VIII concentrates and/or plasma transfusions.

21. It is possible that my mother was the subject of research which took place without her knowledge and therefore without her consent. Factor VIII was a new and pioneering treatment in the 1970s and although lessons have now been learned, historically patients were condemned and lives put at risk. Research based medical advancement in both care and treatment has undoubtedly improved both management and outcomes for the future generations.

### Section 5. Impact

22. My mother had severe mental health issues that led to mental/nervous breakdowns which culminated in violent and abusive behaviour towards me.

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My poor mother was plagued with constant worry and constraints due to the nature of her Haemophilia (minor injuries would become very serious), HIV and Hepatitis C. My mother's treatment and care regime was punishing in itself and she spent an inordinate amount of time attending clinic appointments and as an inpatient at various hospitals throughout her life. Looking back, my earliest memory was attending the Haemophilia Centre at the CH with my mother via train as in those days you could sit alongside the driver. Understandably, my mother's health conditions and resultant hospitalisations entirely dominated and dictated her daily routine and affected her whole life.

23. I would describe my entire childhood as an "*extremely unhappy*" one. This led to me eventually leaving home at the relatively young age of GRO-B as I was no longer able to withstand the intolerable mental and physical abuse which I was subjected to, by my mother, on an almost daily basis. Sadly, this estrangement from my mother gravely affected, and continues to affect, my whole life.

24. I remember trying to reconnect with my mother when I was aged around

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which was shortly before I

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## ANONYMOUS

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25. My life has been traumatic and deeply affected by my mother's illnesses. Her constant hospitalisations, treatments, worry, mental health, lack of funds and being unable to work led to her physically and mentally abusing me. I was deprived of a loving, safe and secure childhood which led to me suffering with many problems and difficulties in my early adult life.
26. I have been deprived of a mother and any hope of family contact. Due to my young age when all of this happened, I was precluded from understanding the implications and nature of both physical and mental illness which has caused me deep regret and guilt. It was almost impossible for me, as a child, to get to grips with my mother's conditions. The fact that I was unable to find my mother, before her untimely death, to seek reconciliation and make amends with her, has left me both traumatised and deeply saddened.
27. I don't believe that I have recovered from my past. The scars I bear run incredibly deep. I am on my own now and have no family; the abuse I suffered made it impossible for me to hold down or maintain any form of relationship because of the mistrust which I carry with me. I did manage to forge a few relationships but they were never full or complete and always came to an end. One of my exes [GRO-B] accused me of never letting her in emotionally; her accusations were spot on. I always erected a safety net around me. I would like to clarify that my resultant behaviour was by no means my poor mother's fault. It is correct to say that it had everything to do with my mother, but I don't blame her for anything as she, herself, must have been going through hell.
28. The abuse I suffered led to me becoming a heavy drinker for many years but I stopped drinking approximately 20 years ago. I used to drink as an attempt to wipe out my memories of the past. Over the years different scenarios have

## ANONYMOUS

set me off and led to unwanted explosions of my emotions, often in situations where I would have preferred that they remained hidden. However, I understand that this is the norm when one has suppressed and buried things for so long. The act of hiding matters makes no difference because such matters have a way of breaking through and coming to the forefront. An example of this occurred many years ago

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Suddenly and without warning, I started to cry in front of complete strangers and there was nothing I could do to prevent this embarrassing explosion of emotion.

29. I was absolutely devastated when I found out that my mother had passed away and it is something that I have been unable to get over to this day. I am not sure whether my utter devastation stems purely from her death or from the fact that I was not able to fulfil my desperate longing to make peace with her prior to her passing. I also know how fortunate I am that I did not have to witness the terrible wasting away and resultant death of my mother from HIV.

30. I would like to add at this juncture that my mother was the most amazing woman; she was incredibly intelligent and had a wealth of books and poetry which I have inherited. She also possessed an uncanny gift of always knowing what to say at the right time. My mother was incredibly clever in how she used her speech and sometimes her choice of words and the manner in which they were delivered cut very deep. However, other times she said some wonderful things. My mother and I were very similar in a lot of ways and both being great talkers comes to mind!

31. I have a photograph of my mother when she was aged GRO-B which was sent to me by a friend of hers who lived in GRO-B. I know she was my mother so I would be biased but she was fantastically good looking and slim. She turned heads wherever she went and I can categorically say that she would have hated having Haemophilia, HIV and Hepatitis C. Dealing with the same would have seriously affected her mental state.

32. I have tried to turn my life around and worked hard to grow and develop into the person I have become today.

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33. There are a lot of us damaged individuals around; we are a bit odd and sadly society does not make allowances for people like us. We are viewed as eccentric oddballs and frequently cast aside. However, the word that should be used to describe me is *"lonely"*. I desperately longed and still long for a family. The media constantly focuses upon and idolises family life; there is no escaping from the gaping hole that this void leaves. You always hear people say *"I got through this due to my family"* in instances where, for example, someone has successfully fought cancer. You also hear people talking about family feuds and my advice to those would be *"don't do it; hold close to you those you care about and cherish your family"*. Christmas time is also particularly difficult. I have always felt somewhat alienated from *"normal"* life due to the way I was treated by my mother which has also led me to develop and foster a very insular type of lifestyle.

34. I do feel that stigma still exists in relation to both HIV and Hepatitis C. Lack of education and ignorance mean that such matters are not usually openly discussed and certainly historically I did not disclose my mother's story to others, until very recently. However, I am now happy to stand tall and tell people exactly what happened to my mother. The stigma needs breaking down and as far as I am concerned these viruses, in terms of their ability to be openly spoken about, are no different to someone breaking their leg and should be openly discussed. I have never been a bigot and I struggle when I witness bigotry towards those with these viruses; it immediately raises my hackles.

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

35. I am not aware as to whether my mother experienced stigma and bad behavior on the part of clinicians and dental technicians.



36. I think it is likely that my mother was offered some form of counselling or psychological support given the regularity of her hospital attendances although I do not have any evidence to support this assertion.

37. As an adult, I was never offered any counselling or psychological assistance in consequence of my mother's infections or her untimely passing. However, I don't really feel that I can blame anyone for not providing me with any the same because I never asked for it and it was likely that the clinicians were unaware of how to contact me because I frequently moved house.

### **Section 7. Financial Assistance**

38. Neither my mother nor I have ever been offered any financial assistance from any of the trusts or organisations.

### **Section 8. Other Issues**

39. I think this Inquiry needs to ensure that people are made aware of what happened to thousands of poor innocent people who were involved in this most horrific scandal. There are a lot of us out there who have lost dear loved ones. Lessons must be learned to ensure that past mistakes are never repeated. The truth and justice must prevail.

40. I can't help but wonder that things were extremely experimental when the use of Factor VIII concentrates was in its infancy. Looking back, things appeared to be akin to a type of "*trial and error*" procedure which I would liken to cooking with ingredients that were not fresh.

41. The issue of monetary compensation is a tricky one because, in my view, it is impossible to put a figure on losing a loved one. Such a loss is unquantifiable. This is not my main aim at present but if there was a chance of compensation in the future, then it would of course be welcomed.

## ANONYMOUS

42. I was beyond shocked to learn that Factor VIII concentrates were made from blood donations received from prisoners and prostitutes in the US. I was flabbergasted to then learn that they were financially rewarded for their donations.

43. My mother has been dead since GRO-B and was infected far earlier than that. I think it is a disgrace that people are still not aware of exactly what happened and that this huge and devastating topic has struggled to dominate the news.

44. Furthermore, I would like an apology for the fact that not one of the clinicians who I either spoke or corresponded with between 1991 and 1996 told me that my mother had passed away. I think this is outrageous and I am filled with rage about this fact; particularly given the fact that she had been dead since GRO-B

45. However, whatever the Inquiry does or does not achieve will not affect who I am as a person. The damage has been done and my psyche won't change. Not a day goes by when I don't think about my mother. The regrets I have are immense. My mother and I could have had many wonderful years together as adults and I know that we would have done so had it not been for this avoidable tragedy.

46. I am happy to support those involved with this Inquiry in any way I can. I want to obtain justice for my mother and for all of those other people who have been both infected and affected by this scandal. I would like to sincerely thank those who are helping in the long overdue quest for the truth.

### Anonymity

47. I would like to apply for anonymity but I would like it known that, in due course, I will be happy to provide a very public statement although I am unable to do so at the index time.

48. I would be happy to provide oral evidence to the Inquiry although I would require assistance in relation to mobility issues due to my severe

## ANONYMOUS

osteoarthritis. I also envisage that I would be particularly nervous but I trust that I would be provided with sufficient support to enable me to overcome any difficulties in this regard.

### Statement of Truth

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

Signed

GRO-B

Dated

Thurs July 09 2020