

ANONYMOUS

Witness Name

GRO-B

Statement No: WITN5651001

Exhibits: 0

Dated: April 2021

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** I was born on **GRO-B** and I live at **GRO-B**
GRO-B
2. My partner of 11 years, **GRO-B: P** (born on **GRO-B** was infected with the Human Immunodeficiency Virus (HIV) through contaminated blood products. **P** advanced to ARC (AIDS Related Complex) and he died in 1995 (aged 42).
3. This witness statement has been prepared without the benefit of access **P** medical records.

Section 2. How Affected

4. [P] [P] had Haemophilia A. He was treated at the Haemophilia Centre at the Queen Elizabeth Hospital (QEH) in Birmingham. [P] used Factor VIII (FVIII) concentrate as a home treatment. It was kept in the fridge at home.
5. I attended social days with [P] organised for relatives of haemophiliacs, but nothing was ever openly discussed in my presence about infection and/or the risk of HIV and hepatitis through contaminated blood products. There was no opportunity to ask questions. It was all very cloak and dagger.

Section 3. Other Infections

6. I do not think that [P] was infected with anything other than HIV.

Section 4. Consent

7. [P] never told me of his HIV status, maintaining he had never been infected. I do not know whether he was tested or treated without his consent and/or for the purposes of research.

Section 5. Impact

8. I had no idea that [P], my partner of 11 years and father to my first child, had been infected with HIV/AIDS before his death. I had no-one to talk to and provide me with answers for very many years afterwards. I was profoundly affected. I was unable to make any sense of [P]'s unexpected death (and the change in him prior to his death) until relatively recently when I made contact with the UK Tainted Blood organisation. I make this Statement hoping it will be therapeutic for me to write [P]'s story and help me come to terms with unresolved issues about his death.
9. I met [P] some time in 1981 or 1982 and got to know him well. He was a neighbour of some mutual friends [GRO-B] and [GRO-B]. They lived a few doors

away from him. When we became a couple (some time in 1983) **P** and I usually spent our time together at his house in **GRO-B** **GRO-B** **GRO-B**. I was 24 years old and **P** was 6 years older. I had my own house in **GRO-B** but **P**'s house was near to work for both of us.

10. **P** and I had a wonderful relationship. He was such a lovely, caring, kind and well-mannered man. We did everything together. He really was my very best friend. I believe that **P** was told that he had been infected with HIV sometime around 12 months after we began our relationship. Thinking back, he started to have trouble sleeping and then he started to go to church. **P** was a Roman Catholic, but he didn't practice his faith. He suddenly started attending mass on a regular basis.

11. Some time later and for some unknown reason to me **P** stopped paying his mortgage and his house was repossessed. I could never understand why he stopped paying his mortgage. He let his debts accrue. It was so unlike him as he always paid his bills. We both did. **P** was working in **GRO-Bs** as a watch and clock repairer. He had his own business **GRO-B** and **P** was ticking along as usual. I recall telephoning the Halifax Building Society on his behalf to try to stay the repossession. They couldn't understand why **P** had stopped paying either. There was an article about the repossession in the **GRO-B** entitled **GRO-B**. I had no idea what was going on at the time, but, in retrospect, I think **P** had been told that he was infected with HIV and thought he would soon die. **P** was a good-looking man. He was always very smartly dressed and well groomed, but he stopped taking as much care in his appearance. He didn't always shave, and I noticed a hole in his shoe he wasn't bothered by.

12. **P** moved his possessions into a rented council flat and we continued to spend all our time together but at my house instead of his. **P** explained away his need for a separate home of his own by virtue of needing to be alone at times due to his (haemophilia) illness. He had a lot of bleeds and problems particularly with his knees and found it hard to walk at times. As we

spent so much of our time together, it was OK with me for [P] to be alone at times if that was what he wanted.

13. When I was pregnant in 1990 [P] became a little distant and edgy. We had not planned to have a child and [P] did not seem to be as happy as I would have liked him to be. He even queried whether or not we should keep the baby. We almost agreed to disagree. As far as I was concerned, we had been together for 7 years without any problems between us and we were happy. I remember taking a call from a consultant just before I was due to give birth. He had read on my notes that my partner had haemophilia and he asked me if I needed to be tested for HIV. I told the consultant that I had no concerns about HIV at all as my partner was not infected with HIV. I recall [P] being somewhat agitated by the call and the suggestion that I needed a test. I took his behaviour at the time as affirmation of being virus free, but I now see it differently.

14. Our son [GRO-B] [GRO-B], was born on [GRO-B] 1991 (the day after his due date) and [P] was amazing. I couldn't have asked for a better birth partner or person in [P]. It was my first baby and I went into labour before my due date. I couldn't have done it without him. [P] was amazing and he became an amazing father to [GRO-B]. He adored [GRO-B]. He doted on [GRO-B].

15. I remember that [P] had started to look very poorly before he was admitted to hospital in 1992 or 1993 (with what turned out to be pneumonia). People would ask me if [P] was OK and very close friends to include my friend [GRO-B] even asked if I was sure [P] didn't have HIV/AIDS. I said 'no, absolutely not'. [P] had always been slim. We both had busy lifestyles on top of having a young child to care for. I put [P]'s appearance down to stress and being an older father. [P] loved [GRO-B] and I didn't believe that [P] would ever lie to me about such a serious and highly infectious thing. People then thought you could catch AIDS from sharing the same cup or sitting on the same toilet seat.

I had said to him 'you *would* tell me if you had it?' and P was very hurt by the merest suggestion of doubt.

16. GRO-B was around 18 months to 2 years old when P had pneumonia. I remember asking the hospital staff what was wrong with P how long he would be in for and other reasonable questions not uncommon for someone to ask when their partner is unwell in hospital. P looked so ill and I didn't know if it was a bad case of the flu or what it was. The consultant was very guarded with his response to say the least. The wall of silence from the nurses there was almost palpable. I even overheard a nurse remark to another that P's 'girlfriend' had been 'snooping about'. I would not have had any suspicions at all had it not been for the behaviour of the hospital staff.

17. Sometime after P was discharged from hospital, I took GRO-B in his pushchair and went with my friend GRO-B to a clinic to get myself and GRO-B tested for HIV. GRO-B and I were both well and in very good health, but I remember feeling terrified that morning. I watched in shock as a young girl left the clinic in floods of tears after receiving her test result. I did not tell P what I was doing (before or after the test). I didn't want to disappoint him or for him to think I didn't trust him. GRO-B and I were given a negative HIV test result and I went back to trusting P. I felt guilty for ever doubting him.

18. P's behaviour started to change. The change in him was a gradual one at first but he became an almost entirely different person towards the end of his life. He said some very spiteful things to me which were out of character because he had always been so gentle and thoughtful. P had a dry sense of humour, we both did. My feeling now is that he had begun to resent me. I think he would look at me and wonder why I wasn't becoming poorly like him, and he couldn't talk to me about it. After P made his hurtful and resentful comments to me, he would always apologise and say 'I just don't know why I am like this.' He would tell me that he wasn't a nice person to be around when he was in pain. P had become resilient through having to live with haemophilia from a young age. It was a constant for him. He had problems

with his elbows and knee joints, and he walked with a limp. I always made excuses for [P]. [P] started to spend more time at his flat (sometimes weeks at a time), and we kept in contact by phone.

19. In [P]'s last few months, his character changed. His behaviour was very odd and unpredictable, and, in effect, he withdrew from our family/relationship. He was hanging around with a very strange character and I found out that they were visiting prostitutes. That was completely out of character for [P] and not something I felt I could put up with. I just couldn't understand him. [P] became quite spiteful to me and said that [GRO-B] wasn't his son and had even resorted to following me and doing other frightful things. [P] was very conflicted and distressed. He didn't want to be the person he had become. In the midst of his turmoil, he even asked me to marry him. I had no idea what was going on with him and said '[P] we are not even getting on at the moment'. I was also completely unaware that he was probably suffering with encephalopathy.

20. I wasn't with [P] when he died. He had gone to his flat as he often did. I understand that he then went to his mother's flat and had died there in a chair having been unwell for a few days. I was reassured that he would not really have known anything or felt any pain.

21. I found out that [P] had died as a result of HIV/AIDS when I went to [P]'s flat and found it emptied and through speaking to a friend, [GRO-B] at the funeral directors. [GRO-B] allowed me to come in and sit by [P]'s coffin for a while. I was not allowed to see his body. He was in a sealed body bag inside the coffin. If it hadn't been for [GRO-B] I would never have known what had happened to [P]. It was a shocking way to find out. I was by then alienated/estranged from [P]'s family and they wouldn't speak to me except [P]'s brother who confirmed to me that [P] had died of AIDS and made it clear to me that the family did not believe [GRO-B] was [P]'s son. It was inconceivable to them that I could have had an intimate relationship with [P] and not be infected with HIV too.

22. There was no closure for me. I went to the crematorium alone after the cremation service. There were no flowers from the family or anything. P's death was hushed up by them. As well as emptying P's flat, they had put P's dog (GRO-B) down. He would have hated that. GRO-B meant everything to P. GRO-B was P's dog, and GRO-B was my dog. We had the two dogs between us. I was left completely on my own with a 4 year old to bring up. I was lost. I had no-one to talk things through with and had no alternative but to get on with things as though P and I had split up permanently. I was deprived of the ability to grieve. There were no answers for me and no-one to turn to for support.

23. I was vulnerable and lacking in confidence and self-esteem when I then met the man who would become my husband. He was controlling and abusive and I put up with his behaviour, believing I was somehow at fault and deserved to be treated that way. I had four more children. The abuse got worse, but I stayed with him for the sake of the children. I was of course a homeowner but sold up and ultimately ended up living in seclusion with my family on a farmhouse GRO-B. At that point my husband ratcheted up the abuse and violence and I fled in 2014 with nothing and no-one but my youngest son. P's memory/character was always rubbished by my husband (and my mother in law). His name was smeared. GRO-B was told that his father was nothing more than a 'no good' pimp. GRO-B discovered P had died of AIDS after being taunted about 'a secret' by some other children. I had wanted to tell GRO-B sooner, but my husband persuaded me not to. Through my husband's systematic abuse, he succeeded in alienating my children from me (except the youngest son, who lives with me) and they are estranged from me to this day.

24. The lack of information as to how P had become infected with HIV and not being able to talk to anyone positively about P meant that nothing was ever reconciled and resolved for me. The lack of counselling available to me has really exacerbated my distress. There have been times when I have thought 'I just can't do this'. After leaving my husband, I made contact with the

Terrance Higgins Trust (THT) looking for specific/targeted counselling. I needed answers. I was signposted for counselling, but then told me that my son GRO-B would need to give his permission before they could help me. As I don't see GRO-B this was not going to happen. I could not get counselling because I could not obtain GRO-B consent. I did not exist. When I fled the marital home, I left the life I had tried to rebuild for myself behind me. Even the wooden train set P spent hours painting for GRO-B was destroyed (by GRO-B who has trashed my name and that of his father). It is only through the Tainted Blood Group that I have begun to understand why P's behaviour changed, his anger and distress and the effect his illness probably had on his mental well-being and his brain. Being infected with HIV through no fault of his own ended P's life and it destroyed my life.

- 25 P was a lovely person and lovely company right up to when he was very ill. He didn't know how long he would live for and did very well to cover it up. To be told in 1983/1984 that you have been infected with HIV and carry that around until your death in 1995, was a very heavy secret to bear on your own. I would have stood by him had he found the courage to confide in me. He was wrong not to tell me, but I am not angry with him. He probably felt that he had no choice. P doted on GRO-B. He adored GRO-B of that there was no question. We were in no rush, but we would have married in time. P was my best friend and everything in between. I think of the great future we would have had together but for this.

Section 6. Treatment/care/support

- 26 P was addicted to painkillers and openly took them in front of me. He kept his HIV medication at his flat. P would have had to hide his medication from me as I am a qualified nurse and so would have known what he was taking.

27. I had no offer of counselling or support and have only very recently started it.

Section 7. Financial Assistance

28 [P] bought a mobile home in [GRO-B] just after [GRO-B] was born for us to go for weekends and to take family holidays. I thought it odd, but I didn't question it. He must have had a payment from the MacFarlane Trust (MFT) and used the payment towards financing the mobile home he wanted to buy. As stated [P] began behaving erratically. He didn't look after the home and wasn't interested in keeping the payments up.

29. I became aware of the MFT through my involvement with them after [P]'s death. They said [GRO-B] was a beneficiary. They would give money for anything reasonable he needed. This was after [P]'s death and [GRO-B] was around five years old I think. [GRO-B] has been provided with liberal financial support from the MFT throughout his life. He has had everything to include outings, camping trips, ski-ing trips, training courses, driving lessons and tinted windows on his car. I used to correspond with a lady there, keeping her updated with [GRO-B]'s progress and thanking her for her help. Ultimately [GRO-B] took over but did not keep in touch.

Section 8. Other Issues

30. In 2014 I fled the rented farmhouse with my youngest son. I had lost everything, my house I once had and all of my possessions. I live in social housing with my youngest son. Had [P] been alive I would never have been in this situation or been vulnerable to an abuse. I am sure life would have been very different with [P] by my side.

Anonymity

31 [GRO-B] understand that this Statement will be published by the Inquiry.

Statement of Truth

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

Signed.....

GRO-B

Dated.....

29th APR 2021.