

ANONYMOUS

Witness Name:

GRO-B

Statement No: WITN5654001

Exhibits: 0

Dated: JULY 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 1959 and I live at GRO-B GRO-B
2. I am co-infected with the Human Immunodeficiency Virus (HIV) and the Hepatitis C Virus (HCV) through contaminated blood products.
3. This witness statement has been prepared without the benefit of access to my full medical records.
4. My ex-wife, friend and mother to my two sons, GRO-B has also provided a Witness Statement to the Inquiry (Witness Number GRO-B).

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Section 2. How Infected

5. I have mild Haemophilia A. I was under the care of Professor Christine Lee and her team at the Royal Free Hospital (RFH) in Hammersmith for my appointments. However, I very rarely needed treatment and it was only ever provided to me in a hospital setting.

6. I was treated with contaminated Factor VIII (FVIII) concentrate manufactured by the Armor Pharmaceutical Company, Batch Number W92508, administered at the GRO-B on 30th November 1982. I was 23 years old. I had had an accident and most of my finger was severed. I needed emergency surgery to my hand and was given the FVIII concentrate after the operation. No advice and/or warning was given to me about the risk of infection through blood products before I was given the treatment. It was before cannulas were widely used in hospitals and I remember being woken up that night and injected with 4 long/large tubes of something that looked to me like urine. I had an almost immediate reaction. It was a warm hospital ward, but I began shivering.

7. I was identified as being infected with HIV from a blood sample taken in February 1985. I was told that I had been infected with HIV on 17th June 1985 at a routine appointment. I didn't know that I had been tested for infection. I was called into a room by Dr Yee who showed me some readings on a graph. News of HIV/AIDS was in the fringes, but it was also relatively new to the clinicians and no advice was given to me to help me to understand and/or manage the infection. It was some time much later that they said they were looking at drug therapy. I left the appointment and I hit the bottle. After that I pushed it to the back of my mind, and it took a lot of time to properly sink in. I realised I had a death sentence hanging over me. I realised too that there was a high chance I could contaminate someone I became intimate with. I had to be straight to the point with myself. I wasn't going to get anybody and I thought I would remain a single guy.

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8. I wasn't informed that I had also been infected with HCV until some-time in 1994. I had met and married GRO-B by then (as set out in her own Statement) and she was pregnant with our first child. We knew that she needed to be tested for HIV and I was with her when she was told the result by Professor Lee. She was negative for HIV *and negative for HCV*. We didn't know that she had been tested for HCV and didn't know what that was or why she needed to be tested. It then became apparent that the reason was me. I didn't know up until that point that I had been infected with HCV (as well as HIV).

Section 3. Other Infections

9. I was notified of a possible infection of variant Creutzfeldt-Jakob Disease (vCJD) through blood products from a donor who had died from vCJD. I refer to GRO-B's Statement for details.

Section 4. Consent

10. I was tested for infection without my knowledge and consent given.

Section 5. Impact of the Infection

11. It was very difficult to tell my mother that I had been infected with HIV. She was very shaken, but she had had to learn to deal with my haemophilia since the early 1960s and was relatively stoic. My brother and father were both fine with me. I left home shortly after and I remember my father telling me to just enjoy my life. I have a close and long-established core group of very good friends (some of whom belonged to my Church, local to my former home in GRO-B). They rallied around me and were very supportive. They are well-travelled, open-minded people (one of them is gay). The people in my life that matter to me have stood by me. We are friends to this day. I lived in a three

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bedroomed flat in [GRO-B] owned by my grandmother. I was at times a little too chatty and open to people in my home who were lodgers, telling them that I had HIV. Some of them didn't understand and some of them gave me the cold shoulder and moved out. One particular nurse (lodging with me) reacted badly. It was a very big painful lesson I had to learn to keep my trap shut.

12. Being infected with HIV came with a lot of stress and strain and there were certain things I was always hesitant to do. It was very hard for [GRO-B] She had very little support from her own family when we married in 1991 although they are fine now. [GRO-B] wanted children. Becoming a parent is a huge thing in itself without all the uncertainty we had. To learn that I was also infected with HCV when [GRO-B] was pregnant with our first child in 1994 was another worry, but HIV was thought of as the 'death sentence' by everyone. I had to shake the sand out of my sandals and move on. I never had any HCV symptoms. It had showed up in my blood records and, over time, my body got rid of it. It has been at undetectable levels since 1999.

13. I consider myself to be one of the lucky ones compared to other infected haemophiliacs, but my mental health has been adversely affected to the extent that I suffer with chronic depression and have suicidal thoughts. I have high blood pressure, high cholesterol and I suffer with insomnia/sleepless nights which I attribute to the HIV medication.

Section 6. Treatment/care/support

14. I maintained a low viral load count for quite some time, and I was involved in one of the first AZT trials as set out in [GRO-B]'s Statement. Riva Miller, the Social Worker at the RFH provided some counselling. She did her best and it was helpful.

Section 7. Financial Assistance

15. My dealings with the MacFarlane Trust (MFT) have been less than straight forward. I was made to jump through hoops, and it felt as though I was going 'cap in hand' to obtain any financial help. **GRO-B** and I were particularly demoralized after we were refused funding for extra help at nights when our second son was born in 2012. **GRO-B** has a disability and the birth was a difficult one for her. It went to appeal, and part of the grant was provided on a loan only basis. Our youngest son is a very lively chatty boy, you could say he's a 'live wire' which takes up a lot of our time.

16. I never received anything from the Skipton Fund. I do not think the Royal Free Hospital put their patients forward for payment and I have been informed that they no longer have my records. My GP is trying to assist us with this.

Anonymity, disclosure and redaction

17. I do seek anonymity and understand that my redacted Statement will be published by the Inquiry.

Statement of Truth

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

Signature: GRO-B

Dated: 30th July 2021