

ANONYMOUS

Witness Name: GRO-B

Statement No: WITN1474001

Exhibits: WITN1474002-003

Dated: March 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 I was born on GRO-B and I live at GRO-B
GRO-B
2. I make this witness statement on behalf of my late husband, GRO-B: H
GRO-B: H H was born on GRO-B and died at the age of GRO-B on
GRO-B as a result of Non A Non B Hepatitis (NANB) and AIDS.
3. I am a widow living on my own and I am partially sighted. I have GRO-B
with my late husband.
4. This witness statement has been prepared without the benefit of access to my
late husband's full 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. In the late [GRO-B] [H] was diagnosed with mild Haemophilia A, following a tooth extraction. Following his diagnosis, he received Cryoprecipitate each time he had a bleed.
6. On [GRO-B] [H] was involved in a road traffic accident and was admitted at the [GRO-B]. He was later transferred to the [GRO-B] also called [GRO-B] [GRO-B] quite soon afterwards, where he was unconscious for about a month. I believe this was the first time he received Factor VIII (FVIII) treatment and I believe he received a lot of it. I believe it was at this point that he was infected with Hepatitis B (Hep B), NANB and HIV.
7. At the time, he was mainly treated at [GRO-B] and he was under the care of [GRO-B].
8. [H] only required FVIII as and when he had a bleed and when he had dental extractions.
9. In or about [GRO-B] [H] was discharged from [GRO-B]. In or about [GRO-B] of the same year [H] became jaundiced and was admitted at [GRO-B]. I believe this was the time that [H] was diagnosed with Hep B. I do not know how what information he was provided.
10. I believe that [H] was also diagnosed with NANB at roughly the same time. [H] had heard of NANB before but did not know what it was and how serious it could be. We had a conversation with [GRO-B] regarding this and he warned [H] to use protection during sexual intercourse. [H] responded saying [GRO-B] is already doing that', but [GRO-B] responded saying it was [H] who had to use protection.
11. In or about [GRO-B] I believe [H] was told that he had contracted HIV. This soon developed into AIDS. [H] was very afraid and concerned about being intimate with me when he found out. However, after looking though [H] limited medical records, there is a letter dated [GRO-B]

which states 'both fresh serum samples and stored samples from GRO-B GRO-B have been sent for HTLV-3 serology-the putative agent held responsible for A.I.D.S'. A copy of this letter is exhibited at 'WITN1474002'. However, there are no blood tests records in his medical records and a medical record dated GRO-B is the first record to confirm that he tested positive for HIV. A copy of this letter is exhibited at 'WITN1474003'.

12. I do not believe that H was provided any information or advice beforehand about the risk of being exposed to Hep B, NANB or HIV and neither was I.

13. I attended most of H appointments with him. I remember once when I attended an appointment with H the doctor was not happy with me going in with H as he knew I was going to ask questions. The doctor just randomly threw all the papers in the air saying 'you win some, you lose some'. I was shocked by the doctor's behaviour; I just wanted to know whether my husband would live and what his life expectancy was.

14. I believe H was not provided adequate information to understand and manage the infections. He certainly was not provided any information whatsoever about the HIV.

Section 3. Other Infections

15. H suffered from Aplastic Anaemia and Asymptomatic Pneumonia as a result of the HIV. The infection developed into AIDS, which caused his death.

16. We also received a letter about the potential risk of vCJD, after H death. I believe he was not told about vCJD when he was alive.

Section 4. Consent

17. H had no knowledge that he was being tested for the above infections. He was just called in to be told about the test results which was when he found out he was tested. Therefore, I believe he did not give his consent to be tested or treated.

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18. I do not know whether [H] was given adequate or full information about the infections. He tried to protect me so I believe he may not have told me everything he was told by the doctors. I do not know whether [H] was tested for the purposes of research.
19. When he died, I was with him and I was only allowed to see him for 20 minutes and not more than that. I never got to see his body again. The coffin was closed and did not even have his name on it.
20. I therefore have doubts in my mind about why I was not allowed to see him after he died. I do wonder whether it was because they used his body for research purposes after his death.
21. [H] made his own funeral arrangements with a vicar before he became poorly. He was cremated. He told me when he made the arrangements that he was not allowed to be buried. I do not know who told him that he could not be buried.

Section 5. Impact of the Infection

22. [H] suffered mentally as a result of the infections. When he found out he isolated himself from people close to him. He had depression and would just lay on the sofa feeling down. He did have medication for his depression.
23. [H] never accepted help from me and his attitude had changed during this time. If I walked into a room where he was, he would walk out. When I brought food for him, he would have his eyes closed and pretend to be fast asleep. His mental demeanor and character wholly changed after his was diagnosed. He was a completely different person. Some days he would get up and go out and other days he would not.
24. [H] also suffered physically from the infections. He used to say that food tasted like cardboard and he was unable to have fatty foods as they made him sick. He lost his interest in food. My husband could not eat his [GRO-B] [GRO-B] and I recall on [GRO-B] [H] told me that he could not eat or talk because his mouth was too sore and white. I believe this could

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have been ulcers or thrush. He was admitted to GRO-B and was allowed home GRO-B

25. Between GRO-B and GRO-B H started to deteriorate. I was living on a knife edge from GRO-B onwards. He became bedbound and was very poorly. I asked the doctor how long H would live and the doctor informed me he could live up to 70 years old or he could die tomorrow. The uncertainty of what was going to happen made everything worse.
26. H used to get very tired all the time. As stated above, H lost his appetite and as a result he lost a lot of weight. After he was diagnosed with NANB, he also suffered from acidic problems in his stomach. He would feel nauseous when I cooked and so I had to cook quickly. A couple of months before his death, H took vitamin drinks as he could not eat solid food.
27. H did not usually drink but was allowed two pints of beer at the weekend. We went to a wedding in GRO-B and H drank more than 2 pints and ended up in hospital. He drank on that particular day as he was upset that he would not live to see his children get married.
28. H was given AZT for the HIV. I do not know whether he faced any difficulties or obstacles in accessing the treatment as I believe H kept some things from me in order not to upset or worry me.
29. H treatments also caused him to suffer mental and physical effects. I recall an incident when H was taking medication for his depression. We went shopping and he shoplifted. As we were walking out, the security guard asked us to go back into the store and put back everything H had stolen, such as stationery. I believe either H did not realise he was doing it or it was a cry for attention because of all these things that were going on in relation to the infections. I believe the medication that he was receiving, made H do things that he did not realise he was doing.
30. At one point, he was in so much pain that H doubled the dose of his medication and I found the wrappers on the bedside cabinet. I panicked and he was admitted to GRO-B. It was questionable who was going to give a

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stomach pump as he was a Haemophiliac. I remember when he next went to

GRO-B

he was asked "is it that bad". I believe his answer was "yes".

31. The infections had an impact on our private, family and social life. We never went out because H was really down, depressed and became poorly. However, prior to this, we used to go to the seaside during the weekends and were always out and about.

32. We kept H infected status very private and only told close family members. My GRO-B was GRO-B years old at the time and my GRO-B were GRO-B and GRO-B years old. They were aware as to what was going on, but told to keep it in the family.

33. Our children were also affected when they found out about the infections. One morning, my second GRO-B did not go to college and H just screamed in his face saying 'I have AIDS, AIDS, AIDS', then my son screamed at me saying 'dad has AIDS'. H had a one to one conversation with our daughter and she was upset on hearing the news.

34. My second GRO-B took the news really badly. He started showering all the time as he was scared of catching the infection. He was quite badly affected. He also took a lot of responsibility as he considered himself as the man of the house.

35. As a result of H death almost GRO-B years ago, my children continue to be affected. One of my GRO-B gets very angry now and he is finding it difficult to have relationships anymore.

36. I was also impacted heavily by H infections and subsequent death. I was always upset and crying, trying not to show my feelings to our children. Other people always kept asking why I was always upset, but I never told them what was going on and kept H infected status to myself. The Tainted Blood Group, Archer Inquiry and this Inquiry are bringing my emotions out again and making me very tearful.

37. There was a stigma attached to the infections at the time which is why we kept them a secret and only told close family members.

38. My close family only talked about the infections if I did. They have been very faithful to me and looked after me. I am very thankful to my two brothers and their wives for supporting me through the horrible time.

39. I stopped working after [H] died. However, I did go back to college after [H] death, to shut things out completely. 3 years into college, I had a breakdown and everything got on top of me even though I tried to move on with my life. I managed to finish my course but I could not go near people or socialise as I was afraid they would know about what happened to me.

40. I suffered from anxiety and I still suffer from it as a result of what happened to [H]

Section 6. Treatment/care/support

41. I do not believe that [H] faced any difficulties or obstacles in obtaining treatment, care and support in consequence of being infected.

42. I do not believe that [H] was offered any counselling or psychological support. I believe that if such support was offered, it would have definitely helped. There is a medical record which suggests that we both had counselling, but I do not recall him having it.

43. I attended a bereavement group but I could not cope with group sessions, so I stopped going.

Section 7. Financial Assistance

44. [H] did not receive any financial assistance. However, he was involved in a 1991 litigation with the Macfarlane Trust. I believe he had to sign a waiver not to pursue another claim in the future. I believe I received £20,000 shortly after 1991.

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45. I receive £100 a month from Macfarlane Trust, which started a few years after [H] death. The application for the above payment was pretty straight forward.

46. I also received £1,000 a month from the Skipton Fund. However, this payment stopped 2 or 3 years ago and only lasted 36 months. In addition, I received a Stage 1 lump sum payment of £20,000. I believe another patient told me about the Skipton Fund. I believe the application for applying was straight forward.

47. My children were offered £2,000 if they agreed to see a psychiatrist following [H] death. However, my middle child was working and so he was not eligible for it. It was offered but taken back as it was means tested.

48. Sometimes I felt guilty for applying for the money. I did not know whether I was entitled to the financial assistance as [H] had already died. I do not receive any money now apart from widow's credit and pension.

Section 8. Other Issues

49. [H] was one of the first batch of people treated with contaminated FVIII blood products in [GRO-B] and I trust they would have known that the product was contaminated back then. I want answers.

Anonymity, disclosure and redaction

50. I wish to remain anonymous.

51. I do not want to give oral evidence to the Inquiry.

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Statement of Truth

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

Signed...

GRO-B

Dated

21. 3. 2019.