

ANONYMOUS

Witness Name: GRO-B

Statement No: WITN6891001

Exhibits: 0

Dated: December 2021

INFECTED BLOOD INQUIRY

FIRST WRITTEN STATEMENT OF GRO-B

I, GRO-B will say as follows:-

Section 1. Introduction

1. My full name is GRO-B I was born on GRO-B 1949 and I live at GRO-B
2. My son, GRO-B: S (born on GRO-B 1975), is co-infected with the Human Immunodeficiency Virus (HIV) and the Hepatitis C Virus (HCV) through contaminated blood products.
3. S has provided his own Witness Statement to the Inquiry (Witness Number WITN2767001) and this Statement should be read in conjunction with his Statement. This Witness Statement has been prepared without the benefit of access to my son's full medical records.

Section 2. How Affected

4. [S] has severe Haemophilia A. At the age of 10 months we found out and we were surprised as we weren't aware of any other family members to have it, and as it runs in families.
5. We (my husband and I) were stationed in Germany at the time because my husband was in the Army. We were being looked after at British Forces Hospital [GRO-B] [S] was being given Cryoprecipitate. The Army requested we return to the UK to sort out our family 'problems'. When we returned to the UK in 1977, we were then being looked after by the Royal Free Hospital (RFH) in London. The RFH did many tests on [S] and myself and I then found out that I also had low Factor VIII levels. At this point [S] started to be treated with Factor VIII (FVIII) concentrate. [S] at this point was nearly two years old.
6. When [S] was nearly four years old, I had to have surgery and I was given Factor VIII. At no time were we given any information about FVIII concentrate or was there any suspicion that there was anything wrong with the product.
7. In 1981 we returned to Germany for a short while and then back to the UK to [GRO-B] in Dorset. Although we were being looked after at Boscombe Haemophilia Department we were still under the overall care of the RFH. In 1983, the RFH asked all three of us to come up to London for blood tests which we did. We were told there that the blood tests were to find out if any of us had HIV. What a shock that was. We had to return home and await the results. My husband and I received our letters and we were negative, but there was no letter about [S]. We contacted the RFH and was told the news over the phone that [S] was positive, and we needed to return for a consultation about the situation. We were absolutely devastated by the news. At the consultation we were told that if [S] lived to be 15 years old, we would be lucky. Our first thought was how at such a young age [S] was going to take the news. Secondly, we could not believe the NHS had given our son a

product that was likely to kill him. It was like living with a time bomb, waiting to go off.

8. [S]'s teenage years were ruined. He couldn't be like other teenagers. Not only did he have haemophilia, but now HIV and later HCV. Because of the stigma at that time we kept the information to ourselves and still do. We had been giving [S] FVIII concentrate for years without any concern, thinking it was a miracle that would be marvellous for [S]'s haemophilia. Never did it occur to us that there was anything wrong with it. I even took it myself for surgery at the RFH. We had heard the news about the problem with blood in America but thought that is in America. We never thought it would affect us. After all, we were in England and we had the NHS. It never occurred to us that they would give medication that was anything but OK. We had every faith in the doctors and our Government knew all along and allowed everyone to keep using it. Well, *shame on them!*

Section 3. Other Infections

9. [S] suffered with opportunistic infections and health conditions attributable to the viruses. [S] contracted shingles and had infected fingers. Knowing that [S] was unlikely to make it past his mid-teens was horrific. Every time he was unwell with even so much as a cold or flu, I was filled with dread. I thought 'Oh my God. Is this the start of it all?'

Section 4. Consent

10. I do not think that [S] gave specific consent to being tested for hepatitis and he was in his late teens/early twenties when he became aware that he was HCV positive. We were broken. I thought 'How much more can his body take and what impact would it have on his future life (if he had one)?'

11. I am unable to comment as to whether [S] was used for the purposes of research. If the clinicians even suspected or had any concerns whatsoever as to the safety of the treatment products they should have never ever given in to their patients. To learn that [S] was infected through contaminated treatment products made us feel like we (his parents) had done it him as well. We were devastated and felt cheated.

Section 5. Impact of the Infection

12. I refer to paragraphs 4 to 9 above.

13. [S] is our only child. The fear and stigma surrounding HIV/AIDS was terrible. We were advised to inform the school in case [S] had an accident or a nosebleed there. I had to go and tell them, but that was the only time I ever told anyone. I would like to think that the school were discrete with the information, but I don't know for sure. [S] was bullied. We were living in [GRO-B] at that time and [S] didn't share the local accent. He missed school time through haemophilia but often made up reasons not to go in.

14. [S] has more recently confided in me that he considered suicide on several occasions as he became older. He married at the age of [GRO-B] being late in meeting someone he felt he could confide in without being rejected.

15. [S] is frightened to visit the dentist to the day. We were sent by the hospital to a practice at the farthest end of a centre for the very last appointment of the day and they came out at him in what I can only describe as space suits.

16. As eluded to previously, my husband's army promotion was put back/affected (he was pretty much made to no longer feel welcome in the Army) and we were

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under huge strain. It is difficult to revisit those very dark days for all three of us in my mind.

Section 6. Treatment/care/support

17. We had no counselling or psychological support.

Section 7. Financial Assistance

18. I refer to S s Statement.

Anonymity

19. I do wish to remain anonymous and I understand that this redacted Statement will be disclosed for publication to the Inquiry.

Statement of Truth

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

Signed..... GRO-B

Dated.....04.01.2022..... ,