

ANONYMOUS

Witness Name: GRO-B

Statement No.: WITN0426002

Exhibits:

Dated: 10 April 2019

INFECTED BLOOD INQUIRY

SECOND WRITTEN STATEMENT OF GRO-B

I provide this statement in response to a request under Rule 9 of the Inquiry Rules 2006 dated 04 March 2019.

I, GRO-B will say as follows: -

Section 1. Introduction

1. My name is GRO-B I am 42 years of age having been born GRO-B 1976. My address is known to the Inquiry. This is the second statement I have provided to the Infected Blood Inquiry.
2. In my first statement to the Infected Blood Inquiry, I outlined my own experience of being infected with HCV as a result of being given contaminated blood products for treatment of my mild haemophilia A. I also suffer from epilepsy.
3. In this statement, I intend to discuss how my uncles GRO-B: U1 ("U1") and GRO-B: U2 ("U2"), both of whom suffered from haemophilia A, were infected with HCV and HIV respectively as a result of receiving contaminated blood products. U1 and U2 passed away due to medical complications associated with their infections.

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Section 2. How Affected

5. U1 and U2 were my maternal uncles, born in 1966 and 1971 respectively. Like myself, U1 and U2 were diagnosed with haemophilia A when they were children. I had a close relationship with both U1 and U2. As there was only a five-year age gap between U2 and I, he was more like a brother to me than an Uncle.

U2 s haemophilia treatment and HIV diagnosis

6. I am unaware of the specific details surrounding U2 s haemophilia diagnosis or treatment. I think U2 was under the care of the Birmingham Children's Hospital when he was younger but I can't be sure. He was later under the care of Dr Wilde at the Queen Elizabeth Hospital as an adult.
7. I am not certain which particular blood products U2 s received for treatment of his haemophilia but I am aware that he regularly received blood and blood products for treatment of his bleeds.
8. Like myself, neither U2 nor his family were given advice or information about the risks of infection associated with blood and blood-products.
9. U2 was diagnosed as HIV positive when he was around 20 years old. He was told he received the infection as a result of receiving contaminated blood products. I don't know if U2 was ever told when he was infected or with what batch of blood or blood product he was infected. It may have been impossible to pinpoint given how often he received blood or blood products.
10. By the time U2 was diagnosed, people were very aware of HIV. The media had reported how deadly the disease was and U2 s diagnosis came as a huge shock to the family.
11. U2 s diagnosis was not discussed openly when he was first diagnosed and the family would say U2 had cancer. I think my family were probably trying to protect U2 from the stigma of HIV.

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12. I am not aware of the details surrounding [U2]'s diagnosis or what information about HIV he was provided with. However, my family has discussed how [U2] was given very little information about his HIV. For example, [U2] was not told about the risks of infecting other people with HIV and he subsequently infected his girlfriend at the time which devastated him.

13. I don't think [U2] appreciated how serious his HIV diagnosis was given his age. [U2] liked to live fast and after his diagnosis he continued to do all the things young men do such as go clubbing and lead an active social life. I don't think he realised the impact this would have on his health.

[U1] s haemophilia treatment and hepatitis C diagnosis

14. Like [U2] and myself, [U1] was diagnosed with haemophilia A as a young child. I don't know all of the details surrounding [U1]'s haemophilia treatment but I am aware he was under the care of Dr Wilde at the Queen Elizabeth Hospital when he was an adult.

15. [U1] and I received the same treatment for our haemophilia being cryoprecipitate and later Factor VIII when it became available. [U1] had regular bleeds, which required treatment with blood and/or blood products.

16. [U1] was never told about the risks of contracting HCV through blood products. Given [U2]'s illness, my family was aware of HIV however HCV was not even on the radar. I'm not sure if [U1] was ever told that he was being tested for HCV.

17. I was diagnosed with HCV in 1995 when I was 19 years old. Only a few months later in 1995, [U1] was also diagnosed with HCV. [U1] diagnosis was a huge upset to the family, particularly coming so soon after my diagnosis. At the time of [U1]'s diagnosis, he was told he had advanced liver damage.

18. I am unaware whether [U1] was provided with adequate information about HCV at the time of his diagnosis or even if he received any information at all. When I

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was diagnosed with HCV, I was given limited information about the disease and I imagine it was the same for U1

19. I don't believe either U1 or U2 were provided with adequate information about their diseases or how to manage them.

Section 3. Other Infections

20. I do not believe U1 was infected with an infection other than HCV.

21. I do not believe U2 was infected with an infection other than HIV.

Section 4. Consent

22. I am unaware if U2 was ever treated or tested without his knowledge, consent or without adequate or full information being provided. I am unaware if U2 was treated for the purposes of research.

23. I am unaware if U1 was ever treated or tested without his knowledge, his consent or without being given adequate or full information or for the purposes of research.

Section 5. Impact

Impact of HIV on U2

24. U2 was diagnosed with HIV in 1986 or 1987. U2's diagnosis left him and my family completely devastated. Prior to his infection, he thoroughly enjoyed his life. The two of us were like brothers and would spend a lot of time together.

25. U2 didn't follow his HIV treatment and often neglected to take his medication. I don't think U2 wanted to spend whatever time he had left in hospitals. I think U2 believed that doctors would not be able to do anything for him and treated the diagnosis like a death sentence. U2 may well have been

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depressed and he was deeply affected by the fact he unknowingly infected his girlfriend with HIV.

26. Prior to his diagnosis, [U2] was always a very placid man. After his diagnosis, [U2] became quick to anger and struggled to control his emotions. There would be occasions where little things would make him explode.
27. After [U2]'s diagnosis, his health deteriorated quickly and he soon developed AIDS. Where he had previously been fit and healthy, he quickly became skinny and weak.
28. [U2] became so weak and ill he ended up in a hospice. I remember visiting him in the hospice where he was so frail he couldn't get out of bed or do anything by himself. My family would try to protect me and stop me from seeing him while he was in the hospice. They were worried about the stigma attached with AIDS. I was in high school at the time and children at school would bully me for having a relative with AIDS.
29. I still remained close to [U2] during his last few years and I was with him in his final days. [U2] sadly passed away from AIDS in 1990, when I was 14 years old.
30. [U2]'s passing had a huge impact on my life. It coincided with a time when my epilepsy was flaring up, and the stress of his passing made my epilepsy worse. After [U2]'s death I quickly lost interest in school and I was expelled shortly afterwards. My mother has said [U2]'s death changed me from a happy go lucky child.
31. My maternal grandmother was very close to [U2] and his passing devastated her. It nearly led her to have a breakdown. Many of our family members developed depression after [U2]'s death and some were prescribed antidepressants to deal with the trauma. My mother is still affected by [U2]'s death and regularly talks about him. Our family has been left with strong awareness of death.

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32. [U2]'s death terrified [U1] and me as we were both receiving blood products throughout the same period as [U2]. [U1] never really got over [U2]'s death.

Impact of HCV on: [U1]

33. By the time [U1] was diagnosed with HCV he was already very unwell and had advanced liver damage. [U1] received his first liver transplant in approximately 1997. The liver transplant was initially successful and [U1]'s health bounced back somewhat.
34. [U1]'s new liver gradually began to fail and his health seriously and rapidly declined. In 2003 or 2004, [U1] underwent a second liver transplant, which unfortunately wasn't successful. After the second transplant, [U1] became so unwell. I remember visiting him in hospital where he was lying in bed, extremely yellow in colour and tied up to all sorts of medical machines. It was clear that he was not dying. [U1] sadly passed away not long after the failed transplant. He was only 47 years old.
35. [U1]'s death really frightened my family and me given my own HCV infection. My HCV is not treated as I am unable to take my epilepsy medication and HCV medication together. I'm left wondering if I am going to end up like [U1] strapped to machines and dying in hospital.
36. Like [U2]'s death, my family were deeply affected by [U1]'s passing, particularly my maternal grandfather who was very close to him. [U1]'s death was too much for my mother and she had a nervous breakdown after his death.
37. There is a deep sense of trauma and grief in my family. My mother has now seen two of her brothers die as a result of contaminated blood products and her son infected with HCV. [U1]'s widow, [GRO-B] was also hugely affected by [U1]'s death. [U1] was everything to [GRO-B] and she has she isn't interested in a life with anyone else.

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38. [U1] was the main breadwinner for his family, and [GRO-B] had financial difficulties after his death. In his final years, [U1] had to give up his job in printing due to his health which left the family without an income. [U1]'s daughter had to support the family financially and took on the repayments of [U1]'s mortgage.
39. [U1] and [U2]'s passing has affected our family dynamic and death is constantly on our minds. Whenever I am unwell, my children get very upset as they fear that may die like my uncles. My family has been surrounded by it for years.

Section 6. Treatment/Care/Support

40. I am unaware whether if [U1] or [U2] ever faced difficulties or obstacles in obtaining treatment for their respective HCV and HIV infections.
41. I am aware that [U2] was offered treatment for his HIV but he did not follow the treatment plan.
42. I am unaware whether [U1] or [U2] were ever offered counselling or psychiatric support for their respective infections.

Section 7. Financial Assistance

Financial Assistance received by [U2]

43. I know that [U2] received financial assistance in connection with his infection but I don't know how much money he received, when he received it or which trust or scheme the money came from.
44. I don't know if [U2] faced any obstacles in obtaining the financial assistance.

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Financial Assistance received by U1

45. U1 passed away before receiving any financial assistance in connection with his infection. After his death, U1's widow GRO-B made applications for financial assistance on his behalf. I am not certain how much money GRO-B received, when she received it or which trust or scheme the money came from.
46. I am glad GRO-B received financial assistance after U1's death as she was left in an extremely difficult financial position when U1 died.

Section 8. Other Issues

47. U2 was never involved in any campaigning or litigation in relation to infected blood. I don't believe U1 was either. U1's wife is an active campaigner and has been heavily involved in the Inquiry's engagement meetings. I am unaware whether U1 was involved in any litigation or whether he joined GRO-B in her campaigns.
48. As stated in my first statement to the Inquiry, I want to see the government take responsibility for what happened and provide financial compensation to everyone that has been infected and affected by the Infected Blood Scandal.

Statement of Truth

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

Signed

GRO-B

Dated

17, 4, 2019