

# ANONYMOUS

GRO-B

Statement No. WITN07570001

Dated: 28 / 4 / 2019

## INFECTED BLOOD INQUIRY

### WRITTEN STATEMENT OF

GRO-B

I provide this statement in response to a request under Rule 9 of the Inquiry Rules 2006, dated 6<sup>th</sup> December 2018.

I, GRO-B will say as follows:-

#### Section 1. Introduction

1. My name is GRO-B and I was born on GRO-B 1977. My home address is in Yorkshire where I live with my partner. I am currently employed as a university lecturer.
2. I intend to speak about my mother, GRO-B: M née M who was born on GRO-B 1947 and who died on GRO-B 1987 at just forty years of age.

## ANONYMOUS

3. My mother suffered from the condition known as LUPUS, which passed undiagnosed throughout most of her lifetime. In 1982 she contracted HIV from contaminated blood given to her during a transfusion.
4. In particular, I will reveal as much as I can recall regarding the nature of her illness, how her illness(es) affected her, and the impact her illness(es) and subsequent death had on me and the rest of our family.
5. My mother was born into a Northern Ireland Protestant family living in GRO-B. Her family owned a GRO-B farm and her upbringing meant that she grew up with a strong work-ethic. My father, GRO-B met my mother in GRO-B in the mid-1960's where he was completing post-doctorate research.
6. They married in GRO-B then moved to GRO-B near Manchester where my elder sister, GRO-B was born in 1975.
7. My father, working for GRO-B and others, had to travel a lot, including his being engaged in Singapore, India and Africa. My mother worked as a midwife, and then as a district nurse. I believe that she changed her nursing role in order to work around family responsibilities, and in particular our childcare. She was a caring woman who had a job caring for others.
8. We were a close family and I believe that our parents enjoyed a very good relationship together. My mother, having been brought up on a farm with lots of open space around her, wanted the same for us, and as a result we moved into a large house with a big garden in GRO-B Manchester. The house needed a lot of renovation work, and became known by my parents as '*the money pit*.'

# ANONYMOUS

## Section 2.    How Affected.

9. My earliest recollections of mum are of her being ill, and having to be treated at the Wythenshawe Hospital and Manchester Royal Infirmary (MRI). I recall my sister and I having spent a lot of time in hospital waiting rooms and travelling to and from hospital especially during our school holidays. I also remember her taking lines of prescription pills as she was on so much medication. This was all normal for us, and I didn't question it.
10. In 1982, as a result of her LUPUS having passed undiagnosed, she became severely ill and nearly died. She was treated at the MRI where she had to be given a blood transfusion, apparently receiving eight pints or units of blood. As her blood group was rare, B Negative, the hospital had to call in a donor in order to secure sufficient blood to save her.
11. At the time I was just five years of age, but I remember it having been extremely serious although I then had no concept of my mother actually dying as hospitals had already become such a large part of our lives by then.
12. My mum was only in hospital for a short time, and her recovery post-release from hospital appeared to be okay to me. She had always had to take pills and go to hospital, so a few more pills and hospital visits made no difference to me at the time. Life simply went back to what it had been like before the transfusion took place.
13. I have really strong memories of our subsequently going to the MRI with mum and she bought lots of chocolates and cards for the doctors and nurses. Both of my parents were overwhelmingly relieved and grateful to the National Health Service (NHS) for having saved her life – as a nurse, my mother understood just how much the hospital had done for her.

## ANONYMOUS

14. We did not know it, as there were no overt symptoms to me, so far as I can recall, but this was when she had been given the contaminated blood from which she had contracted HIV.
15. In April 1987, when I was GRO-B years of age we went on a family holiday to a villa in Portugal. I can remember that mum didn't look well and had loads of cold sores and mouth ulcers. She also looked tired and noticeably struggled to cope.
16. The holiday itself was very unusual, as we never flew abroad. We would usually have gone on a summer camping holiday. I can remember that dad said that mum wanted to spend some time in the sun.
17. I now believe that it could be likely that our parents had been told something regarding mum's health, something which led them to book this holiday, quite possibly they had been told that she then only had months to live.
18. After the holiday, in April or May 1987, mum had to go into hospital as an inpatient for a while. I remember that dad bought her a new Sony Walkman, dressing gown, pyjamas and slippers as she spent so much time in hospital.
19. I have recently been told, by an aunt, my mother's sister, that she had to come to look after us for a short time in GRO-B 1987. Mum was still going out to work, and most probably needed help with our childcare. She hadn't wanted to tell her employers that she was unwell, and worked up until just four or five weeks before she died, quite possibly as she needed the money to fund 'the money pit.'
20. My aunt told me that mum was very confused, and often said things that didn't make any sense. For example, my aunt would give her some money to purchase a newspaper from the shop for her, but mum would become confused and get lost on the way back. Sometimes, mum asked to be taken for a drive around the local area, but became disorientated and had no idea where she may have been – as my aunt didn't know the area either, they often became lost.

## ANONYMOUS

21. As time progressed, it felt as though my mother was in hospital more and more, and dad couldn't look after us whilst he was in hospital accompanying her. I had a very good school friend at that time, GRO-B and I spent a lot of time with him and at his house around that time.
22. In the early hours of GRO-B 1987, my father woke me to tell me that my mother had died.
23. I have a very strong memory of my really wanting my mum's Sony Walkman, just so that I could have something of hers to look after.
24. With the benefit of hindsight, I think that our father should have told us earlier that mum was going to die, but believe that at the time he himself was struggling massively, and had wanted to keep the worst from us until the very last moment.
25. I can remember flying to Northern Ireland on GRO-B 1987, my tenth birthday, for her funeral; with the ceremony being held the following day in GRO-B near GRO-B
26. We were told that she had died of Lupus. I do not believe that I was lied to, everyone just assumed that she had died of Lupus. On the death certificate it says that she died of a stroke caused by her Lupus.
27. However, in about 1990 – 1991, my father told my sister that mum had actually contracted AIDS whilst she had been in hospital. He said that he believed we had the right to know the truth, and because we both needed to have an AIDS test through our local General Practitioner (GP). Thankfully, my tests were returned 'clear,' but I do not know the results of the tests on my father and sister.

# ANONYMOUS

## Section 3. Other Infections.

28. I do not know whether my mother contracted any other infections. She suffered from LUPUS and contracted HIV, which became AIDS as a direct result of her having been given a transfusion that contained contaminated blood.

## Section 4. Consent.

29. At the time this all happened, I was too young to know for certain whether my mother was treated, or tested, or in some manner or form 'used' in medical research circumstances, without her knowledge or consent, or in the absence of adequate information having been provided to her. However during the course of our frequent hospital visits, I do recall mum having given blood samples.

## Section 5. Impact.

30. I knew, two to three years before mum died, that dad drank and smoked, but he never did either overtly and never to the extent witnessed following her death. Once she passed away, alcoholism took over. I can recall him drinking huge amounts and chain smoking whilst we were at the airport heading for mum's funeral. It was a shock to see him drinking and smoking so much, so openly, particularly so as I was only just ten years old.

31. After the funeral we went to stay in Somerset with our aunt. We were with her for some three months, and I believe that during this period dad became an alcoholic. He struggled to look after us and to maintain the large house. In part, I think this is why he remarried, something which happened very quickly, in GRO-B

32. My father, and as a result, my sister and I, 'fell out' with our grandparents, my granny and grandad on my mother's side of the family, as they were very upset that he had remarried so soon after mum's death.



## ANONYMOUS

33. Following his remarriage, my granny used to send me annual birthday cards, each containing a newspaper 'clipping' saying just how long it had been since mum had passed on. My mother's parents blamed dad for having taken their daughter to the U.K. mainland, where she died. It may be that they felt that had she remained in Northern Ireland, it wouldn't have happened and she would still be alive today.
34. My father became an angry drunk. I remember that he once told me that it had been my fault that mother had died. He had remarried an angry woman, and they argued a lot, especially when he was drunk, from the remarriage until I was about fifteen.
35. I remember that whilst undertaking my GCSE examinations, in 1993, my father went into rehabilitation (rehab), and believe that his wife had told him that he had to either straighten himself out, or she would leave him.
36. Between 1993 and 1999 he was in control of his alcoholism, and whilst he was sober I enjoyed his company, we would go into Manchester together, watched football, and had political debates. I went on to university, and whilst studying I would visit him over the Christmas and other holiday breaks.
37. However, his wife issued divorce proceedings and he started having the odd drink again. I was at ease with him having a single pint, as I believed that he had his drinking under control, but this was until 2002 – 2003 when he returned to alcoholism.
38. He found a new partner, someone with whom he went to live and he sold our old family home. He used the money from the sale to buy a property in Spain, and living with his new partner didn't then own anywhere in the U.K. himself, but she then kicked him out, and he was banned from driving for drink-related offences.
39. He would call me at work the shout at me over the 'phone and would regularly ruin Christmas gatherings. My sister tried to remain close to him, and would invite him over for Sunday lunch, which he regularly failed to attend.

## ANONYMOUS

40. We pleaded with him, ignored him, shouted at him, we tried everything we could to make him stop drinking but nothing worked. In my late twenties, I gave up and told him to call me when he was sober.
41. In 2008, my father was living alone in a flat where he would walk from the bed to the bathroom to throw-up, then return to his bed to keep drinking. I can only think that it was on one of these journeys that he must have fallen down the stairs, which is where we found him a few days later, dead as a result of asphyxiation.
42. His alcoholism had reached such a late stage that I was told by doctors that his liver was 60% bigger than normal. "He was on a suicidal path," according to the coroner.
43. I firmly believe that my mother's death, a direct result of her having been given contaminated blood, was the reason for my father's alcoholism – he sought solace from a bottle.
44. Our step-mother, who had two children of her own, was a very controlling, manipulative woman. I couldn't wait to get away from her, which I did as soon as I was eighteen. My sister locked herself in her room when she moved in with her children.
45. This all added to the deterioration of our family relationship, and that between my sister and I, as I believe we would have been much closer had our mum not died.
46. The only time my sister and I were very close was for the two years after our fathers death, whilst we were trying to sort out his messy finances. We found ourselves having been left responsible for a £1,500- per month mortgage on the Spanish property which, as this was at the time of the financial 'crash,' it was impossible to sell.



## ANONYMOUS

47. The contaminated blood transfusion, and resultant HIV / AIDS not only robbed me of my mother for thirty two years, but acted as a trigger to other awful events in my life, such as my father's decline into alcoholism and a step-mother coming into our lives. I was GRO-B when I lost my mother and only GRO-B when my father died.
48. I am sure that this has impacted upon my personality; I find myself more of a peacemaker and more anxious than I may otherwise have been.
49. I had a very disrupted childhood from nine years of age, and other significant life events, such as graduations, were very different from that which they may otherwise have been. I am now a university lecturer, but neither my mother or father are here to see that, and I really wanted my father to be at my masters graduation, especially as he had been an academic himself, and had wanted similar things for me – my father had a PhD in Chemistry (GRO-B) before having travelled to GRO-B for further study / research purposes.
50. I had initially undertaken an events management job, probably not what he would have hoped for, for me, and he never saw the change in my life.
51. Had this transfusion not occurred, there is absolutely no reason why both of my parents could not be here, now, and the four of us would most probably have still been very close.
52. When my father told me that mum had died of HIV, I remember feeling scared, frustrated and angry, wondering how it could have happened as until that point in time, I had thought that Lupus had killed her.
53. I cannot recall any specific stigma having affected my family and I. However, I can remember having watched an AIDS advert on the television with my mum – broadcast sometime in the early 1980's – where a headstone with 'AIDS' written on it came crashing down, and she commented on how scary it was.

## ANONYMOUS

54. Hospitals have been associated with very negative emotions for me since mum's death in 1987. The emotional trauma has affected me so much, that it has only just begun to lessen over thirty years later.

55. This is in part because my partner has been diagnosed with Lymphoma, and has herself needed multiple blood transfusions to save her life. My emotions are so strong, that before my partner was given blood, I was panicking, feeling that I had to ask if it was really essential, if the blood was safe, I just had to say something.

56. I have not been able to tell many people that my mother died of HIV / AIDS. The first person I told was a close friend, almost fifteen years after her death, and I did not tell my partner until we had known one another for ten years. Even now, with better education and the stigma being less pronounced, I find myself very reluctant to share this story with most people.

### **Section 6. Treatment / Care / Support.**

57. I was offered no form of counselling or psychological support through my school, the social services or anyone else when my mother died. I do not recall my father having any, or mentioning any to us, although he may have been offered it.

### **Section 7. Financial Assistance.**

58. I did not receive any form of compensation until I was seventeen or eighteen years of age when I was awarded £20,000- which I used to fund my university degree, a car, and to help me through the first year of my events management career.

59. My sister received the same amount and I believe that my dad also received compensation.

60. I do not know the source of the compensation we each received.

# ANONYMOUS

## Statement Of Truth

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

Signed: \_\_\_\_\_

**GRO-B**

Dated: \_\_\_\_\_

28 / 4 / 2019