

# ANONYMOUS

Witness Name **GRO-B**

Statement No: WITN1480001

Exhibit: 0

Dated: 8 August 2019

## INFECTED BLOOD INQUIRY

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FIRST WRITTEN WITNESS STATEMENT OF **GRO-B**

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I, **GRO-B** will say as follows:-

### Section 1. Introduction

1. My name is **GRO-B**. My date of birth is **GRO-B** 1967 and I live at **GRO-B**. I live with my partner, **GRO-B**. We have a **GRO-B** year old daughter, and **GRO-B** has a **GRO-B** year old daughter from her previous relationship. I work full-time as a **GRO-B**.
2. This statement is made in relation to my father, **GRO-B:F** (dad). Dad was born on **GRO-B** 1943 and died on **GRO-B** 1995, at the age of 52. He contracted the Human Immunodeficiency Virus (HIV) through contaminated blood products and died of Acquired Immunodeficiency Syndrome (AIDS).

3. This witness statement has been prepared without the benefit of access to my father's medical records.

## **Section 2. How affected**

4. My dad suffered from severe Haemophilia A. I am not sure as to the details of when my dad was diagnosed but I am aware that Haemophilia runs in his family; he had four sisters who are carriers who also passed it down to their daughters.
5. I am an only child. My parents divorced when I was around 10 or 11 years old.
6. My childhood memory of my dad was that he was not able to do anything with any risk of him getting hurt. I was not able to do all the things that other boys my age were able to do with their dads such as football or riding a bike for fear of risking a bump and consequently a bleed.
7. I'm pretty sure that it was in about 1977 and certainly before my parents were divorced that he started treatment with Factor VIII concentrate and he started home treatment. I used to watch him inject himself; it was pretty normal to me.
8. It was not until I was older when I started to really understand the nature of my dad's condition. We had Factor VIII bottles in the fridge and whenever he had a bleed he would shake the bottles and then administer it. He also had regular visits to the Haemophilia Centre at the [GRO-B] I believe that the [GRO-B] was the only place where he received his treatment from; I certainly do not recall him going anywhere else.
9. My dad was a [GRO-B] he owned his own [GRO-B] called [GRO-B] [GRO-B]. It was a well-established [GRO-B] with seven or eight staff members in addition to my dad. He was very passionate about [GRO-B]. When I was younger he had worked in a factory with my mum for a period of time prior to

opening his [GRO-B] but he was always [GRO-B] on the side and he always had the aspiration to open his own [GRO-B]. He opened his [GRO-B] in the late 1970s; I recall about 1978/79.

10. Due to the nature of his work, he was on his feet a lot. This caused him many bleeds, which in turn required a lot of Factor VIII treatment.
11. As a result of being treated with contaminated blood products, my dad contracted Human Immunodeficiency Virus (HIV).
12. I am not aware when my dad was actually told about his infection; he never told me how or when he was told. I am also not aware whether any information was given to him about the virus or how to manage the infection.
13. I recall him telling me about his HIV infection. I believe it was shortly after I had left the [GRO-B] in mid 1990. We were both avid supporters of [GRO-B] [GRO-B] Football Club. We were in the car on our journey to a football match. Dad was driving. We were only a couple of miles into the journey when he broke it to me that he had HIV. He was very calm when he told me about it. I do not know for how long he had been living with the diagnosis.
14. There were a lot of things going through my head at the time and automatically I thought of the worst case scenario. I just wonder whether at that point he had already developed AIDS and that is why he told me or whether that was just speculation at the time.
15. We were close but we had a typical father-son relationship and so we did not tend to talk about our feelings. We were not particularly emotional at that point, but I do recall the information being a shock to me. It took me a long time to process it. At the time I think I knew that it was going to kill him as there was no effective treatment available in those days. At the time it seemed to me that all everybody was talking about was AIDS and the numbers of people dying from it.

**Section 3. Other Infections**

16. I am not aware of any other infection apart from HIV.

**Section 4. Consent**

17. I do not know anything about any tests taking place and whether he was informed about them, or consented to them. We never spoke about it.

**Section 5. Impact**

18. My dad never complained, regardless of the haemophilia issues that he had. It was difficult for him as he bled regularly. He spent a lot of his youth in hospital. His sister has told me stories about how he would ride a bike as a child, crash and end up in hospital for months. He wanted to do things like his friends, and he never complained. He was mentally tough. He had had a lot of pain all his life. It was particularly difficult towards the end of his life. Regardless of all this, he never complained and he never showed any bitterness.

19. I lived at home with my dad and his partner, [GRO-B] until he died and therefore I was involved and watched his health deteriorating. I remember that he started having more frequent trips to the [GRO-B] Hospital and there were times when he was admitted to hospital for days or even a week at a time.

20. In 1995 he was admitted to hospital and I recall [GRO-B] returning and saying that he was going to be there for a while. I did not think much of it at the time. A week went by and I went to visit him. I believe that [GRO-B] said something to me in preparation to see my dad. This is when it became apparent to me that he was

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not going to come out again, because of the extent to which his health deteriorated.

21. I do not recall speaking to the medical staff at all. I recall having a lot of conversations with [GRO-B] and my dad's sister, who visited him a lot. I also remember speaking to my mum about what was happening, as my parents were very close regardless of the fact that they were divorced. I remember going to see my mum and saying that he wasn't going to come home.

22. My dad died on [GRO-B] 1995. I watched him deteriorate in front of my eyes. When he was admitted to hospital in that November he was conscious and mobile to some degree but then he quickly became bedridden, blind and deaf. The deterioration was rapid and it was very hard to watch. He was in hospital for about two or three weeks before he passed away.

23. My dad was very passionate about his job as a [GRO-B] and his business. He was very successful at what he was doing. He had people coming from all different locations to have a [GRO-B] at his [GRO-B]. However, as a direct result of his condition and his deteriorating health he was not able to continue. Eventually his business had to be sold. My dad lost his career to AIDS.

24. On one hand I do not think that my dad's passing had a major effect on my career. However, on the other hand, I always used to go to my dad for advice and I felt like he always knew everything. It is possible that I might have made different life decisions based on his advice, but I will never know that.

25. Not having my dad around affects me to this day; particularly when something significant happens and I wish he was here. When I joined the [GRO-B] my dad was very proud and he was there at my passing out parade. I left the [GRO-B] in August 1990 and subsequently joined the [GRO-B]. He was not there for my [GRO-B] passing out parade in 1998.



26. I have now reached the age of 52 which is the age dad was when he died. I know that I still have so much life left in me; my dad's life was cut so short due to no fault of his own.
27. I think that the biggest thing for me is that my dad did not get to see my daughter. I do take her to his graveside and we talk about him and include him in her life. We also talk about my partner's mum who had died from breast cancer. My daughter asked me once if she could use the telephone to give **GRO-B** **F** a ring. When I said she couldn't she said "don't you know his phone number in heaven"? She is only 5.
28. My father was definitely afraid of the stigma attached to having the virus. He was a well-respected **GRO-B** and lived in a small town. I think that his thought process at the time was that if people were to find out about his infection he would probably lose his business. Although many people knew that he had haemophilia I do not think that they guessed that he had HIV; nobody ever suggested it to me anyway.
29. The only people who knew about his infection were myself, **GRO-B** and his sister. I think that many people in my family would have been shocked to find out what happened to him.
30. I do not think that my dad was treated any differently by the medical staff in comparison to other patients. The staff at the **GRO-B** Hospital were brilliant; they treated him with respect.
31. I also do not believe that when he died there were any issues with funeral arrangements, as a result of his illness. We had requested that there be no mention on his death certificate of HIV or AIDS; we did not want people to know about it. I used to say that dad had died from complications associated with his Haemophilia.

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

32. I do not believe that my dad received any treatment for his condition; I am not sure whether there was anything available at the time.

33. I am not sure about my dad being offered any counselling; it was certainly never made available to me.

**Section 7. Financial Assistance**

34. I am not 100% sure but I believe that my dad received some money from the MacFarlane Trust in or about 1991. I am not sure how I found out about it or who told me. I have the figure of £30,000 in my head for some reason.

35. I have not received any financial assistance in relation to my dad's infection.

**Section 8. Other Issues**

36. I do find it very difficult to sum up 25 years of emotion in a statement. Whenever I read about the contaminated blood scandal there is always a mention of statistics. I always think to myself that it is not about the statistics, it is about people's lives. I do not like to think of my father as a statistic.

37. I am not sure whether my dad knew the full facts of what was happening with the contaminated blood products. I do not know whether it was common knowledge. Dad lived with Haemophilia his entire life and he suffered pain. Then miraculously a new treatment arrived and he did not have to drive to **GRO-B** every time he had a bleed. He did not realise, however, that every time he had

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the treatment it was like playing Russian roulette. Eventually, something that was meant to help him ultimately killed him. This makes me feel angry.

38. I do not know how long he would have lived without the infection but I am certain that he would not have died at 52, and also he would not have died in such a horrible way.

### **Anonymity, disclosure and redaction**

39. I confirm that I do wish to apply for anonymity and that I understand this statement will be published and disclosed as part of the Inquiry.

40. I do not wish to be called to give oral evidence.



**Statement of Truth**

I believe that the facts stated **GRO-B**'s witness statement are true.

Signed..... **GRO-B**  
**GRO-B**

Dated..... 08/08/19.....