

# ANONYMOUS

Witness Name **GRO-B**

Statement No: WITN6610001

Exhibit: WITN661002 - 009

Dated: 16 December 2021

## INFECTED BLOOD INQUIRY

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FIRST WRITTEN STATEMENT OF **GRO-B**

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

### Section 1: Introduction

1. My son, **GRO-B: S** was born on **GRO-B** 1972 in Cornwall. He was a bonnie baby, weighing 10lbs and everything seemed perfect. He was a much-loved son and brother to my daughter **GRO-B**
2. He was diagnosed with Haemophilia with a Factor VIII essay of 13%.
3. In our case, there was no history of Haemophilia in our family.

### Section 2: How Affected

4. My daughter **GRO-B** was 3 years old when **S** was born so she treated him like a doll, with a lot of squeezing and cuddling, so we put **S** occasional bruising down to her over enthusiasm. **Exhibit WITN6610002.**
5. However, as time went on, at 9 months old he was crawling and the bruising became worse, so we arranged for him to be examined by Dr Joyce at the formerly and still commonly known Treliske Hospital (now the Royal Cornwall Hospital). A blood sample was taken from **S** femoral artery which led to a massive bleed during the night at home.

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6. My husband and I rushed him back to the hospital where after more tests he was finally diagnosed with Haemophilia. **Exhibit WITN6610003.**
7. Obviously [redacted] s needed constant care and any trauma would lead to a hospital visit for treatment with Factor XIII to clot his blood. **Exhibit WITN6610004.**
8. His joints, particularly his knees suffered the most and he wore a helmet to protect him. However, overall he was able to lead a normal life, albeit not a boisterous one.
9. [redacted] s attended a local primary school in Cornwall which was located beside the now the [redacted] s
10. Inevitably, he suffered many bleeds into his joints. Thankfully the hospital was [redacted] GRO-B so his treatment was relatively immediate. **Exhibit WITN6610005**
11. My husband was an antique dealer and was offered a post in London. So, our family moved and for a time our visits to Great Ormond Street Hospital were frequent.
12. When we moved, I enrolled [redacted] s at the [redacted] GRO-B. This was mostly an all-girls school. [redacted] s excelled here and made many friends. It had a gentle approach to schooling and as I didn't want [redacted] s to feel isolated or bullied in a regular boy's school as he could not participate in contact sports, enrolling him at the [redacted] s School was by far the best option which worked out quite well.
13. I recall that we arranged a trip to Oxford during one of the mid-term breaks, [redacted] s suffered a bleed during our trip away and as a result we had to bring him to hospital for treatment. It was on that occasion that I believe he received contaminated blood products. Unfortunately, I have been unable to source the records from his attendance.

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14. We stayed in London for a number of years until we returned to Cornwall after the opportunity of selling the business came up.
15. When he was older, he boarded a [GRO-B] during the week where we were fortunate to have a very understanding Headmaster – [GRO-B] who, together with his daughter [GRO-B] took personal responsibility and as a result [S] was very happy there from the age of 8-12 years of age [GRO-B] went to the girls boarding school and so I would collect them both on a Friday and return them on Sunday evening.
16. [S] did not apply himself at school, which resulted in weak O Level results. He didn't sit his A Levels; he was of the mindset of "*what is the point?*". It was very unfortunate as [S] was very bright. However, his illness negatively impacted on his state of mind when it came to studying and his future.
17. Following school, he enrolled in a Business Course [GRO-B]
18. [S] was treated with Cryoprecipitate in the early 80's and was then changed to Factor VIII. **Exhibit WITN6610006.**
19. I was aware that [S] was being tested for HIV regularly by Dr Morell at the Royal Cornwall Hospital. However, this was explained to me as routine testing. No further information was given to me, no reasons for why he was being tested.
20. When the devastating news of AIDS raised its head [S] was tested by Dr Morell, Haematologist.
21. He rang our house one evening, without preamble to inform me of the tragic news that [S] tested positive for HIV – he was 13 years old. **Exhibit WITN6610007.**
22. We kept this from [S] until he was 18, deemed as an adult he had a right to know then. I instructed the hospital that I did not want anyone to know of

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his status until he reached majority. He commenced AZT shortly after his diagnosis. **Exhibit WITN6610008**

23. Before we had the opportunity to tell **S** about the extent of his illness, he was told this, in a very blasé manner by one of the nurses caring for him on the ward one day. My husband and I were outraged, we had kept this from **S** for so long and decided to tell him when he turned 18.
24. Unfortunately and regrettably, this caused him to have a nervous breakdown and he was admitted to **GRO-B** Psychiatric Hospital.
25. Due to the manner in which he was told, the shock of finding out the extent of his HIV infection caused **S** to shut down. He refused to eat. He did not speak for what felt like an eternity.
26. Whilst at **GRO-B** Psychiatric Hospital, they performed shock treatment on him and after one month of a complete shutdown **S** slowly came back to a version of himself.
27. We visited him every day. It was so heart breaking to see him up in a place like this. Overnight he had changed.
28. A family friend **GRO-B** an AIDS specialist asked to assess **S** at St Mary's Paddington.
29. By this time **S** was prone to minor infections and in **GRO-B** opinion, this would spread to his brain and his lifespan might be one year, which proved this case.
30. We decided to bring **S** home to be cared for at the Royal Cornwall Hospital. He was becoming mentally happier.
31. Whilst he was admitted, we were notified that he had a "turn". I was unable to see **S** at that time, but we called every day.

32. It transpired that [s] had suffered a brain haemorrhage and was in intensive care. It was a very shocking.

33. He was placed on life support. We were told that there was no coming back from this.

34. [s] remained on life support for 2 days until the decision was made to take him off. He died very suddenly and shockingly.

35. My son died on [s] 1992. Exhibit WITN6610009

### **Section 3: Other Infections**

N/A

### **Section 4: Consent**

36. As a minor, [s] was treated with my consent although there was no point where I was given adequate information, details of any risks involved, or potential side effects associated with the proposed treatments.

### **Section 5: Impact**

37. My daughter [GRO-B] contributed greatly to caring for [s] also. [s] illness and the caring that he required inevitably took its toll on all of us. [GRO-B] had a very close bond with [s]. She has a dog which she called [GRO-B] in memory of her brother.

38. We were not aware of it at the time, but it transpired that [GRO-B] overheard the conversation that was had where we were notified of [s] HIV diagnosis. Looking back, the stress of it all took its toll on [GRO-B] and she developed bulimia as a result.

39. It was a very stressful at times, especially as we could not share any worries and therefore no help was offered.
40. As a family we were completely isolated, but we lived with it. It was always in the background, never too far from our minds.
41. The stigma surrounding AIDS forced us to be closed off.
42. We lived in a very small community and as a way of protecting  I believed staying silent was the only way to ensure that he would have a regular and normal childhood as possible.
43. My husband passed away a year before  died.  illness undoubtedly contributed to his death.
44. I lost my mother during the same year that  died, so it has been a very long grieving period.
45. I lost 3 loves of my life and so I held on to my business after they died, as a way to keep me going.

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

46. None whatsoever.
47. My son was not offered any care or support. The only form of counselling he received was part of the programme in  hospital, following his admission after his breakdown.
48. My husband, daughter nor I were offered any form of counselling during or following  death.
49. We were offered no sympathy.

**Section 7: Financial Assistance**

50. As my husband had an antique dealing business and I owned a delicatessen thankfully we were financially secure.

51. S received money in the region of £20,000 from the McFarlane Trust. Which we viewed as his own money and allowed him to spend it in any way he wanted.

**Section 8: Other Issues**

52. I continue to feel very let down by what has happened to my son. He received very little care and compassion. It was like we were set off to deal with all of this on our own.

53. I want to see justice for my son and for the rest of the Haemophiliacs and their families.

54. To date, no apologies have been received and no one has been held accountable.

55. In writing this statement, I find it difficult to convey the impact that this has had on my life and that of my daughter, but I believe my son's story and all of those affected ought to be told as to why this catastrophe occurred.

**Statement of Truth**

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

Signed GRO-B \_\_\_\_\_  
GRO-B  
 Dated 16.12.21 \_\_\_\_\_