

# ANONYMOUS

Witness Name: GRO-B

Statement No: WITN6420001

Exhibit: WITN6420002

Dated: August 2019

## INFECTED BLOOD INQUIRY

FIRST WRITTEN WITNESS STATEMENT OF GRO-B

GRO-B will say as follows:-

### Section 1. Introduction

1. My full name is GRO-B. I was born on GRO-B GRO-B 1995 and I live at GRO-B Somerset GRO-B.
2. My father, GRO-B: F (born on GRO-B 1967), was co-infected with the Human Immunodeficiency Virus (HIV), the Hepatitis B Virus (HBV) and the Hepatitis C Virus (HCV) from contaminated blood products. He died from treatment of a High Grade (Non-Hodgkins) Lymphoma on GRO-B 2019, aged 51. I refer to Exhibit WITN6420002 being a copy of Dad's Death Certificate.
3. The witness statement has been prepared without the benefit of access to my father's full medical records.

### Section 2. How Affected

4. My father (Dad) had severe Haemophilia A.
5. Dad was treated at the Haematology Department at St George's Hospital, Blackshaw Road in London. He transferred to Guy's and St Thomas' Hospital in 1999 and was latterly treated (from 2009) at the Bristol Haemophilia Centre.
6. Dad was treated with a variety of blood products such as Cryoprecipitate, Factor IX (FIX) and Factor VIII (FVIII) concentrate (to include Factorate manufactured by the Armour Pharmaceutical Company in the USA). Dad first tested HIV positive in January 1985 and was found to have HBV in June 1984.
7. Dad was identified as being HCV positive from February 1992. It was previously referred to as Non-A Non-B Hepatitis.
8. I am uncertain as to how Dad was told that he had been infected with the three viruses, but I know that he felt he had been treated with disdain by his own doctors. He wasn't told straight away that he had been infected and said that he had been kept in the dark. He was then told with a lack of concern and he felt mistreated. No information or advice on risk was given to my Dad or my grandparents even when they questioned the risk. My grandparents are unable to talk about it to this day without dissolving into floods of tears.

### **Section 3. Other Infections**

9. Dad was noted to have been at risk of variant Creutzfeldt–Jakob Disease (vCJD) in 2004. He was never informed. We knew nothing about it.

### **Section 4. Consent**

10. Dad was tested for infections without his or his parents' knowledge and consent.
11. Dad also believed that he was treated with blood products for research purposes. He believed that he and other young haemophiliacs were used as guinea pigs.

### **Section 5. Impact**

12. Aside from haemophilia related joint and mobility problems, Dad developed all manner of health issues to include depression, chronic fatigue and brain fog, insomnia, high blood pressure, asthma, respiratory infections and kidney, liver and heart problems.
13. From when I was two years old, I loved playing sport and would play some form of sport 7 days per week if I could. I played with neighbours and uncles, but never had the opportunity to play with my father. He was always too tired and drained (and wary about bleeds).
14. My parents split up when I was 8 or 9 years old and I lived with my Dad which was closer to my school until after I turned 17 years old. Dad made a lot of sacrifices to get me into a private school and to give me a good start in life and pretty much broke the bank in doing so. Dad had his own business working as a driving instructor. His car had dual controls and sometimes Dad was in such a poor state that GRO-C. He shouldn't have worked for as long (and as hard) as he did, and I am forever grateful for everything he (and my mother) did for me. Because of Dad's poor health and all the sacrifices he made, I had very little time to spend with friends. If I went out I felt bad asking him to pick me up at night and I didn't like leaving him at home on his own.

## ANONYMOUS

15. Dad was aware of the risk of passing infections to others through blood contact. I often helped Dad by administering his haemophilia treatment to him. He would tell me to wear gloves and be careful with the needle. From a very early age I knew to stand clear if Dad cut himself shaving. I was told 'don't go near other people's blood'. I thought then that that was a rule that all children were taught and followed. Dad didn't want to talk too much about what had happened to him, but in retrospect I think that he tried to make me grow up quicker than average. Because of the stigma I wasn't allowed to talk to others about Dad and I had some very good friends I would have liked to confide in as we are still good friends now. Dad didn't want me to be judged. I struggled with that because I really needed someone to talk to. It was equally as hard for Dad as he was infected through no fault of his own.
16. Dad and a very good friend of his were avid campaigners for justice for contaminated blood victims. I was around the age of 21 and at University, listening to a debate in Parliament and I remember our MP talking about one of her infected constituents. It dawned on me that she was speaking of my father and how he didn't feel that he had been the father to me that he felt I deserved. Unbeknown to me that was how my Dad thought and felt. We had a subsequent conversation between us and it was heart breaking for me to hear how he felt especially as he had worked so hard when he shouldn't have still been working and had sacrificed so much. I was so happy and grateful to have him as a father, but he didn't see it.
17. Dad and I had a very close bond. It was a shock to learn that Dad developed a high-grade cancer in 2018 and harder still to also learn that it was directly linked to infected blood. If it wasn't for infected blood he would still be here now.
18. Dad fought so hard for an Inquiry and to get justice. He always said 'the longer they leave it, the less people they have to answer to'. He is no longer here to fight

the fight. There are less and less people like him left as time goes on and he is now one of that number and he shouldn't be.

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

19. Dad had HIV antiviral treatment from 2010. He had an attempt at clearing HCV with six months of Pegylated Interferon and Ribavarin in 2002 and a second, successful course of HCV clearing treatment in 2016.

**Section 7. Financial Assistance**

20. Dad struggled to provide financially for me and his partner. I am in the process of making contact with the EIBSS as I think that Dad should have had a higher level of payment than that given to him in 1991.

**Anonymity, disclosure and redaction**

21. I am applying for anonymity and would like this Statement redacted. I understand this Statement will be published and disclosed as part of the Inquiry.

**Statement of Truth**

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

Signed

GRO-B

Dated

30/09/2021