

# ANONYMOUS

Witness Name **GRO-B**

Statement No: WITN1651001

Exhibits:0

Dated: August 2019

## 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 name is **GRO-B** I was born on **GRO-B** 1976. I live at **GRO-B**  
**GRO-B** with my husband and  
my two children who are **GRO-B** and **GRO-B** years old.
2. I make this statement on behalf of my late father, **GRO-B: F** who  
was infected with HIV and HCV after receiving contaminated blood products  
to treat his Haemophilia. My father was born in **GRO-B** 1956 (his exact date  
of birth is unknown) and died on **GRO-B** 1993 at the age of 36.
3. I have two younger siblings with whom I share the same father; one younger  
half-sister and one younger half-brother. I believe that my half brother may  
have given a statement to the Inquiry.

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4. My parents were not married but their relationship ended when I was only one. My father died when I was 16. During these years I lived with my mother but I saw my father regularly on weekends and in school holidays.
5. My mother had a subsequent long term partner and she had 2 sons.
6. This witness statement has been prepared without the benefit of access to my father's full medical records.

### **Section 2. How Affected**

7. My father suffered from haemophilia from a young age, but I do not know which type. I remember he suffered from severe bleeds and, on occasions, was detained in hospital. He received treatment at St Mary's Hospital, Paddington in London. I do not know the names of the doctors who treated him or the dates when he received treatment. I do not know if he was treated at any other hospitals.
8. In early 2018, I sent a request to St Mary's Hospital to provide me with all of my father's medical records, but to no avail. The hospital has refused to do so because I am not a named executor to his estate. I was told that I needed to get proof that I was a beneficiary to the estate. However, even though I did this I was told again that as I was not an executor I could not have a copy of the medical records. I was in touch with a lot of people to locate his records, it was an incredibly long and drawn out process but without success.
9. After my parents separated, I stayed with my father on weekends and on school holidays throughout primary school and the early part of secondary school. As I became more older, I realised my father was visiting hospital to receive some form of treatment but I was still too young at the time to understand what treatment he was receiving.

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10. My father would not discuss his health with me, perhaps because I was too young, and I suppose he wanted to protect me from the truth. Since my father's death, I have become more aware of the effects of HIV and Haemophilia through my own research.
11. I do not know how or when my father found out that he had contracted HIV. I assume it was the hospital who told him but I do not know for sure.
12. My father's appearance alerted me to the fact he was not well; he just didn't look himself. I was about 14 or 15 at the time. The colour of his skin appeared to change. He never told me what was wrong at the time. I remember saying to Mum that he looked a bit different and I also remember speaking to my sister saying that Dad did not look well. At no time did he tell me that he was suffering from any infection.
13. I believe the hospital may have failed to advise my father of the risks of infection to partners. This is because my half-brother's mother had contracted HIV from my father and she died of AIDS in 1996.
14. I do not know what information was given to my father about managing the HIV infection. I was very young at the time and I feel like he was protecting me from it all. There was a lot of stigma around HIV and AIDS at the time; things are much more open now.

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

15. I have been made recently aware that my father was also infected with HCV. I can now associate this with the changes to the colour of his skin.

#### **Section 4. Consent**

16. I do know whether my father was being tested or treated without his consent or for the purposes of research. It is difficult for me to say as I was not told by my father and I have been unable to review his medical records.

#### **Section 5. Impact of the Infection**

17. Towards the end of his life, my father wanted to spend more time with us. At the time, I was living with my mother in GRO-B in North London and my father lived nearby. I recall we used to visit our father every other weekend. During these visits, we noticed that he was losing weight and his complexion had altered to an ashen grey colour.

18. My father was of Jamaican origin and he took us to see the country where he was born. I believe he also wanted to visit and see where he was born. He went twice within the space of two years. In hindsight, I believe he wanted us to see where he was from. Prior to this, we had never really gone on holiday abroad. I got the impression he was trying to get as many moments as he could with us.

19. On the first occasion my father took all of his children to Jamaica. On the second occasion, however, he asked me to go with him too. However, I was unable to go the second time because of my upcoming GCSEs.

20. My father had greatly deteriorated over the last two years of his life. My father passed away whilst on that holiday with my brother in Jamaica. He was rushed into hospital whilst there, but I do not know what for and he ended up dying. It was GRO-B time just before I was due to take my GCSEs the following summer.

21. It was devastating that he went away on holiday and never came back. Before he went he seemed like he had lost weight, and was ill but he was so

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strong. He carried on and pretended everything was normal, not wanting us to feel scared or upset. I only saw him the week before he was going away with my brother. I remember telling him to have a nice time in Jamaica.

22. I cannot remember how I was told that he had passed away. It has faded from my memory. I cannot recall if I overheard it or whether my mother told me. He was buried in Jamaica and we went out there for the funeral. I am not aware of there being any problems with the funeral arrangements. There was no discussion of his illness at the funeral.

23. I have never seen a copy of my father's death certificate.

24. I was absolutely devastated; I just never thought I would lose my dad so young. I assumed that because he was a haemophiliac that is what he died from and that the hospital in Jamaica hadn't been able to deal with it. To then find out he had HIV, there was a lot of stigma around it. I recall there being a lot of adverts. It was always associated with being gay or being a drug user and I knew my dad wasn't either. We had to lie. We told people that he died from complications of his haemophilia. I never knew how people would react if I told them the truth.

25. I have told people since, my family know about my fathers' infections. It was a burden to carry the information about my father, having to lie all the time about someone that you love.

26. Apart from being a haemophiliac, my father's general health was good. He was a telecommunications consultant and he was responsible for advising large companies how to set up their businesses. At the time he was single and had a normal life. I did not notice any physical or mental change in him. However, his health began to deteriorate rapidly when he became symptomatic during the last 18 months of his life.

27. I have found it particularly difficult to manage without him. No other person will ever be able to take his place. I miss the support my father gave. I was very

upset on my wedding day because my father was not there to give me away; it was painful that he wasn't there. There is a constant reminder that he was taken away from me. I will never know how different my life would have been if my father was still with me to give moral, emotional and financial support. My children will never have the love of their grandfather; he never got to meet them. I hate to think about all the important events in life that my father hasn't been here to celebrate. My father never even made it to the age I am now. I value life more because my father passed away so young. You cannot take things for granted. The bond between me and my half brother has strengthened since his death.

28. My father's death came at a crucial time of my life. I was taking school exams when he became terminally ill and his loss had a severe impact on my education. I failed my GSCE exams. I found it difficult to cope and I turned to drinking alcohol excessively. It took me about 2 years to come to terms with it all. I couldn't really concentrate on anything, I should have gone for counselling but I didn't. I ended up leaving school after my GCSEs and I had a number of different jobs. I left home just before I was 18; I wasn't really coping very well and I wanted to do my own thing. I did a lot of drinking and clubbing.
29. I never received any counselling. I did have a supportive family and a good network of friends who were there to support me even though I had not told them the truth of how he died. I was not aware he was going to die even though he looked ill in the last 18 months of his life.
30. There was considerable stigma attached to AIDS in the early 1990s. For this reason, I had to conceal my father had the virus because anyone who had it was frowned upon. I was of an age when I started to form relationships with boyfriends. I was worried that others would think that I was also suffering from it.
31. After my father's death, I lost contact with my half brother, [GRO-B]. My father had infected his further partner [GRO-B]'s mother) and she too died of AIDS.



GRO-B was only 9 years old at the time and he went to live with his uncle in GRO-B I lost contact with him for a number of years.

32. In my day to day life I was and am very much aware that I have no second parent to fall back on. If my mum couldn't afford something I had no father to help out. There are sentimental things I will never get to pass down to my own children because I was never given them myself. I had no fatherly support, I couldn't even go and see him for a Sunday lunch, I can't give him a call and tell him about things or ask his advice. My brother should have been able to learn from his father and this was robbed from him. He was only 6 when my father died so he had even less time with him than I did. His memories are not as full as mine; they are much sadder. He went on holiday with him and came back without him.

#### **Section 6. Treatment/care/support**

33. I do not know if my father faced difficulties or obstacles in obtaining treatment, care and support after he had been infected with HIV. I am now aware if any psychological support was made available to my father to help him deal with his HIV infection. I do not know whether there was any counselling made available to me when I was a child but I did not have any psychological support outside of my friends and family.

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

34. My father was not employed when he took us to Jamaica. He was supporting himself. I believe he received a lump sum but I do not know how much he received or where it came from. We had never been abroad prior to this, and to go to Jamaica was a big holiday.

35. My mother was struggling to provide for me when I was at school. I needed clothing, money for travel and other expenses. My father should have been there to help out and I missed out on his general support.
36. The MacFarlane Trust sent a letter to me with a cheque after my father died in about 2000. I cannot remember when the letter was sent to me, nor can I remember the exact amount. All I remember is that I had not applied for it and it came as a complete surprise. I do not know whether it was applied for by the executor of his will, I believe it was for about £1000 (one thousand pounds).
37. In 2011, my half sister applied to the Skipton Fund for an ex gratia payment for all the children. She received money from this Fund, and has caused family problems as it was not shared. The fact this money was paid did indicate to me that my father was infected with HCV. I believe she received about £70,000. I am not sure whether she had to send off medical records to receive this money. I do not have any contact with my half sister, she applied for the ex gratia payment, I was not aware of the actual application. It is only because I emailed the organisation to ask whether there was an application in respect of my late father and whether it had been successful, that I found out. The Skipton Fund could not give me any further information. I think my brother, GRO-B stayed in contact with my half sister for a period of time, but I do not know if they are still in contact.
38. There is no amount of money that can replace the loss of a father. My father was always there for me and also for my siblings because that was the kind of person he was. I particularly feel for my younger half brother. I know that he will miss my father when he gets married and his father will not be there for him.



**Section 8. Other Issues**

39. The family has been denied access to justice. I know that the hospital have the records that I have requested and I believe I should have access to them to find out more about my fathers' infections. The NHS has the answers and we should be told the truth.

**Anonymity**

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

41. I do not want to give oral evidence to the Inquiry.

**Statement of Truth**

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

Signed.

GRO-B

GRO-B

Date... 2/9/19 .....