

ANONYMOUS

Witness Name: GRO-B

Witness Number: WITN2733001

Exhibits: 0

Date: May 2019

INFECTED BLOOD INQUIRY

FIRST WRITTEN STATEMENT OF GRO-B

I, GRO-B will say as follows:-

Section 1. Introduction

1. My name is GRO-B I was born on the GRO-B
GRO-B
2. I make this statement as the son of GRO-B: F who was born in or
about GRO-B and died at the age of about GRO-B as a result of
having been infected with Hepatitis C following a whole blood transfusion.
3. **This statement has been prepared without the benefit of access to my
late father's full medical records.**

Section 2. How Infected

4. I was very young when my father received a whole blood transfusion. I was about 6 or 7 years old which would place this accident in approximately 1989. My father was involved in an industrial accident at work. [GRO-B]
[GRO-B] He suffered severe burns and was taken to Stoke Mandeville Hospital, Aylesbury and had skin grafts on his back and wrist. We were told as the doctors were operating near his arteries, a transfusion of blood was necessary and it was this transfusion which gave him HepatitisC.
5. I do not know whether my father was told beforehand about the risk of infection from a whole blood transfusion.
6. In 2000, his stomach became distended and he attended his GP Dr [GRO-B] at [GRO-B]. Upon seeing my father, Dr [GRO-B] promptly called the ambulance and my father was admitted to Milton Keynes General Hospital. I believe that my father was told that he was Hepatitis C positive during this visit as the family found out in or around this time.
7. I am unaware what information or advice (if any) was given to my father about the infection and the risks of others being infected.

Section 3. Other Infections

8. I do not know whether my father received any infections other than Hepatitis C.

Section 4. Consent

9. I am unaware whether my father was treated or tested without his knowledge or consent or if he was treated or tested for the purposes of research.

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Section 5. Impact

10. My parents split up as my mother was a Jehovah's Witness and was against blood transfusions. My father was violently opposed to this view which makes me wonder whether my father knew about his Hepatitis C infection prior to his hospital visit in 2000 and perhaps just kept his diagnosis a secret.
11. I saw the blood transfusion when I visited the hospital and I recall my father acknowledging that my mother did not agree with him having a blood transfusion.
12. My father was devastated to hear the news about Hepatitis C and was in agony and ill for a very long time before he presented with symptoms of Hepatitis C. He had terrible cramps in his legs, yellowing of the eyes and swelling of the stomach.
13. I was 17 years old when my father passed away. In the last few years of his life, I noticed that he was going down hill.
14. It was a horrible experience looking at my father and I recall that he was very poorly. My father was lethargic and I remember that he complained of fatigue. I recall him telling me that he was driving home one day and he had to pull over on the side of the road to have a nap.
15. He was emotionally distant and he was never particularly playful. I used to see him every Saturday after he separated from my mother. Our relationship was good. Although we rarely shared affectionate moments we did spend time together.
16. I recall that my father took a lot of medication but unfortunately I do not recall any specific names. I am aware that my father was on a plethora of medication which increased his oestrogen levels as he developed breasts.

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17. It is difficult for me to divorce the illness from the side effects of treatment as I was relatively young when I saw my father go through this terrible infection. I recall that he was sleeping a lot and he often felt nauseous. My father accepted treatment in the time shortly before his death.
18. As far as I am aware, his infected status did not impact on any treatment which he may have received.
19. The impact of my father's infection on our private, family and social life was difficult to deal with. I was in the second year of my studies at College when he passed away and I took a year off my studies. I did well at College despite everything but I deferred my College course to be with my family. I have only recently begun studying for a . I think my father's death has impacted my life in that it has set back my education. I was 17 and I was only just starting to become 'someone' but I had my whole life crumble right in front of me.
20. When my father was ill towards the end he moved in with my sister who was a nurse, who also shortly after passed away due to a brain tumour.
21. This all happened half of my life ago. I became very scared of becoming infected or diseased. I saw hospitals as a bad place to be and I did not want to go. I also became distant and defensive when it came to relationships as I was afraid I would contract something. It made me paranoid to the point of a state of dread. I have been tested for Hepatitis C as a result of this on numerous occasions.
22. I have suffered with an auto immune condition since I was about 24. In order to control my eczema; I was prescribed medication which caused diabetes and which my doctors said was caused by my underlying stress and the impact of losing my father.

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23. I have two sisters and the passing of my father was a shock to my whole family. It was difficult for us to have the conversation after our father passed away whether we should all be tested for Hepatitis C.
24. My father's legacy, knowledge, talent and skill had gone with him. Had he been alive, I would have followed his craftsmanship and I would have learned from him. This opportunity was taken away from me. I would have most likely become a mechanic and a carpenter like my father.
25. I have earned pennies, if I had become a carpenter or mechanic like my father, I believe I would have earned far more money.
26. I have a son who is GRO-B and he was also robbed of a grandfather. I often talk about my father with my son; because he has his grandfather's chin. I talk about my late father frequently.
27. For a few years following my father's death, I went off the rails and I drank a lot of alcohol and I used drugs which I am not proud of. I still drink approximately 3 pints every day which helps take the edge off the day and, most importantly, helps me to forget. I am determined to try and want to move on.
28. I think my father's infection and passing has impacted on my ability to form attachments and to have adult relationships. I see relationships as potential pain. I believe that one day I will be able to afford to go away on my own some day and completely isolate myself from others. I do not want anybody around me to see me in pain or to see me pass away the way that I saw my father pass away. I would rather protect others from pain like that.
29. It has been hard to reconcile what has happened. I grew up in a religiously split household which went wrong through contaminated blood.

Section 6. Treatment/Care/Support

30. As far as I am aware, the hospital just helped my father to die comfortably. I do not know whether he experienced any obstacles in receiving treatment.

31. In consequence of what happened with my late father, psychological support and counselling has never been offered to me by the hospital or NHS.

32. I have been advised to go to couples' therapy by my partner.

Section 7. Financial Assistance

33. As far as I am aware, my late father did not receive any financial assistance.

34. I believe that my mother investigated this as she told me that she was not entitled to any financial assistance as she was not married to my father.

35. I did not know that any financial assistance was available at all.

Section 8. Other Issues

36. I would like for people to be held accountable for what happened to my father. There should be many recommendations made in order to prevent tragedies like this from happening again.

Anonymity, redaction and disclosure

37. I would like to be anonymous and would prefer not to give oral evidence due to study commitments.

Statement of Truth

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

Signed: GRO-B

GRO-B

Dated: 16/7/15