

ANONYMOUS

Witness Name: **GRO-B**

Statement No: WITN3265001

Exhibits: 0

Dated: July 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 am widowed and live at **GRO-B**
GRO-B. I was born on **GRO-B** 1950.
2. I make this statement in relation to my father **GRO-B: F** who was born on **GRO-B**
GRO-B 1923 and died on **GRO-B** 1975. I have two brothers; **GRO-B** who was born
on **GRO-B** **GRO-C** and **GRO-B** who was born on **GRO-B** **GRO-C**
3. This witness statement has been prepared without the benefit of access to my father's
medical records. If and in so far as I have been provided with limited records the relevant
entries are set out in the medical chronology at the end of this statement.

Section 2. How Affected

4. My father was diagnosed with myelofibrosis in 1973. He was diagnosed eventually with this
condition in 1973 by the Hammersmith Hospital. He attended the anaemia unit. His
hospital number was **GRO-B** and his consultant was called Dr Gordon Smith.

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5. My father had been very poorly for a couple of years prior to this. He became very weak and it was only when he was transferred to Hammersmith Hospital that they diagnosed his condition as myelofibrosis.
6. The only treatment at the time for this was blood transfusions. He was regularly admitted to hospital for these. I cannot remember whether he was called for the treatment or whether he went to hospital as and when he felt treatment was necessary.
7. I do remember one day when we were sitting in the garden with my father and he became so weak. We called the GP who said he could do nothing for my dad and we were told to contact Hammersmith Hospital. They sent an emergency ambulance to collect him. He could not get out of his chair. He was taken to Hammersmith Hospital and was given 8 units of blood. I cannot recollect clearly the date but I believe it was in early 1975; he was extremely poorly.
8. He attended the anaemia unit at Hammersmith Hospital. I can remember seeing him having the transfusions. Sometimes he was transfused with whole blood and sometimes he received platelets only which were bags of yellow solution. I remember there were bags of dark blood, bags of yellow platelets and he also was given a clear colour product but I do not know what that was.
9. In the early days of his diagnosis with myelofibrosis the blood transfusions made him feel better; they bucked him up and he used to return home with more energy and feeling much better.
10. I think it was in the summer of 1974 that he was told by staff at the anaemia unit that he had been given bad blood.
11. I remember he told us that he'd been infected with bad blood and this is what he had been told. I cannot recall a specific date. However after this the transfusions did not appear to help him and did not build his energy up. He always felt very ill and his dramatic weight loss began. He became fatigued very easily.
12. He did not tell us what infection he had contracted. I believe that he died from AIDS due to the symptoms he suffered following the "bad blood" transfusion.

Section 3. Other Infections

13. I am not aware of any other infections he had.

Section 4. Consent.

14. My father did not tell me that he believed his blood had been tested without his consent and therefore I am unable to state specifically whether he consented or not or whether he was used for research purposes. I do remember him saying after one treatment that he felt as though he was being treated as a guinea pig.

15. My elder brother [GRO-B] has recently applied to Hammersmith Hospital for my father's medical notes but all they produced were little scraps of paper that had been photocopied. I have seen these and from what I recall they were all blood requests from 1974 with details of batch numbers. We feel that the scraps of paper must have come from a file but we have been sent nothing else.

Section 5. Impact

16. My mother and father did not tell me specifically what infection my father had been given. We, as a family believe he was infected with HIV/AIDS. This was not spoken about within the family and when Dad was alive because of the stigma attached. I feel that it would have implied that my father was homosexual as in the mid 1970's "AIDS" meant homosexuality to many people.

17. I remember that my nephew [GRO-B] had just been born and my dad would say that he would not pick him up because he was so frightened that he might infect him.

18. He was the sort of man who would never have refused treatment if offered. He was very open with my mother and I am sure that she would have known if he had but they never told us.

19. My mum became his main carer and once he had been infected his hospital visits became much more regular. My mother died in the year 2000.

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20. I think that when he had been told he had been given bad blood he knew he was going to die.

21. He had been told that once he was diagnosed with myelofibrosis that if he lived for three years after the start of blood transfusions that he would have lived but because he was given contaminated blood he died.

22. He died on **GRO-B** 1975 and his death certificate cites the cause of death as bronchopneumonia and myelofibrosis.

23. My recollection of dates is a little hazy but from 1974 his health deteriorated. He went from being a 13/14 stone strongman to rapidly losing half of his body weight in a very quick time. He lost such a lot of weight that we associated his condition to AIDS.

24. As his children the hospital did ask each of us whether we would be prepared to donate our bone marrow for transplant. I remember that I agreed to but this was never followed up.

25. We were a close family. My brothers drove up every night when dad was in hospital taking our mum to see him. We lived in **GRO-B** and he was hospitalised in Hammersmith so this was a long journey. Dad insisted that we did not go every day but towards the end of his life I spent a lot of time with him.

26. In the latter days of his life we knew that he was going to die. We went to see him one evening and the next morning my mum received a phone call to say that he had died.

27. We were all devastated by his death. He was only 51 years old and my mum was only 48. She was completely lost without him; we could not believe that he had gone.

Section 6. Treatment/Care/Support

28. As I do not know what my father had been infected with I cannot say whether he was given the care or support that he required.

Section 7. Financial Assistance

29. My father had worked as an HGV driver up to 1971 when he started having problems with his health. He did not work following his diagnosis of myelofibrosis. He received benefits. However my mother and father had to fight for attendance allowance when my mum became my father's carer. They only received this after our local MP intervened.

30. We did not receive any other financial assistance.

Section 8. Other Issues

31. In 1974, my father tried to take matters into his own hands and pursue a claim against Hammersmith Hospital. In order to continue with the action, he was asked by his solicitors to obtain his medical records. As far as I am aware they refused to grant access and consequently the case was dropped.

32. I feel that the people responsible should be named and held accountable as to why they continued to give contaminated blood and blood products to patients.

Anonymity, disclosure and redaction

33. I would wish to remain anonymous. I am happy to give evidence if called by the Inquiry to do so. I understand that my statement will be read and published by the Inquiry.

Statement of Truth

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

Signed GRO-B

GRO-B

Dated 18 July 2019