

ANONYMOUS

Witness Name: GRO-B

Statement No: WITN3662001

Exhibits: 0

Dated: March 2020

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 GRO-B and I live at GRO-B
GRO-B
2. My father GRO-B: F (born on GRO-B) was infected with the Human Immunodeficiency Virus (HIV) and/or the Hepatitis C Virus (HCV) as a kidney transplant recipient. His health deteriorated with eventual multi-organ failure leading to heart failure on GRO-B aged 43.
3. This Witness Statement has been prepared without the benefit of access to my father's full medical records.

Section 2. How Affected

4. My father had a kidney transplant at NOT RELEVANT
NOT RELEVANT the Queen Elizabeth Hospital, Birmingham in 1982 and received regular blood transfusions following it.

ANONYMOUS

5. The transplant was a success and my father was well for a period of about 12 months. Before the transplant he had been on dialysis for a long time. After the transplant, we (my parents, older brother and I) were able to go on our first family holiday to Cornwall.
6. My father's health then quickly deteriorated and the doctors were baffled as to what was wrong with him. My father was not alone. The doctors had recently seen the same symptoms in other transplant recipients and they had all died with eventual organ failure. A very good friend of my father (known to him through their shared time on dialysis) had suffered the same fate as my father a few months before the death of my own father (also following a kidney transplant).
7. My father became a different person towards the end of his life. He couldn't move and didn't want any of us to go out or leave his side. After my father died, my mother returned to the hospital on a couple of occasions to discuss my father's death with his medical team. My mother told us (me and my brother) not to tell anyone how my father had died (other than as a result of heart failure).
8. HIV/AIDS hit the news in a very big way around six months after my father died. I overheard my mother talking to a close friend and she was worried about AIDS and worried that she (too) might be infected.
9. Apart from on just one occasion a few years later, my mother refused to talk to us about my father's death. On that occasion, we were watching the film Philadelphia together and she turned to me and said 'that's what your dad died of'.
10. I have lately come to understand that some of the symptoms my father had before he died are synonymous with HCV. It may be that he was infected with HCV in the alternative or in addition to HIV.

Section 3. Other Infections

11. I do not know whether or not my father was infected with anything in addition to having HIV and/or HCV.

Section 4. Consent

12. My father would have consented to the kidney transplant. I do not believe that my father was made aware of the risk of contamination through blood transfused during or after the operation.

Section 5. Impact of the Infection

13. I was 15 years old when my father passed away after many months of being unwell with an 'unknown' illness.

14. Some of the symptoms I was aware of and remember to this day were:- Continual vomiting; painful joints and body cramps (my father would cry with the pain and could not even bear clothing to touch him); swollen ankles and swollen bloated stomach; liver problems – jaundice; extreme weight loss and open, weeping sores on his body. The symptoms were very unpleasant.

15. We had watched my father's friend suffer and die, with doctors being completely 'baffled' by his symptoms and eventual death. When my father started showing the same problems, I remember him being absolutely terrified, asking for answers to why they had both (approximately 12 months after receiving their 'successful' kidney transplants) suddenly contracted a disease that affected multiple organs and led to their untimely deaths.

16. My father died without ever finding out; the most agonising and painfully slow death that can be imagined. There were never any answers. I was still a child, but can remember the suffering and the unanswered questions.

ANONYMOUS

17. I didn't tell anyone at school about how my father died. We were not allowed to discuss it and that impacted on my ability to grieve the loss of my father. It really had a huge impact on my brother who became very introverted. My father and brother had been best friends and very close.
18. Before my father's illness, he was a different person. He was very active and had a keen interest (shared with my brother) in cricket and football. He was a very caring, selfless sort of person and we did everything together as a family. When he became ill, he became very controlling and would make us stay in and sit with him. He became particularly anxious and upset when my mother was out shopping. He would notice if she was 10 minutes longer than he expected. He tried to stop me going out with my friends and I rebelled because of the way my dad was acting and how his personality had changed and I began to truant from school. My home life was horrible.
19. I remember my father suffering with headaches and constant vomiting. My father was taking anti-rejection transplant tablets and would have to check his vomit after being sick to see if he had brought his tablet(s) up. It was my worst nightmare and I have since developed a fear of being sick. My father would beg me to put his socks on his feet because they felt so cold and would then cry with the pain as I put them on.
20. The last two months were horrendous. My father looked scary, he had skin lesions and it was harrowing. I didn't realise my father was dying and towards the very end he was delirious, shouting that 'dogs' were coming for him. I was reluctant to visit my father in hospital despite encouragement from my mother. It was difficult for me and I carry some guilt about that but they were not happy memories for me.
21. I had a childhood of two halves. Before my father died, we had had a comfortable home-life. My father was a Manager at GRO-B with a pension and good sickness benefits. We were comfortable financially. My brother and I had career aspirations. I wanted to go to University and become a teacher.

ANONYMOUS

22. My father had no life assurance cover to cover the mortgage repayments and my mother couldn't afford for me to study to be a teacher at University. There was no further education for my brother either. He had to get a job (scaffolding) straight away in order to support my mother.

23. I did eventually get to work in the education sector as a classroom assistant. I have worked my way up and I am now safeguarding lead but, had I gone to University, I would by now (at 50 years old) have become a head teacher or deputy head at least.

24. I have two children, aged 26 and 24. Life was very hard for my 'nan' (my father's mother) and my uncle (my father's brother). They struggled. They lost a son and a brother. Every time I took my children to visit my nan and right up until she died, she would always cry when she saw me and them. My eldest has a particular likeness to my father.

25. My mother has remarried. She will not speak about my father. It is too difficult for her.

Section 6. Treatment/care/support

26. My father had no treatment as the doctors did not know what was wrong. We were never offered any counselling.

Section 7. Financial Assistance

27. My father had no financial support from the trusts and funds.

Section 8. Other Issues

28. Some years later, realising for myself that my father must have contracted HIV and/or HCV from contaminated blood during the kidney transplant surgery, I have never understood (a) how this could have been allowed to

ANONYMOUS

happen and (b) why my family were never contacted to explain what my father had died from.

Anonymity

29. I wish to remain anonymous.

30. I do not wish to provide oral evidence to the Inquiry.

Statement of Truth

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

Signed.....

GRO-B

Dated

9th June 2020