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Witness; GRO-B
Statement No; WITN3776001
Exhibit Nos; Nil
Dated; 10-12-20

INFECTED BLOOD INQUIRY

WRITTEN STATEMENT OF GRO-B

I provide this statement in response to a request under Rule 9 of the Inquiry Rules 2006 dated 17 September 2019.

I, GRO-B will say as follows: -

Section 1. Introduction

1. My name is GRO-B My date of birth is GRO-B 1972 and my address is known to the inquiry.
2. I have been living here in GRO-B for 10 years and I have two boys. My Mrs is working and I used to be in construction in London. I play in a couple of bands.
3. I intend to speak about my Daddy, GRO-B: F and his infection with Hepatitis C. In particular, the nature of his illness, how the illness affected him, the treatment received and the impact it had on him, my family and our lives together.
4. My siblings GRO-B and GRO-B have already provided statements to the Inquiry. My brother GRO-B will be seen at a later date.
5. I can confirm that I am not legally represented and that I will be

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requesting anonymity in line with the rest of my family. This is to protect the good name of my elderly mother who still lives within the tight community where the story I am about to tell unfolded.

Section 2. How Affected

6. I was 15 years old when my Daddy passed away but I remember that he was often sick and was in and out of hospital when I was young. He was a haemophiliac and his condition required him to frequently be in hospital.
7. My uncles were also haemophiliacs but I didn't really understand what that meant. I remember it was called the Kings disease because a Russian king had it. But I didn't really know much about it, I was just too young.
8. As I've mentioned, my Daddy was regularly in and out of hospital. He was always getting treatment for knocks to stop bleeds. It was an ever present whilst I was growing up and the doctors were always at our house, coming to see Da for one thing or another.
9. I remember the Factor VIII being kept in the fridge at home and I used to play with the empty syringes using them to squirt water. I remember him injecting and I guess it is this Factor VIII that infected him.
10. My Daddy didn't have any tattoos and he certainly wasn't an intravenous drug user. He didn't drink alcohol at all as he was tee-total and was happily married to Mum. Whilst he had a smoking cap and jacket that he liked to wear, I never actually saw him smoke.
11. I did not know that he was infected with Hepatitis C as we never had this conversation. He probably tried to protect me from it because of my age. Me and my Daddy were away on a summer retreat in GRO-B this was a religious retreat for all denominations and we were staying in a chalet with bunkbeds.
12. It was only me and my Daddy that went to the retreat this time but we had previously all been there as a family. My older brothers and sisters had

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been before and so only we went. My mum didn't go because she had to stay with the rest of them.

13. We may have been there about a week and then he took ill. This was the summer of 1987 and when he got ill this was the beginning of the end as he died in [GRO-B] 1987. I did not know about the Hepatitis before that. I was quite immature and there was a lot going on in Belfast at the time and so my family decided not to tell me about it. When he was taken ill I had no idea that he was going to die.

14. My Daddy was taken ill in the daytime and I remember this because he would go off to talks and meetings whilst I would go do different activities, such as surfing or canoeing. [GRO-B] a friend of the family, found me and said something has happened and I discovered that Daddy had been taken in an ambulance to hospital. I was then driven with [GRO-B] to the Royal Victoria Hospital in Belfast.

15. When I got to the hospital my family were there as they had come from [GRO-B]. The drive is mostly what I remember but I don't remember much else. It is strange what you can remember. My brother was in England and he had to frantically get back because, as I recall, we were told it was very serious.

16. I didn't know he was going to die but it was my Daddy and naturally I was really anxious about his condition, so I asked Mum about it and she couldn't tell me. But I could see the worry in her. Daddy was in and out of consciousness and he was too ill to even have a conversation with us.

17. It seemed like he was in hospital there in Belfast forever. Belfast is an hour and a half journey and going up and down every day was difficult for the family. Just the travel alone, nevermind the worry about what would happen when you left him to go home.

18. I recall during the visits that Daddy didn't look well, he progressively looked a lot worse and I remember him looking very yellow. He was usually bubbly and laughing and joking but this all stopped.

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19. My mum stayed up at the hospital and so there were people looking after us. To me at the time, this part seemed to go on forever. When he could, Daddy read the bible a lot and said a lot of prayers because my parents were very religious.
20. I didn't see him getting any treatment when he was in hospital but I did see them changing covers for him. My feeling was that he was kind of left on his own because they knew he was going to die. We went to visit him a lot and this was very protracted. Driving back and forth to the hospital took up an immense amount of our time and definitely took a toll on mum and the rest of us to. It was physically and mentally draining.
21. Eventually - I'm not sure how long after his admission - Daddy wanted to be at home and so an ambulance brought him back from the hospital in Belfast. He used to drive all the time to Belfast and knew the roads well so he could tell where he was.
22. Coming home it was brilliant and I thought now he would be ok. I just thought that they wouldn't have let him out of the hospital if he wasn't going to be fine. There were people non-stop at the house visiting him and the local doctor came to see him often. However, Dad deteriorated and couldn't cope at home and I remember the doctor told us that he needed to go back to the hospital now. He was only in the house for a week or two before he had to go back. He was really poorly.
23. People were paving the street outside our house at the time and they stopped out of respect because the word was he was dying. Daddy was very well known and respected in the local community. I myself didn't know what to say to people and there was all this drama around what was happening to him so I found it was best to keep my mouth shut.
24. So as the doctor instructed, Daddy was taken to Altnagelvin Hospital. This period of time, when he was in Altnagelvin, seemed endless and it took him a long time to die.
25. I was at hospital a lot but me and my brother used to go and do something and come back as there was a lot of standing around. The priest went in

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about 30 times to say the final prayer and then he would breath again and recover slightly and this ritual seemed to go on forever.

26. In the end, I was not there when he died. I was in the house and there was a phone call to tell us to come back to hospital urgently and we were there 10 minutes later. It was too late.

27. When we arrived back at the hospital Mum just said you need to go bury your Daddy I gave him a hug and kiss. I don't remember my brother being there but I can remember my sister **GRO-B** and mum being present. Dad was in a room of his own by this time.

28. I lost the plot a bit after he died because the nurses came in and said you only have an hour to spend with him. **GRO-B** burst out crying because they said they had to wrap him in plastic because of the Hepatitis. She screamed and said, 'have you not done enough to him'. I really kicked off at this point and kicked a chair and my sister had to calm me down. It wasn't the most fun situation. Thinking about it, I was probably full of pent up grief - it's not easy to watch your father's life slowly ebb away in front of your eyes, particularly at such a young age.

29. He had to be wrapped up and I didn't understand why until years later. Still, with the hepatitis it shouldn't have made any difference. The fact we could only spend an hour with him after he died was the worst bit.

30. Daddy was in an individual room the whole time in Altnagelvin Hospital because he was in a really bad way. In Belfast Hospital, I think he was on a ward because I remember curtains.

Section 3. Other Infections

31. I am not aware of any other infections that my Daddy was given as a result of his haemophilia treatment or any other illnesses that he may have suffered from as a consequence of that treatment. I have been asked if I was aware that he had HIV and this is not something that I can say I had knowledge of.

Section 4. Consent

32.From what I remember, I do not believe that my Daddy was warned of the risks associated with his use of blood products. I certainly don't remember it ever being discussed within the family and that includes his brothers.

Section 5. Impact

33.He was always good craic, the life and soul of the party and I remember the last Christmas we had together he put a suit on for the day. Usually Daddy would be in his pyjamas but he had a suit on. Thinking back, I wonder if he had an idea it might be his last Christmas and he was going to die. It's only later you think about that sort of thing.

34.Daddy was well known in town and was big on religion, so the house was always full and we would often feed everyone. My Daddy would have prayer meetings and he was a great believer in reconciliation. Six people from Ireland went to GRO-B for peace and reconciliation and he was one of them. He knew everyone in the community and when we walked around town it seemed everyone knew him. There were always people stopping to talk. His death was a big loss to the community and made the local press.

35.Basically, what happened is we were on holiday, he got sick, went to hospital, came home and then went back to hospital and then he died and was put in a bag. This ordeal had a terrible effect on me; I went crazy and off the rails properly, actually this is probably an understatement.

36.I don't remember much about directly after he died. It's a bit of a blur. I was hurting a lot inside. I got in a lot of trouble and my schooling stopped as I didn't go. Before that I was at school all the time and was doing averagely. However, my education stopped as I didn't give a monkey's about the exams. It was the last thing on my mind. I didn't turn up for one single exam and I started drinking alcohol.

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37. I had never been on alcohol before. Thinking about it now, it seemed that I was going too far. It was like pent up frustration with the way life was going. I would get in fights, suffer the usual cuts and bruises and at times end up getting arrested. I did all these things with my friends but I was the one who took it further, pushed it, just that bit more. It was quite a chaotic time and I am sure it wouldn't have happened if my Daddy was alive. I know that he would not have let it go as far as it did and, to my mind, none of it would have occurred in the first place if he had lived.

38. I was actually once some years later in a lift with Kenneth Clarke, the health secretary at the time of daddy's passing. I was in Kennington station and he was in the lift in black tie dress and we spent 20 seconds in silence in there. I didn't know at the time he was the health secretary, I just thought he was another Tory. Probably a good job – for both of us!

39. After Daddy died I still played my music as things had to go on. I left home for work at the age of 18 with a pal that played in a band with me. This was in early 1990, in London, but I only stayed for 6 weeks as I hated it. I had a job and worked with a mate on a removal firm.

40. If I had all the facts at the time I think I would have gone to prison. If I knew just how badly he really was treated I would have gone completely off the rails. At the time I didn't understand that someone has to sign off on these things and didn't realise there is someone to blame for all this happening to my Daddy. It's lucky I was so young. God knows what I would have done if I'd been fully aware.

41. After Daddy died, Mum went from smoking 40 up to 60 cigarettes a day. My parents were young when this happened, younger than I am now. Mum had a hard time as she knew of it all and she knew why this was happening. She would inject him with the Factor V111 and so only God knows how she feels.

42. Mum wouldn't tell me anything about how she was feeling. She is just of that generation where you don't open up – certainly not to your youngest son. She just got on with it and did what a mum does. When we were

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home for Christmas last year, I saw that she had meds for depression but she didn't confide in me about this during the visit and I did not ask as I know it would make her uncomfortable.

43. It definitely still affects my Mum, how could it not? I think about it mostly every day, so she must as well. I still miss my daddy and I'm sure that we all do. It was hardest on Mum though really, as she had five kids and was left to bring us all up whilst enduring the heartache of knowing her own future had been ripped away.

44. My brother and sister were living in London so they went straight back there after Daddy died. My brother was going back to nursing training and so wasn't around for long. My sister [GRO-B] would have passed her exams by then as she was the oldest so she would have been working. [GRO-B] was in Belfast at the time. It is hard to say what the effect on them was as they were not around me.

45. [GRO-B] me and mum were the only ones who lived in the house after Dad died. It was a difficult period and there were bombs going off at this time as well.

Section 6. Treatment/Care/Support

46. Other than the Factor VIII I do not remember anything else being given as treatment for his haemophilia. That is all I know he took. I don't know what medicine, if any he was given in hospital to try and treat him. I just think there was little care shown to him in his final weeks in hospital.

47. I do not remember any problems with my Daddy receiving treatment from the dentist due to his infection.

48. I am not aware of any psychological counselling that Daddy was offered or received. Nor was there any support of that or any other nature provided at a later stage for my Mum or any family member that I am aware of.

Section 7. Financial Assistance

49. I don't know anything about any financial assistance that may have been given.
50. After Daddy died, I remember someone coming to the house and someone saying we had to sell the table in the dining room and a fella came around to see the house because we might need to sell it.
51. I do not recall any financial hardships but even if there were any my Mum wouldn't have said anything to me about this. It wasn't, again, the done thing. I don't think there were any problems when my Daddy worked as a social worker but I don't really know anything about this period as I was quite young.

Section 8. Other Issues

52. I believe that the powers that be must know why it happened. It is easy enough to understand what happened. They were getting blood from prisons and from drug users and at some point, someone should have said we aren't going to touch that. How long does it take to realise that people are falling ill – in fact dying?
53. They thought they could get away with it because the haemophilia community is only a small group of people. This all happened a long time ago and it is really too late for many, past, present and even future who won't see the outcome. However, it is good that something is finally being done and maybe those responsible will eventually be held to account but, although waiting years for action, it provides little solace to those left behind.
54. I have signed a Consent for the Use of Statement form today on the understanding that it will not be submitted until such time as my written statement is agreed and signed.

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Statement of Truth

I believe that the facts stated in this witness statement are

true. Signed

GRO-B

Dated 10-12-20