

ANONYMOUS

Witness Name: **GRO-B**

Statement No: WITN2796001

Exhibits: 0

Dated: April 2019

INFECTED BLOOD INQUIRY

FIRST WRITTEN STATEMENT OF **GRO-B**

I **GRO-B**, will say as follows:-

Section 1. Introduction

1. **GRO-B**
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2. I prepare this statement in relation to my uncle, **GRO-B: U**
GRO-B after having received
contaminated blood and contracting HIV. My father, **GRO-B**
GRO-B was also greatly affected by my uncle's death and has helped to
prepare some of the following details for the purpose of this statement.

3. This statement has been prepared without the benefit of access to my
uncle's medical records.

Section 2. How Affected

4. My uncle was diagnosed with severe Haemophilia A from a very young age. My father advised his day to day life was so heavily affected from living with the condition, that he once said he would have to take him to school in a pushchair so as to shield him from any knocks to the body.
5. He was predominantly treated at the Royal Victoria Infirmary Hospital in Newcastle-Upon-Tyne and was under the care of Dr Peter Jones. His symptoms included immense joint pain, internal bleeding and immobilisation which led to long periods of hospitalisation. He received regular blood transfusions at the hospital. Once Factor VIII blood products were made available, my uncle received injections to administer at home. I recall my grandparents' fridge was always full with medication.
6. I was very close to my uncle growing up as he continued to live with my grandparents until his mid 20s and my family home was not too far from them all.
7. He left my grandparent's home to study at Sunderland University living with friends, etc. In approximately GRO-B he married my aunt, GRO-B GRO-B who remained married to him until his death in 1987.
8. In or around 1985, my uncle received a job offer to become a Communications Lecturer and so he and my aunt moved to GRO-C. His care was transferred to Addenbrooke's Hospital in Cambridge, but I am unable to confirm details of any consultants who provided his care.
9. As a result of receiving contaminated blood products, my uncle was then infected with HIV.
10. I am unsure as to when he was made aware of his HIV positive status. I believe that my uncle received contaminated blood products at both hospitals therefore I am unsure when he might have been infected.

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11. His health began to drastically decline when he was living and working in

GRO-B

12. All of the communication between my father and uncle would go through my grandparents, therefore at this time I do not know when my father would have been made aware that my uncle was infected with HIV.

13. I do not know whether my uncle was provided with adequate information in relation to using Factor VIII products.

14. I believe my uncle should have been given all of the information in relation to risks. To the best of my knowledge, he did not receive adequate information or advice in relation to how to best manage or treat his infection once he became aware of his HIV status.

Section 3. Other Infections.

15. I do not believe that my uncle contracted any other infections from the blood products he was provided with. His death certificate states his cause of death were both cerebrovascular accident and HIV.

Section 4. Consent.

16. I do not know whether my uncle was treated or tested without his knowledge.

17. I do not know whether my uncle was subject to research.

Section 5. Impact

18. In the latter part of 1986, when I was attending Gateshead Technical College, I remember telling my lecturer who also used to teach my uncle, that GRO-B: U had not been to work and had been taking long periods of absences. I believe the decline in his health happened at this point and rapidly deteriorated within the next 18 months.

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19. My father recalls my uncle becoming withdrawn from the family and his obvious suffering on a mental level, which most likely resulted in depression. He became fearful of what the stigma might do to our entire family.
20. He proceeded to become physically weak too, which resulted in his hospitalisation. I think both my uncle and aunt became quite religious towards the end, as a result of his ill health.
21. My grandparents went to visit him during a particularly bad episode and decided my parents needed to be called as his health only seemed to be deteriorating. My parents reached within a day and my mother remembers that he had religious singers at his bedside. I think at this point, everybody had come to terms with the fact that his life was coming to an end. My uncle passed away on GRO-B
: U 1987.
22. On the day of his funeral, reporters from the local newspaper came to GRO-B: U house to ask questions. I do not know how they managed to find out about the circumstances surrounding his death, as our family wished to keep the details of my uncle's infection contained. As such, the reporters were hastily ushered away.
23. It appeared from the attendance at his funeral, that my uncle was a sociable individual and had a big network of friends in GRO-B
24. The impact of his death on the whole family was huge. My father appeared to be overwhelmed with grief. He'd always maintained a very close relationship with my uncle, having had to take on a protective role, as his elder brother, from a very young age.
25. My grandparents lived with the impact of losing their son for the rest of their lives. They began going to Church a lot more, despite our family never having been much for religion to begin with. We suspect they used this as a coping mechanism and continued to do so until they passed away in approximately 2001, within a year of each other.

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26. My aunt had always been there throughout my uncle's care, but unfortunately after his death, we did not keep in contact. I am unable to ask her for details of my uncle's health in more depth.

27. Our whole family lost my uncle too early; he was only 37 years old. We are all angry because "his death happened, when it did not need to happen."

Section 6. Treatment/Care/Support

28. I do not know if my uncle ever received psychological support or counselling.

29. I do not believe any of my family members received psychological support, however I cannot be sure.

Section 7. Financial Assistance

30. Following my uncle's death, I believe my father was contacted by a trust (may have been the MacFarlane Trust) but was advised that only the next of kin could register details of GRO-B: U death. My father passed these details onto my uncle's widow.

31. I do not believe any persons in our family received any financial assistance or compensation.

Section 8. Other Issues

32. My grandparents were part of the Haemophilia Action Group. They had a big support network in relation to the haemophilia, but I am not sure whether this support was still available after my uncle had been infected with HIV.

33. Following my uncle's death, I believe my grandparents continued to be members of the Haemophilia Society.

34. I have not campaigned for the issue and have only maintained an interest via the media.

Anonymity, disclosure and redaction

35. I wish to apply to retain my anonymity.

36. I would be prepared 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

Dated

29-04-19