

Witness Name: **GRO-B**
Statement No: WITN2613001
Dated: 28th October 2022

INFECTED BLOOD INQUIRY

FIRST WRITTEN STATEMENT OF MR **GRO-B**

I provide this statement in response to a request under Rule 9 of the Inquiry Rules 2006 dated 12th December 2018. I adopt the paragraph numbering in the Rule 9 request for ease of reference.

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

1. Introduction

1. My name is **GRO-B**. My date of birth is **GRO-B** and my address is known to the Inquiry.
2. I intend to speak about my father **GRO-B: F**'s diagnosis and how he was infected with HIV, which I believe he contracted through being given blood transfusions as a result of his haemophilia. In particular, I wish to comment on the impact this diagnosis had on him personally but also on me, as his **GRO-B** and on the rest of my family.
3. I was born in **GRO-B** but our family moved to **GRO-B** in **GRO-B**. I lived with my father, mother, brother, and sister. My paternal grandparents lived nearby,

and they supported our family financially and logistically due to my father's illness. Our family was very close and in general, I had a happy childhood.

4. I remember my father as a bubbly, clever, and caring man. He was a hands-on father who believed in the importance of a good education, so he often helped me with my homework. My father sadly passed away on **GRO-B** when I was **GRO-B** years old.
5. I have been married for **GRO-B** years and I live in **GRO-B** with my wife and **GRO-B** children. I work at a **GRO-B** in admissions and recruitment.

2. How Affected

1. My father was a haemophiliac and in **GRO-B** he was receiving blood transfusions as part of his treatment. I was told by my parents and grandparents that he contracted HIV from these blood transfusions. I remember that he would struggle to walk, and he had nuts and bolts in his legs.
2. I recall that every now and again my father would need to go to hospital for treatment. I believe that he would either go to **GRO-B** Hospital or **GRO-B** Hospital. I do not know exactly when he was given the blood transfusions that infected him, or which hospital gave him those blood transfusions.
3. I do not know exactly when or how my father found out that he had contracted HIV. At that time, there was a lot in the paper about haemophiliacs contracting AIDS and then people started to die. I recall a period when there was a lot of communication between my parents and their haemophiliac friends who had been contaminated with infected blood, so I imagine that my father was probably tested around that point.
4. I believe that my siblings and I were sat down at some point by my grandparents and told that my father had contracted HIV from contaminated blood during his haemophiliac treatment. I remember being told that the contaminated blood had

come from prisoners and homosexual men overseas, and so I grew up with a lot of resentment towards these groups of people. I have had to work through these feelings throughout my life.

5. I remember there being a lot of discussions with medical professionals and my family about the possibility that other members of my family may have contracted HIV. I cannot remember whether I was tested for HIV at the time.
6. I do not have any views about how the results were communicated to my father as I was not present, but I feel that we could have been given more information as a family about the diagnosis and how to properly manage it.
7. In GRO-B my father was in and out of hospital as his health had deteriorated. In GRO-B he was admitted to hospital for two weeks but came out at the end of GRO-B. In GRO-B he was admitted into GRO-B. He died on GRO-B GRO-B at 5pm.
8. I do not know whether any information or advice was given to my father before he received the blood transfusions surrounding the risk of being exposed to infection, but I do know that if he had had a choice of facing the risk of being infected with HIV or not; then he would have chosen the latter. As my father was a haemophiliac, he was told that he could live until he was around 60 years of age, but because of the HIV, he died at GRO-B years old. I know that my father would not have taken any risks that would have shortened his life any further than necessary.

3. Other Infections

1. I know that my father contracted HIV as a result of being given contaminated blood, but I recall also being told that he had Hepatitis C and that his eyesight deteriorated as a result. I cannot recall exactly when or who told me this information.

4. Consent

1. I do not think that my father was ever tested without his knowledge or consent, but I do not think that he was told about the risk of infection from contaminated blood.
2. As stated already, I am sure that my father would not have had the blood transfusions had he known there was a risk of contracting HIV from them. I am sure that he would rather have been in pain from haemophilia than contracting HIV and dealing with the consequences of that.

5. Impact

1. When my father was diagnosed with HIV, it must have been absolutely devastating for him. It must have been very difficult for him knowing that eventually he was going to die. My parents sheltered my siblings and me from a lot of the details, but I remember them being upset and sad at the time.
2. Following my father's diagnosis, I recall that his physical health deteriorated gradually. It got to the point whereby he could hardly walk, he became limited in the use of his arms. His legs became so thin that they were like bones. His condition progressed and eventually he was admitted to GRO-B Hospital in GRO-B. They released him from hospital, but he deteriorated further and was admitted only a month later back in GRO-B. That is where he remained until he sadly passed away.
3. My siblings and I were at a GRO-B school, GRO-B which was around 75 to 80 miles away from GRO-B Hospital. When my father was admitted in GRO-B my mother moved into the hospital and lived there with him. She would make the journey to pick us up every weekend and bring us to visit him. She would then return us back to school.
4. By the time my father was admitted to hospital, he was very poorly. He had lost a lot of weight and he was experiencing hair loss. I remember that at one point

my siblings and I were taken out of school and driven to the hospital by the headmaster. We were not sure what was going on, but we knew that it was something to do with our father. When we got to hospital, some photographs were taken of us with our father. He looked so frail in these photographs.

5. I recall the day that my father sadly passed away as my siblings and I had visited him in hospital. My mother then took us back to school. Later on, we were called in to the headmaster's office and I saw my mother crying on the floor. I knew straight away that my father had died, and we all started crying and hugging each other. We then went back home with my mother, and I remember us all sleeping in the same bed that night.
6. My father's passing had a really bad impact on me. I was not prepared for him to pass away; in fact, I was told by my parents that he was getting better. I felt that I should have done more to help him, and that I had to step into his role as the eldest of my siblings, which caused me to shut off my emotions. My mother did try to take me to see a counsellor after his death, but I did not like it, so I did not go again. I believed that there was nothing that the counsellor could say that I did not already know.
7. I felt that I could not tell anyone that my father had HIV as there was a lot of social stigma at the time. It was often linked to homosexual men, and as a result I had to work through a lot of resentment throughout my life. I told my friends at school that my father died of haemophilia. Even now, that is normally what I tell people because I find that easier than going into the truth.
8. When I met my wife at GRO-B as a young adult, I finally felt comfortable enough to open up about my experiences of losing my father. I cried my eyes out to her and I told her everything. Looking back at this now, I may have benefited from seeking out a counsellor at that point.
9. When my father passed away, we all had to pull together as a family, and it was the strength of our love that got us all through it. We are lucky that we still had each other.

10. Unfortunately, my mother fell out with my paternal grandparents. I remember them having massive arguments and eventually we had to move out of our home. I found this very difficult as they were like second parents to me. However, I managed to stay close to them and they continued to support me.

6. Treatment/Care/Support

1. I do not know the specific details about the treatment and support that my father received, and I do not know whether he faced any difficulties or obstacles in obtaining treatment.
2. As previously stated, my mother did try to take me to see a counsellor after my father's death, but I did not like it, so I did not go again.

7. Financial Assistance

1. I do not know what financial assistance was given to my father whilst he was alive as he dealt with all the finances himself.
2. I know that my mother received some financial assistance from the Macfarlane Trust. I do not know how much she received, whether she experienced any difficulties in accessing the funding or whether she received any other financial assistance.
3. I have not received any financial assistance from any of the Trusts and Funds set up to distribute payments.

8. Other Issues

1. I do not have any specific questions that I wish to put to the inquiry or any other issues that I wish to comment on.

Statement of Truth

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

Signed..

GRO-B

Dated.....

28/10/2022