

# ANONYMOUS

Witness Name: GRO-B

Statement No: WITN2790001

Exhibits: 0

Dated: October 2022

## INFECTED BLOOD INQUIRY

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FIRST WRITTEN STATEMENT OF GRO-B

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GRO-B will say as follows:-

### Section 1. Introduction

1. My full name is GRO-B I was born on GRO-B and I live at GRO-B
2. My father GRO-B (born on GRO-B 1965), was infected with the Hepatitis C Virus (HCV) from contaminated blood products. He died on GRO-B GRO-B 2007 at aged 42. His Death Certificate records Intracerebral Hemorrhage as the primary cause of death. Cirrhosis and Hepatitis C are recorded as secondary causes.
3. This witness statement has been prepared without the benefit of access to my father's full medical records.

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4. My mother [GRO-B] has provided her own Witness Statement to the Inquiry (Witness Number [GRO-B]). This Statement should be read in conjunction with her Statement.

### **Section 2. How Affected**

5. I am the only child of [GRO-B: F] (Deceased) and [GRO-B].  
[GRO-B] Being only 10 when my dad died, I was unaware of his infection, the circumstances that led to his infection or any other details around this as my parents felt it was best to protect me from this information. Therefore, all knowledge I have learned since my dad's death has been told to me by my mother.
6. My mum and dad's relationship ended when I was 3 years old, and my mum became my primary carer although I spent time with my dad as much as was possible with the physical and mental problems caused by his infection.
7. My dad suffered from mild/moderate Haemophilia (A) and was infected with HCV through blood products when he was a child under the care of Alder Hey Hospital. When my dad reached adulthood, his care was taken over by The Royal Liverpool Hospital where there was a dedicated Haemophilia Centre. My dad was not informed of his infection until shortly after my birth in 1996. Some years later he was informed that he had received treatment that had been traced to a donor who was infected with vCJD. Further information surrounding my dad's infection/death can be found in my mother's statement and my dad's medical records.

### **Section 3. Other Infections**

8. I am not aware of any infection other than HCV and vCJD.

### **Section 4. Consent**

9. I refer to my mother's Statement.

**Section 5. Impact of the Infection**

10. My first memory of spending time alone with my dad was when I was 3 years old and I had been on a day out with him. As we were walking down the street that he lived in he suddenly collapsed and fell to the floor. I can still remember the feeling of being struck by fear. I began to scream and cry hysterically until neighbours ran out of the houses to help and an ambulance was called. That day left emotional scars on me and still does to this day. It meant that from that day onwards I never truly felt secure alone in his presence. Being so young I was unable to try and communicate this feeling to my mum.
11. Whenever I spent time with my dad I would always have a feeling of unease, I loved my dad more than I can possibly explain. I was a true Daddy's girl and time spent with him meant the world to me. But sadly, it also brought about a feeling of what I now recognise as anxiety as I was constantly watching him to check he was okay and worried terribly if he looked unwell. I was so scared that he may collapse again, and I would be left to try and get him the help he would need. I was also scared that I would be a little girl left in an unsafe situation if this happened.
12. Throughout my childhood there were a handful of occasions that my dad collapsed or took ill when I was alone with him but one time that sticks in my mind is when I was about 8/9 years old. We were crossing a main road near where he lived, and he collapsed and hit the floor in the middle of the road. I was old enough to realise I had to somehow try and get him over the road and had to try and drag him to safety. I then ran into a nearby shop to get them to help me and get an ambulance and call my mum. That was one of the most traumatic days of my life and I still suffer flashbacks of it to this day. After this occasion it was agreed between my mum and dad that any future days out or trips anywhere must only take place with my mum also joining us. Other than that, I was to just visit him in his home.

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13. Throughout the 7 years from when my parents split up to his death there were many occasions where I would not see my dad for a period of many weeks and sometimes even a couple of months. During these times I would pine for my dad terribly, I just really missed spending time with him. My mum did her best to try and divert my attention and would keep telling me my dad loved me very much, but he just couldn't see me now as he wasn't very well. Then she would say that I wasn't to worry about him, it was nothing serious and that he would be okay and would be able to see me again soon.
14. As a young child I just found this very upsetting and somewhat confusing. If my dad loved me so much why wouldn't he want to spend time with me? Or if he was just a little bit unwell, surely he could still see me or at the very least ring and speak to me! My mind would then wander, and I would think is he much sicker? Is he going to be okay? Is my mum hiding things from me so that I don't worry? It just didn't make a lot of sense to me and again caused me great anxiety.
15. During periods when I would not see my dad, he missed out on some important events such as one Christmas, one birthday and my first Holy Communion. In particular my first Holy Communion sticks out in my mind as everything around it was so special. My mum and grandparents had bought me a lovely white dress, arranged a big party for family and friends and the day after the communion GRO-B
16. It was a time filled with such excitement, but I was so aware that my dad was not around to be a part of all the celebrations, and this really upset me. My recollection of the day is that in the church I kept looking around to check if he had come in and each time someone new came into the party I would look to see if it was him. I just could not believe he did not want to be a part of my 'big day' it made me feel truly abandoned by him.
17. As a child if I was ever in the presence of anyone who was in any way unwell, I would become hyper vigilant around them and would watch them so closely

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to check if they were okay. I couldn't just take their word that they would be fine. I would feel like I had to watch them intently.

18. To this day I still have this and if people take ill, it brings great anxiety to me and triggers distressing memories of my dad taking ill. To this day if any of my friends or family are particularly unwell, I find myself wherever possible trying to avoid being with them. It is just so triggering for me.
19. On some occasions I found it easier to just speak to my dad on the phone rather than go and see him. This was such a difficult thing for me as I felt completely torn between desperately wanting to spend time with him but having such an overwhelming fear of being alone in his presence in case something happened.
20. Sometimes he would sound so sad on the phone when I made an excuse for not seeing him and this subsequently made me feel full of guilt. In the last years of his life a lot of the time I spent with him would be where he would come to mine and my mums house. We would have tea together and I would spend time with him but in an environment where I felt safer.
21. The last time I saw my dad was on his 42nd birthday. My mum and I went to his house to take him cards and gifts and we spent an hour or two with him. He had recently come out of hospital and had his arm in plaster but seemed otherwise okay. I can still clearly remember him waving us off on the step as we drove away. Never in a million years would I have ever thought that would be the last time that I would see him.
22. 13 days after I saw him on his birthday my mum woke me up one morning, as she always did for school but I immediately sensed something wasn't right. My mum then told me the news that was to rip my world apart. My dad had died. I just couldn't take in what I was hearing, how it could be true.
23. Unknown to me my mum had been told 6 days before that my dad had suffered a brain haemorrhage and was unconscious and dying without any chance of recovery. Whilst I was in the care of my family being treated to days out and

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being showered with love as a distraction, my mum was in the hospital with my dad sitting with him in his unconscious state until he passed away.

24. My mum had made the decision that it would not be right to bring me into the hospital and see him like that when he would be unable to communicate. She did not want that to be my last memory of him. Over the years since he died, I have had mixed feelings about whether she made the right decision on this, although I fully understand she made the decision with my best interests at heart.
25. Soon after my dad's death I started to feel so different to my peers. I was the only kid who's dad was dead. At times it made me very angry if a friend would tell me that their dad was annoying them or if they ever said they hated their dad. I had to battle to stop myself screaming at them 'STOP IT BE GLAD YOU HAVE A DAD, MINE IS DEAD'. Equally it also made me feel very sad and upset when I saw my friends being treated lovely by their dads or spending birthdays etc with them. It just compounded the agony and sadness I felt that my dad was not here with me.
26. When I was 13 years old my mum married my Stepdad **GRO-B** has always done his very best for me and I know he loves me like I am biologically his own. Even so, over the years, at times, I have felt that the loss of my dad has impacted the relationship I had/have with **GRO-B** I felt I couldn't quite build the 100% healthy relationship I wanted to have with **GRO-B** and I know that part of it is because I have feared giving my all to him in case I lose him too. It is abandonment issues.
27. During my teenage years I did my best to paint an outward picture that I was doing fine. My mum would often try and talk to me about how I felt etc, but I would always make it clear I was doing okay and of course I missed my dad, but I was coping fine with it all and she didn't have to worry. The reality was quite different.

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28. In the first seven years after he died my dad missed out on some major milestones in my life such as starting high school, sitting and passing my GCSE's, attending my prom, changing from the little 10-year-old girl he left behind and becoming a teenager, starting to become an independent person, getting my first paid job, starting to take driving lessons and passing my driving test.
29. As I hit the milestone of my 18th birthday the loss of my dad and my many years of hidden/pent up emotion hit me like a brick wall. My mum and family arranged an amazing 18th birthday party, I was bought everything I could have ever wished for. I had the best celebrations with family and friends but the one person I wanted most in the world was missing.
30. In the 8 years that have followed since my 18th birthday, my mental health has gotten steadily worse. My relationship with family members has suffered and I have withdrawn from family life choosing to spend time with only a small group of close friends. For several years I had a strained relationship with my mum where in most cases I would avoid being in her company as much as possible.
31. I have been diagnosed with anxiety and depression and I am on various medications for this. Alongside this I have been suffering from an eating disorder where I cannot eat most foods and often do not eat all day long but then binge eat at night. This has caused my weight to spiral, and I honestly have not been able to take care of myself the way I would have done if I was in a clearer mind.
32. After several years of refusing in the last two years, I have started counselling, unfortunately what the NHS could offer me was not suitable for the complex problems that I have. Therefore, I have been receiving private counselling which is funded by my family and a small contribution from EIBSS. My counsellor identified other issues and it is likely that I also suffer from borderline personality disorder and or PTSD. I am also currently awaiting psychiatric assessment for Bipolar. My counsellor has stated I show all the classic signs

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of childhood trauma and it is her belief this is the cause of my considerable mental health problems.

33. In the past 7 years I have become very socially withdrawn and the level of my anxiety often makes it impossible for me to attend any social events with family or friends. My life has revolved around spending time with just a small number of very close friends and not venturing out into the world to enjoy the joys of what the world should have to offer for someone my age.
34. My relationships with men have been very troubled and again abandonment issues have meant that I am either unable to commit to a relationship or if I do, I am plagued with the thought that they will leave me, or something will happen to them, and I will lose them. This has often prevented me from enjoying the carefree romances that someone my age should have been enjoying.
35. Not being in a good mental place has also caused me to make some very bad decisions over recent years and has resulted in me being in considerable debt and financial disarray.
36. At several points in recent years, I have been suicidal. I have simply not seen any purpose in me still being alive. I have battled to hold down a full-time job which I have often attended in a robot-like fashion. I literally get up, go to work, come home and other than that I feel like my life had little purpose and certainly did not have any joy in it. For many years I have simply been numb to life itself.
37. With the start of the Infected Blood Inquiry, it has brought around a lot of questions in my head. Over the years I have asked my mum questions about what happened to my dad and slowly in recent years she has given me this information. There is still a lot that I do not know, and I know I cannot mentally deal with at this present time.
38. The thought of what the infection did to my dad from the time he was infected and the 10 years leading up to his death, both mentally and physically, is completely heart-breaking. It also makes me feel so very angry that a ticking



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bomb was thrown into his and my mum's life just a few months after my birth and that it destroyed our little family.

39. Whilst I cannot bare to follow the Infected Blood Inquiry as it brings on too much trauma, I feel very glad that it is happening and that my mum is involved in it on behalf of me and my dad. There has got to be some accountability for why this happened and why my dad's life was destroyed and then stolen.

40. Now at the age of 26 I am desperately trying to put the shattered pieces of my life back together. I want to try and create a life that contains some joy. I feel that the past 8 years of my life have been just a desperate spiral of sadness, overwhelming grief, and chronic mental health illness.

41. I am trying hard to get full diagnosis of the many areas of mental health trauma/illness that I have. I then want to begin the journey of trying to overcome them or at least live with them in a way where my life is something more than just a survival day to day. I believe once I have full diagnosis' that I can then explore targeted professional help although again this is likely to be something that will have to be funded privately.

42. I very much hope the findings of the Infected Blood Inquiry help me to be able to work my way through to some level of acceptance of what happened to my dad and the highly destructive affect it has had on my life.

43. I have been told by my mum and other family members that my dad was the proudest dad on earth the day that I was born and from that day onwards. The infection and severe mental and physical problems that it caused often stopped him from being the dad that he would have wanted to be. This was through no fault of his own, but it is heart-breaking, nevertheless.

44. I know the 'existence' I am living is not what he would want for me. I know he would hate what his infection has done to my life even more than what it did to his. My one hope is that somehow, I can try and find joy in my life, to thrive

instead of just survive and to live a happy life just like what my dad would want for me.

**Section 6. Treatment/care/support**

45. I refer to my mother's Statement.

**Section 7. Financial Assistance**

46. I refer to my mother's Statement.

**Anonymity**

47. I wish to apply for anonymity, and I understand that this redacted Statement will be published by the Inquiry.

**Statement of Truth**

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

Signed

GRO-B

Dated

4/11/2022