

Witness Name GRO-B

Statement No: WITN3239001

Exhibits:0

Dated: December 2022

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. I am married with 2 children, aged 4 and 1.

3. I provide this statement in relation to my father GRO-B: F who was born on GRO-B He has Christmas Disease which is characterised by a deficiency of Factor IX. This is also known as Haemophilia B. Initially he was treated with fresh frozen plasma but in or around 1973 he was moved onto Factor IX concentrate. He was infected with Hepatitis C (HCV) via contaminated Factor IX concentrate but was never told which batch number or when he was infected. He was first told about his infection in or around 1990 by staff at the Royal Free Hospital (RFH) in London.

4. My father has provided an anonymous witness statement to the Inquiry under GRO-B My paternal grandmother, GRO-B also provided an

anonymous witness statement to the Inquiry under GRO-B I refer to both statements in relation to factual and background matters.

5. This witness statement has been prepared without the benefit of access to my father's medical records.

Section 2. How Affected

6. My father had Haemophilia B and was treated with fresh frozen plasma from the age of 9 but in or around 1973 he was moved onto Factor IX concentrate.
7. He was treated in Great Ormond Street Hospital (GOSH) before his care was transferred, at the age of 11, to RFH. I do not know the names of his consultants. My father also carried out home treatment which allowed him greater flexibility in terms of his lifestyle.
8. As far as I am aware my father was not given any information about the risks of infection from the use of Factor IX.
9. My father was infected with HCV via contaminated Factor IX concentrate.
10. My father does not know the which batch number infected him nor when he was infected.
11. In or around 1990, my father was told by staff at RFH that he had been infected with "*non A non B Hepatitis*". My father was told that there was good news and bad news. The good news was that he had avoided HIV, but the bad news was that he had contracted "*non A non B Hepatitis*".
12. My father recalls that the staff at the RFH appeared to be in a state of panic and high anxiety and he cannot recall which consultant/member of staff delivered the news. My father had no idea what the significance of the diagnosis meant. They did not expand, and he did not ask. He was given no advice regarding prognosis, management or risk of transmission to others.

13. About two years later, so in or around 1992, my father was told by staff at the RFH that he had been infected with HCV. This was a longer meeting than the one which took place in 1990. He was told that she should practice safe sex, but he was not told anything about prognosis, symptoms or treatment.

Section 3. Other Infections

14. As far as I am aware my father was only infected with HCV.

Section 4. Consent

15. I believe that my father was tested without his consent, knowledge and for the purposes of research.

Section 5. Impact of the Infection

16. The key thing to pull out is that although my father was quite unwell, he got a lot of solace and comfort in activities outside of family and work. He GRO-B
GRO-B both of which were big parts of him. These extracurricular activities appeared to be his new focus and took up a lot of his time and because of that I probably saw less and less of him as I think that it was his outlet and his way of coping with what was happening to him. As a result of this, it felt like my father was emotionally unavailable at times. We did do things as a family, but I would say that my father was out three or four times per week and that this probably impacted me more when I was going to bed a little later, like 7-8pm. It felt like my father was not always quite present and that was a big thing for me.

17. At the time, my brother and I definitely felt that we didn't get to spend as much time with our father as we would have liked but knowing what we know now and with the added benefit of hindsight, it is far easier to understand why he acted as he did. He was an unwell man coupled with the fact that he felt unable to speak about what he was dealing with.

18. There was a big impact and a knock-on effect of spending less time with my father which was that I did not really get to know him until I was a lot older. It probably took until my parents divorced for me to have a better and more meaningful relationship with my father.
19. Another big impact on me was my father's lack of mobility in terms of the things that he was not able to do with me whilst I was growing up, such as physical activities like teaching me how to ride a bike. As I got older, this extended to things like him not being able to teach me DIY and other things that you would naturally pick up from your father whilst you are learning your way in life. As a result of his illness, I never picked up those skills with my father and I felt that I lost out on him not being able to show me a certain role model for what a father should be. I didn't get a blueprint on this because nothing was passed on in this regard.
20. One could say that in the short term not learning to ride a bike was of relatively low importance because as time passes this becomes less important because something else, more age specific, takes over, such as driving lessons, which I managed to do without my father. However, the bike issue really got to me and was yet another thing I felt that I missed out on and has led me to prioritise teaching my children to ride a bike. As I grew up, not having a traditional male role model seemed to impact me even more in terms of the role that I was supposed to carry out whilst in a relationship with my wife. My father had never helped around the house or taken on traditional tasks or responsibilities, as a result of his ill health. The blueprint for me was my mum running around doing absolutely everything.
21. As a result, I learnt from scratch what a male role model should be in terms of both a father figure to my children and a husband to my wife. Things like putting up shelves in our house was a struggle but I was quite fortunate that my father-in-law was very good at DIY, and that he was able to teach me bits and bobs along the way. He has been a great support to me, as has my wife who has pushed me to do things around the house. I have also pushed myself as I

wanted to be better around the house and I am now much more *"hands-on"*. I had to rewire myself to be dynamic and to share the household tasks on a 50/50 basis with my wife. Had I carried on with the model I learnt from what was available to me, I wouldn't have my current wife!

22. Because I had not been taught how to ride a bike as a child, I had to teach myself as an adult, before I could then teach my children. I therefore located a bike instructor who specialised in teaching adults to ride a bike. Similarly, I have become very determined to show my children the things that I wasn't shown. I was not able to cook or clean, so I taught myself how to do those skills. My 4-year-old son now picks up a Hoover and helps out around the house. He is also able to help with the cooking and I take pride in the family dynamics that are developing.

23. In terms of impact, I also look back to when my father was working, earning good money and able to fund my brother and I at private primary schools. Financially things were very comfortable, and we went on fantastic holidays; I am trying to phrase this in a way that does not make me sound entitled. In some respects, the sudden and drastic change of circumstances, as a result of my father's infection and subsequent inability to earn the money that he used to, has been a good thing in that it forced me to become a lot more well-rounded and to actually experience and see what reality was.

24. I had to obtain a bursary in order to progress to a private secondary school as without this we would not have been able to afford the fees. My brother chose to go to a GRO-B Whilst this wasn't private it was a good quality school and almost equivalent to a good grammar school. I really wanted to go to the private secondary school as my private primary school was a feeder to the private secondary school. I remained at this private secondary school until I was aged 16 when I was basically told that I could not stay and do my A-Levels there as the bursary ended at age 16. In private education, it is high pressured, but one is fed everything and given all the opportunities, clubs and classes possible together with exemplary teaching. Once the bursary ended, I went to GRO-B which was the complete opposite of what I was

used to; no one cared if you didn't turn up and nothing was fed to you. I stumbled through A- levels with bad results and lost interest in education. This was a massive crash for me; I went from a sense of entitlement with being given everything on a plate in life to literally having nothing and having to re-learn my way in life.

25. The culture shock was far too drastic for me. I wasn't mature enough to deal with this massive change at the age of 16. I estimate that it probably took me 10 or so years to adjust. I then started to work my way up in my chosen career in which I felt that I had lost such a significant amount of time and investment. I should have been earning what I am now about 7 or 8 years ago had I been able to remain on the traditional path which was not possible due to my father's illness and the ensuing financial and emotional difficulties it caused. This has resulted a long-term impact on me now in terms of my finances. I would have liked to have been able to save more money to put towards the house and other important things. If I was earning 10 or 15K more than I am currently earning, then I would be able to do these things.

26. I also look at the path that I was on and the circles that I used to socialise within and what I have lost out on as a result of my father's illness. But for my father's infection, I could have been in private education to the age of 18, attended a very nice university where I would have likely had good networks and offers of internships and the like. Career wise and who I socialised with would have been very different as my father had high powered GRO-B friends and everything was very upper middle class. In fact, my wife and I joke about the fact that we would not have met me if my father had not been ill. We met online about 5 years ago. Our lifestyles and the social circles we moved in were very different so it is unlikely that our paths would have crossed but for my father's illness.

27. Looking back, I think the causative factor in my parent's divorce was my father's illness. If your partner has a long-term illness, then it must put an inordinate amount of strain onto the relationship and additional pressure on the healthy partner. The divorce and the separation procedure leading up to this took a few years and this had a knock-on effect on both my brother and I, which added

a further layer of difficulty onto the fact that we were already dealing with my father's ill health, his emotional unavailability and the loss of lifestyle and schooling associated with his large income. The divorce and separation was taking place at around the time that I was doing my A-Levels and commencing my university degree. I ended up leaving university and working in odd jobs as my education totally stalled. I had to wait about 2-3 years before I felt able to continue in education and I had to undertake part-time study in the evenings to complete an open university degree as I did not feel comfortable being away from home. My brother had to repeat his year at university as he felt unable to continue. However, his delay was not as bad as mine and he got back onto his planned path fairly promptly.

28. I found the delay in my education difficult to deal with and I became quite resentful of the situation, rather than my father. I felt that I was always lagging behind. I still feel annoyed with the fact that I feel that I am behind people who have done the traditional thing of passing their A-Levels, getting a degree and then starting their career. I feel that I could be earning more than I am now had I been able to continue on the traditional pathway.

29. Today, there is still a very bit impact on my life in terms of the care and assistance I provide to my father. I live about a 40-minute drive from my father, and I deal with all of his paperwork, his bank account and all his post comes to me. My brother and I have Lasting Power of Attorney in respect of our father. As he has got older, things have become that little bit harder for him. If he needs something or something goes wrong, he struggles to pick up or answer the phone and his phone is not always with him and he is not very mobile. He finds simple routine tasks daunting. If something is broken and it is too much for him, he might not ask for help and I would only discover that he needs help when I go and visit him after work. I would describe my role as "*project manager of my father's life*". On an average day, if you could call it an average day, it could be sorting out a bookshelf (which I am now able to do thanks to my father-in-law) and dealing with general admin, but it is literally doing everything for him.

30. I am trying to fulfil a lot of roles at the same time and often feel stressed and time pressurised. I am trying to help my father, working hard on my career, be a good husband to my wife and a great father and role model to my two young sons. Although currently undiagnosed, my eldest son struggles with some behaviour difficulties at times and consequently he requires a lot of attention. Sometimes I feel guilty that I can't always be there for everyone at the same time. I have to be on hand and readily available for my father and although I don't care for him every day, I have to be ready in case he needs me. With my father as he is now, it is like having another child but with even greater needs. I could be doing a job at home when he rings me, and I have to rush to him to help him with something like his medication. I find this constant juggling act difficult, and it is another impact on me as a result of my father's infection.
31. I am also aware that my father may receive compensation as a result of what happened to him and that on his death, any remaining monies would pass to my brother and I. Part of me feels guilty at this prospect because we are talking about money that I have not earned. But then I think how much I have endured and how life has completely changed for me. I feel that I have lost out on lots of things and many opportunities as a result of my father's infection. Based on this, I feel a little more comfortable about any compensation which may come my way.

Section 6. Treatment/care/support

32. I have never been offered any counselling or psychological support in consequence of my father's infection. During 2019, my father became very ill with a bad infection, and we thought we would lose him. I self-funded therapy for myself at that stage. It was very upsetting as it brought up so many things. It never crossed my mind that someone would have offered this to me.

Section 7. Financial Assistance

33. As far as I am aware my father only received the Stage 1 payment of £20,000.00 from the Skipton Fund (SF). I do not believe that he had any difficulties with either the application or receipt of funds.

34. I have never received any financial assistance from any of the Trusts and Funds.

Section 8. Other Issues

35. I would like the Inquiry to elicit a meaningful apology which would need to be heard by people. This would mean that the media would have to be involved. Historically, the media have shown very little interest in the Infected Blood Scandal. Conversely, the media put much more interest, momentum and scrutiny into the Hillsborough Disaster. The Infected Blood Scandal needs to be in the press; people don't know much about it as it is not publicised well.

36. I want to ensure that something like this does not happen again; we need more accountability.

37. I would also like to ensure that those who have suffered and are still suffering are sufficiently compensated. Not one single penny of the compensation should go back to the Government so the settlements must all be tax free.

38. I want my father to have every opportunity to do what he wants with the rest of his life. My father will never be at peace with what happened to him.

39. Andy Burnham has talked about potential manslaughter charges, and I would like this to be considered. In my view, those who committed wrongdoings knew the risks yet still carried on.

Anonymity

40. I wish to apply for anonymity.

Statement of Truth

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

Signed: GRO-B

Dated: 22/12/2022