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Witness Name: **GRO-B**

Statement No: WITN7219001

Dated: 17th October 2022

INFECTED BLOOD INQUIRY

FIRST WRITTEN STATEMENT OF **GRO-B**

I provide this statement in response to a request under Rule 9 of the Inquiry Rules 2006 dated 5th September 2022. 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. I am a wife and mother of two children, aged 26 and 21 respectively. I currently work for my local authority in the finance department.
2. My brother, **GRO-B: B** died on **GRO-B** 2004. He died following a brain haemorrhage.

2. How affected

1. My brother had severe haemophilia A and was infected with Hepatitis C ('HCV') and HIV through contaminated Factor 8 concentrates. He was aged [GRO-B] when he died.
2. I always had a close relationship with [B]. My father worked in the [GRO-B] [GRO-B], and so my family moved around a lot as a child. With my father often busy working, much of my childhood was spent in the company of my brother and mother. My brother and I were often the new kids in school, and as we were near in age – he was older by 18 months – we always looked out for each other. I recall accompanying my brother whenever he had to go to hospital for haemophilia treatment.
3. I missed [B] when he started boarding school at [GRO-B], aged 11. As we had been so close in our early years, it felt like a big separation. When he finally finished school and returned home aged 17, I was really looking forward to spending more time with him; however, our relationship had become more distant. I was aware something had changed.
4. I was around 15 or 16 years of age when my mother informed me that [B] was infected with HIV. Due to the stigma of HIV/AIDS I promised him that I would never tell anyone about his infection. I kept this promise all of [B]'s life. New acquaintances were not told he was a haemophiliac for fear of connections being made or questions being asked.

3. Other infections

1. I was informed that [B] was co-infected with HCV and HIV.

4. Consent

1. I am unaware of whether my brother was treated or tested with his knowledge, consent, or without being given full or adequate information.

5. Impact

1. I am unable to comment on what [B] went through personally as a result of his infections; he rarely shared information about his condition or treatment, as he did not want to upset me. Though [B] clearly was a changed person because of his diagnoses, throughout his life he always tried to keep up appearances and did his best to make everyone laugh and smile. For instance, he would often tell silly jokes and do impressions.
2. [B]'s situation was very difficult for my mother and late father. I know that they both felt a lot of guilt for his condition, even though it was not their fault. The strains that were placed on my family were so great that at one point I feared that I would lose the relationship with my parents. When [B] died, I feared I would lose my parents altogether.
3. [B] has two children who were aged [GRO-B] and [GRO-B] years old when he passed away. His wife was [GRO-B] years old. The impact his passing has had on them was and still is immense. I feel desperately sad for the lives they have been forced to live without the love, guidance, and support of a truly devoted father and husband.
4. In the months following [B]'s death, I attended a counselling service offered by my employer at the time. Even during these confidential sessions, I felt unable to tell the full truth about [B] and his life. I have not been offered nor have I attended any counselling since this time.
5. [B]'s passing at such an early age put into perspective just how precious life truly is. After taking some initial time off work for bereavement, I decided to

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take two downgrades in my job in order to spend more time with my children as they grew up. I knew that family life was more important than anything. I only went back to work full-time when my youngest had reached 17 years of age.

6. In subsequent years, [B]'s infections and death have continued to impact me in myriad ways.
7. I now have a general mistrust of the National Health Service which I have passed on to my children. I remember, for instance, that when my son was admitted to hospital aged 18 with stomach pains, I made sure to impress on him the need to always ask doctors and nurses for a justification whenever they decide to administer a medicine or take blood.
8. Instead of being a time for celebration, for me birthdays are often a source of trauma and sadness. They are a constant reminder that I have now overtaken my older brother in age. Understandably, my [GRO-B] birthday was particularly distressing for this reason.
9. I am now a generally anxious person, for instance, I need to know where other family members are 24/7 just in case something were to go wrong.
10. As stated above, I made a promise to [B] that I would always keep his diagnoses a secret. Even in the years after his death I did not share this information with anyone, not even with my husband who I have been married to for [GRO-B] years. I have kept this secret for the best part of 40 years because I wanted to protect my brother. When I decided to go ahead and make this statement to the Inquiry, I knew that I would need my husband's support. I finally told him the truth about [B] last month.
11. I am truly grateful to my husband for his kind and supportive response, without which I am sure I would not have been able to give this statement. In sharing [B]'s secret with my husband, although I feel that a great weight has been

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lifted from my shoulders, part of me still feels as though I have betrayed my brother's trust.

6. Treatment/ Care Support

1. I am unaware of any obstacles my brother faced in obtaining treatment, care, and support.
2. I received the counselling referred to above.

7. Financial Assistance

1. I have not received any financial assistance from the Trusts or Funds set up to support those infected and affected by contaminated blood.
2. I am aware that my parents were affected financially by my brother's infections; I know that they had to save money just in case something happened to him.
3. I have no comments to make on the running of the Trusts and Funds set up to support those infected and affected by contaminated blood.

8. Other Issues

1. From my perspective, [B], like so many others, was given a death sentence through no fault of his own. I feel deep sorrow for the life that he had to lead and believe that we have all been robbed of a very special person.
2. The [GRO-B] 2022 makes 18 years since [B] passed away. I will always miss him and the close and supportive relationship we had as siblings. He was particularly missed following my father's recent death, when I needed the support of my older brother more than anything. I regret that [B]'s

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children were deprived of a great father, and that my own children were deprived of a great uncle. He truly was a lovely human being.

3. I wish to express my reflections more broadly on the infected blood scandal. There was no need for this scandal to occur, and I cannot understand why it took so long for us to reach this point. I regret that so many people, including my father, have passed away without receiving answers. For them, the conclusion of this Inquiry will come too little too late.
4. With that said, I hope that this statement will be of help to the Inquiry. I do not believe the government realise the full magnitude of what happened and therefore hope that this Inquiry will finally reveal the truth.

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Statement of Truth

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

Signed.....

GRO-B

Dated.....

16/11/22