

ANONYMOUS

Witness Name:

GRO-B

Statement No: W7235-001

Exhibits: 0

Dated: November 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 am known as GRO-B My date of birth is GRO-B 1958. I reside at GRO-B GRO-B I am married with 4 children, 3 of which live at home and one lives in London.

2. This witness statement has been prepared without the benefit of access to my first wife's medical records, although these have been requested.

Section 2. How Affected

3. My first wife GRO-B: W when we had been married for just under a year, gave birth to our son GRO-B: S on GRO-B W had been previously engaged to a haemophiliac but had not been aware that he had been infected

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with HIV through contaminated blood products. As a result of the relationship with her previous fiancé, [W] unbeknown to her had become infected with HIV.

4. I do not know if [W] had been aware of any risks her former fiancé had been exposed to.
5. [W] was infected with HIV and no other infections.
6. Not long after our son [S] was born, both he and [W] became unwell. At first the doctors could not work out what was wrong, they were at a loss as to what was wrong, I recall at one point they thought it may have been legionnaires disease. They had not considered HIV as [W] was not in a high risk group. It was only when [W] mentioned that she had been in a previous relationship with a haemophiliac they realised what the problem might be and tested the three of us immediately, within minutes of finding that out.
7. [W] former fiancé had not been in touch to tell her she might be infected. I only found out that he was infected as I knew people who knew him. Her former fiancé and his two brothers have all died of AIDS as a result of infected blood products.
8. As it was so long ago, I cannot remember what information was provided when the diagnosis was made.

Section 3. Other Infections

9. I am not aware of [W] being infected with any other infections.

Section 4. Consent

10. I am not aware of [W] being tested or treated without her knowledge or consent.

Section 5. Impact of the Infection

11. [W] and our son [S] were diagnosed with HIV and it destroyed everything. I was tested and was negative.

12. [W] was admitted to the John Radcliffe Hospital as she was unwell and I do not recall that she ever came out, once she was admitted she stayed at the hospital until she died, she was there for around 3 months.

13. We were allowed to take [S] home occasionally we would take him home for the day and my parents and I would have the odd overnight visit with him at home.

14. [W] had a constant feeling of guilt that she had passed the infection on to [S]. It was life changing and the focus was on the two of them for however long it was going to be, by the time they passed away I was prepared for it, in those days the diagnosis was a death sentence anyway, so it was just a matter of how long, so I was reasonably prepared for it. I did have incredibly low moments and wanted to top myself, but that passed, I threw myself back into work, running my own business in the advertising industry.

15. The diagnosis took a great mental toll on [W] as she could never overcome the guilt of infecting our boy. The medical complications that arose as a result of the infection are too numerous to mention but included pneumocystis pneumonia, shingles, lesions, cryptosporidiosis. [S] had some mental development problems as a result of his infection.

16. There was a stigma attached to the diagnosis, we didn't tell everyone. We only told people that were close and anyone that would come into contact with [W] and [S] in terms of visits. Even to this day a lot of people do not know, if they

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ask what **W** passed away from, I say cryptosporidium. They do not know what that is. Those that we did tell saw them as innocent victims so there was very little stigma towards them both.

17. What happened had an impact on our family members. One of the most impacted was my mother, she was very close to both of them. **S** was her first grandchild so for her, she never really got over it and died a few years later when her cancer came back. Her life revolved around the John Radcliffe Hospital for around 8 months. She stayed there Monday to Fridays, I went in the evenings and weekends, we did this so **S** was never on his own. My mother was badly affected by it. **W** father, he used to help out as well, and don't know if he has ever really recovered. He is 93 now, and I pop in to see him from time to time. **W** youngest brother **GRO-B** around the time of her death he had just finished a degree in chemistry and I just don't think he ever recovered from it, he was **W** closest sibling, he has since been diagnosed with schizophrenia and has not worked in the last 20 to 30 years. They would be the three who were impacted most.

18. **W** had to give up work as a result of the infection. She was a state registered nurse and from memory I think she gave up work before she had **S**. She was feeling so tired all the time and we put it down to the pregnancy and then the birth, but if you look back now, I realise that the infection was the cause. We would have arguments about it, I would ask her what was wrong and tell her to get out of bed, obviously unaware of what the problem was.

19. Once she had been diagnosed, I had to take a back seat from my business, I had to leave it to the people we had working for us as every evening and weekend I was at the hospital. At weekends I would go to the hospital from Friday night until Sunday night. Work had to take a back seat, I still used to go in, but I couldn't get involved in anything too time consuming, or any intensive travelling, anything I would normally do, I had to forget about that for a year or two.

Section 6. Treatment/care/support

20. There was very little in the way of treatment options back then, only AZT which they were started on reasonably quickly, they were then hospitalized for the last time in the summer of 1989 and both did not make it out again.

21. [W] struggled to get a dentist to treat her, I found her a local dentist I knew, he was very good and said he would do it for her. That was the only struggle we had everyone was really good otherwise.

22. I assume counselling and psychological support was offered, but cannot be sure as I cannot recall. I remember after [W] and [S] died, sitting in a room with someone from a bereavement charity, but it wasn't really me, I just wanted to work and keep busy so I would have only had that 1 session. I do not know if [W] had any, I cannot remember.

Section 7. Financial Assistance

23. We did receive a settlement from the McFarlane Trust of £23,500 that I shared between myself and [W] parents, it was just a one off payment. I only have birth and death certificates for [W] and [S] but have now applied to EIBSS on behalf of them both.

Section 8. Other Issues

24. In general, people were incredibly supportive. My mum lost a few friends who assumed that HIV only affected drug addicts or homosexuals, I think my case was so unusual in this area in that generally a lot of people were supportive.

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Anonymity

25. I wish to remain anonymous.

26. I do not want 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

12/11/2022