

Witness Name: GRO-B

Statement No: WITN7437001

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 was born on GRO-B I live at GRO-B
GRO-B
2. I am married with 2 children, and I am a solicitor.
3. I make this statement in connection with my dad, GRO-B:F
who was born on GRO-B and died, aged GRO-B on GRO-B from
Hepatocellular Carcinoma having contracted Human Immunodeficiency Virus
(HIV) and Hepatitis C Virus (HCV) via contaminated Factor VIII concentrates.
4. My mum, GRO-B (anonymous) and my uncle, GRO-B
GRO-B (not anonymous), have both given witness statements to the Inquiry
under GRO-B and GRO-B respectively. I refer to the contents of
these statements in relation to background and factual matters.
5. This witness statement has been prepared without the benefit of access to my
dad's medical records.

Section 2. How Affected

6. My dad had severe Haemophilia A and was treated at the Haemophilia Centre at the Royal Free Hospital (RFH) under the care of Dr Dormandy, Dr Tuddenham, Dr Kernoff and Dr Goldman.
7. My dad was infected with HIV and HCV via contaminated Factor VIII concentrates.
8. In relation to the remainder of this section I refer to the witness evidence of my mum and my uncle.

Section 3. Other Infections

9. I refer to the witness evidence of my mum and my uncle.

Section 4. Consent

10. I refer to the witness evidence of my mum and my uncle.

Section 5. Impact of the Infection

11. The impact was profound and traumatic on me and my family. The illness ultimately deprived me of my dad and my children of a grandfather. By cutting his life short he missed out on so much, not least watching myself and my sister grow up, walking us down the aisle at our weddings and meeting his grandchildren. It ended my childhood and shattered my family. We live with the impact of what happened every day. It feels very raw even after over 30 years; the pain of losing him can still take my breath away. I find it very difficult to talk about him without getting upset. This witness statement process is therefore very uncomfortable but something that I am determined to do for him. My last memories of my dad were visiting him in hospital where he spent a lot of time

and, as a result, we all spent a lot of time there growing up. In particular, my very last clear memory of my dad was of him being worried that my sister had some blood on her which, of course, I didn't understand at the time. I didn't know that this would be the last time that I saw him; I never got to say goodbye to him. This was in the RFH and would have been on or around

GRO-B

GRO-B

12. The impact of what happened to dad, and the age I was when it happened, meant it really shaped my character and personality. It meant that I had to grow up more quickly than I should otherwise have done and take on both emotional and practical responsibilities. I tried very hard to be there for my mum in the years immediately following my dad's death. The impact is of course ongoing for all of us; my mum who is now aged 70 has never remarried and lives alone. My sister and I are her sole close familial support; she has no one else.
13. I often wonder what I would have been like had this not happened to me. I think that I would have been more carefree and more able to have fun.
14. My dad was brilliant and funny; he would often have me in stitches. He really loved reading and history and I was really interested in history, so we had this shared interest and bond; we would often go to WHSmith to buy a children's history comic or a book on a Saturday morning as a treat. We had a great relationship – I was a daddy's girl. I just knew that he loved me so much. Although my memories have faded after all these years, I remember the short period of time I spent with him very fondly. The best way I can describe it is that he was my dad, and you never get another one of those.
15. The impact on me and my family in relation to the HIV is trickier to describe as I only became aware of the HIV element to my dad's death much later on in life. Due to the stigma attached to HIV, my mum, uncle and grandparents carried this secret with them for years which meant that I did not find out the truth until I was in my 20s. To carry such a secret for so many years must have been so damaging for them and for their mental health.

16. I believe the circumstances of my dad's death created a culture in my family of not talking about certain things; we didn't really talk about how we were feeling or about my dad. My family effectively airbrushed it all out. The impact on me of not having a space where we could talk about him a lot means that even today when I talk about him, I get very upset because I am not used to talking about him. I believe it prevented our healing process. I had unanswered questions regarding his death, but the brain is a funny thing, and it was almost as if I knew not to question it too much. I never asked the questions as it was almost as if I knew that I wasn't meant to push this door open. I instinctively knew this.
17. It was extraordinary really, how I found out about the real cause of my dad's death. My grandma and I were out for lunch one day, and she started talking about Princess Diana and how she had done so much for people with HIV and how awful it had been for my dad. I cannot remember the exact words she used but she was telling me about my dad's diagnosis and death but in a very indirect manner. I worked out the fact that he must have had HIV based on what my grandma was saying. I took this information back with me to my mum, who then explained what had happened. Looking back, it was definitely a deliberate intention of my grandma to tell me, and while it was not a 'death bed confession', I think that she had got to the point in her life where she felt that enough was enough and that I needed to know the truth.
18. My relationship with my mum in my adult years was impacted by the way I found out about the real cause of my dad's death as I realised that she had been keeping this secret from me. Not only was I processing the information that grandma and mum had now given me, but I was now going back over all of the things which had happened in the past, with a fresh set of knowing eyes. Prior to this point, all I knew was that dad had Haemophilia, was always in hospital and had been very unwell in the time leading up to his death and had received various payments connected to his Haemophilia.

19. When I found out the truth about dad's HIV things started to make a lot of sense and quite a lot of the past fell into place. Although I knew that my family didn't share my dad's HIV diagnosis with me in order to protect me and that came from a good place, it had an impact nevertheless, despite the good intention.
20. We went on holiday, as a family with dad, in the summer holiday of GRO-B and my guess was that dad was very determined to go on that holiday despite the fact that he spent pretty much the entirety of the holiday in bed in a darkened room. On our return, he literally fell into my grandpa's arms; something that I probably wasn't meant to see. This was only weeks before his death.
21. I was only aged 10 when my wonderful dad died, and I can't even begin to imagine how scared my dad must have been with the knowledge of the HIV and knowing that he was going to die. My mum must have also been beside herself with worry and upset, while of course raising two young children.
22. I now turn to the financial impact of dad's infections, both before and after his death. The financial impact whilst dad was alive must have been quite material given that he was a professional who was unable to work for large periods of time. The financial impact of his death was serious. My mum's statement will speak more but from my perspective, I had to have a government assisted place to be able to remain at my private school which provided me with important continuity and familiarity at a time of great change. We had to go through a means tested assessment every year so there was never any guarantee that I could remain at my school which added additional anxiety onto an already upsetting situation. In fact, the provision of government assisted places was abolished in 1997 when the Labour government came to power. This meant that for the last two years of my schooling, I obtained bursaries. The fact that the assisted place scheme was abolished while I was at school highlights how unsecure the position was for me.
23. We were fortunate that we lived in a lovely house prior to my dad's death. My memory of this was that we were financially comfortable. However, we did have to move house after he died due to finances and I remember mum talking to

me quite a lot about finances; I was aware that it was a real juggling act. Mum started working full time after my dad's death and did everything she could in order to give us everything she could. It was a real watershed. I think it is clear to me that the financial impact of what happened to dad has been a big one in terms of the day to day life we would have had and the financial assistance that myself and my sister would have had later in life had he lived. Even today, I can sometimes find it difficult seeing my peers in more comfortable circumstances as a result of being fortunate enough to receive more family financial assistance than I have received.

24. What happened has not given me a good relationship with money to the extent that I am very focused on money and often worry about not having enough money or a safety net. This means that I am not particularly carefree, and it affects the choices that I make. It was a real driver as to why I went into a well-paid profession in that I felt that as a result of what happened I wanted to go into a well paid and stable profession such as law. I didn't feel that I had the financial freedom to choose a different type of career.

25. Given my young age at the time of my dad's illness and death, I refer to the witness evidence of my mum and my uncle in relation to the physical and mental effects of the infections on my dad. I understand that my dad suffered cirrhosis of the liver, AIDS related symptoms and depression.

Section 6. Treatment/care/support

26. I refer to the witness evidence of my mum and my uncle.

27. I was offered grief counselling via the Haemophilia Centre after my dad's death. I did not find it helpful, so I stopped going. My memory of it was that it involved drawing pictures of dad and that sort of thing. I was an intelligent child, and I felt that the counselling was pitched at the wrong level, and it did not work for me. I attended because I had to, not because it helped me. Like everything 30 or 40 years ago, it was not of the quality or format that would likely be offered today.

Section 7. Financial Assistance

28. I refer to the witness evidence of my mum and my uncle.

29. Mum told me that I received a payment of £500 from the MacFarlane Trust (MFT) to fund books and expenses at university. Apart from this, I did not receive any financial assistance from any of the Trusts of Funds which were set up to distribute payments.

Section 8. Other Issues

30. I would like the Inquiry to find answers as to why this tragedy occurred and who was at fault. It is important for those answers to be out there in black and white for all those people who are currently suffering and for those who are, through no fault of their own, no longer with us and those they have left behind.

Anonymity

31. I wish to be anonymous like my mum.

Statement of Truth

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

Signed.....

GRO-B

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Dated.....*2nd December 2022*.....