

Witness Name: GRO-B

Statement No: WITN7505001

Exhibits: Nil

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 reside at GRO-B
GRO-B My date of birth is GRO-B I live in GRO-B with my husband.
I am currently working part time, having stopped teaching due to health reasons.
2. I make this statement about my father, GRO-B: F who died in 1991 aged 43. My father was infected with HIV and Hepatitis C while receiving treatment for Haemophilia. My mother, GRO-B believes that he informed her of this in 1985 but cannot say whether he knew prior to this. I was only 6 when my father died.
3. This witness statement has been prepared without the benefit of access to my father's medical records.

Section 2. How Affected

4. Given my young age when my father was infected and his subsequent death, please refer to the statement of my mother, [GRO-B] [GRO-B] and my father's brother, [GRO-B] [GRO-B].
5. My father was treated at the Royal Free Hospital Haemophilia Centre, Hampstead and was under the care of Dr Tuddenham and Dr Kernoff.
6. My father was infected with HIV and Hepatitis C.
7. Given my young age, please refer to my mother and uncle's witness statements for details of my father's treatment and what advice or information was given to my father about the treatment.

Section 3. Other Infections

8. I am not aware of any other infections, but again given my young age please refer to the witness statements mentioned previously.

Section 4. Consent

9. Given my young age at the time, please refer to my mother's witness statement in relation to consent issues.

Section 5. Impact of the Infection

10. Please refer to my mother's witness statement about the impact of the infections on her and my father.
11. It may be difficult to identify a causal link between my father's death and my physical, mental and emotional health and my life generally, but from my perspective my father's infection and death has pervaded all aspects of my life.

12. It is natural to compare myself to others and I often considered myself luckier than my sister, GRO-B and my mother as I hardly remember my father. I thought this meant that his death was easier for me than it had been for them.
13. When putting people at ease when they discovered my father's death I would often comment that it was hard to miss what you did not know. This problematic pattern of minimising my own feelings has continued into adulthood. I now know this is not the case and losing one's father at 6 has a fundamental impact on one's development. The loss of my father was deeply wounding. It also involves the loss of what I did not get to experience. The lack I feel on every Father's Day, on his birthday, the anniversary of his death, my wedding day and numerous other times.
14. At my mother's 70th birthday recently, I was caught off guard when someone mentioned my father's humour and I had to admit that I had no first hand recollection. I did not get to grow up with two parents like most people and I felt different from a young age as a result. I have found the grief does not lessen but one's ability to deal with it grows.
15. Another impact was the result of the impact of events on my mother and how it changed her. She had to parent for two. She had to shoulder everything for our family. She had to care for my father and had to process everything that happened and raise two young daughters. My mother has many wonderful qualities. She is also fearful, distrusting and pessimistic. I do not wish to speak of her experience so it is best to refer to her statement, but I have no doubt these experiences shaped her in this way. This naturally had an impact on how my sister and I were raised.
16. I felt pressure not to let my mum down and developed perfectionist tendencies and later anxiety and depression. I feel a lot of guilt around my feeling less robust than others. I have struggled with my mental health. I worked hard to learn how to acknowledge my emotions and how to process these. I find it

difficult to acknowledge my needs and to meet these or seek help. I have no doubt this was shaped by the experiences of my father, family and upbringing.

17. I experienced a particularly difficult time in my early 30s trying to conceive and experiencing four miscarriages. The stress led to a tipping point in my health and I was unable to work. I relied on the NHS which involved both good and bad experiences all with the unsettling backdrop of what happened to my father. It took a long time to obtain diagnoses. I was informed by the NHS that I simply had a weakness in my neck and I would have to live with the chronic pain. Eventually I got a private diagnosis of a dislocated jaw and TMD. Parallel to this I was diagnosed with an autoimmune condition which likely caused the miscarriages due to 'sticky' blood.
18. This was all challenging but made harder knowing the experience of my father, particularly given the irony of the issue. A number of troubling things happened which again raised questions regarding my trust of the NHS. For instance, myself and my husband had to ask nurses two or three times to remove a jar of foetal matter which had been removed during an unsuccessful procedure under local anaesthesia and left right next to my bed whilst we waited alone to find out the next steps. This would be difficult for anyone, let alone someone with my background. Furthermore, with regards to my mental health, I had grown up not having a 'normal' family and now I could not have one of my own. My background made everything more difficult. It meant again that I was questioning why I couldn't have what other people had and whether I was somehow to blame.
19. My four years of orthodontic treatment ended in August 2022 and I am also now on appropriate medication for my autoimmune condition. I am currently working one day a week but have chosen not to return to teaching. Unfortunately my capacity is not what it was and I don't know if I'll be able to work full time again even in a less demanding role. I understand there is a medical reason for this but it is a battle not to consider that I am somehow lacking or less robust than others. These are feelings that I have been familiar with since my father's death.

ANONYMOUS

20. I find it difficult to lean or depend on others. Therapy has shown me that I have often minimised my feelings as a coping mechanism so that I could meet the needs of others. I worry that others do not understand my experience or that they would think that I am playing 'victim'. This has caused me to be isolated at times and not able to be vulnerable with others.
21. This was significant. As a result of the stigma, my mother chose not to tell my sister and I of my father's infection status and the true cause of his death until 2012, when I was 26. While shocked and confused by the decision, I do not blame her. This revelation had a severe impact on me, developing anxiety and depression, the first of several bouts, and I received counselling at the school where I was teaching at the time. The further impact that this would have had on my relationship with my mother as she was raising me cannot be underestimated. Moreover, I am left questioning whether this stigma and the painful events surrounding my father's death is why we hardly talk about him. This would impact my own grieving and processing of his death. Nevertheless I cannot speak to my mother's experience so please refer to her statement.
22. I have spoken briefly about as to how this would have shaped my mother's life, character and her parenting. This would in turn impact myself and my sister. I will also add that I remember as a child that my sister would always get upset being in hospitals. Otherwise, I do not wish to speak to the experience of my family members so refer you to their statements.
23. My father was a chartered accountant and the main earner. There is no doubt that his infection and subsequent death had a significant impact on his ability to work and our family income. I refer you to my mother's statement for more detail.
24. I am aware that in the years after my father's death I struggled to keep up academically at the private junior school I was attending on an assisted place. I had to move to a state school for my secondary education as I was only offered a half assisted place at the private school which we could not afford. I am pleased to say I thrived at the new school and achieved well but it did take time. Nevertheless, I experienced panic attacks about exams for my GCSEs and A

Levels. I even considered leaving school and not continuing with sixth form. I received counselling for managing them. It was only later in life it became clear that it was linked to a fear of failure and not wanting to let my Mum down who had already been through so much due to the infection and death of my father. I have already outlined the impact on my life and work of finding out about my father's infection status at 26. I have also outlined my later health challenges and my stopping of work. This has had significant financial impact on myself and my husband. We spent thousands of pounds dealing with the symptoms of my health issues, diagnoses and treatment. We sold our house in London and moved to Devon in order to make our outgoings more manageable and improve our quality of life. While I understand that some of these aspects are not directly linked to my father's death, I do consider it as having significant impact on them.

Section 6. Treatment / Care / Support

25. Given my young age when my father was infected and his subsequent death, please refer to the statement of my mother, GRO-B and my father's brother, GRO-B

26. I discovered during the Inquiry that counselling or psychological support was available to me. I am yet to make use of this so cannot comment on whether it is adequate. However, it is inadequate that this was not made clear until the Inquiry. I have vague memory of someone coming to the house subsequent to my father's death to discuss it with me but I do not know their role or whether this was provided by my mother or another source. I cannot speak to the experience of my father as I was too young.

Section 7. Financial Assistance

27. Given my young age when my father was infected and his subsequent death, please refer to the statement of my mother, GRO-B and my father's brother, GRO-B

28. See above

Section 8. Other Issues

29. There has, rightly, been a great deal of emphasis on those infected and, sometimes, partners. However, it is only recently that the impact on children has been considered. I would encourage the inquiry to be mindful of this and the far-reaching effects. My whole life has been shaped by the experiences and subsequent death of my father. I would like this to be acknowledged in any apology given.

30. Given my young age when my father was infected and his subsequent death, please refer to the statement of my mother, GRO-B and my father's brother, GRO-B

Anonymity, disclosure and redaction

I confirm that I would like to remain anonymous.

Anonymity

31. I wish to remain anonymous.

32. 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.

ANONYMOUS

Signed.

GRO-B

Dated 14/12/22