

Witness Name:

GRO-B

Statement No: WITN2835001

Dated: 6<sup>th</sup> March 2019

## INFECTED BLOOD INQUIRY

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FIRST WRITTEN STATEMENT OF

GRO-B

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I provide this statement in response to a request under Rule 9 of the Inquiry Rules 2006 dated 12<sup>th</sup> December 2018. 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** I live at **GRO-B**

2. I intend to speak about my father **GRO-B: F** born **GRO-B** 1934, his infection of HIV and possibly Hepatitis B and C, which he contracted from infected blood products in the 1970's and 1980's. In

particular, the nature of his illness and how the illness affected him, the treatment he received and the impact it has had on my family and me.

## **2. How Infected**

1. I am unsure when my father's first diagnosis of Haemophilia A (severe) was, but I do know his mother was a carrier, his sister was a carrier and her son, my cousin had the same condition. My cousin was also infected and he took his own life in his early 20's.
2. My father spent a lot of time in the GRO-B Hospital in GRO-B due to treatment on his teeth, a car accident, bleeding relating to a pseudotumour and for bleeds into his muscle and joints through bumps associated with working on a farm.
3. In 1974 was when my father was first given Factor VIII Kryobulin in order to clot his blood prior to teeth being extracted. He had no problems with this product in terms of bleeding and it was decided to change over to this as it was working better for my father. Both my mother and father went on a home treatment plan, in order for them to self-administer Kryobulin at home should my father need it.
4. In 1979 my father was involved in a road traffic accident. My parents' vehicle was smashed into by a drunk driver. My father sustained multiple injuries. He received large quantities of Factor VIII blood in order to stem internal bleeding over a thirty-six-day period.
5. I believe it was in 1985 when my father first knew he had been infected with HIV through contaminated blood products. I was about 9 or 10 years old at the time and can remember family life becoming rather strained.

### **3. Other Infections**

1. Unclear regarding hepatitis B and C.

### **4. Consent**

1. I believe my father was written to by the GRO-B Hospital, inviting him for screening for HIV once they realised the blood product was infected. I am unsure if consent was gained with regard to giving him blood products or whether any risks were explained to him.

### **5. Impact**

1. I did not know my father had contracted HIV until after his death. I do remember how poorly he was as I spent a lot of time at the hospital visiting my father. I would even have to do my homework there.
2. My father was crippled with illness. It was awful for him. He couldn't walk and didn't enjoy being a father to me and my sister. For example he couldn't accompany me to football matches anymore as it was too difficult for him to get up the stairs in the stadium.
3. I can remember times when my father would cut himself and because he was bleeding he would push me away or scream at my mother to keep us away. He would always throw towels out after using them to stem the bleeding. It was never questioned by me as it became the norm.
4. Between 1985 and before my father's death his whole personality changed. He went from being a loving father to someone who I didn't recognise anymore. I became scared of him as he became really moody and strict. I remember his medication was stored in a

cupboard and administered at the table. We were told we could not go near it or him. We always had family holidays but once my father became ill this didn't happen anymore.

5. My mother became preoccupied as she was caring for my dad or visiting him in hospital. My sister and I were looked after by relatives we hardly knew and were separated as they wouldn't look after us together. It was quite a lonely time for me.
6. I can remember my father having a few arguments with GRO-B when he was in the GRO-B Hospital. He always seemed to be annoyed with her and it was always a running battle when she came on the ward. He once told her to 'go fuck yourself'. He always seemed to be angry about his health. I can recall my father having sores on his face before he died, it was quite scary as I was only 14 years old at the time and didn't understand what was happening to him.
7. I would say between the ages of 9 and 14 years, life was very difficult at home for me, there was no social life as I spent most of my time on ward GRO-B visiting my father. As well as this, my father could not work and he leased out our farm to other local farmers in order to get some money in.
8. My father passed away in 1990. I was 14 years old. I will never forget how I heard the news. I was staying at another relative's house and someone was throwing a stone at the bedroom window. It must have been in the middle of the night. My uncle told me that my daddy was dead. There was a lack of emotional support for me.
9. A few days after my father died my mother told me that he had died of AIDS and it was that what had killed him.
10. The GRO-B Hospital GRO-B appointed an undertaker and there was a threat made by Dr GRO-B to cremate my father's body if certain



procedures weren't met. I know my father's body had to be placed in a bag with the word 'toxic' or something of that nature, written on it. I do know Dr. GRO-B told my mother something else would be put on the death certificate and it was put that my father died of double pneumonia. We were only allowed to have one night for the wake instead of the traditional two. When I think of this, even now, it makes me physically sick. I also believe that my father's coffin was not allowed to be opened.

11. My mother turned to the drink. It seemed as though she had given up on her own life. When my father was alive, he was a very strict guy, but once he passed away something changed in my mother. She was like a child who had responsibilities but didn't have the ability manage them or make the right decisions. My mother was taken advantage of and was persuaded by a local farmer to sell the family farm directly to him and not put it on the open market. It sold for way below the market value. I believe the farm had been passed down from my grandmother. The farm had been in the family for many years.
12. I had not only lost a father I had lost my mother too as she started to suffer with mental health problems. I would have to keep clear of her. She couldn't really cope on her own with two children and the drink got the better of her. After selling the farm she moved into a house that was in unfinished, again she was taken advantage of by the tradesmen completing up the house. Everything cost more than what they quoted for. I couldn't get close to my mother she became narcissistic and finally a recluse. My mother's health deteriorated rapidly and she had GRO-B issues, which led to her death in GRO-B. She died with about £8,000 and this was split between family members. However after settling all the bills etc, there was not much left. My mother owned her own house, but it was in a poor state.
13. There wasn't any emotional support for me after my father's death. There seemed to be no-one to even explain things to me. If people

asked in school how my father died, my head would go down. I think at some point I was told not to say anything to anyone. I know at the time the world wasn't ready to understand or have any empathy for people with AIDS. I wouldn't dare tell anyone about my dad having it in case they thought I had it.

14. I scraped through my A levels which gave me enough grades to go to University where I studied computers. I am now a software developer.

15. I became very insecure during my adolescence up until my early twenties. I made a lot of foolish choices such as buying cars and getting into the wrong relationships. I wasn't by any means streetwise and was so unworldly. There was no fatherly advice and I couldn't seek advice from my mother.

16. I felt like I was left out to dry, kicked under a bus as there was no support. It doesn't fade as the trauma I endured because of how my father died has been left unprocessed. I was about 40 years old when I gained confidence. I have little trust in people.

17. When I heard about the inquiry, I started to suffer with emotional pain such as migraine and backache. I realised now that there are still some things that I haven't dealt with. However, the process of this Inquiry has been therapeutic for me as I have had to deal with facing things rather than them be stored in a filing cabinet. I have told my wife now and she has been brilliant about it.

## **6. Treatment/Care/Support**

1. I wasn't offered any support or counselling at the time of my father being diagnosed or after he died. My mother and sister weren't offered any support either.

## **7. Financial Assistance**

1. I believe my father claimed Disability Living Allowance. There was no other financial support for my mother and children after my father died. I believe my mother may have received the compensation of the time, this was a modest amount I think and subsequently, it is now considered that it was based on "limited information" and misleading information. She also received a payment from the Skipton Fund but this was just within the last 8 years and not at the time of my father's death. Almost 25 years later. This money went into house repairs and my mother had some debt to pay off.

## **8. Other Issues**

1. My father passed away in 1990. I believe as a bereaved child I was forgotten about on an emotional level. Had I been offered some support, guidance or even counselling in how to manage the issues surrounding my father's death, I may have come to terms with my own emotional state a lot sooner.
2. The authorities at the time who clearly had a hand in the death of my father acted with complete callousness and total disregard for the emotional welfare of bereaved relatives, (especially young children/teenagers). They left the children to a life of pain and emotional problems as the issues were never 'processed.'

**Statement of Truth**

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

Signed

**GRO-B**

Dated

06/03/2019.