

ANONYMOUS

Witness Name: GRO-B

Statement No.: WITN3163001

Exhibits: WITN3163002

Dated: January 2021

INFECTED BLOOD INQUIRY

WRITTEN STATEMENT OF GRO-B

I, GRO-B will say as follows: -

Section 1: Introduction

1. My name is GRO-B and my date of birth is GRO-B 1944 and I reside at GRO-B and I was married to GRO-B: H until he passed away on GRO-B 1993 when he was 56 years of age.
2. We had a very happy family life and my husband was a great protector, provider, you name it he was terrific. We had two sons, GRO-B who is now 48 years old and GRO-B who is now 45 years old. Both now live with their own families and I therefore now live alone.
3. I have a heart condition, and I'm asthmatic and diabetic, so I have good days and bad days.

Section 2: How affected

4. H was diagnosed as a haemophiliac when he was 7 years old. He used to have bleeds into his joints and if he had them into his knees or legs of any description he had to be laid up at the time and this was all before Factor VIII was available.

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5. He was treated between Basingstoke Hospital and Treloar Hospital which was the Alton Haemophilia Centre, where he attended frequently for tests on his haemophilia, especially when he had a bleed into any of his joints.
6. Once Factor VIII became available [H] was able to collect this from Treloar Hospital and he would then inject himself at home and his bleeds used to heal in a few days. He had regular visits to Treloar Hospital. We were never informed of any risks involved with using Factor VIII and I am not aware that [H] was provided with any advice or information in this respect.
7. [H] suffered various fevers from time to time and on one occasion he contracted Hepatitis, I believe it was Hepatitis C, very badly and was ill for two to three months. At this time our youngest son was only 9 months old and did not understand why he could not get into bed with his daddy.
8. I recall that [H] was given a blood transfusion which I think was in about 1979-80, I think he was anaemic, and they gave him a blood transfusion at Basingstoke Hospital.
9. In 1980 [H] attended Treloar Hospital for one of his regular check-ups and it was then he was informed that he had been given infected blood, I believe this was with Dr Aronstam at Treloar. He was also treated by Dr Roy at Basingstoke Hospital who I believe is still at the hospital. I do not remember the actual date he was informed. I was not present at this appointment as I was working at the time. I saw him later that day and he told me at that point. I do not know when he had become infected. I have tried to obtain his medical records from our GP, but they no longer have them. I was therefore not aware of how long [H] had been infected for, prior to him being informed that he had been given infected blood in 1980. His HIV developed later. I have recently been able to obtain a copy of his medical records from the UKHCDO which show that his first positive test for AIDS was 13 September 1982 [WITN3163002]. These records also list the products that he had been given from 1971 up until 1993 which includes Travenol, Hyland and Hemofil FVIII.

Section 3: Other infections

10. I was not aware of any other infections other than Hepatitis C and HIV.

Section 4: Consent

11. I am not aware that [H] was treated or tested without his knowledge. I believe he gave consent for his treatment.

Section 5: Impact

12. When my husband was told in 1980 that he had been given infected blood he had been informed that he only had about 9-10 years to live. We were devastated. [H] made me promise that I would never tell our boys, they were only 8 and 5 years old at the time. In retrospect I think that was a silly mistake because I think they should have known, perhaps when they were older, but not at their ages at the time. It was really difficult having to hide this from the boys.
13. All we could do was look after [H] which is what we tried to do all the way through. It did have an effect on him because he went into his shell a little bit. The only people who knew about his condition were his GP and family members. We all tried to get him out of that, but obviously it was the shock of knowing that you haven't got that long to live.
14. [H] went on to live for 13 years after being told he had been given infected blood, but in that time what he went through was absolutely heart-breaking for us all to watch and deal with. [H] was a very positive man, but even he had his moments of despair, which in turn had its effects on all of us. There were many occasions when he was admitted to hospital and many visits for checks and he suffered a great deal. It was very hard for the boys to watch their father suffer so much and for me it was heart-breaking. I had to live knowing that he was going to die and shatter my life and the boys' lives.
15. I recall on one occasion when we were on holiday abroad in 1988. We were motoring through France, Germany and on to Vienna, Austria and planned to

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meet with friends there. [H] was taken ill with a bleed which he could not control and was admitted to hospital in Weisbarden, Germany where he stayed until it was controlled. We did not reach Austria as we had to return home. This was devastating for our sons as they were so looking forward to meeting our friends in Vienna, so were we. It took us two days to get back as we had to stop in Brussels overnight for [H] to rest and, on finally reaching Dover, we had to stay overnight in a hotel there. [H] was taken ill again with a severe nosebleed and I had to leave the boys with the hotel Manager whilst I went with him to [GRO-B] Hospital, where [H] had to stay for another week and was given another blood transfusion. [H] made myself and the boys go back home as we had a roof rack with luggage which he was concerned about. [H] finally came back home after a week and then he had to rest for another week.

16. The boys were so good for me and without them I think I would have been broken a good deal earlier, as every time [H] became ill I wondered if it was going to be the time. My husband was a very positive man and would always reassure me, but it was very hard indeed.
17. [H] did not receive any treatment in terms of his infected status, obviously he lived with it for a number of years. If he needed to attend the dentist he did so at the hospital, he would not have been treated by a local dentist.
18. No one knew about him having HIV apart from a few people and therefore we were not treated differently. [H] did not want anybody to know. I believe he told his brother and his sister, but nobody else. We just basically learnt to live with it because when he was ill, it was on my mind whether this is it, or not. Every time he was ill I would go into a frenzy and I think all that mounted up and up and up on me.
19. Things did go downhill because I became ill, I'm not that well anyway and because I was working all the time. Later, I had to retire early because I had a breakdown.
20. After being informed he had HIV [H] did continue to work, he was an Accountant. The company he worked for knew he was a haemophiliac and so

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knew he had problems anyway. So when he had to rest up they were understanding about this. The worst time was when he had Hepatitis C. Our youngest son was only about 3 years old and our oldest was 6 years old and trying to keep our youngest away from this father at the time was quite difficult, to say the least.

21. Unfortunately, [H] had to retire early due to ill health, it was getting very difficult for him to drive to London every day. There were times when he became ill and ran a temperature and on his arrival home, had to be helped out of the car and into bed for a few days. This happened quite frequently in his last few years before he retired. Sometimes I did not know how he had even got home, but thank God he did. Our two sons were amazingly helpful in these situations and without them I could never have coped. This had an impact on all of our lives, they saw everything and in the latter years of his illness we could not go on holidays.
22. When [H] was finally taken into the Hospice, my world fell apart. He was there for about a month and I had to cope because of the boys and in the end I was so glad I still had them by me. They were cheated by losing their father at the most crucial time in their lives. You would think after 27 years you would calm down to it, but I can't. They have been marvellous all the way through, to me and to one another and in helping to look after their father. I feel that they have lost such a lot. This ruined their childhood. When you think of what kids are doing at the moment I just feel that they missed so much. They were 17 and 20 years old when he passed away. [H] thought the world of them.
23. It was difficult for [H] too, fortunately we both used to talk about it and what we could do to resolve things, but it wasn't the same. I do think that this is why I have gone through with this process, because I just feel for the boys, I'm doing it for them.
24. [H] was only 56 when he died. I still miss my husband and think about how much he suffered and struggled and also how much he missed of our sons growing up and not seeing how they have both turned out.

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25. I found it very difficult to explain to my two young sons exactly what had happened and they were devastated when their father passed away. It has always made me so angry that his life was taken at a time in their life when they needed him. I also suffered a nervous breakdown as a result.

Section 6: Treatment, care and support

26. [H] did not receive any treatment for his HIV. Things have progressed in recent years, but it certainly wasn't on offer then. Not much was known about HIV at the time.
27. [H] did receive some treatment for his Hepatitis C, but only from the local doctor. I think he was on antibiotics at that time.
28. [H] was given support from the medics who dealt with him and on occasions they would include me, but because I had a full time job I was not able to go with my husband every time.
29. We were never offered counselling. It wasn't a thing back then, it just didn't happen in those days. I have not been offered any counselling since my husband passed away either.
30. I do have a very good family and they have provided support in many ways. [H]'s brother and his wife really helped us through it, but now his brother has Alzheimer's.

Section 7: Financial assistance

31. Due to his health [H] had to take early retirement, his illness was becoming worse. Due to his age he only had the company pension as he was not old enough for the state pension. This had a huge impact on our family financially. We were of course not getting his usual salary and we have two young boys to bring up. We had a mortgage to pay and all the usual expenses. We received nothing from the Department of Work and Pensions or from any Trust Funds at the time.

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32. I went up to full time in my job, maybe even over full time. I think that is what created my problem in the end. Both of our boys were in education at the time and we were really scrimping and scraping. This affected the boys, they could not have the things they wanted all the time. We tried hard and we had to delve into savings that we did have in the end.
33. Later my eldest son got a job and so he was able to help out a bit.
34. I believe that we did receive a one-off payment from the MacFarlane Trust in the sum of £10,000. We did not receive any money whilst H was still alive. I do receive a monthly payment which I believe has been taken over by the NHS.
35. The process for applying for assistance with the MacFarlane Trust was very good, they used to send us annually a form to fill in and complete which we would send back. The MacFarlane Trust paid for a wet room in our house.
36. Eventually I had to retire due to my own ill health and money is very tight. I am not able to get out and go for a walk because I am not able to walk that far. I can get out and drive and hopefully I can keep my car, that is what is worrying me most at the moment.

Section 8: Other issues

37. I have made this statement on how the most horrendous error affected the lives of my family. I am hoping that by writing this it will help me and my two sons. I have never been able to talk about it with anyone before, even my two sons, as it hurts so much even now. I still feel so bitter that anything like this was allowed to happen.
38. The boys have missed a lot. They were marvellous all the way through their father's illness, to me and to one another. I feel that they have lost such a lot.

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39. My husband had one brother and one sister and all the families were shattered and devastated on hearing about his problems.

Statement of Truth

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

Signed:

GRO-B

Dated:

10 January 2021