

ANONYMOUS

Witness Name: GRO-B

Statement No: WITN3256001

Exhibits: 0

Dated: 13 June 2019

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 and I was born on GRO-B. I live at GRO-B. I am married and I have GRO-B grown up children from my GRO-B marriage. I have always worked as a GRO-B but I had to leave as I developed GRO-B. GRO-B I live on a personal pension and am also in receipt of personal independence payments.
2. I make this statement in relation to my late brother, GRO-B: B (B) who was born on GRO-B and sadly passed away on GRO-B GRO-B.
3. I am aware that my GRO-B also intends to provide a statement to the Inquiry.

4. This witness statement has been prepared without the benefit of access to [B]s full medical records.

Section 2. How Affected

5. [B] was born with [GRO-B] and I remember him being admitted to [GRO-B] [GRO-B] in about [GRO-B] for an operation to repair the [GRO-B]. He was about [GRO-B] months old at the time and I was around [GRO-B] years old. I remember him having a blood transfusion and being on a blood drip.
6. On [GRO-B] 1993 [B] was admitted to Broadgreen Hospital, as the doctors suspected him of having glandular fever.
7. Within a short time of being in hospital, the doctors requested that [B] undertake an HIV test and on 13 January 1994, he was told the test was positive for AIDS.
8. [B] was never diagnosed with HIV, when he became ill the virus had already developed into stage 3 AIDS.
9. [B] then had a chest X-ray which revealed that he had AIDS related pneumonia.
10. He contracted AIDS as a result of the blood transfusion he had as a baby.
11. At the time [B] was diagnosed, the doctors suggested that [B] might have been silly as a child and that he perhaps he was infected through association with gay men. Knowing [B] and his personality though, I just could not believe this was the case.

12. I was [GRO-B] years old when [B] was born, our mother was [GRO-B] and had had [GRO-B] [GRO-B] and [GRO-B] before [B] was born. Our mother was very protective of him, he never played out and he was very close to my children. He was [GRO-B] and washed his hands regularly. [B] told me that he was not promiscuous or anything like that, but the hospital tried to imply he was gay. [B] had girlfriends and would tell me anything and he was definitely not gay. The hospital's suggestion that he was was never spoken about outside my family.

13. I do not believe that when [B] had the hernia operation our parents were provided beforehand with any advice or information about the risk of being exposed to infection from the blood transfusion.

14. [B] was never given any information in relation to how to manage the infection. The hospital gave him the infection and left him to deal with it.

Section 3. Other Infections

15. As far as I am aware [B] had no other infections as a result of receiving infected blood.

Section 4. Consent

16. [B] was not tested or treated for HIV without his knowledge or consent. He knew he was being tested for HIV and as far as I am aware, he only had one test for HIV.

Section 5. Impact of the Infection

17. When [B] was told that he had tested positive for AIDS, I was with him as were our parents. [B] just looked at our mum and shook his head. My mum

tried to reassure him and told him not to worry and that he would be okay, but **B** just shook his head. The doctors just walked away and did not say anything else. They were probably just too scared; no one knew about the infection at that time. We had no support; they just left us and effectively just pushed us under the table.

18. **B** was terrified and he was made to feel ashamed of having AIDS by the way the staff discussed him behind his back and treated him in the hospital, he was shunned. Staff would not engage with him. When the staff at Broadgreen Hospital discovered that **B** had AIDS their attitude completely changed towards him as well as our mum and dad. Before the diagnosis the staff were friendly and chatty. Once they discovered **B** had AIDS they were distant, rude and very fearful of **B** and our family.

19. Physically **B** went through some drastic changes from the impact of the infection. He was fit and healthy and **GRO-B** tall with a muscular build. However he went from being **GRO-B** stone when he died and it happened very quickly. He had been losing weight before the diagnosis. His teeth started to protrude from his jaw due to his huge weight loss; it was as if his teeth or jaw were too big for his face.

20. **GRO-B** attended conferences in **GRO-B** to try and find new treatments for **B**. He was the top man in the field but came back with nothing though he did his utmost to help. **B** was prescribed antibiotics or other drugs but that was it.

21. After being admitted to hospital in **GRO-B** 1993, **B** was never discharged. After a few weeks he was transferred from Broadgreen Hospital to the **GRO-B** where he was placed on a life support machine. He was sedated and paralysed in Intensive Care. **B** was not able to talk to us when he was on the life support machine.

22. **B** was on a life support machine for about five weeks but on **GRO-B** **GRO-B** the life support was removed. This resulted in him having a cardiac arrest, CPR was given to him and the ventilator was switched back on. However, later that day, **B** was pronounced brain dead.
23. Our family was informed that **B** life support machine was to be turned off, and on **GRO-B** at **GRO-B** this was implemented and **B** lost his life just **GRO-B** birthday.
24. It all happened so fast. From **B** finding out about the infection to his decline and his death. It was awful; he was only **GRO-B** and we received no help or support.
25. **B** and our family did not understand how he had contracted this infection. We tried to ask the doctors questions but we were given no answers other than that we were told not to speak to any one about how **B** died, as we would be a target of social exclusion. I was told not to tell my children also as they would be attacked and ostracised.
26. As a special favour to our family the doctor told us that he would write on **B** death certificate that he died of multi organ failure instead of AIDS. We were recommended by the doctor to keep the **B** true cause of death a secret. We were told that stating **B** died of AIDS on his death certificate would cause problems; for example undertakers could refuse to take care of **B** body.
27. Our Mum and Dad were older parents when **B** was born and they believed at the time of **B** death that, the doctors word went without question and that the doctors were covering up **B** true cause of death to protect our family.

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28. As a result of the advice given by the doctors, [B] cause of death was never spoken of after his funeral.
29. At the time [B] died, I was [GRO-B] years old and I had [GRO-B] children aged from about [GRO-B]. I was working as a [GRO-B] part time for [GRO-B] doing 16 – 20 hours per week. After [B] died I did not work for 5 months I had a breakdown, fortunately my job remained open for me.
30. With all the emotions and trauma I found coping very hard as there was no sense or reasoning as to how [B] died and what had happened to our family. No words could ever explain what I went through mentally.
31. When [B] died I could not sleep and was given a handful of sleeping tablets from my GP to get me by. My husband at the time would wake me in the night as I was sobbing and crying in my sleep, this happened every night. I was then diagnosed with depression and I decided to tell my GP at the time that my brother had died of AIDS. The doctor just looked at me and did not offer any support or advice. In fact he did not comment and I was given a five day prescription of sleeping tablets and was told that was all I could have. My depression has turned into more long standing mental health issues over the years.
32. In [GRO-B] when I was about [GRO-B] years of age, I decided to come out of my career in medical care to become a social worker and I started a university course in social science. I only did the first year as I could not continue due to my declining mental health. I recall I was in class sat at a desk and people were laughing, I assumed they were laughing at me. My mental health had slowly become worse and had developed into paranoia.
33. I am now diagnosed with [GRO-B] and I am prone to panic and anxiety attacks. I have not been out of the house in about [GRO-B] years because I

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fear everything and anything even though I do not always know to what or why. Last year I was also diagnosed with diabetes.

34. I have also developed health related anxiety. I went to the doctors constantly with my children regarding their weight, (I bullied them into eating) fevers and anything. I was told I was an over protective parent at the time. All my children have grown up now but I still suffer from health related anxiety with weight loss and these fears now are focused onto my dog, her eating habits and her weight.

35. I used to be happy go lucky but over the years [B] death and the way he died has got to me. I put it down to not having counselling at the time.

36. [B] infection affected all of my family. I feel that a tombstone was placed on my mother after [B] died, she only lived 5 years after he died. It was tough for my father, he lost his son then his wife, he was happy go lucky, he lost his spark and the will to live. He died about 12 years ago. We were a close knit family but we just became lost and we forgot about anything else in our lives.

37. Whilst [B] was in the [GRO-B] my youngest son had an accident and needed a blood transfusion. Because of what was happening to [B] was very distressed and refused to let him have the transfusion. Social Services became involved asking why I was refusing the treatment. I was told not to tell anyone about what was happening to [B] so I did not tell Social Services. My husband at the time took control of the situation and was adamant that he would give consent for the transfusion so the treatment then went ahead. It was a very difficult and frightening time for us all.

38. My husband had lung cancer and also needed a blood transfusion. I was acting so irrationally and was so worried; I did not let him have the transfusion. In the end my husband said he had to have it and he did.

39. No one ever really knew of [B] condition and I found that rather bizarre. We never told anyone due to the stigma around at the time. It already felt like we were all lepers and so we thought that if we told everyone then we would be ill judged and bullied.

40. I told my husband about [B] condition however I did not tell my children until they were old enough to cope with it. My two eldest girls, who were more [B] age, I told when they were 20/22 years of age. [B] went off the rails. My youngest child I did not tell until few weeks ago when the Inquiry was about to start.

41. Other than for the purpose of this statement, I have never spoken to anyone outside of the family about what happened.

Section 6. Treatment/care/support

42. [B] was never offered any counselling, support or any help. He was terrified when he was given the results of his HIV test.

Section 7. Financial Assistance

43. My daughter, [GRO-B], applied in recent weeks to the EIBSS for financial assistance but I do not know much about the application as she has dealt with it all.

44. EIBSS have told [GRO-B] that they doubt I will receive any payment as I am not a spouse, but they will give me a final decision in 30 days. This will therefore be around 14/15 June.

Section 8. Other Issues

45. We have applied for B medical records but the NHS say they have never received them. The hospital where he died have said they sent off the notes though.

46. We are doing this for B we want justice for him.

Section 9. Anonymity, disclosure and redaction

47. I confirm that I do wish to apply for anonymity and that I understand this statement will be published and disclosed as part of the Inquiry.

48. I do not wish to be called to give oral evidence as I do not go out of my house.

Statement of Truth

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

Signe

GRO-B

Dated: 13 June 2019