



Witness Name: GRO-B

Statement No: WITN7617 001

Exhibits: WITN7617 002

Dated:

INFECTED BLOOD INQUIRY

WRITTEN STATEMENT OF GRO-B

I provide this statement in response to a request under Rule 9 of the Inquiry Rules 2006 dated 16 December 2022.

I, GRO-B will say as follows: -

Section 1: Introduction

1. My full name is GRO-B and my date of birth is GRO-B 1958. My address is known to the Inquiry. I am not married and have no children. I am an ex-registered nurse.
2. I wish to speak about my late partner, GRO-B: P born on GRO-B 1943 P was infected with HIV as a result of a transfusion.
3. I confirm that I am not currently legally represented and that I am happy for the Inquiry Team to assist me with my statement.
4. I also confirm that I have had the option to seek anonymity and the Inquiry's statement of approach explained to me. I can confirm that I am requesting anonymity.
5. The inquiries criticisms procedure and the 'right of reply' has been explained to me.

Section 2: How Infected

ANONYMOUS

6. [P] was born in Scotland on [GRO-B] 1943. He was in good health and was a very fit person who was in the RAF for about 25 years. We met in a pub while I was doing agency nursing at [GRO-B] Hospital. He initially left the RAF to work for the Ministry of Defence, before leaving to work for [GRO-B] [GRO-B] as a telex supervisor.
7. In late 1984 [P] had an accident at work. He and his colleague were in a room where filing cabinets were piled up high. The colleague was 8 months pregnant and a cabinet fell on top of her. [P] tried to help to lift it off her, but the cabinet also fell on him in the process.
8. At first [P] was not taken to the hospital. It was only after going to a doctor that he went to the hospital where he was told that he smashed all the vertebrae in his neck. [P] was referred to a neurologist at the [GRO-B] and was told that if he did not have this particular operation he would be paralysed.
9. I told [P] to have it done. [P]'s workplace treated [P] poorly and tried to encourage [P] to get back into work when he was not in a position to do so. They forced him to go back to work even though he was not well which impacted his insurance claim. The way they treated him at his work was so horrible.
10. [P] went to [GRO-B] for a new operation which was known as the Crockhard Procedure. He had this surgery around 1984 or 1985. [GRO-B] [GRO-B] was the name of the surgeon performing the procedure. The procedure involved taking different parts of the body and fusing them to the spine. It was major surgery which involved opening the neck and hip. [GRO-B] worried about the operation but I told him that he had to go ahead with the surgery.
11. During the surgery there was no mention about any transfusion. I remember seeing a bag of blood above [P]'s head. When my sister came to see him, I told her not to show her shock to [P]. Luckily [P] made it through the surgery but his arms were never the same due to his muscle usage.
12. I don't recall if [P] was ever given any details about the risks but [P] did not

ANONYMOUS

have any other risk factors, he had no tattoos, piercings, he didn't use any intravenous drugs or have any other transfusions other than the one he had in 1984. He was a very fit bloke before going into hospital.

13. We were living together and had joint accounts. We couldn't marry at that stage but we would have done if we could have. We had a fantastic relationship and bought a house together in Essex. We were a couple but didn't have a sexually intimate relationship.

14. After the operation we went together on holiday and everything was fine. P was very tired but he worked hard. He was still working at GRO-B as a telex supervisor, he really loved his work. I used to go meet him for lunch and had to get clearance to get into the building.

15. P worked every day and stated that he was working for us, so we could have a good future. We also had a golden retriever. P told me not to work so much and wanted me to stop work completely. P kept going to work even on Saturdays. We hardly go to see each other sometimes because we were working different shifts and the company that P worked for was American.

16. During this period P got very bad shingles. I was a state enrolled nurse who mainly specialised in geriatric and psychiatric care but I was aware of how bad his shingles was. P would get so tired all the time.

17. P had one bout of shingles but did not get anything else to make me suspicious. We moved from GRO-B in 1995 to Essex because we wanted a garden for the dog. I wish we did not move away from London.

18. In around August 1997 P was made redundant which knocked me for six. He was treated very badly by his work and was pushed out because computers were coming in. He was training staff at his job and then they made him redundant.

19. One day P collapsed and lost all the powers in his legs. I called an ambulance and P was taken to the Basildon hospital, this happened a number of times.

ANONYMOUS

They gave him a couple paracetamols and then sent him home. [P] was always taken to the Basildon Hospital which was [GRO-B] miles from us. They were dreadful and just checked [P] over and said there was nothing to see here. He kept going backwards and forwards to and from the hospital which was absolutely terrible.

20. [P]'s GP was aware of his condition but [P] was always sent to the hospital. The hospital did not scan [GRO-B] or do anything which was so frustrating.

21. In the interim period [P] also picked up pneumonia. We decided more needed to be done so [P] went private to a neurologist in [GRO-B]. The private consultant sent [P] back to Basildon. [P] could not breath and they took their time but eventually but [P] on a medical ward.

22. They did a blood test but I did not know what it was for. This was a test for HIV. I asked the hospital that whatever the result was, to let me tell [P] but they did not listen to me. I did not get in the hospital in time because I could not drive. By the time I got there, I knew they had told him and he had just given up. The last thing that we expected was that it would be HIV.

23. In late 1997 [P] was still in the Basildon Hospital and they put him into a side ward. [P] was deteriorating quite quickly. I had to sit with [P] and talk to him and tell him that he had to live. When I went to go visit him at the Basildon the way [P] was treated was so awful. Sometimes he had been left with faeces and it was disgusting. They also ruined his soiled clothes as they threw bleach on them.

24. While he was at Basildon, I was frightened to leave him. He also had thrush but they still did nothing. Everyone in the ward knew that [P] was HIV positive because the nurses kept telling everyone. As the hospital was [GRO-B] miles away, I had to get a Green Line bus to get there and tried to stay as late as I could.

25. When I got to the hospital there would be patients queuing to see [P] to look at the AIDs man. I hope [P] was not aware of this. When I was visiting [P] the nurses did more work but they left him alone once I left him.

ANONYMOUS

26. Patients at the hospital thought that I was P's private nurse. Sometimes when I was shopping people would come up to me and say you look after that man with AIDs which put a lot of pressure on me.
27. A friend of mine worked nights on the ward and said to me that she did not even recognise P. She said that the Basildon were treating him very badly and P had to get out of there. I called the consultant and said that I wanted him moved. Dr Skinner from the Royal London Hospital was there within the hour. She took one look at P and said she wanted him moved straight away.
28. P was then moved to GRO-B Hospital around late November 1997 until February/March 1998. Before going into hospital GRO-B was originally 16/17 stone and around 6ft 1. In hospital at the Basildon his weight had dropped to 6 stone. Dr Skinner could not believe the state that GRO-B was in.
29. Once P was at GRO-B: H3 he was looked after much better. The staff at GRO-B were lovely to me and P. He was at GRO-B for 6 – 8 weeks. He couldn't walk and there was one occasion where an agency nurse injected P's neck. I caught her and asked her what she was doing. The sister told her to get off the ward and not to come back. Other than this minor issue, I could not fault the care at GRO-B though as P was being looked after properly.
30. After staying at GRO-B P was taken to GRO-B in GRO-B which was a rehabilitation hospital to help him to walk. P was so determined that he would not leave the hospital in a wheelchair P started to put the weight back on and his HIV was under control. He was given AZT and a combination of other tablets. Some of the side effects affected his heart and cholesterol.
31. I thought at the time there had to be a vaccine or something. They treat HIV amazingly now. GRO-B treated P so well and all the staff were lovely. He did eventually walk again and he did walk out of the hospital. I was so proud of him.
32. It was difficult at the time because we couldn't tell anyone. P's family kept asking why he was in hospital and I tried to make excuses and put them off

ANONYMOUS

visitors.

33. P also engaged with the HIV organisation Hanks that took P to visit various people. I was a bit annoyed with this as some of them were drug addicts but they did help me with getting lifts to the hospital as I could not drive at the time and always had to take the bus.
34. Hanks encouraged P to write a memoir about this HIV. P was determined to write the memoir and then send it to his mum and family. I was worried that there would be a really bad reaction and told him to tell them he had cancer instead.
35. When his mother found out she was devastated. One of P's sisters took the news well but the other was horrible. P and I were going to retire and buy a house in GRO-B which was where P was from. We flew together to GRO-B and his family picked us up. P was not in a good state at this point. We stayed with his sister and P had an explosion with his bowel. There were faeces everywhere and I did not know what to do.
36. We also stayed with P's other sister, GRO-B: S2. She was horrible and did not treat P well when we stayed with her.
37. P told me before he went that he wanted me to learn how to drive. When I passed my test, he was over the moon for me. I got top marks on my theory and practical which gave us freedom to travel. P wanted to drive but I just could not let him. He looked so vulnerable at the time and I was caring for him 24/7.
38. In GRO-B 2021, P told me that he had had enough, he looked me straight in the eyes when he said it. We went to the hospital to check his heart. P was put on an exercise machine which exerted him very quickly.
39. P was then taken to the Basildon Hospital which he hated. P looked so white and said that he wanted to go to the toilet. P was on the toilet and then I started screaming for help. The retired GP with us panicked and then I had to press the crash button. The hospital staff cut off all of P's clothes and started pumping

ANONYMOUS

him. They tried to resuscitate him for 40 minutes but he was gone.

40. The autopsy for [P] was done in [GRO-B] I asked if it could be done before [GRO-B] [P] did not die of HIV but of heart disease. Everything we had was in joint names so [P] not dying of HIV was good [P] kept the HIV under such good control that it was undetectable. It was a privilege to look after [P] He died on the [GRO-B] 2021 and was 57 when he passed.

Section 3: Other Infections

41. As far as I'm aware [P] did not contract any other infections other than HIV.

Section 4: Consent

42. I don't know whether [P] had been tested without his knowledge or consent or used for research purposes.
43. I do not believe [P] was provided with adequate information about his infection or how to deal with it. If I said anything and asked for more details they would ask me to leave.

Section 5: Impact

44. [P]'s diagnosis had a huge physical and mental impact on me. I was constantly under pressure that people would find out about [P]'s HIV including his family. I was frightened to tell anyone where I lived and didn't want a brick thrown through my window. I had no support at all.
45. We never dreamt that [P] would get HIV. I still feel numb thinking about it.
46. [P] started smoking again because he was so stressed out. He had menthol ones and I tried to hide them over the house but he still managed to find them. It was a nightmare.
47. I complained about his care at Basildon Hospital after he came out of Basildon. I kept complaining and complaining and eventually managed to speak to someone. As a result, they started a review.

ANONYMOUS

48. The result of the independent review in 1999 detailed that they were appalled with [P]'s treatment and that he was sent to A&E six times and then being sent back with paracetamol which was not right. Since that review, the whole procedure for the UK changed that now if someone presents themselves twice, they will have to be tested for HIV.
49. We were refunded for the private consultation and the clothes that were destroyed by the nurses when they put bleach on [P]'s clothes. Getting [P] out of that hospital was the best thing I ever did.
50. While [P] received excellent care at [GRO-B]s and [GRO-B] the treatment at Basildon Hospital was completely awful. It was voted the worst hospital in the country. I was always scared stiff because I never knew what I was going to go back to when I left him at that hospital.
51. When [P] died, all his benefits and pensions were stopped. They said that [P] had died at the wrong time of the month. Luckily me and [P] had joint accounts. The Royal British Legion also said that they could not provide anything to me after [P]'s passing because [P] and I were not married.
52. I also went to [GRO-B] as [P] had a pension there and they awarded me an independence pension which is not a big amount but we relied on one another and I still get this now.
53. An MP from [GRO-B] put me in touch with Liberty. I spoke with a solicitor there called [GRO-B] Liberty asked me if I wanted to go to the European Court of Human Rights because I was entitled to nothing. Liberty said it was so unfair and it should be a civil partnership and I should get something. I said I would go anonymously because I still did not want everyone to know.
54. The case was [GRO-B] and there was a lot of paperwork involved. It went to the [GRO-B] and only 1% of cases went to the [GRO-B] [GRO-B] This happened about a year after [P] died around 2002.
55. I was so angry and that I had been treated like dirt when trying to get money

ANONYMOUS

from [P]'s pensions. Liberty said that I shouldn't have to go through this. They said it might not help me but it could help a lot of people in the same situation who had also been treated like dirt. I know I did not have to do it but I did it for [P]. The outcome was civil partnerships starting.

56. The obstructions of the Labour Government were disgusting. They took all the credit for it but they did nothing. It must have cost them millions to fight against me. They did all they could to obstruct me.

57. I was fighting for financial rights and financial stability. Because without a civil partnership I could not claim his army pension or civil service pension. I neglected my own health looking after [P]. I did not claim those pensions but I did it for future generations.

58. Liberty were wonderful and told me from the start it would not benefit me but it would benefit others. I helped benefit the next generation of gay people. I know I didn't have to do it but I did it for [P]. I was so pleased. I think in December 2005 they allowed civil partnerships. [P] and I would have been the first people to get married if we could.

59. It's lovely that it came through but it angered me too. I did it for [GRO-B] because I was so fed up with the way that they treated me. [GRO-B] was so lovely and Liberty still keep in touch now and again. Young people today do not realise how lucky they are. I wish we had that. It's all changed completely.

60. I was like a zombie at that time. I think it was good for my mind to have something to focus on at that time.

61. [P] and I did not tell anybody about his diagnosis because I was frightened that they might set my house on fire or beat us up. They would treat us like lepers. If people were so nasty in the hospital, imagine what people living next to you would be like. I still don't tell people.

62. I did not tell a soul until 2018 other than [P] telling him family. In 2018 I was working with a psychologist called [GRO-B]. He spent a lot of time with

ANONYMOUS

me and we just clicked. Eventually it just came out about P and HIV.

63. GRO-B said he won't tell anyone but it was a privilege to share that information. When I told my GP, she was shocked and had no idea about what had happened to P and myself.

64. I feel writing this statement will mentally help me a lot. I feel like P is here today and what happened to him is getting recognised for once. The treatment he received was so terrible at Basildon but the experience at GRO-B and GRO-B was much better.

65. When P died, P's family were trying to get half of the house and it was so stressful. I was going through a really hard time and I was trying to get a copy of the will. They kept saying they should have the house but I kept telling them that it was my home.

66. When P died in 2001 I decided to leave Essex in 2006. The memories within that house and of P were too much to bear. I wanted to get away from it and moved to GRO-B but this move did not help.

67. I was so happy with P but since he has passed many times I have felt like taking my own life because I feel very lonely.

Section 6: Treatment/Care/Support

68. P was given AZT for his HIV and also a combination of other drugs. The drugs worked on some people but did not work on others. I feel that the drugs were hit and miss and people were used as guinea pigs.

69. P was also seen by Mr GRO-B at the GRO-B hospital in GRO-B which was GRO-B miles from us and then transferred to Basildon Hospital. P was also seen by Dr GRO-B after he came back from GRO-B. Research may have been done on P but I was not aware of it.

70. I believe that people with HIV were treated like guinea pigs so for P to be undetectable was amazing.

ANONYMOUS

71. No counselling or psychological support was made available to me.

Section 7: Financial Support

72. When we applied for [P]'s medical records I got in touch with [GRO-B] who worked as a solicitor. It took nearly 18-19 months to produce the medical notes and at this time [P] was very sick. [GRO-B] said that [P] should have got £25,000 in support from the MacFarlane Trust but we could not.

73. I have been informed about the Terrence Higgins Trust by the Inquiry Investigator and hopefully the Trust will be able to assist me in my application for support/compensation from EIBSS.

Section 8: Other Issues

74. The government knew that the blood was infected and I cannot understand why they allowed that to happen. If I got some financial compensation, I would like to dedicate a memorial to [P] at [GRO-B] and [GRO-B] Hospital because they were so good to him.

Exhibit

75. I have sent the Investigators a copy of [P]'s memoir (1 page), they are going to exhibit it to this statement as WITN7617 002. I had hidden it away because I didn't want anyone to find it. I showed it to my physiologist, who read it out to me, I found it very moving.

76. I think it was written in about 1999, the group HANKS encouraged him to write it initially, then there is an update, that I think would have been added at the end of 1999. I didn't want him to write it but I know that it gave him piece of mind. It is very accurate to his feelings

ANONYMOUS

Statement of Truth

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

Signed

GRO-B

Dated 1ST FEB 2023