

ANONYMOUS

Witness Name:

GRO-B

Statement No: WITN2652001

Dated: 22 February 2019

INFECTED BLOOD INQUIRY

FIRST WRITTEN STATEMENT OF MS

GRO-B

GRO-B

I provide this statement in response to a request under Rule 9 of the Inquiry Rules 2006 dated 12 December 2018. I adopt the paragraph numbering in the Rule 9 request for ease of reference.

GRO-B

will say as follows:-

1. Introduction

1. My name is GRO-B and my address is GRO-B

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GRO-B

2. I am making this statement because my Dad GRO-B: F was infected with HIV and hepatitis C through contaminated blood and died or GRO-B 1997 when I was 4 years old.

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2. How Infected

1. My Dad [H] had severe haemophilia A, also called factor VIII (FVIII) deficiency or classic haemophilia.
2. My Mum [GRO-B] will provide more detail about how Dad came to be infected in her witness statement to the Inquiry.

3. Other Infections

1. My Mum [GRO-B] will provide more detail about other infections Dad suffered in her witness statement to the Inquiry.
2. I am aware from the available medical records that Dad was diagnosed with non-Hodgkin's lymphoma in April 1996. He was then admitted to hospital in November 1996 with a chest infection.
3. In January 1997 Dad had Pneumocystis pneumonia (PCP).

4. Consent

1. My Mum, [GRO-B] will provide more detail about consent in her witness statement to the Inquiry.

5. Impact

1. I only have a few memories of my Dad being alive. I remember being on an aeroplane going on holiday and him feeding me salami. My Mum has told me that we went on a lovely holiday to Tuscany about a year or so before he died so that's where we were flying to.
2. Dad also had another holiday to Sicily with Mum in the year before he died. I don't have any memories of him standing up or walking around. I

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remember him having a bed in the study at home. I have a brief memory of the Christmas before he died when he was really unwell but he tried to pull himself up to joining the family celebrations. I remember he used to pick me up and tell me silly stories. The rest of my memories of that time are just of being a kid, playing in the garden, sitting at the dinner table and very brief images of our house. The aeroplane image is definitely my strongest memory.

3. I think that even though I was very little, I did notice that things were different for our family than they were for other families, although I don't think that I would have understood that this was because Dad was so ill.
4. I do have a memory of the day that I was told that Dad had died. I remember being in the living room and **GRO-B** my brother being really upset. It was very strange for me to see my brother cry. My first reaction was to copy him so I was crying dramatically. I knew that something bad had happened but I did not know what I was supposed to do or how I was supposed to act.
5. My brother **GRO-B** recalls that I started jumping on the sofa and saying 'Dad is dead, Dad is dead!' I think this was a reaction to the pressure I felt act in the right way in the face of such bad news. I knew that Dad wasn't there anymore and I didn't understand why.
6. I have brief memories of the funeral which was at the **GRO-B** church at **GRO-B**. I remember looking down on what was happening from a balcony. I don't remember much else from the day.
7. I had recently started nursery when Dad died and I was completely terrified and didn't want to be there. I wasn't a confident child and I was closely attached to my Mum. As soon as I started nursery I developed selective mutism. I never really spoke to anybody at school up until at least year four or year five. The staff at school didn't believe that I was

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so vocal at home. It was really concerning for them that I wasn't speaking. I think that the reason I didn't speak was that I did not want attention on me even though my mutism meant that I was on the receiving end of bullying from other children.

8. Mum tried to explain to me about Dad dying. I remember she tried drawing therapy books where you mark on the person where on their body something is wrong with them. I remember one of the marks that she made was on Dad's knee and for a while I thought he had died of a bad knee.
9. My shyness persisted into high school. My teacher insisted in my year five class that I had to talk but I was still painfully shy. I would choose friends who were louder and more outgoing than me and who could speak on my behalf.
10. I didn't feel safe anywhere other than at home. I spent a lot of time in after-school clubs and at friend houses and I was very anxious and clingy. I think the whole family had separation anxiety after Dad died but for me it carried on for much longer than you would expect. I was overwhelmed with all of these feelings but I wasn't able to verbalise them.
11. Three girls from my primary school came up to high school with me so I was not alone but I did find the transition very difficult. I didn't go to the same high school that my brother **GRO-B** had been to. Mum has told me that the **GRO-B** meeting place helped her to secure a place for me at the **GRO-B** School. Mum managed to get me to attend things like drama and music classes, all activities designed to bring me out of my shell. This was when I was aged around 10 and 11.
12. I was known at the **GRO-B** school as the quiet one. I didn't really fit in any more with the three girls I had known from primary school so I felt quite isolated. It was only in year 12 that I started socialising. Six form

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was a real breaking point for me. I feel that I have made so much progress but still to this day it really hits me hard if someone says I am quiet after I have battled so hard against shyness for my entire life. I still have the tendency to go inward if I am upset, experiencing emotions and not knowing what to do with them and how to express them.

13. For a long time, I disconnected from what had happened with Dad. Mum had to sit me down and have a conversation with me as there was a good chance that I was a carrier of haemophilia. This had serious implications for the future if I wanted to have children.
14. I did a fine art degree after high school. Going back over the story of my Dad with my Mum caused me to grieve for him all over again as an adult. The grieving process inspired my artwork and I produced a series based around my relationship with Dad. I became interested in the artistic expression of grief and loss and I produced a project using muslin faces layered over each other called GRO-B I feel now that my artwork provides me with the voice that I didn't have before.
15. When I first found out that I was a carrier of haemophilia, I thought no one would want to be with me. I thought that nobody would want to have a haemophiliac child with me. I have found that sometimes telling people that I am haemophilia carrier leads to the whole story coming out about Dad and what we went through.
16. On one occasion I remember my friend's mum asking me lots of questions about what had happened with Dad and I felt really put on the spot and didn't know what to say so I'm very careful now about who I tell. Both myself and my brother GRO-B have stories about times when we were 'outed' by people supposed to be our friends.

17. I am training now to be a primary school teacher at the GRO-B GRO-B however, I am currently on a placement in Wales which enables me to be close to my family.

6. **Treatment/Care Support**

1. In terms of support, my brother was old enough to attend a bereavement group but I wasn't and as a result there was no support for me at all. In fact, my Mum has told me how she struggled to know how best to communicate with me and support me when Dad died and there was no support available for her either.
2. I think the secrecy that surrounded Dad's death may have been a huge factor in causing the selective mutism I suffered from as a child.

7. **Financial Assistance**

1. My Mum, GRO-B will provide more detail about financial assistance in her witness statement to the Inquiry.

8. **Other Issues**

1. I am pleased in a way that the Inquiry has come up and I now feel that I have the opportunity to revisit what happened with Dad and be involved in his life in some way. This has made me feel connected with Dad and with his past. For a long time when I was little I felt that my Dad was missing but I feel like I understand him more now as a person and that he is missing in one sense but still present in another.

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Statement of Truth

I believe that the facts stated in this Witness Statement are true.

Signed ..

GRO-B

Dated.....

✓ 22/02/19