

Witness Name: Daniel Farrugia

Statement No: WITN3637001

Exhibits: 0

Dated: November 2019

INFECTED BLOOD INQUIRY

FIRST WRITTEN STATEMENT OF DANIEL FARRUGIA

I, Daniel Farrugia will say as follows:-

Section 1. Introduction

1. My name is Daniel Farrugia. My date of birth is the GRO-C 1965. I live at GRO-C I am married with two children, and four grandchildren. I am currently unemployed.
2. I make this witness statement in relation to my late father, Victor Charles Farrugia who was born on the GRO-C 1939. He passed away on the 23 August 2002 as a result of being infected with contaminated blood. His death certificate states that his cause of death was Bronchopneumonia, HIV and Haemophilia A.
3. This witness statement has been prepared without the benefit of access to my late father's medical records. I requested my father's medical records but I was told that they could not find them and his medical records were missing.

Section 2. How Affected

4. My father had mild Haemophilia A. I do not know when he was diagnosed.
5. I do not know the name of the Factor VIII (FVIII) blood products that my father received.

6. My father was under the care of Dr Brian Colvin at the Royal London Hospital, Whitechapel. Sometimes my father couldn't get to Whitechapel for treatment so the medics visited him at his home.
7. I do not know the exact date my father received infected blood products but he did have a bad accident in the mid 1960s, whilst he was on a boat. The hatch of the boat came down and hit him on the head. He was given an ice-pack on the boat and taken to the local hospital in England. They had never heard of a Haemophiliac surviving what he survived. It is highly likely that he received blood products to treat his injury at the hospital. They cut out part of his skull so his brain could swell. When he came out of the coma he was not able to read or write. He did not know who we (my mother and I) were. He did pull through and he was mentioned in the World Medical Journal because he survived such a traumatic injury.
8. I don't believe my father was given any information of the risk associated with blood products. He thought the doctors were doing what was best for him. The doctors never told me of any risks involved.
9. As a result of my father receiving contaminating blood products, he was infected with HIV and Hepatitis C (Hep C).
10. My Uncle Barry was also infected with HIV. When Uncle Barry found out his brothers, including my father started to worry because they all had received similar treatment. My Uncle David told my father that he needed to get tested and I believe this was in the mid 1980's, approximately 6 months before my Uncle Barry died. My father received a letter just before my Uncle Barry died stating he had tested positive for HIV.
11. I do not know what information was provided to my father when he found out about the infection. They just said he was HIV positive and put him on AZT treatment soon after.
12. I believe information about the infection should have been provided earlier to my father. I believe the doctors should have told him when they found out

that the blood products were infected and that there was a potential risk of infection. He believed that the blood products he was receiving were safe.

13. I don't think my father was told about the risk of others being infected as a result of the infection.

Section 3. Other Infections

14. I spoke to a doctor who had a scheme for people who were infected with cirrhosis of the liver. He signed a letter saying that it was a major probability that my father was also infected with Hep C.

15. I have heard about Mad Cow disease but I don't know if my father was infected with it.

Section 4. Consent

16. I believe my father was tested without being given adequate and full information. I think things were going on which my father did not know about.

17. I do not know if my father was tested for the purposes of research.

Section 5. Impact of the Infection

18. After my father's boating accident he fought back and learnt to read and write again. Gradually he changed and was not the man my mother married. They then split up but stayed good friends. My mother met another man and got married and we moved to Denmark in 1976.

19. My father used to drive to Whitechapel Hospital, but it became impossible to find a parking spot. His licence was later taken away as he was not fit enough to drive. He got fed up and missed appointments as a result so the nurses started coming down from the hospital to treat him.

20. My father was always tired and very fatigued. He could not leave the house until after 13.00 and then he would only stay out for about an hour and a half because he would get tired very easily. I recall my father having a lot of problems with his stomach and I am not sure if it was because of the infection.

When I went back to see him after he was diagnosed with HIV, I noticed he had lost a lot of weight. I know in relation to the above he didn't have any trouble before the infection.

21. He was getting worse and worse and I went to England to look after him. He required 24 hour care. The council said they weren't geared to come over and look after a HIV patient. He was put in a 'Mildmay' which is like a home for a short period and then my father was told by the council that they did not have the funds for it anymore. As a result he went back to his own home after a few days and he paid privately for someone to come and look after him.
22. A month after, I received a phone call from my Uncle David saying I needed to come to England. My father had something in his blood which was giving him a fever. I finally got to the hospital and I was told that he had been unconscious for a while. I spoke to the nurse on the ward and told her that "if he goes down hill again please don't bring him back, because he wasn't mentally there anymore". My father was saying weird things. He didn't really know who I was. When I left the hospital he was still saying weird things.
23. Whilst I was in Denmark, I received a telephone call from my Uncle David and he told me that my father had passed away the night before. My father never got the chance to see my world in Denmark because he was never well enough to travel.
24. My father was treated with AZT after he was diagnosed with HIV. He had to take tablets every 4 hours. He took a lot of medication. I believe there were side-effects from the medication that he was taking and the hospital staff told him that if he felt rough then he should go back to the hospital.
25. My Uncle Barry did not have a chance to take any medication, he died before he was given any treatment.
26. I don't know if my father received any treatment for Hep C.
27. I do not know if there was any other treatment which should have been made available to my father at the time.

28. I recall one occasion when my father was in hospital and his toe nails were long. The nurses said they didn't have the staff to cut his toe nails. I threatened to bring a journalist in if they didn't sort it. They must have sent someone to cut his nails, because the following day they were short. The hospital also wouldn't shower him, I had to do it. It was stupid because they couldn't catch anything off him anyway. Maybe they were ignorant about it.
29. My father did not socialise much after he found out about his infected status. He kept a lot to himself. If someone came round and picked him up he would go but he wouldn't otherwise. Before he found out about his infection, my father was a very sociable person and would have talked to anybody in the streets.
30. When my Uncle Barry died it was terrible. I remember him as a fit man who looked after his family. He was a clever man. The last time I saw him, to my knowledge, he was not infected. Then one day my mother came in and told me she had bad news and said Uncle Barry had died of HIV. When I found out my father was infected I knew what was going to happen because of what happened to Uncle Barry. My father was fortunate to live longer than Uncle Barry.
31. I took my children back to England so my father could meet his grandchildren. I visited England more often because I was not sure how long my father had to live. He would have loved to come to Denmark and see the world I lived in, but, as stated above, he was too poorly to travel.
32. Before my father was infected with HIV, he liked to get out of the house everyday and go and sit in the nearby café and talk to people. When it came out that he was HIV positive people in the café would move away from him. The hair dressers refused to cut his hair. My father spoke to the doctor who wrote a letter to 'whom it may concern' stating that he was not contagious just by sitting near him, but nobody paid attention to it. People froze him out and he became isolated within his own home.
33. The stigma affected me because sometimes when I went round to my father's house and had a coffee someone would take my father's parking spot outside

his house to annoy him and cause trouble, even though it was a disabled spot. They wrote 'AIDS scum' on his house. The neighbours somehow found out about his infected status and it just spread from there.

34. People thought my father was gay. The neighbours would say 'here comes the queer' and 'I don't understand how he had you' I would correct them and say he was a Haemophiliac and infected through contaminated blood products but they didn't believe me. They would say that his infection was his own fault. I wanted to say something but my father would tell me to leave it because he was fed up.

Section 6. Treatment/care/support

35. When my father was really ill he had a care worker come to the house but they would only last a week or two and then they would not return when they found out about his infected status. It would then take weeks to find a new one only for them to leave again.
36. My father was not offered any counselling or psychological support. I believe it would have helped had it been offered. There was a nurse at the hospital in Whitechapel and he spoke to her sometimes and I believe she dealt with HIV patients.
37. I was not offered any counselling or psychological support. I believe it would have helped had it been offered.

Section 7. Financial Assistance

38. I know my father received some money from the Macfarlane Trust but I'm not sure how much he received. Maybe it was a weekly payment. I know his rent was quite cheap so maybe they were helping with his rent.

39. My father also received a lump sum payment of around £80,000 but I don't know what Trust or Fund he received it from. My father did not tell me much about his finances.

40. I did not receive any financial assistance from any of the Trust or Funds that were set up.

41. I thought the Macfarlane Trust was good to start with because they were was some acknowledgement that there was some wrong doing. They helped my father and made his life a little easier, financially. My father was not very good at reading or writing as a result of the boating accident, so I believe someone would have helped him apply for the finance assistance.

Section 8. Other Issues

42. They should do the right thing and acknowledge that something did go wrong. I want justice and some answers as to what happened.

Anonymity, disclosure and redaction

43. I am not seeking anonymity. I understand that this statement will be published and disclosed as part of the Inquiry.

44. I do not want to give oral evidence to the Inquiry due to living in Denmark.

Statement of Truth

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

Signed

GRO-C

Dated

26-11-2019