

Witness Name: Angela Elizabeth Farrugia

Statement No: WITN3232001

Exhibits: 0

Dated: September 2019

## INFECTED BLOOD INQUIRY

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### FIRST WRITTEN STATEMENT OF ANGELA ELIZABETH FARRUGIA

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I, ANGELA ELIZABETH FARRUGIA will say as follows:-

#### Section 1. Introduction

1. My name is Angela Farrugia of GRO-C Essex GRO-  
GRO-C My date of birth is GRO-C 1951.
2. I make this statement in relation to my three brothers, Victor, David and Barry Farrugia, all whom have passed away as a result of receiving contaminated blood.
3. Barry's date of birth is GRO-C 1949 and his date of death is 22 September 1986.
4. Victor's date of birth is GRO-C 1939 and his date of death is 23 August 2002.
5. David's date of birth is GRO-C 1942 and his date of death is 3 April 2012.
6. This witness statement has been prepared without the benefit of access to my late brothers' full medical records.

## **Section 2. How infected**

7. All three of my brothers suffered from mild Haemophilia A. This is a condition that has run in my family and many of the women are carriers of the Haemophilia gene.
8. In order to treat any major bleeds, from time to time, my brothers received blood clotting products under the NHS.
9. During our younger years, Victor, David and Barry were treated mainly at the Royal London Hospital and were under the care of Dr GRO-D. Barry was also treated at Cardiff Hospital, Wales for a short while.
10. I do not have exact dates of infection, or details of the exact blood products used on my brothers, but my nephew, Anthony Farrugia would have better knowledge of this from medical notes. Anthony has provided his own witness statement to the Inquiry at WITN1218001.
11. Victor and David both served in the Merchant Navy without any major incidents due to Haemophilia. Barry (the youngest) started a Gas Apprenticeship when he left school, becoming a fully qualified Gas Engineer, again without too much trouble from Haemophilia.
12. They only needed occasionally due to mishaps at work or teeth extractions.
13. After Victor married he left the Navy and worked in the docks. Whilst on duty, he sustained a very serious head injury after an accident on board a ship in dock. He was 27 years old and underwent several brain operations, spending months in hospital, having lost his speech and memory. He recovered enough to be sent home with a metal plate in his skull, and suffered epileptic fits for a long time. This was in 1966 and he was a father to a young son. This will tell you that his Haemophilia itself was not necessarily life threatening.
14. David worked for British Transport Underground from the early 1970s until his retirement. Again, he had a very good work record and mainly treated himself

with compresses and bed rest if he was able and if the bleed was not serious. Occasionally, he would have to go to hospital for treatment, but only if necessary.

15. Barry also had a good work record and I can't remember too many incidents with his bleeding. In fact he got knocked down by a car as a young boy and needed no treatment at all.

16. None of my brothers would have taken the treatment if they had been warned of any risk of possible infections. They led almost "normal" lives with Haemophilia and GRO-C who is 87, also a mild Haemophiliac who was very lucky to not have received any of the infected products. He has had joint problems, but the Haemophilia has not shortened his life.

17. As a result of receiving contaminated blood products my brothers were infected as follows: Barry with HIV, Hepatitis B and Non A Non B Hepatitis; Victor with HIV and Hepatitis C; and David with Hepatitis C.

18. The first signs that all was not right were Barry looking and feeling unwell, losing weight and suffering fatigue. Barry had been receiving the 'New Treatment' for various non-serious bleeds. This was during the early 1980s and it was becoming clearer from press reports that a new 'Gay Plague' was affecting men in The United States. The symptoms these men had were the same as those Barry was suffering from.

19. The media named the disease AIDS and we feared for Barry, although he still did not have it confirmed by the hospital. Since then, we have discovered from his medical notes that it was clear that the hospital were testing him for HIV and Hepatitis.

20. I am not sure of the dates Barry was told he had AIDS and Hepatitis, but he suffered mentally as well as physically, knowing he was dying.

21. Just before Barry died, my eldest brother, Victor, was told he had been infected with HIV whilst receiving contaminated Factor VIII for teeth

extractions. You can imagine the impact of this news on him, after seeing Barry suffer. Victor was never warned of any risk involved in this treatment.

22. David was told in or around 1992 that he had Hepatitis C. Dr GRO-D at the Royal London Hospital told him, and said he probably received contaminated Factor VIII concentrate during the 1970s.

### **Section 3. Other Infections**

23. I do not know if my brothers were exposed to any other infected as a result of being given contaminated blood products.

24. I am aware that David was informed he had been exposed to vCJD.

### **Section 4. Consent**

25. I believe that my brothers were treated and tested without their knowledge or consent and without being given full or adequate information.

26. I do not know if my brothers were treated and tested for the purposes of research.

### **Section 5. Impact of the Infection**

27. Barry turned into a shadow of himself and it was clear he was very ill. He was only 37 years old, with a family. His liver was severely damaged by various strains of the Hepatitis virus; all contracted via blood products. In consequence, he suffered more and more bleeds, and received more and more contaminated products. Due to having AIDS, Barry's immune system was extremely weak and made him more susceptible to other infections as well. He had a mental breakdown and was sectioned under the Mental Health Act. A short time later, he passed away. I saw him the night before he passed away and all I can say is that it was horrifying to watch him suffering as his liver failed and he choked because of the thrush in his throat.

28. Victor was given AZT drugs which did help him live years longer, but he was in bad health from 1986 until his death in 2002. When Victor developed full blown AIDS and the drugs stopped working, my brother David and I tried to get him into a hospice, which was difficult as nobody knew how long he would live. There was one Hospice in Shoreditch in which he stayed for a while. We had carers come to his home, but it was very limited as to what they would do. It was obvious they feared his infections. They wouldn't help him wash, and refused all bodily contact with him, therefore, until he finally went into hospital to die, David and I had to attend to his personal needs. Victor was 63 years old when he died.

29. After losing both his younger brother Barry and then, in 2002, his elder brother Victor, who were both dual infected, David suffered the anguish of finding out that he too was infected with Hepatitis C. He naturally assumed he would develop AIDS at some point, even though he was assured his HIV test was negative.

30. David retired early due to ill health as the Hepatitis C caused numerous health problems. He and his wife Madeleine retired to Cambridgeshire where he was a patient of Addenbrooke's Hospital. He tried to clear the virus with Interferon treatment, but he could not stand the side effects and it made him very ill. His mental as well as physical health declined, due to the Hepatitis C virus. David died suddenly of a brain haemorrhage 6 years ago, aged 69.

31. I do not know how Barry or Victor's infected status has impacted upon their treatment, medical or dental care for other conditions. I know that David had to wait for the last appointment of the day at the dentist because a risk of infection

32. The devastation their deaths caused to me and my brother's families is beyond description.

33. The stigma that surrounded their illnesses was very upsetting. Victor had AIDS SCUM scrawled on his car and so called "friends" shunned him. Victor



suffered years of graffiti on his car and front door. When Barry went into hospital for the final time, he was treated like a leper by some of the staff. I know this was due to ignorance in the 1980s but it didn't make it any easier to watch my loved ones being treated like that. Furthermore, the funeral directors refused to embalm David's body due to his Hepatitis C.

34. After Barry's death, his family fell apart as his wife returned to Wales with their youngest son Paul selling the family home. Please refer to Anthony's statement for more information regarding what happened after Barry's death. My own daughters were still at school when their Uncle Barry died and they couldn't tell their school friends what was wrong with him because of the stigma associated with AIDS at that time.

#### **Section 6. Treatment/care/support**

35. I would like to refer to Anthony's statement regarding information on treatment, care and support.

#### **Section 7. Financial Assistance**

36. I would like to refer to Anthony's statement regarding information on financial assistance.

#### **Section 8. Other Issues**

37. I hope and pray that the Inquiry will bring answers and an assurance that this can never happen again, GRO-C  
GRO-C. I also hope, my nephews, Tony and David Farrugia are rightly compensated for the hardship they endured for years as a direct result of their father (Barry) dying. Furthermore, the family all want to know why and how it happened, and whose decision was it to carry on using contaminated products after they knew it would probably kill the patient.

**Anonymity**

38. I do not want to remain anonymous and understand this statement will be published as part of the Inquiry.

39. I do not want to give oral evidence to the Inquiry.

**Statement of Truth**

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

Signed...

GRO-C

Dated

5/9/2019