

INFECTED BLOOD INQUIRY

FIRST WRITTEN STATEMENT OF VINCENT BARRY FARRUGIA

I provide this statement in response to a request under Rule 9 of the Inquiry rules 2006 dated 17th September 2019. I adopt the paragraph numbering in the Rule 9 request for ease of reference.

I, Vincent Barry Farrugia, will say as follows:-

1. **Introduction**

1. My name is Vincent Barry Farrugia. My date of birth is GRO-C 1968 and my address is known to the Inquiry.

2. **How Affected**

1. I write this statement in relation to my late father, Barry Daniel Farrugia. My father was a mild haemophiliac and I recall him having small bleeds.
2. My earliest memory of my father's haemophilia was when I was 14 years old. I recall one occasion when he was brushing his teeth he pulled his back out which subsequently caused him to have a bleed.

3. Around the same time my father developed an inhibitor. This meant it became more difficult to treat his haemophilia. When he developed the inhibitor he needed more treatment. I remember him being treated with Cryoprecipitate and Factor VIII.
4. I also remember my father self-treating. We had ice packs in the freezer for when he injured himself. I believe we were living in Dagenham when my father started self-treating for his haemophilia.
5. When I was younger, my father would never let his haemophilia get in the way of his time with his children. He would still take us to the park, run about and play games with us.
6. My mother, Cheryl Farrugia's, statement lists the treatments my father received for his haemophilia, these included; Haemophill, Armour Factor VIII, NHS Lister and Porcine Factor.
7. I recall my father receiving treatment for haemophilia at Royal London Hospital, Whitechapel and University Hospital Wales, Cardiff. From the late 1970s to the early 1980s was the period in which my father's health began to decline.
8. From 1983 onwards I remember the press began to report on the AIDS virus. At the time the press would scaremonger and state AIDS was a virus which mainly affected homosexuals, however there was the odd report which said haemophiliacs were also affected by the virus.
9. Following the publicity AIDS began to receive in the early 1980s, I noticed many of my friends began to give me a wide berth. By this I mean I found many friends began to distance themselves. I was no longer invited around their houses for tea or to socialise with them.
10. It was revealed in February 1985 that my father had tested positive for HIV. However, looking at back at that period in the early 1980s, it was clear to me

that my father was not well. Before he received his diagnosis he was often low in energy and gaunt.

11. When my father received his AIDS diagnosis I was not shocked, it was just confirmation as I believed he had the virus for a while before he received his diagnosis.

3. **Other infections**

1. According to my mother's statement my father developed Organic Brain Syndrome, CMV and EBV infections. As a result of the AIDS virus I recall my father having oral thrush, warts, frequent cramps and lesions on his skin.
2. My father's mental health also deteriorated as time went on. He started to experience the effects of psychosis. I will discuss this in greater detail later in my statement.

4. **Consent**

1. I would say my father was tested and treated without his knowledge as during the final six months of his life he wasn't able to provide consent as he no longer had capacity.

5. **Impact**

1. My father told me he was HIV positive a few months before my 18th birthday. I remember saying to him, "I already know Dad". Most of the conversations were about my father's brother Andrew who had also received contaminated blood. My father asked me if I knew what it meant to have HIV.
2. As my father's health went into decline so did his mental health. He was a big, strong man, standing at 6'3. I recall my father flying into fits of rage and being generally quite angry after he was diagnosed with HIV.

3. My father also went onto develop Obsessive Compulsive Disorder (OCD). He developed habits and had his way of doing things. He liked doing things methodically and having a routine. As time went on my father was susceptible to the cold and would wear his big sheepskin coat everywhere to make sure he stayed warm.
4. The earliest memory I have of being told about precautions and measures I needed to take regarding my father's illness was when I was 17 years old and visiting my father at the Royal London Hospital, Whitechapel. On this occasion a nurse snatched a hamburger out of my hand. She said to me that I must not use the same cutlery, plates or toothbrush as my father.
5. I was not provided with any leaflets or literature regarding the HIV. The only information I received regarding the HIV infection was from the nurse I spoke to the day the hamburger was snatched from my hands.

6.

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7. As I have mentioned above, my father developed OCD. As his mental health worsened I would find post-it notes scattered around the house. On one occasion me and my father went to a timber yard and my father asked if the man who sold us the timber could write us a receipt on a piece of paper. This then turned into a habit and he would write different words on different pieces of scrap paper.
8. As time went on and as his mental health deteriorated my father developed child-like tendencies. It was terrible to witness. I recall when I would take him out of the hospital for some fresh air, he would start jumping around like a child. We would cross the road and he would grab my hand. My father developed a nervousness when he was outside.

9. When we would go for a walk out of the hospital my father would have his pyjamas on, he needed constant supervision and reassurance. His moods also became quite unpredictable; it was as though he developed a dual personality.
10. After a long battle of almost six years, my father passed away on 22nd September 1986. Recently, my brother Tony went to see one of the doctors who treated my father, I am unsure as to the name of the doctor or which hospital treated him. Following this, it was revealed, that at some point, my father also contracted hepatitis C from contaminated blood. Looking back I would say my father experienced worse side effects from HIV than hepatitis C.
11. What all of this has done to our family is irreparable. The damage that has been done will never be repaired. There are some family members who believe we should not accept any compensation.
12. Medical professionals and some politicians have known the truth all along. They have denied families help. Even though I have not had any direct dealings with them I still find it terrible victims are offered little or no support.
13. As the eldest child, I felt as though I had a duty to protect my siblings. For a very long time, I kept my grief and anger under wraps to protect my family.

6. Treatment/Care Support

1. As I have stated earlier in my statement, my father received treatment at the Royal London hospital, Whitechapel under Dr Colvin and at the University Hospital Wales in Cardiff under Professor Bloom.
2. My father was also assigned a medical social worker, Mr Nigel Harvey.

7. Financial Assistance

1. I received a £1,000 ex-gratia payment when my father passed away. I was also sent a letter which accompanied the £1,000, it stated the money had been gifted

from a board of trustees, however I do not recall what trust or scheme this was from.

8. **Other Issues**

1. I believe counselling should be more accessible for victims and family members of victims. I know Sir Brian has said he aims to provide a swift response, however the Government need to understand that there are victims dying everyday.
2. I fear if this goes to Court, a lot of the issues will be buried in legal argument. I recall a speech made by Andy Burnham in Parliament. This was a powerful speech and I feel as though he has really supported the cause.
3. I would like to think once the Inquiry has concluded and Sir Brian has made his findings that compensation will be paid. I would like to see individual assessments for the victims on a case by case basis. However, no amount of money will compensate for the fact my father has missed out on a relationship with his grandchildren and several weddings that have taken place in his absence. You cannot compensate for what you have lost. When you look at it from the perspective of seeing your loved ones grow up and sharing memories with them my father has missed out on so much.

Statement of Truth

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

Signed **GRO-C**

Dated 03/02/2020