

Witness Name: KATHARINE ANN SUSAN FARMER

Statement No: WITN4704001

Exhibits: 0

Dated: OCTOBER 2020

INFECTED BLOOD INQUIRY

FIRST WRITTEN STATEMENT OF KATHARINE ANN SUSAN FARMER

I, Katharine Ann Susan Farmer, will say as follows:-

Section 1. Introduction

1. My name is Katharine Ann Susan Farmer. I was born on GRO-C 1958 and I live at GRO-C
2. I believe my father, Victor Thomas William Farmer (born on GRO-C 1912), was infected with the Human Immunodeficiency Virus (HIV) through a contaminated blood transfusion in 1981 or 1982. He died on 3rd November 1983 having developed Myelodysplastic Syndrome (MDS).
3. This witness statement has been prepared without the benefit of access to my father's medical records.

Section 2. How Affected

4. My father was diagnosed with bowel cancer and had treatment (radiotherapy, I believe) after he retired in 1979. He was under the care of Mr Bert

Thompson at St Thomas' Hospital in London. The treatment was successful and my parents went away on a cruise together in 1980. On the cruise, my father became very ill with a mystery viral infection. They saw Mr Thompson on their return and he recommended blood transfusion treatments, to take place at St Thomas' Hospital and, for the sake of convenience as they were living in [GRO-C] at the hospital in [GRO-C]. My father's condition was improving, but during one of his blood transfusions (at St Thomas' Hospital, I believe) he had a very bad reaction and lost consciousness. The incident was extremely traumatic for my mother. She was with him at the time and called for the nurse to stop the treatment. After that he went downhill, and he never recovered. He died in November 1983.

5. After my father's death, we did not immediately make a connection between his death and the blood transfusion, especially as my mother was very deeply distressed and her wellbeing was the top priority. Little was known about HIV at the time, but as the news about contaminated blood transfusions began to emerge in the late 80s/early 1990s, I began to suspect that this could have been a cause of my father's rapid deterioration. The link between HIV and MDS is now known and documented.

Section 3. Other Infections

6. I do not believe my father to have been infected with anything other than HIV.

Section 4. Consent

7. I do not believe that my father was warned of the risk of HIV infection prior to having the blood transfusion and, as such, did not provide informed consent.

Section 5. Impact of the Infection

8. My father was a very fit and active man before he developed bowel cancer and was struck down by the mystery virus. He played tennis two to three times per week, was an enthusiastic amateur artist, and keen traveller. He

was a man who looked 40 years old when he was 60. His bowel cancer treatment was successful and he was expected to make a full recovery.

9. After my father had the bad reaction to the blood transfusion he went down like a stone. There was a marked change in the last months leading up to my his death. He had been mentally sharp, but there was a rapid decline in his mental wellbeing and he was physically much weaker. He couldn't eat for several weeks, only taking in water.

10. We were a family of three. I was the only child. I was in my early twenties when my father had the blood transfusion, and I was living and working away from home in Dorset, but making regular visits to my parents. My father had been so robust previously, that his death hit me like a bolt of lightning. My mother was so fragile at this time, and to say that she was devastated is an understatement. I shut it out. It was all too much for me. I descended into a depression that lasted two or three years, which was not diagnosed. It took a long time before I realised that the unexplained physical symptoms I experienced after my father's death, including problems with my stomach, might have a psychological connection. When I mentioned it to my mother she became angry and distressed, fearing anything about mental illness on my record would affect my employment prospects.

11. In time, and notably after the publicity after tennis player Arthur Ashe contracted HIV/AIDS through a contaminated blood transfusion, we realised that there could have been a connection between my father's death and his blood transfusion.

Section 6. Treatment/care/support

12. Not applicable.

Section 7. Financial Assistance

13. My father did not receive any financial assistance through the Trusts and Funds.

Anonymity, disclosure and redaction

14. I am not seeking anonymity and I do not want to provide oral evidence to the Inquiry. I understand that this Statement will be published for the purposes of the Inquiry.

Statement of Truth

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

Signed.....

GRO-C

Dated.....

22-10-2020