

Elizabeth Glaser and the Pediatric AIDS Foundation

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Abstract

HIV infections in children were first identified in 1983, just one year after AIDS was first described in 1981 at UCLA by Michael Gottlieb, et al. [1]. These children, mostly premature infants and hemophiliacs, were infected by blood or plasma transfusions from untested HIV-positive blood donors [2]. However subsequent studies showed that maternal-fetal transmissions from HIV-infected mothers was the leading cause of Pediatric AIDS, occurring in up to 30 percent of children of infected mothers during pregnancy, at delivery or by breast feeding.

This is the story of how the HIV infections of Elizabeth Glaser and her daughter Ariel lead to the founding of the Pediatric AIDS foundation, as told by Ariel's doctor and Elizabeth's own words in her autobiography, *In the Absence of Angels* [3]. Elizabeth was infected by a post-partum blood transfusion in 1981, and passed on the infection to Ariel by breast feeding [4]. Ariel became ill at age 3 and was diagnosed with AIDS at age 4.

Elizabeth, despite her own infection, was determined to find treatment for her daughter and other affected children. She enlisted two friends, Susan DeLaurentis and Susan Zeegan, to help her establish the Pediatric AIDS Foundation to lobby the US Government to develop a network of Pediatric AIDS centers and an expanded research effort.

Ariel Glaser died in 1988 at the age of 8 and Elizabeth died in 1994 at the age of 47. Elizabeth was celebrated as a national hero for her advocacy of Pediatric AIDS research and care. The foundation was renamed the Elizabeth Glaser Pediatric AIDS foundation in her honor.

Ariel Glaser Becomes Ill

In May 1985 my UCLA colleague Richard Fine asked me to see 4-year-old Ariel Glaser because of anemia, kidney disease and weight loss for the last year. He suspected that she might have something wrong with her immune system.

Ariel was the daughter of Elizabeth and Paul Michael Glaser. Paul was Starsky of the popular television show Starsky and Hutch. Little did I anticipate how Ariel's illness would occupy a major portion of my time for the next two and a half years and become the first chapter of the legacy of the Elizabeth Glaser Pediatric AIDS Foundation.

Elizabeth's pregnancy was complicated by vaginal bleeding in the 7th and 8th months, necessitating delivery by Cesarean section at Cedars-Sinai Medical Center in Los Angeles in August 1981. The bleeding was so severe that a hysterectomy was considered. Finally, the bleeding was controlled with the help of 7 blood and 4 plasma transfusions, given immediately after Ariel's delivery.

Mother and baby girl Ariel were discharged after 7 days, during which time breast feeding was begun and continued for 8 months.

Ariel did well until shortly after her fourth birthday when she developed abdominal pain and diarrhea. The family was in Miami where Paul was directing a movie. A pediatrician there thought Ariel might have picked up a flu virus in Puerto Rico during a short visit there. When Ariel's symptoms worsened she was hospitalized for further studies. The pediatrician found her to be anemic with an enlarged spleen and protein in her urine. He diagnosed hemolytic-uremic syndrome (a rare kidney disorder) and gave her a blood transfusion.

When the Glasers returned to Los Angeles they consulted UCLA pediatric nephrologist Dr. Richard Fine. Over the next several months he did extensive diagnostic studies. At one-point leukemia was considered because of persistent anemia. Although unwell, Ariel was able to attend preschool. The parents, in their frustration, even consulted a homeopathic doctor.

After Ariel developed thrush, a fungal infection of the inner cheeks often associated with immune deficiency, I was consulted in early 1985. Ariel was pale and small (the 10th percentile). Her cheeks and tongue were coated with white thrush, and she had a runny nose, a protuberant abdomen and enlarged lymph nodes in her neck.

I realized she had a severe immune deficiency, not present at birth. This suggested Pediatric AIDS. A few children had been diagnosed with pediatric AIDS as a result of receiving blood transfusions from donors that carried the AIDS virus. At that time there was no blood test for the AIDS virus, later named the Human Immunodeficiency Virus----HIV.

When I asked Elizabeth if Ariel had ever received a blood transfusion she said no, but that she (Elizabeth) had received several blood and plasma infusions immediately after birth because of severe post-partum bleeding. She also added that Ariel had been breast fed for eight months.

At that point, I suspected that Ariel had acquired AIDS by breast feeding, after her mother had become infected through her blood transfusions. The fact that the delivery had occurred at Cedars-Sinai Hospital in West Los Angeles added to my suspicion---several premature infants born at Cedars-Sinai had become HIV-infected through blood transfusions.

A single case of breast milk transmission had just been reported from Australia in the medical journal *Lancet* [5]. Subsequent studies found that up to 30% of HIV-infected mothers transmit the infection to their previously uninfected infant by breast feeding.

When I explained this to Elizabeth, she realized that she, her husband Paul and 2-year-old son Jake might also be infected. With fear and tears, she asked me to examine her immediately for evidence of AIDS. I looked in her mouth, felt for lymph nodes and said that she looked fine but that the whole family needed to be tested for AIDS. I called Dr. Fine and he agreed.

In two days the tests came back; Ariel, Elizabeth and younger brother Jake were HIV positive; only Paul was HIV-negative. Elizabeth was panic-stricken; Paul was skeptical. But on retesting the results were confirmed: Ariel had AIDS, Elizabeth and Jake were HIV-positive but asymptomatic, and Paul was HIV negative [6].

Elizabeth at this point called her mother in Boston to tell her the bad news: Ariel had AIDS and that she and 2-year-old Jake were HIV-positive. Only husband Paul was HIV-negative. A few days later her mother flew cross country to be with her only daughter.

A Management Plan for Ariel

After this triple dose of bad news, decisions had to be made.

First: who should be told of the diagnosis?

I recommended, and they agreed that no one, except family, not even close friends, should be told of the diagnosis, because of its pervasive social stigma. An AIDS diagnosis in a second Hollywood family (after Rock Hudson), would result in another tabloid frenzy. Thus the Glaser family illness would remain a secret until one year after Ariel's death.

But if Ariel was to attend kindergarten, the principal, the teacher, and the school nurse must be told of Ariel's diagnosis; a cut or a bathroom accident would require gloves for the cut and bleach for the cleanup. The Crossroads school had no policy on dealing with HIV-positive children so Ariel was denied admission.

Second: what to do for Elizabeth?

I sent Elizabeth to Dr. Michael Gottlieb, the UCLA internist who in 1981 reported four cases of young men with *Pneumocystis jirovecii* pneumonia and profound T cell deficiency [1]. These were the first reported cases of Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome (AIDS).

Dr. Gottlieb found that Elizabeth had only 210 helper T cells/uL., well below the protective level of 500 cells/uL., and much below the normal level of over 1000 cells/uL. He told Elizabeth that there was no current treatment for AIDS but that an antiviral drug, zidovudine (AZT), was promising and should be available soon.

The helper T cells, officially CD4 lymphocytes, make up about 30% of the white blood cells and are the most important cell of the immune system, helping to fight viruses, cancer and certain infections like tuberculosis. They also are the cell that causes the body to reject mismatched cells and organs.

HIV attaches to the CD4 cell, eventually killing it. Indeed, the CD4 T cell count is the best way to monitor the progression of HIV. When the level falls below 200 cells/uL., the patient is very susceptible to infection and when it falls below 50 cells/uL., the patient has essentially no cellular immune system. Thus Elizabeth had a weakened but not absent immune system.

Third: What to do for Ariel?

Ariel's blood tests showed severe anemia, and only 6 CD4 cells/uL., ie, no cellular immunity. We gave her an antifungal medicine for her thrush, the sulfa drug Bactrim to prevent *Pneumocystis* pneumonia and monthly infusions of human Intravenous Immune Globulin (IVIG) to prevent infections. I also consulted Dr. Yvonne Bryson, a UCLA Pediatric virologist who would join me in the care of Ariel.

Over the next months I saw Ariel nearly every week---in the clinic or at her home near ours in Santa Monica. Elizabeth and I became well acquainted---we found out that we were

fellow Badgers, both graduates of the University of Wisconsin in Madison.

With the help of its school nurse, my friend Kit Dreyfuss, Ariel entered Roosevelt kindergarten, the local public elementary school; the school had an AIDS policy and an emergency action plan. Ariel spent a happy year without school problems.

By the end of the school year Crossroads had developed an HIV policy and the plan was that Ariel would attend first grade there in September.

Ariel gets sicker

During the year of Kindergarten Ariel became thinner and weaker and AZT was still unavailable, but she was looking forward to school. She started first grade in September 1987, but within two weeks she could not continue because of diarrhea and abdominal pain; instead she was home schooled by Crossroad teachers.

Rumors began circulating that the Glaser family had AIDS; indeed, one parent asked her teacher if Ariel had AIDS. A close friend overheard a cocktail party conversation about AIDS in the Glaser family.

Just before Thanksgiving, Ariel was admitted to UCLA hospital under the name of Betsy Meyer to maintain the family's secret about her illness. The diagnosis was pancreatitis, aggravated by eating. Intravenous feedings were begun, necessitating a permanent venous access line in her neck, a procedure called Total Parenteral Nutrition (TPN). Oral AZT also became available. After three weeks in the hospital she went home to continue TPN at home. A visiting nurse taught Elizabeth and Paul how to administer the intravenous feedings.

Over the next several months Ariel stabilized on the oral AZT; but in March she developed a fever and pneumonia, and was readmitted for antibiotic therapy. A brain scan showed encephalopathy. Miraculously she had a good response to the antibiotics and was well enough to go home, still on intravenous infusions.

Elizabeth gets started

By late spring of 1988 it was clear that AIDS was winning the struggle for Ariel's life. Elizabeth then made the decision to launch her battle against Pediatric AIDS.

She later told Laura Palmer, her co-author, "There was no angel to help us that would appear to set everything right. If anything was going to be done, I would be the one who would have to do it. This was not a role I wanted, I simply had no choice." It became the title of Elizabeth's autobiography, *In the Absence of Angels* [6].

After that decision, Elizabeth said she had to do something to save her child. She asked me if there anything she could do and

still keep their privacy? And would I help her [7]? I replied that I would indeed help her. Elizabeth said later that if I had said she should just concentrate on Ari and her family because they really needed her she would have agreed [8].

When she told of her decision to husband Paul he was silent for a long time and then said: "*I'll support you in whatever you have to do. I don't want to be an active part of it. I just can't speak publicly about something I feel is so personal. But if you feel you have to do something, I'll certainly stand behind you*" [9].

That was a brave decision---If the family's HIV infection became public, Paul's career as an actor and director might be in jeopardy.

But how to get started?

Josh Baran her friend and publicist, made three suggestions [10]. First educate yourself---for starters read Randy Shilt's book '*And The Band Played On*'.

Next enlist your friends, relatives, colleagues, doctors, politicians, you will need others to help you.

Finally raise money---whatever you do it will cost money. Ask your contacts for start-up funds; but for big money you will need Government support and that takes lobbying---meeting and talking to government officials, especially representatives and senators.

By coincidence C. Edward Koop MD, the Surgeon General of the United States, was coming to Los Angeles in a few weeks. Mike Gottlieb arranged for Elizabeth to meet with him. Koop, a pediatric surgeon, listened carefully to Elizabeth's story, and suggested she should meet with Admiral James Watkins, President Reagan's Commissioner on AIDS in Washington DC.

Six weeks later Elizabeth made her first of many trips to Washington. She met with Admiral Watkins, California legislators Representative Henry Waxman and Senator Alan Cranston, and with Dr. Anthony Fauci, Director of the National Institute of Allergy and Infectious Diseases. She also met pediatrician Dr. Philip Pizzo of the National Cancer Institute; he told her of his promising results with intravenous AZT on his HIV children that failed oral AZT.

When she returned home, Elizabeth asked me why I didn't use intravenous AZT on Ariel. I told her its manufacturer, Burroughs-Wellcome, had refused my four previous requests to obtain intravenous AZT for our patients until it was licensed.

Elizabeth then called Tim Westmoreland, the counsel for Henry Waxman's House Committee on Health and the Environment. He was the most knowledgeable staff person on Capitol Hill about the AIDS epidemic. She told him that she needed to get intravenous AZT for her daughter, as recommended

by Dr. Pizzo of the NIH. He gave her the name of the person to call at Burroughs-Wellcome.

The person at Burroughs-Wellcome told me he could not release the drug until it was licensed I then asked him to reconsider since Elizabeth Glaser, the patients mother, would not take no for an answer and would have her congressmen Alan Cranston and Henry Waxman and even President Reagan call the company.

Twenty-four hours later, the drug arrived. It was given through a port-a-cath, first by the home nurse and later by Elizabeth and Paul. Nothing happened for two weeks, but after the third week, Ariel said "Good morning Mom," her first words in three months [11]. Elizabeth and Paul embraced and wept in joy. But it was to be a short-lived improvement.

Meeting the President, Starting the Foundation

As Ariel's health slowly slipped away, Elizabeth became more and more determined. She asked her friend Lucy Wick if she could get her to President Reagan [12]. Lucy's husband, Doug Wick, was a close friend of the Reagans and would arranged for a meeting with President and Mrs. Reagan.

She then asked me what she should tell the president.

I said that she should tell him your story, how you and Ariel were infected; tell him about Ariel and all the other children with AIDS. Tell him we need more pediatric trial units, and tell him we need more research to prevent maternal-child transmission.

So on June 21, 1988, Elizabeth spent an hour with the President and his wife Nancy. Both were touched by her personal story; by the end of the hour the president pledged to look at Admiral Watkins own report on AIDS with new eyes.

But after the summer passed nothing came of the meeting. Elizabeth decided at that point to start her own foundation to raise money for Pediatric AIDS research. The government was not moving and there was no guarantee they would do the right thing. With Paul's assent she decided to start her own foundation. But she needed help, especially since her family's illness was still a secret.

She enlisted two of her closest friends Susan DeLaurentis and Susan Zeegan, the future co-founders of the foundation. They had not known each other well but they soon became the closest of friends. They agreed to join Elizabeth in her quest, not knowing what they were getting into, and not receiving a cent for what would become a super human effort.

Next the trio sat down with me and Dr. Yvonne Bryson at Elizabeth's kitchen table to decide just exactly what the foundation should do and how they could get started.

They started by enlisting donations for the new foundation,

aided by a gift of \$500,000 from Paul's aunt, a \$150,000 donation from Ted and Sally Fields and \$100,000 from Steven Spielberg.

These funds supported a Pediatric AIDS research lab at UCLA, the first of many think tanks, and several research grants, administered by the American Foundation for AIDS Research (AMFAR). Arthur Ammann, now at Genentech, Phillip Pizzo and I would be on their advisory board.

The first pediatric think tank on the maternal-fetal HIV transmission was held in Washington. Art Ammann, Phil Pizzo and I organized a meeting of 20 pediatricians, obstetricians and virologists to discuss what mothers should be tested, why some but not all infected mothers transmit the virus, and what might be done to prevent transmission.

One thing we learned from Ariel's illness is that breast feeding must be avoided by mothers infected or even at risk for HIV infections. The medical details of Ariel's illness were published in 1991 [4].

Ariel's Last Days 1998

Over the next several months Ariel's speech and motor development improved dramatically. The intravenous AZT had reclaimed her central nervous system but she continued to have abdominal pain. But by mid-July the AZT had caused Ariel's white blood cell count to fall so low that she had to return to the hospital. Another new drug, Granulocyte Macrophage Colony Stimulating Factor (GM-CSF), was given to boost her white cell count. And her abdominal pain became more severe, causing her to cry and writhe with pain. Elizabeth slept at her bedside.

I was to go on vacation on August 1. When I told that to Elizabeth she was, in her own words, "*scared and petrified.*" [13]. I told her that I would be in town and would come in every day to see Ariel. At that point she gave me a warm hug.

I could only say, "*Thank you, Elizabeth.*"

She smiled through her tears, "*That's the first time you've called me Elizabeth.*"

"I'm a Midwestern WASP and we were taught that you don't get emotional with your patients."

"I'm sorry", she said *"I'm a Jewish girl from New York and I have to cry and give you a hug."*

We were Dick and Elizabeth after that.

Ariel celebrated her 8th birthday on August 4 1988 at UCLA. Although back on intravenous AZT she had lost all the milestones that she had made. The parents wanted to take her home despite her failing health.

On August 12th, while in her father's arms, Ariel coughed

and took her last breath. Paul wept, Elizabeth sobbed. She held the lifeless child in her arms. After a long time, she kissed Ariel one more time and gave her to the nurses who had cared for her night and day.

I spoke at the memorial service at their home the next Sunday. I ended my eulogy with these words, *“One measure of a successful life might be the amount of love exchanged and received over a lifetime. By that measure, Ariel received a full quota in her seven years, especially from Paul and Elizabeth. We all have been touched by this precious child”*.

The next day the family flew to Boston where Ariel was buried in nearby Brookline, Massachusetts.

Over the next weeks Elizabeth and Paul took several small trips and hosted many visitors---hoping to ease the pain of Ariel's death. Elizabeth then turned her attention to 4-year-old. Jake. He was attending Presbyterian Church preschool without incident. I was following him every few months-- he remained well with near normal T cells. That meant that Elizabeth could turn her attention to her foundation and to the upcoming presidential election.

Elizabeth met with the wives of the candidates, Barbara Bush and Kitty Dukakis, to tell her personal story, Barbara Bush was cordial but untouched, while Kitty Dukakis and Elizabeth bonded immediately. Kitty pledged her help to the foundation. Elizabeth was keenly disappointed when George Bush won the election.

A Night to Unite

In November 1988 Elizabeth and Susan DeLaurentis made a second Washington DC trip, this time to lobby for Pediatric AIDS support. Both were struck by the absence of government support for pediatric AIDS, either for research or for clinical care. They told their concerns to Joel Johnson and Kevin McGinnis, legislative assistants to Democratic Senator Howard Metzenbaum of Ohio and Republican senator Orrin Hatch of Utah, respectively. They also met Sandy Brock, wife of William Brock, President Reagan's labor secretary and a prominent Republican fund raiser. These connections would pay off handsomely on their next Washington trip.

In March 1989 Elizabeth and Susan returned to Washington, primarily to meet Dr. Frank Young, the director of the Federal Drug Administration (FDA) to discuss fast-tracking approval of AIDS drugs for children. But just before their scheduled appointment, Dr. Young canceled their meeting, ostensibly to meet with the ambassador from Chile. Elizabeth and Susan were outraged. Appointments to meet with Senators Ted Kennedy and Jesse Helms were also cancelled.

But they did meet with Senators Metzenbaum and Hatch; despite their political differences, they were good friends and

both wanted to increase research for Pediatric AIDS. Indeed, the two senators offered to hold a reception in Washington to benefit Pediatric AIDS research.

When their friend and event organizer Sandy Brock was told of their offer, she told them to set their sights higher---hold a Black-Tie dinner with celebrities and entertainment, charge \$1,500 a plate, \$10,000 a table, and get several \$20-30,000 sponsors. She offered to organize it but told Elizabeth and the two Susans that they must round up the celebrities [14].

Elizabeth and her friends went to work. The event, named *A Night to Unite*, would be hosted by the two senators, and held June 21, 1989 at the National Building Museum in Washington DC for 800 paying guests. Elizabeth had persuaded Alan Alda to be the master of ceremonies, and the rock star Cher, to perform. Elizabeth had met Cher since she was her daughter Chastity's teacher several years previously. She also persuaded Michael Eisner of the Disney Company to produce the short movie *A Gift of Time* for the dinner and Ted and Sally Field to underwrite the cost of the event. Special guests included Muhammed Ali, Kitty Dukakis, Olivia Newton-John, Ali MacGraw and three UCLA families with children with AIDS.

Since Elizabeth's connection with the Pediatric AIDS Foundation was still a secret, she did not appear on the program or attend the reception or dinner. She came in late and stood at the rear of the hall for the movie and presentations.

The highlight of the evening was Cher. She entered the stage in a slinky long black skirt and sang her first song to the enchanted crowd. After the applause died down she said *“That was for the Republicans”* Then she disappeared off stage for a minute and reappeared minus the bottom half of her dress to reveal a fringed mini skirt with high black boots. Before starting the rest of her performance she said, *“And this is for the Democrats”*.

Before Cher's last song *‘If I could turn back time’* she pointed to Elizabeth in the back of the hall and threw her a stage kiss and then said *“I am here tonight because of a teacher my daughter had in school.”* Elizabeth panicked, but fortunately the sound system was weak and indistinct, so no one caught the significance of this gesture.

The evening ended with the song *Tomorrow* from Annie. Cher was joined on stage by Senators Hatch and Metzenbaum, MC Alan Alda, Kitty Dukakis and organizer Sandy Brock.

The event was a great success and netted the Foundation a million dollars.

Elizabeth's joy was followed by an ominous call from Dr. Michael Gottlieb to tell her that her T cells were falling and she will need additional medicines.

The Glasers go Public 1989

Two months later, one year after Ariel's death, Elizabeth received a phone call from Lloyd Zeiderman, their business manager, who was helping with Ariel's UCLA hospital bills. Lloyd said that a man posing as a representative of the Glaser's health insurance carrier had called my UCLA office to verify a few facts about Ariel's last UCLA hospitalization, even though she was admitted under the name of Betsy Meyer. My secretary unwittingly answered a few questions, but took his name and phone number and called Mr. Zeiderman. When Mr. Zeiderman called the number, it was a non-working number. He warned Elizabeth that her secret was in danger [15].

Shortly thereafter, strange calls began arriving at the Glaser home. Paul's sister in Boston received a call from a man who identified himself as a classmate of Paul's and who now worked as an AIDS researcher at the US Centers for Disease Control. He wanted Paul's phone number to express his condolences and provide some insight into the family's illness [16]. A third call came to the Pediatric AIDS Foundation, asking for Elizabeth Glaser, whose connection to the foundation was not yet known.

Then a well-dressed man in a dark blue suit and a yarmulke appeared on the UCLA pediatric ward. He claimed to be a Rabbi and wanted information about Ariel's last days for his talk at her memorial service scheduled a year after her death. The head nurse was suspicious, knowing Ariel's hospital name was Betsy Meyer, so she immediately called hospital security. Before they arrived, the man disappeared down a back stairway [17].

On August 11, 364 days after Ariel's death, Elizabeth received a phone call from The National Enquirer weekly tabloid, telling her that they have a story about the Glaser family illness and wanted to give her an opportunity to talk to them about it [18].

It was the dreaded call that Elizabeth never wanted to receive. She promptly called her lawyer, Peter Benzian.

Mr. Benzian called the Enquirer to threaten legal action if they ran the story. In the meantime, the Glasers left town to avoid having a picture taken of the family.

A few days later the Enquirer told the Glaser's publicist, Josh Baran, that in exchange for a quote from the family, they would alter their story to say that Ariel was infected by a blood transfusion, not breast feeding, without mentioning Elizabeth's and Jake's HIV infection. Mr. Baran said he would discuss this with the family if they would delay publication for a week [19].

Both Peter and Josh advised the Glasers that the Enquirer would publish the story regardless of the threat of a legal suit; the Enquirer was used to such threats [20]. The Glasers decided to tell their story before the Enquirer's story came out---ie, beat them at their own game.

Josh called his friend Janet Huck, an LA Times reporter, and told her the whole story. He offered her an exclusive interview with the Glasers if it could be published before the Enquirer article would appear. Janet checked with her editor and within 48 hours she met with the Glasers and arranged for a photograph of Elizabeth and Paul.

But before the story would appear, the parents of the Presbyterian Church preschool would have to be told of Jake's HIV infection. Elizabeth's friend Susan Zeegan had obtained an updated report from the US Centers for Disease Control (CDC) that indicated that household and school contacts of HIV patients were not at risk of HIV infection. Mary Hartzell, the director of the nursery school, called, a meeting of all the parents to inform them that a child in the school was HIV-infected but assured them that their child was not at risk of contracting AIDS from this child.

Next Elizabeth met with the parents of Jake's classmates. Her narrative, ending with her encounter with the National Enquirer, was greeted with total silence--- but then the audience arose and began applauding. Afterward I and Dr. Jay Gordon, Jake's pediatrician, answered the parents' questions for an hour. All but two couples were reassured by the CDC report. Ms. Hartzell suggested that they take their children out of school since their policy of inclusion would not be changed.

A few days later on August 25th Janet Houks' story appeared on the front page of the Los Angeles Times View Section: Breaking the Silence; Starsky Star, Wife, Share Their Family's Painful Battle Against AIDS. Friends and colleagues from far and wide called to tell of their good wishes and their bravery.

The National Enquirer's article was published a few days later on September 5th with Paul's photo and Ariel's grave site, under the title: Starsky & Hutch' Star AIDS Tragedy. Elizabeth said she never read the Enquirer story. She later said that while she forgave the donor of the infected blood, the government that didn't respond, the society that didn't care, but would never forgive the National Enquirer for invading the sanctity of her family and her friends [21].

But now Elizabeth could work openly for the Pediatric AIDS foundation without worrying about protecting her story.

Elizabeth Glaser Becomes the Face of the Pediatric AIDS Foundation

After her story was published Elizabeth became the face of the Pediatric AIDS Foundation. Elizabeth despite her concern for Jake's and her own health, met with donors, politicians and writers for newspapers and magazines, attended the annual benefit picnic with multiple Hollywood stars, and attended the biannual think tanks. The foundation established an office, hired a business manager, and developed a board of scientific directors, headed by

Dr. Arthur Ammann, my longtime colleague dating back to our days at UC San Francisco in 1963.

Art, Phil Pizzo and I organized the first Pediatric AIDS Foundation's think tank---two day meetings for 20 clinicians and researchers from all over the USA to discuss a single topic related to pediatric AIDS. One early think tank discussed maternal-fetal HIV transmission; ie why did only 30 percent of HIV-infected mothers transmit the virus to their newborns and what was special about these pregnancies that allowed transmission? One such factor, as exemplified by Elizabeth's case, was breast feeding.

In large part because of Elizabeth's efforts the Pediatric AIDS Foundation expanded its influence. They supported research grants, fellowship programs, and 5-year research support for a promising Pediatric AIDS Scholar chosen each year. The foundation continues to study the best treatment for the many children already infected and, more recently, how to prevent and combat AIDS in developing countries.

Elizabeth received much recognition and many honors. She appeared on the cover of *On Wisconsin*, the Alumni Magazine of the University of Wisconsin. She also received the UCLA Medal and the Harvard AIDS Institute Leadership Award. She was the subject of a photo essay by Annie Liebovitz for *Vanity Fair* magazine. Most remembered was her heart-breaking speech at the Democratic National Convention on July 14, 1992.

Her autobiography "*In the Absence of Angels*", written with Laura Palmer, was published in 1991 [3].

Elizabeth died on Dec 3, 1994 at the age of 47. An open air service for her was held on a hill at Pepperdine University overlooking the Pacific Ocean. A few days later she was buried in Brookline Massachusetts next to her daughter Ariel.

After Elizabeth's death The Pediatric AIDS Foundation was renamed The Elizabeth Glaser Pediatric AIDS Foundation in her honor.

Epilogue

Just as President Abraham Lincoln said to Harriet Beecher Stowe, the author of Uncle Tom's Cabin: "So you're the little woman who wrote the book that started this great war." Twelve score and seven years later, Elizabeth Glaser was the little woman who started this great war on Pediatric AIDS---an even more deadly battle. The war continues to this day.

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