

Witness Name: Teresa Jane Cobbledick
Statement No.: WITN2105001
Exhibits: NONE
Dated: 21st November 2018

INFECTED BLOOD INQUIRY

FIRST WRITTEN STATEMENT OF TERESA JANE COBBLEDICK

I provide this statement in response to a request under Rule 9 of the Inquiry Rules 2006 dated the 21st November 2018.

I, Teresa Cobbledick, will say as follows:

Section 1. Introduction

1. My name is Teresa Cobbledick. My date of birth is the GRO-C 1981. My address is known to the Inquiry. I am currently living on my own. I am currently receiving Employment Support Allowance benefits. I am unemployed due to health reasons. I intend to speak about my step mother Corinne Cobbledick's infection of HIV and hepatitis C, in particular, the nature of her illness, how the illness affected her, the treatment received and the impact it had on her and our lives together as a family.

Section 2. How Affected

2. Corinne did not have a prior blood disorder. She received a blood transfusion. She had a severe bleed that required an immediate transfusion to save her life due to a pregnancy related matter which I talk about below. I don't know

full details of what occurred, I am just aware that Corinne was in the early stages of a pregnancy. She started to feel unwell and called a GP who came to visit her at home. This doctor told her to rest. She began to feel worse and called for a 2nd GP to come and see her. This GP provided her with the same advice, by the evening Corinne called for a 3rd GP as she felt very unwell and had severe stomach pains. This 3rd doctor called for an ambulance and she was admitted to Bangor Hospital, Livingston and found to have an ectopic pregnancy and internal bleeding. Corinne received the transfusion in 1984.

3. Corinne received four pints of blood during the transfusion. Two pints of the blood it has later been discovered had been infected. This is information provided to Corinne by her GP, who was based at Craigshill Medical Practice, Livingston shortly after she was diagnosed. We do not know how the GP knew that 2 pints of the blood she received was infected.
4. Corinne received the transfusion at Bangor Hospital, Livingston. This hospital is now closed. Corinne was diagnosed with HIV in 1986 and was diagnosed with hepatitis C in 1994. After she was diagnosed with HIV she had a lot of treatment at the Royal Infirmary, Little France, Edinburgh. I do not know the details of the doctors involved in giving Corinne the transfusion. This is information that will be contained in her medical records which my brother Iain Cobbledick has information.
5. Corinne received the transfusion on 11th January 1984. I do not know which month this was. My brother Iain Cobbledick will know which month it was based on her medical records.
6. Corinne collapsed at home in 1984 when she was pregnant. She phoned the doctor for help. Ultimately, three doctors came out to see her that day at home to check her over. The first two doctors checked her over and said she was fine, then the third doctor came out in the evening and phoned an ambulance for her. Upon her admission to Bangor Hospital, Livingston, it was discovered she had an ectopic pregnancy. Ultimately she required a blood transfusion to save her life as she was bleeding internally. I do not believe that any information was provided to Corinne before she received the transfusion about the risk of being infected. She was very ill when this

happened, they just went ahead and did the transfusion. My brother will have more factual information on this as he has all her medical records. Further to this, I have read through her personal diaries and she does not indicate anywhere that there was any discussion about the risk of being infected.

7. Corinne was diagnosed with HIV in 1986 and was diagnosed with hepatitis C in 1994. She died in 1995.. In 1986, she went to her GP who was based at Craigshill Medical Practice, Livingston, because she was feeling run down and tired. Her GP, whose name I do not know, ran a series of blood tests. At the time, there was apparently a lot of information in the newspapers about the infected blood. We believe that the GP included a HIV test in all the blood tests he did to check and be sure. It came back positive. The GP then wrote to her and told her to go to the Royal Infirmary, Edinburgh to receive the results of the tests. The GP refused to give her the results and he insisted the results had to come from the hospital. She did go to hospital and was then told she had been infected with HIV.
8. She was diagnosed with HIV by the Royal Infirmary Edinburgh, under the care of Dr Brettie who was a Senior Registrar at the HIV department at the hospital. I believe she was given a lot of information on HIV at the time the doctors at the hospital diagnosed her. The hospital did offer her counselling. She went to some group counselling but it was full of drug addicts and she did not feel this was appropriate as she hadn't brought this on herself. She was referred to another counselling group, which turned out to be an HIV support group for gay patients. Again this was not appropriate. She had been infected via blood transfusion. She then did a lot of research herself. She read a lot of newspapers and she was always reading medical books and things about HIV. Looking back now, I believe that was also her looking into her illness to understand it.
9. Adequate information was provided about HIV. I know that Dr Brettie is spoken about highly by Corinne in her diaries. He was her Doctor until the end of her life. She describes him as being very considerate. My father, John Leslie Cobbledick says that as well. My father had to GRO-C quite often after Corinne was diagnosed. GRO-C I remember there was a time when I was younger, Corinne cut herself and I went to help

her. She screamed the house down that I needed to keep away from her and she grounded me for this so I would never approach her again when she was bleeding. I remember thinking this was very strange. Towards the end of her life she was diagnosed with Cervical Cancer. I remember the Macmillan nurses coming round to the house. The nurses told me not touch the yellow box where they would dispose of the needles and it was set out what equipment I could not touch. This was an indirect way of giving me information about the infection. Corinne was given adequate information about the infection because she knew very clearly about how she could spread the infection. I wasn't told of her infection explicitly. I was always led to believe it was cancer that was wrong with her. I found out 3 months before she died about the HIV. I didn't find out that she had had hepatitis C until last year 2017.

10. I do consider that information should have been provided earlier to her about the condition and managing it. Corinne should have been told she had hepatitis C much earlier. If she had, she would have lived longer I think. She found out she had hepatitis C on the 12th July 1994. Details of who provided this information and which hospital, will come from my brother, but I believe this would have been the Royal Infirmary, Edinburgh that told her because she was already under their care. She started losing a dramatic amount of weight towards the end of 1993. In her diary she talks about being a size 16 and then seeing her weight falls to less than 7 stone. She was already wearing a wig as her hair had fallen out. She had a percutaneous endoscopic gastrostomy (PEG) in her stomach to provide her with a means to receive food. She had liver problems and that is when they diagnosed with her with hepatitis C. This was around June 1994. She died in April 1995. I do believe if she had received treatment for hepatitis she would have lived longer. I believe this because her death certificate says that she has died from hepatitis C. It does not say from cancer and nor from HIV. She writes in her diary that the doctors confirmed to her that her liver was failing towards the end of her life. She was on a number of drugs for HIV, Antiretroviral Therapy (ART) drugs and Highly Active Antiretroviral Therapy (HAART) drugs but nothing for hepatitis C.

11. I think Corinne should have been screened for hepatitis C much earlier. The doctors knew that people who were infected with HIV also had hepatitis C so it follows that Corinne should have been screened for this the moment they realised this was a possibility. A lot of news articles have discussed about how the medical profession was aware that the infected blood that people received contained hepatitis C as well as HIV. Corinne's GP in 1987 told her that the infected blood had come from an American Prisoner. That information was available to him then and she discusses this in her diary. It will also be in her medical records. Even then, they still did not test for hepatitis C.
12. Dr Brettle made sure that my father [GRO-C]. He did provide them with full information on the risk of spreading HIV. Dad was then [GRO-C] [GRO-C] up until the point that Corinne passed away. I have been tested for hepatitis C in the 2018 and this came back negative. [GRO-C]
[GRO-C]
[GRO-C] They have never been offered the test before [GRO-C]
[GRO-C]
[GRO-C] My other full blood brother Ian was one of Corinne's carers throughout her illness. He has never been offered a test for hepatitis C. Dad has never been tested before because after he lost Corinne it was just not something he wanted to think about. He had lost her and that is what has consumed him.

Section 3. Other Infections

13. Other than pneumonia, there has been no other infections other than what I describe above. She died from hepatitis C and pneumonia. She was diagnosed with cervical cancer, in the late 1990s but this was not related to infection. She did not clear this and this and remained in treatment for her cancer up until her death. I have blocked out a lot of the period of her illness from my mind. I was 13 years old at the time she died.

Section 4. Consent

14. Corinne was tested without her knowledge. She was originally tested for HIV without her knowledge in 1984 as evidenced in her medical records. There may have been other tests that were completed without her knowledge but I do not hold details of what these will be.
15. Corinne was tested without her consent. When they did the HIV test no one sought her consent.
16. I believe she was tested without being given full and adequate information. Going right back to 1986. Her GP wouldn't tell her she had HIV. He refused. He told her to go to the hospital. I believe he was scared. It was such a big thing at the time in the media and there was no reason to refuse to tell her. The GP after she was diagnosed did then tell her in 1986 that the infected blood had come from 2 pints out of the 4 pints of blood she had received. How did he know that? How was that information so clearly noted somewhere but then not actioned until 2 years after the transfusion? Why in the first place was she left for a whole day bleeding when she was pregnant in 1984? Why was nothing explored about what could be going on? The ectopic pregnancy was not properly investigated back in 1984 by the GPs who attended her home until it was too late. They just kept telling her to rest. Perhaps if this had been investigated and discussed with her she could have been helped without the need for a transfusion. Maybe she would have only needed 2 pints of blood rather than 4 if they caught it earlier. We don't know now and I don't feel we ever will.
17. I believe that Corinne had been tested on for the purposes of research. She describes this in her diary. She felt like a guinea pig at points because the doctors kept taking so much blood from her. The only person that provided her with information was Dr Brettle. She was also on a trial drug, I do not know the name of this drug for her HIV that is evidenced in her medical records. This drug made her throw up, it left her drained, the last year of her life, she began to fade away. It was when she started to take this drug, she stopped singing, she stopped doing anything at all except crying.

Section 5. Impact

18. The effect on Corinne's life was immense. The day that she was told she was HIV positive was the day she died. Her life was taken away from her. She didn't have a life She always felt disgusted and emotionally felt like nothing. She felt lower than a piece of shit. She had done nothing wrong but had this done to her. She was depressed. There were times she was at home and she would be just sitting there crying for no apparent reason all the time. I remember a long time ago, before her health deteriorated in 1993 she was always singing. She used to sing the Scottish anthem in Welsh. Then one day, she wasn't singing anymore. She wasn't cooking anymore or making teddy bears for charity anymore. It all stopped. I have a poem given to me the day she went to Hospital. She never packed a bag but did this time like she knew she was dying. The poem is called "Oh why did this happen to me"

*I look in the mirror, what did I see,
I see a stranger for it is not me
My hair is turning grey and my eyes I can't find,
They are lost in black circles upon my face
OH WHY DID THIS HAPPEN TO ME.
My children grow up, my grandchildren too,
But what of my future I do not know
My life in God's hands and my doctor's too
In my fight with this stranger called AIDS.*

19. There was a Variant CJD letter that was sent to her and put in her medical records. I do not know when this was sent however Ian Cobbledick will hold a copy of this letter. No hospital would ever give her anaesthetic due to the HIV, Hepatitis C and CJD. When she had her cervix burnt away in the late 1980's because of the cancer she had to have this done with no anaesthetic. The doctors refused to use anaesthetic because she had HIV. They would not use needles on her as it would then expose them to her blood. They would only give her gas and air. They just believed she was a drug user, they treated her like an animal by doing this.

20. The procedure to burn the cervix took place at the Western General, Edinburgh. The way Corinne describes this in her diary it says that she told the nurse before the procedure that she was HIV positive. The nurse ran down the full length of the ward, screaming at the top of her lungs, "*She is infected! This patient has HIV!*" for the whole world to hear. Then the doctor spoke with her and said "*We will not be using anaesthetic on you. If the procedure gets too painful, we will stop and you can go home*". They did the procedure and she had to endure the pain and then she was told to go get a bus home. She had a second operation on her neck later on in the 1990's. This was for a slipped disc and again the doctors refused to use anaesthetic on her. She was treated like an outcast. She was always on antibiotics. She always had a cough or cold, diarrhoea, just every infection going on. We even put in a downstairs toilet because it was easier for her to get to.
21. Corinne had a bed put up for her in our conservatory downstairs. She could hardly move. In 1993 her cheeks were sunk in. I was finding hair everywhere; she was eating often, but still losing weight. She rapidly deteriorated from December 1993 to July 1994 when she was diagnosed with hepatitis C. Her health continued to just deteriorate from there and she died in April 1995.
22. Corinne was never given or offered treatment for hepatitis C. When she was diagnosed she was given some antibiotics for her liver but that was it. I don't know the name of these drugs. This information will be in her medical records. She received treatment for HIV, as described earlier on in this statement. She was on Antiretroviral Therapy (ART) drugs and Highly Active Antiretroviral Therapy (HAART) drugs for HIV.
23. I believe Corinne faced the obstacle of not being told about hepatitis C and then she faced the obstacle of never being offered treatment for it. I don't know if it was because she was already so unwell. She was treated like an animal.
24. The hepatitis C medication was never made available to her. No offer was ever made and ultimately it was hepatitis that killed her. I don't understand why she was not offered this? I also don't understand why my father and my brother have never been offered a test for hepatitis C.

25. The treatments were very draining on her. They were physically and mentally draining. She suffered constant sickness, diarrhoea, tiredness, loss of weight, the list goes on and of course the depression. She suffered all of that and then having to cope with the fact that she is having to lie to everyone about her diagnosis.
26. One dentist in Livingston refused to treat her. This dentist was based in Craigshill Medical Practice and another dentist was based in Ladywell. Both refused to treat her. I don't know the names of the dental practices that did this other than the areas they were in. The reason they refused to treat her was because she had HIV. She ended up taking paracetamol for toothaches and just tried to cope. It was extremely difficult.
27. The impact on our family was catastrophic. Our entire family was living a lie. My father is riddled with guilt because of the lies they told my brother and I as children. It was a deep dark secret. There was one point, when Corinne went to her GP and to her horror she realised there was a big sticker on the outside of her file that said HIV. She was scared that people would see this so she asked to have the sticker removed. They did and then the next time she went, they put it back on. That time she warned them she would take action against the surgery if they put that label back on again. After that the sticker did stay off.
28. My brother took an overdose one year ago today attempting suicide. He is alive today. Mentally he has been traumatised. When that happened no one told me because I was lying in a different hospital, because of epilepsy. This is the way our family now works because of this. We all hide illness in our family from each other because that is what we were taught. That's what Corinne and dad did. I hate it. I hate that Corinne lived a lie to try and protected everyone.
29. I remember in Corinne's last few days of her life. When she was in hospital, the last conversation I had with her was me shouting at her and telling her I hated her because she was leaving me. My real mother Ellen Stevenson left me when I was younger and then Corinne came into my life. She had such an

impact. When she came into my life in the 1980's, I had speech problems and development problems. Corinne helped with all of this and worked with me so this improved a lot. I remember the first time I called her Mum. It was Christmas time when I was a lot younger. She asked me what I wished for at Christmas and I said, I wished for her to be my mum. She responded by saying that she would always be there. Corinne had always promised me she would never leave me. When I shouted at her in that final conversation, she couldn't respond. She was too ill. She was just lying in bed, opening and closing her eyes. The same day she passed away. The moment I found out, I ran upstairs and cut myself with a razor. I was 13 years old. I have abandonment issues now because of this. When someone gets close to me I run a mile and I am prone to domestic abuse type relationships now. I tried to commit suicide in June 2018. I overdosed on epilepsy medication. It is very difficult because my real mum is alive. She never knew about Corinne, until the newspaper article on the [GRO-C] 1996 by the Sunday Mail. She told me later on that when she realised, she was hurt as she should have been made aware that Corinne was dying. I was there when Corrine passed. Ian confirmed he picked me up and was too late. I then waited and at home and ran to the bathroom.

30. Everyone at school found out about Corinne's diagnosis. A close friend of a friend told everyone at school and they made my life hell. I wasn't allowed to sit on the toilets at school as the children wouldn't let me use the toilet because they said I would give them AIDS. It was a plague according to the children. It was the attitude of *"you touch me, you got it."* People didn't understand it. They considered it to be a dirty, horrible virus. The full name is Human Immunodeficiency Virus. This was easier for me to say than HIV. The full words sounded like an illness and the abbreviated version was dirty. People didn't understand, people were scared of it. [GRO-C]

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Corinne was one of the first people my brother [GRO-C] and he was one of the first people to find out that she was HIV positive. He worked it out. Corinne did some interviews anonymously for television, except she had a distinctive voice, so he worked it out almost straight away. [GRO-C]

[GRO-C]

[GRO-C]

31. Corrine told us she had cancer as she couldn't tell us the truth. Back in the 80s and 90s there was a lot of stigma. When Corinne died, I ran away from home and I got brought back home again. I was then sent to live with my birth mum, Ellen Stevenson who I didn't really know that well. She lived in Kirkcaldy, Fife. She has told me in later conversations that she considered Corinne to be a good mum and that Corinne had taught me well. I came back home one month later to find out that a neighbour broke into our house and set the bedroom on fire. It was the people along the road from us, I know it was because they came up to me 1 month after she died when I was 14 years old and told me they set it on fire because "*The house needed to be cleansed of the disease*".
32. Corinne was never able to work as she was too ill and didn't work for many years before she died. My father financially supported our house himself until he became her carer.
33. Like I say, I was bullied at school. I slipped behind on my studies. I spoke about Corinne's cancer in school and the school contacted Welfare. A welfare officer spoke to Corinne and then forced Corinne to tell me what she really had. That day is a blank in my head. I only know this happened, because it is written in Corinne's diary. I was traumatised to the point I have blocked it out completely. Everyone found out, all the teachers knew as well. I was an outcast. Dad went to the Daily Record/Sunday Mail and told the world about what was happening on the [GRO-C] 1996, which was my birthday. This made the bullies worse. I remember one day when I had a bag of shit thrown at me on the way home from school. I failed all my standard grades and I used alcohol and drugs to cope with life. I ended up being pregnant at 15 years old. In 2002 I had a breakdown, believing I couldn't be a mother, so now my children live with their dad. I am awaiting psychotherapy. I self-harm,

I have taken drugs, I'm prone to abusive relationships and it stems from what happened to Corinne. I don't think my life would be like this if mum was alive.

34. Corinne was given compensation in 1993 and we went to North America for this. I was told we were going on holiday but now I realise it was for the compensation. No one would insure her for this holiday. Dad took her anyway uninsured because that is where she wanted to go. She got £85,000. She was represented by Brian Donald, Gary Kelly and Gavin Strang based at, AA Hasties solicitors, 43 York place Edinburgh, EH1 3HT, this was on the 17th February 1992.
35. Dad was refused home insurance as well. He ended up having to give up his job to care for Corinne. There was no insurance on the house and he was unable to pay the mortgage in full. It meant that he lost the house in the end and he had to go live in his caravan. That was very upsetting.

Section 6. Treatment/Care/Support

36. There were obstacles in obtaining care and support in consequence of Infection. There were the operations she had the anaesthetic refused for, which I describe above. Her GP at Craigshill Medical Practice put HIV badges on her file so everyone see she was infected. She was made to stand out. She always hated going to her GP because she was scared everyone in the waiting room would see this file. She was refused dental care. Ultimately she got support from the Macmillan Nurses, but that was because of her cancer. Dr Brettle was amazing with her
37. No counselling or psychological support has ever been made available to my family and I in consequence to what has happened. My brother believes we should have had grief counselling or trauma counselling. Our upbringing was traumatic. Dad needs counselling as well, even 25 years after her death. No support has ever been offered to us.
38. Corinne tried counselling at the beginning but she felt like she didn't belong there because it was mainly for people who had been drug addicts or gay.

There was no support available for the hepatitis C. She was left with nothing for that and that was the thing that killed her.

Section 7. Financial Assistance

- 39. Corinne and my dad were not aware of financial assistance from the trusts and funds before Corinne died. My dad John Leslie Cobbledick applied for support from the Skipton fund a few years ago. I have no details about this as I believe this money is dirty money. I don't want it. I don't want anything to do with it. You might want to ask Iain about this.
- 40. I cannot answer about the process of applying for financial assistance and want no involvement in it.
- 41. I don't know if there were obstacles or difficulties with my father applying for financial assistance as I find it dirty money.
- 42. I don't know anything about preconditions to making the application for financial assistance as I have never done this either for me or for Corinne.
- 43. I have no comments or observations to make about the various trusts and funds.

Section 8. Other Issues

- 44. I have a large file full of information that I wish to provide to the Inquiry. I am sending this into Thompsons. This is comprised of various letters to our MP, letters to the Penrose Inquiry, newspaper clips and a full photocopy of Corinne's diary.

Statement of Truth

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

Signed

GRO-C

Dated

4/2/19