

Witness Name: Malcolm Thomson

Statement No.: WITN3480001

Exhibits: WITN3480002-003

Dated: 3<sup>rd</sup> September, 2019

## **INFECTED BLOOD INQUIRY**

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### **WRITTEN STATEMENT OF MALCOLM THOMSON**

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I provide this statement in response to a request under Rule 9 of the Inquiry Rules 2006 dated 19<sup>th</sup> July, 2019.

I, Malcolm Thomson, will say as follows: -

#### **Section 1. Introduction**

1. My name is Malcolm Thomson. My date of birth is the GRO-C 1946 and my address is known to the Inquiry. I am a retired police officer and I live alone. I intend to speak about my late wife Evelyn Greer Thomson who died on GRO-C 2002. In particular I wish to speak about her infection of hepatitis C and how this affected her.

#### **Section 2. How affected**

2. I met my wife when I was fifteen years and she was fifteen years of age. We met at a dance in Glasgow in 1962. We married in 1967 and settled in Coatbridge. We went on to have three children. Alan who was born in 1970, Evelyn (always known as Lyn) was born in 1973 followed by Craig in 1974.

3. Our daughter Lyn was born with GRO-C Shortly after her birth, Evelyn began to suffer with abdominal pain. Eventually she was diagnosed with IBS and subsequently Crohn's disease. She had numerous operations on her bowel and many blood transfusions. It was on one of these occasions that she was given contaminated blood and contracted hepatitis C. Evelyn died not knowing she had this infection. I did not know she had the infection until after her death.
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4. The first time Evelyn went into hospital for an operation on her bowel was in 1974. This was at Gartnavel Hospital in Glasgow. They kept her in for a few days then she was discharged. This is how it was for many years, she was in and out of hospital.
5. In 1992, Evelyn had ten operations throughout the year on her bowel. I remember she was hooked up to bags of blood in her hospital bed. There always seemed to be concerns regarding her blood platelets. I cannot tell you the names of the doctors or nurses whose care Evelyn was under. I do remember the face of the consultant who was treating Evelyn at Gartnavel but I just cannot remember his name.
6. I don't believe that Evelyn was ever told that there was a risk of being infected with contaminated blood at any time. I was certainly not told of any risks. I am sure that if Evelyn had been told there was a risk she would not have agreed to the blood transfusions.
7. Evelyn was never told she had been infected with hepatitis C. The first I knew she had the infection was when the undertakers told me after her death. I had chosen a local undertaker, William Tyre & Son in Largs. After Evelyn had passed away at Inverclyde Hospital, Greenock the undertakers contacted me and said there had been a problem at the hospital. They told me that the hospital had told them that Evelyn had hepatitis C and there was some problem with embalming her body. I was so grief stricken at the time I didn't really pay much attention. I didn't know what hepatitis C was I

assumed it was linked to the Crohn's disease. I exhibit her death certificate under WITN3480002.

### **Section 3. Other infections**

8. I am not aware that Evelyn contracted any other infections.

### **Section 4. Consent**

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9. I do not believe that Evelyn was tested or treated without her knowledge or consent or for the purpose of research. Evelyn was always having her blood taken for testing. I remember on one occasion when she had been admitted to Inverclyde Hospital, Greenock she looked very ill. I thought she had had a stroke, her bloods were taken by the staff and when I went back to see her she looked fine.

10. I was told by the nurses that it had been something to do with her salt levels. This is why I don't understand why we were not informed at any point, that Evelyn had been infected with hepatitis C. From all the tests they did on her bloods they must have known she had it.

### **Section 5. Impact**

11. It is difficult to know what the physical and mental effects were on her. Ultimately the infection took her life at fifty five years old and I became widowed at fifty six years old. It clearly states on her death certificate that hepatitis C contributed to her death. By not informing her of the infection, she was never given the opportunity to fight it.

12. Physically Evelyn was always tired. We both put that down to the Crohn's disease. Mentally she would have low moods mainly because of all her hospital admissions.

13. There were many occasions where I got out of bed in the middle of the night,

to find Evelyn downstairs having phoned for a doctor due to having pains around her abdomen. Invariably the doctor would phone for an ambulance and Evelyn would be admitted to Inverclyde hospital. In GRO-C 2002 she called for a doctor and was taken to Inverclyde hospital. The family just thought she would be in hospital for a few days then she would come out. It came as a massive shock to all of us when I received a phone call from the hospital saying I should get there quickly, as Evelyn was at the end of her life. Evelyn's body had enough and she passed away at 01:45 hours on GRO-C

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GRO-C 2002.

14. I do not know if Evelyn had any further complications or conditions resulting from hepatitis C.

15. Evelyn was never told she had hepatitis C and as such, she was not offered any treatment.

16. Our family did not know Evelyn had hepatitis C and therefore the stigma did not affect us. When I first saw hepatitis C on the death certificate I didn't really know what it was. I assumed it was something connected to Crohn's disease. I had heard of hepatitis A before and associated that with drug users.

17. Evelyn and I were robbed of a happy retirement. We had moved to Largs, a small seaside resort, and were both looking forward to relaxing and being together. Evelyn and I had three young grandchildren. We had Giuliana who was 11 years old at the time Evelyn died. We also had Alana who was five years of age and Emma who was two years of age when Evelyn died. Evelyn doted on them and loved spending time with them, she was robbed of seeing them grow up.

#### **Section 6 Treatment Care Support**

18. As Evelyn was never told she had hepatitis C she was never offered any counselling or psychological support.

## Section 7 Financial Assistance

19. Evelyn and I, did not receive any financial assistance from any trust or fund.
20. Some years, after Evelyn died, I contacted the MacFarlane Trust, however I was advised that they did not consider applications from Scottish patients. I was not signposted anywhere else. I do not remember which year this was.
21. I saw something on the news recently about people contracting hepatitis C and HIV through being given contaminated blood which is what prompted me to become a core participant. Recalling my wife's death and the devastation it caused in 2002 has brought back many painful memories. It is for this reason I have not told anyone, not even my children, that I contacted Thompsons Solicitors. I was advised about the financial schemes and as such, I made an application to SIBSS.
22. Evelyn's hospital records were destroyed in 2007. This is information I learned through Thompsons Solicitors, when they attempted to recover the records on my behalf.
23. I was rejected from SIBSS in November 2019. The basis for this was that Evelyn's records were destroyed and the scheme was unable to determine the source of her infection. I exhibit this letter under **WITN3480003**.
24. What is extremely upsetting is that in the rejection letter, it is acknowledged that the MacFarlane Trust's advice to me, was incorrect and that I should have been redirected to the Skipton Fund. In 2002, Evelyn's records would have still have been in existence, thus my family and I were deprived of the opportunity to investigate this further.
25. The letter also discusses how under the rules that are in place now for applying for support, we would not be eligible, because Evelyn received her transfusion in 1992, despite the fact that this was when she received the blood transfusions. She had also been given blood prior to 1992, but I am unaware of the dates or hospitals.

26. I would like answers as to how long Evelyn had hepatitis C, when it was diagnosed and why she was never told. The answers won't bring her back but it will shed some light on what I believe, is a cover-up. Why else would she not have been told?

**Section 8. Other issues**

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| 27. | NOT RELEVANT |
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**Statement of Truth**

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

Signed

GRO-C

Dated

7/3/20