

## ICL INQUIRY STATEMENT

### GEORGE LEYDEN

1. I am presently self-employed working as a gas engineer from home.
2. I am an accredited gas engineer. At that time I qualified through the BPEC, an accreditation body at Cardonald College. I am a plumber to trade and have worked with gas for over 30 years. Plumbers often work in the gas industry because it is a similar profession. In 1970, for about 5 years, I worked in industrial gas conversion with H G Humphreys in Glasgow who converted industry from Calor gas to natural gas.
3. I was in Gael's Home Interiors at the time of the explosion. I exited this store through the front entrance. As I walked up and down the car park, I smelt spent gas. It smelt like Propane gas. I know the smell of Propane gas because I have been using it weekly for about 30 to 40 years in my job. I use Propane gas to solder joints and I use it on roof work. Also in many of the portakabins that I use, the cooking and heating is powered by Propane gas.
4. As I walked towards the door, I heard an almighty explosion. It was really loud. I wondered what it was. At first I thought it maybe had been neds outside who had set fire to a car and subsequently blown up
5. Gael's then shook. This shake didn't feel like it had come from underground. I live about 300 yards away from a quarry and every week I can feel underground vibrations from blasting at the quarry.
6. I then heard a noise like a tipper truck emptying a load of stones. At that same time the doors to Gael's blew open and a cloud of thick, brown, grey dust and debris came in. The ceiling tiles in Gael's then came down.

7. I thought to myself, this is really serious. My knees trembled. I thought that maybe a building outside was coming down or that something was dropping onto the roof of Gael's.
8. At that time in the shop there were about three or four staff, two men who I thought were sales reps, who were maybe in trying to sell Gael's something and a lady customer.
9. I am not sure, I think, after the cloud of dust an Asian man may have come in through the doors.
10. We hadn't looked out to see what had happened. We just made our way to a fire escape at the back of the shop because we knew from the dust that the damage was to the front of the shop and that if we went that way we would be unable to breathe for dust.
11. We left through the back fire escape. There were about five or six of us. I am not sure if all the staff went outside. Once outside there was an enclosed area, like a forecourt, and it only had one exit. At that exit there was a brown plume of dust. I thought that there was no way we could leave that way because of the dust. I asked one of Gael's staff if there was another exit, he said "No". I didn't believe him.
12. I went back into the shop to try and find another route. I noticed that the dust was getting clearer at the front door and I could see daylight from the front door. I think there was another Asian man in the shop. The two sales reps and the lady customer were also with me. We exited through the front door. I saw a police helicopter and another helicopter behind it. There was a large pillar in the car park and I was scared that the down drop from the helicopter would bring this pillar down. I heard sirens. I was scared because I didn't know if it was a bomb or an accident.

13. As I came out Gael's door I saw that building, which I now know as a plastics factory, had collapsed. From where I was standing I could only see the end of the factory nearest to Gael's shop.
14. I didn't know what to do next. I walked up and down the car park. I don't know why but I then went and opened my car door, which was bashed in and put in my bag containing the three rolls of wallpaper I had purchased. I then continued to walk up and down. I also shouted to see if anyone was in the building.
15. As I walked up and down the car park, I smelt spent gas. It smelt like Propane gas. I know the smell of Propane gas because I have been using it weekly for about 30 to 40 years in my job. I use Propane gas to solder joints and use it on roof work. Also in many of the portakabins that I use, the cooking and heating is powered by Propane gas.
16. I was asked to differentiate between the smell of natural gas and Propane. In my opinion natural gas has a lighter odour whereas Propane has a stronger odour and is more dense. I am 99% sure that I smelt Propane.
17. I was asked to differentiate between unused and spent gas. Gas that leaks has a totally different smell from gas that has been burnt by a source of ignition. It was gas that had been burnt by a source of ignition that I could smell. An example of this being that unlit gas on the rings of a gas cooker to me smells differently from a gas ring that has been lit and is for example boiling a kettle.
18. At that time I thought that maybe someone in the factory had a cooker which was powered by Propane gas, and had left the gas on and then someone had come in and ignited that gas with a source of ignition such as a cigarette.

19. I remember overhearing the sales reps talking to one another. I heard one of them say that they could smell gas and were going to phone the Gas Board. I told them there was no point because the Gas Board didn't deal with Propane.

20. In my opinion the smell lasted about a minute or a minute and a half. It was as if the gas smell had drifted from the front of the plastics factory, over Gael's and then disappeared.

21. I did not notice the smell of gas prior to the explosion.

I confirm that the contents of this statement are true.

Witness signature \_\_\_\_\_

Date \_\_\_\_\_