

Scottish Child Abuse Inquiry

Witness statement of

Sister [REDACTED] EAC

Support person present: YES

Others present: Richard Souter, solicitor, for [REDACTED] EAC
Lesley Allan, solicitor, for the Daughters of Charity of St
Vincent de Paul

Background

1. My name is Sister [REDACTED] EAC. I am known as Sister [REDACTED] EAC and have not been known by any other names. My date of birth is [REDACTED] 1940. My contact details are known to the Inquiry. I was in charge of Ogilvie House from 1960 until 1963 and then again from 1964 until 1970.

New allegations

2. I have previously given a statement to the Inquiry detailing my time at Smyllum. I have now been presented with some new allegations. The allegations have been made by two ex-residents of Smyllum. I have been told that the individuals were known as [REDACTED] AAU and [REDACTED] ACB during their time there.

Allegations by [REDACTED] AAU

3. I can't for the life of me remember a single thing about any girl called [REDACTED] AAU. I have been told that she was a baby when she first arrived at Smyllum around 1960. She would have been five years old when she went into Ogilvie House around 1964. I have been told that she was in Ogilvie House with her older sister [REDACTED] who was aged nine at that time. I have been told that she had other family members at Smyllum also.

4. I am told her siblings were as follows:

[REDACTED] who was seven years older than [REDACTED] AAU
[REDACTED] who was six years older than [REDACTED] AAU
[REDACTED] who was four years older than [REDACTED] AAU
[REDACTED] who was three years older than [REDACTED] AAU

None of her family ring any bells with me. Sorry.

5. [REDACTED] AAU has alleged that on her first night at Smyllum she left her bed and went to her sister's bed as she was scared. She alleges that I found her, dragged her out of her sister's bed and put her back into her own bed. She alleges that I warned her that if she went back to her sisters bed she would be punished. She

alleges that I “battered” her sister [REDACTED] because she was shouting at me on her [REDACTED] AAU behalf. She alleges that I took “a great deal of pleasure” when I was battering her brothers or sisters. She alleges that her sister [REDACTED] was moved to another dormitory to stop her from mixing with [REDACTED] AAU

6. I don't believe this happened. First of all, there were three staff sleeping in Ogilvie House. If a child went into her sister's bed because she was young and scared, I would definitely have said “Stay there, just wait until the morning”. I definitely would never have taken the child out of her sister's bed or battered her sister for allowing her into the bed. I would have said “Stay, wait until morning, we will sort it out in the morning”.
7. [REDACTED] AAU has alleged that she hated fish but was given it to eat every Friday. She alleges that she was given sardines once. She alleges that she tried to hide the sardines up her sleeves but was caught doing so. She alleges that I “whacked” her off a bench and “battered” her in front of everybody. She alleges that I shouted “The Lord provided this food”. She alleges that she replied “Well tell him I dinnae like it”. She alleges that I gave her another slap for that remark.
8. First of all, we didn't have benches in our dining room, we always had tables and chairs. I would never have given the children fish every single Friday. We might have got fish some Fridays. If a child didn't like fish, there was always a macaroni cheese on Fridays. The alleged incident did not happen. Definitely not. I would not say “The Lord provided this food”. I just would not say that. I wouldn't say that to any child in the house. Definitely not.
9. [REDACTED] AAU has alleged that I called the children names like “ungrateful wretch, scum of the earth, the devil's spawn”. She alleges that if there was a crowd of children, I would call them “the devil's children” and tell them that nobody wanted them and they would be nothing in life. She alleges that I would say these things every time I was “raging”.
10. No. I prided myself on having a lovely house and good staff. The children were happy and contented. I would never use that kind of language. Never in my life would I use that language. In the dining room or anywhere else. I would not..
11. [REDACTED] AAU has alleged that the meal times were the worst. She alleges that if I had set my sights on a child then they could not escape me. She alleges that if I hit a child in the face it would leave a mark. She alleges that I “never held back” and would hit her every time I was on meal times.
12. I wouldn't have been the only one at meal time, there were always two or three of us on at meal times. No child ever got slapped across the face as far as I can remember. We didn't treat the children like that. They were never ever abused or anything like that. I prided myself on having an orderly good house.
13. [REDACTED] AAU states that the children were taken to St Andrews near a red-brick building by the seaside. She states that they were there for a week. She states that some of the children decided to collect crabs to put into the nuns beds. She states that the biggest crabs were reserved for me. She alleges that I “battered”

all of the children and the other nuns joined in. She alleges that I threatened the children that if it did not stop they would be sent back to the orphanage in disgrace.

14. There is not one single word of truth in that allegation as far as I am concerned. I do not remember the children collecting crabs or anything like that. We did go to St Andrews in the holidays. As far as I can remember we stayed in a school building that belonged to some community. I don't remember a red-brick building. I think we stayed in a boarding school during holiday time. Some of the Sisters stayed in the convent across the road. I have never been back there since. We went there one year. We used to go to other places. We went to Meikle quite a few times. I think we stayed in army huts or something like that. We always went for two weeks. We would have gone to St Andrews for two weeks. It wasn't just my house that went, the whole of Smyllum went.
15. [AAU] states that she was a bed-wetter at Smyllum. She alleges that it would happen two or three times a week and she would always be punished. She alleges that there were checks carried out during the night by the nuns. She alleges that I was particularly "bad" and "psychotic". She alleges that I would drag her out of her bed and batter her. She alleges that I would punch, kick and use my knuckles to punch her on the top of her head. She alleges that I would use a brush or a ruler to hit her, depending what I had in my hand at the time. She alleges that the children were not allowed to use the word "toilet" and had to say "bathroom".
16. There were no other nuns at Ogilvie house. I was the only Sister in the house. There were two day staff with me so there were three of us in total. I never kicked or punched a child for wetting the bed or anything like that, for sure. It is just so untrue. I'm just so upset about it.
17. I don't remember the words "toilet" and "bathroom" being an issue. If the children went to the toilet, they went to the toilet. If they went to the bathroom, they went to the bathroom. The bathroom was different to the toilet.
18. [AAU] has alleged that I would make her stand with her wet sheet over her head. She alleges that she had to stand up straight with the sheet for what "felt like hours". She alleges that she was then taken to the baths which had freezing water. She alleges that sometimes she was made to wash the sheets and bath at the same time.
19. Never, never, never. We had a washing machine for sheets and stuff like that. No child ever went into the bath with their sheets. Sheets were not washed upstairs, they were washed downstairs.
20. In relation to the allegation that she had the sheet put over her head, this child was quite young, she was a junior child; There is no way that this happened. If she had been older, it wouldn't have made a difference It just didn't happen, that's the thing.

21. If a child wet the bed, as a rule the staff would take off the sheets. The sheets would be taken downstairs and put into the washing machine. The child would be taken and if she was young she would be put into the bath and helped. If the child was older, they would have a bath on their own. There were no showers. The bath water would not be cold. There was always plenty of hot water. There was never a problem with having hot or cold water. The children did not have cold baths or cold showers or anything like that.
22. [AAU] states that her father hated me and a member of staff called [IAN] [IAN] She alleges that I would try to refuse visits from her father by saying that she had been bad. She states that she would tell me that Sister Claire had permitted the visit. She alleges that I would slap her for answering back. She states that her sister [] bit me once because I had hit her [AAU] She alleges that her sister got "battered" for that. She states that her father always refused to listen to me. She states that there would be arguments between her father and I. She states that most of the time her father would be allowed to take her and her sister out for a visit. She alleges that the other children's relatives would just accept what I said to them whereas her father wouldn't. She states that Sister Claire would try to keep the peace between her father and me.
23. Sister Claire was never in our house. If it's the same Sister Clare. I did not have a [IAN] as a staff member. She was not in our house. I do not remember [AAU] father. I don't think I ever had an argument with anybody wanting to see their children. That would never have happened. Any parent or anybody who ever came to see a child would be made to feel welcome. There was never an argument about anybody coming to see their children or anything like that; That just didn't happen.
24. [AAU] alleges that her sister [] would tell their father about being hit at Smyllum. She states that her father would tell me that there "would be trouble" if he could prove that we (the nuns and staff) were hitting the children. She alleges that I told her father that they were just making it up. [AAU] states that her father refused to listen to me and believed her and her sister.
25. I do not remember ever seeing this man. I don't remember the children either. I just do not remember that family.
26. [AAU] alleges that while she was at Smyllum, she never saw her sister except for at meal times. She alleges that if her sister [] saw one of the nuns trying to force feed her [AAU] porridge, [] would run over and throw it at the nuns. She alleges that I would grab [] and batter her for defending her sister.
27. There were no other nuns, I was the only sister in the House with the lay staff. [AAU] says that she only saw her sister at meal times but they were in the same house. If [] was in the house, [] was in the house. If they lived in the same house [AAU] would have had to see her sister.
28. She would never have been force-fed porridge. No child has ever thrown porridge at me. Never. No child has ever bit me either.

29. AAU states that a staff member called IAN was supposed to do "the same" to make sure the children were alright. She says that IAN was nothing like Miss Angela and would hit them as well.
30. There was no IAN or Miss Angela at Ogilvie House. They were possibly in another house. I don't know. To be honest, they are not two names that I recognise but then I didn't know all of the staff in all of the houses at Smyllum.
31. AAU alleges that I was "the worst, the main one". She alleges that the other nuns and staff hit the children but not to the same extent. She alleges that I would snarl at the children whilst I was hitting them. She alleges that I was "a maniac". She alleges that she didn't need anything to set me off. She states that I wasn't an old nun, maybe in my twenties. She states that I was tall and skinny.
32. I didn't believe in hitting the children. I tried never to hit them, I'm sure I never did. That is so untrue.

Allegations of ACB

33. I knew ACB. It has been suggested to me that I knew her Grandfather from Derry in Ireland. It means nothing to me. I can't remember if I knew him. I don't think I knew him.
34. ACB has alleged that on her first day at Smyllum she was taken to the playroom where she vomited on the floor. She has alleged that after her social worker Mrs Reoch left Smyllum, I told ACB to clean up her own vomit otherwise I would make her "eat it". She also alleges that I would force-feed children in the dining room.
- I deny the allegation. I can't remember a social worker called Mrs Reoch or that description of events happening. I can't remember the day ACB arrived. I had two staff. There were three of us in total at Ogilvie House. I can never remember asking a child to clean up after a child had been sick. I had my own staff for that. I don't remember ACB being sick or anything like that. I definitely never expected any child to eat it if they had vomited. That did not happen. I deny that.
35. ACB has alleged that I shamed and humiliated her in front of other children for bed-wetting. She alleges that I made her strip naked. She alleges that I sometimes draped her soiled sheets over her head. She alleges that I dragged her along a corridor to the showers. She alleges that there were boy's rooms that looked onto the corridor. She alleges that the boys could see her walk past naked. She alleges that it was "deliberately shameful".
36. I deny the allegations. That definitely would never have happened. ACB was a child of six years of age. At no time, in no way, would a child be treated like that. Never ever. I didn't even know that ACB wet the bed. ACB was not in any way a troublesome child or anything like that. First of all, we didn't have

showers in Ogilvie House. Along the corridor we had bedrooms, not dormitories. The bedrooms led out onto a corridor opposite the bathrooms. I deny every single thing in that allegation. It definitely did not happen.

37. If a six year old child wet the bed, the staff would make the bed anyhow. The bed sheets would be taken off. We had a washing machine and drying facilities in the house. The child would be taken for a bath. We didn't have showers. The bath would not be cold, there was always plenty of hot water. There were always staff on duty. It would not have been any different if it involved an older child. **ACB**'s allegations definitely did not happen. It couldn't.
38. **ACB** has alleged that friendships were not encouraged at Smyllum. She alleges that the nuns would separate the children if they were getting too close. **ACB** has alleged that she would play chess with her dorm friend **ABE** and I would walk in and kick the chess board over. She alleges that I never gave any explanation for kicking the chess board. She thinks it was because I did not want them to be happy.
39. Again these allegations are not true. We did not have dormitories. I do remember **ACB** and **ABE** I can't remember a six year old ever having a chess board or playing chess. All three of them were about six years old. They might have had dolls to play with but not chess. I definitely would not have overturned their chess board because I was more anxious that they make friends and be good to each other. I would not come in and destroy their game. I wouldn't do that.
40. Chess would be for the older children and the chess board would be kept downstairs, not in their rooms. I can't see a six year old playing chess. I would never overturn their chess boards.
41. Friendships were encouraged all the time. We went everywhere together and prayed together. The children were encouraged to make friends.
42. **ACB** has alleged that she had her arm broken in 1970 by Sister **AFR**. She alleges that she told me what had happened and I told her to "stop lying". She alleges that I told her to go to see Sister **FAM** the nurse who also told her that she was lying. She alleges that the following day her arm turned blue and swollen and she couldn't move it. She alleges that Mrs **AEW** the headmistress at Smyllum Primary sent her back from school.
43. I cannot remember **ACB** ever breaking her arm. I do remember **ACB** having a bandage on her arm. I can't remember **ACB** having a sore arm. Having said that, if she was sent to the nurse it must have been. I remember seeing her holding her arm. I remember saying to her **ACB**, you need to exercise your arm, you can't hold it like that". I do not think that she had a plaster, I think she had more of a bandage on her arm. I think the fact that she went to see the nurse supports that. The doctor came in every single week and there was a nurse every Thursday afternoon. **ACB** would have seen a doctor before she would go to the hospital or anywhere else. I don't think she had a plaster. I don't know the circumstances that led to her hurting her arm.

44. The Sister **AFR** that she talks about was an elderly retired Sister, a retired teacher. She had nothing to do with the children. She lived in a different house altogether. Our house was nowhere near where Sister **AFR** lived. She wouldn't have had anything to do with **ACB**.
45. **ACB** has alleged that I was instructed by Sister **EAA** to take **ACB** to Law Hospital. **ACB** alleges that I drove her in the Variety Sunshine bus to the hospital. She alleges that I threatened her. She alleges that if she "dared tell them" what Sister **AFR** had done, I said that I would break her other arm. She alleges that I told her she could lie to the doctors because she would be protecting a woman of God.
46. I did not take **ACB** to hospital. I did not drive until 1980. I hadn't had any lessons or anything like that. I got my driving licence in 1980.
47. **ACB** has alleged that I told her to lie and tell everyone that she had fallen out of a tree. She alleges that I tried not to leave her alone with the doctors or nurses in the hospital. She alleges that she was scared of what I might do to her if she told the nurse the truth about what had happened.
48. That did not happen, I was not there. I never went with her to the hospital. I don't think she went to the hospital. I don't think anybody took her to the hospital. I don't think she went to the hospital at all. I think she got her arm dressed in the surgery when she went to see Sister **FAM**. I think that was the bandage that she had on.
49. **ACB** has alleged that on the journey back from the hospital to Smyllum, I told her not to tell anyone what had happened. She alleges that my exact words were "If you tell anyone about this young lady I will break your other arm".
50. Not one bit of that is true. I was never in the hospital with **ACB**. I can't remember her having a plaster. I can remember her having a bandage but not a plaster. I never went with her, I had nothing to do with it. I never saw a doctor with her or anything like that. I do not know why she would say this. I have a feeling that a lot of this is made up. That's my thoughts on it. I don't know.
51. I have been asked about the circumstances of how **ACB** came to hurt her arm. I cannot remember what had happened or how she injured her arm. It could not have happened how she described. Sister **AFR** had nothing to do with any child in my house.
52. **ACB** never told me that she had had her arm broken by Sister **AFR**. She never told me that it was when Sister **AFR** had walked in on her (**ACB**) being abused by Father **ADA**. Father **ADA** never came near our house. That's for definite. **ACB** alleges that it happened in the sacrosanct, in the chapel. I heard her say that on the television recently, not at the time. Children did not go to the chapel alone. We went as a group. We went to mass on a Sunday morning. We went as a group and came back as a group. Any priest that came

for mass came five minutes before mass and left five minutes after. He did not stop. I do not know any priest who had ever stopped to talk to the children.

53. No child in my time had a job cleaning in the chapel. No child had anything to do with the chapel. That's for definite. There was a woman appointed who used to look after the chapel. **ACB** never told me about Sister **AFR** her arm or Father **ADA**.
54. **ACB** has alleged that I would get really angry if she ever spoke back to me. She alleges that I would fly into a rage. She alleges that on one occasion I grabbed her by her hair and flung her across the room. She alleges that she broke her tooth by hitting her face against a wall. She alleges that she probably broke her nose aswell. She alleges that I gave her paracetamol and a wet face cloth that night. She alleges that I did not take her to see the nurse Sister **FAM**. She alleges that I did not take it seriously and told her that it was a milk tooth and would fall out.
55. **ACB** was only a child of six or seven years old. There is no way that any child would be treated in that way. No way. I don't think I would have had paracetamol to give to her. There was a nurse and the children always went to surgery if there was anything wrong. Sister **FAM** was the nurse. I would not have given paracetamols to **ACB** I would not have given her a face flannel. I can't ever remember saying that her tooth was going to fall out. I don't remember a single thing about that incident happening because I don't think it did.
56. **ACB** had alleged that there was an occasion when two police officers attended at Smyllum to return a runaway girl. **ACB** alleges that she snuck out to speak to the police officers and told them that she didn't like it at Smyllum and that the nuns were hurting her and others. **ACB** alleges that the police officers took her to see me. She alleges that I thanked the police officers and told them that she had an over-active imagination. She alleges that as soon as the police officers had left I "whacked" her.
57. The alleged incident did not happen. Policemen never came to our house. I left Smyllum when **ACB** was nine. I was there for three years with her when she was between the ages of six and nine. All of this is supposed to have happened during that space of time. She would not have gone out to see a policeman at nine years of age. There was never an occasion when the police came to the house because a child had run away. Not while I was there. Not to my house, Ogilvie House or any other house. Definitely not.
58. I have been shown some photographs and asked if I can recognise anyone in the photographs. I have been asked if I am one of the nuns in the photographs marked in pen "Sister **EAC**".
59. I wouldn't have a clue. The person marked as "Sister **EAC**" is not me. There are two nuns. The one on the right as you look at it is **AEG**. The one on the left as you look at it, I don't know who it is. I can't put a name on her. I think I was taller than that person. I think that photo was taken after I had left as **ACB** was only little when I left. She is not that little in this photo.

60. I have been asked to describe my appearance during my time at Ogilvie House with [ACB] I would say I was good looking! My hair was always covered in those days. I wore a veil so the children would not necessarily know what my hair looked like. I had [redacted] I had a [redacted] complexion. I had [redacted] I had [redacted] eyes. I was [redacted]

61. I have been asked why these people may be saying these things. I have been thinking about that. I have no grounds to think it but I have a feeling that these two people have got together; [ACB] and this lady [AAU] They have been talking. They must know each other and have had a chat together. It's off the top of my head but it's the only conclusion I can come to. It is because their allegations are so similar and so untrue.

I have no objection to my witness statement being published as part of the evidence to the Inquiry. I believe the facts stated in this witness statement are true.

[redacted] EAC

Signed

Date 3rd November 2017