

Scottish Child Abuse Inquiry

Witness Statement of

James Patrick Buckley

Support person present: No

1. My full name is James Patrick Buckley. My contact details are known to the Inquiry. My date of birth is [REDACTED] 1945. I will be 71 on [REDACTED] 2016.

Background

2. When I was a young child I lived with my parents in Royston, near Blackhill, in Glasgow. It was a very poor area with a large catholic population. The local priest was a significant figure.

3. [REDACTED]
[REDACTED] My mother died aged 30 [REDACTED]
[REDACTED] That was in 1953. I think I was eight at the time. I remember that very well. I used to hang on to my mother all the time. [REDACTED]
[REDACTED] The morning she died, I got up. I went into the living room. My mum was lying there. My gran placed a mirror over my mum's mouth to see if she was breathing. My gran said to my father, "she's gone". I was told by my father to go and get the priest. I ran and got him. I have no recollection of my mum's funeral. My mother had 5 brothers and 2 sisters. None of them were prepared to look after [REDACTED].

4. One day shortly afterwards my father came in. He said I was going to live in the country where there would be sheep and other animals. He told me

we were going to Aberdeen. I can remember travelling on the train over the Forth Rail Bridge. [REDACTED]

5. We were met at Aberdeen by nuns. We were transported in a green van to Nazareth House in Aberdeen. I don't know why my father chose Nazareth House. I was eight; [REDACTED]
[REDACTED]

6. [REDACTED]
[REDACTED]

Nazareth House

The regime

7. When we arrived at Nazareth House [REDACTED] given uniforms. [REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]

[REDACTED] There were about 40 beds in each dormitory.

8. Nazareth House was about four stories high. On the ground floor there was a playroom and a school cupboard where hats, scarfs, coats and shoes were kept. The boys wing was on the left of the picture I've been shown. The girls wing was on the right. There were about 75 to 80 boys. There was a girls' section. There was a section for old men.

9. We were treated badly and looked on as scum because we came from Glasgow. Others were treated better than us. This was in 1953. We were kept away from the girls. There were about 60 to 70 girls. We only saw them at Benediction at night and mass in the morning.

10. We had to go to Benediction at 5pm every night and mass every morning at 6am. There were two or three masses on a Sunday. I had to go to all of them and serve mass as an altar boy. We always had to go to

confession on a Friday. Three of four priests came in from St Mary's Cathedral in Aberdeen.

11. We had to get up very early for morning mass. We stood in church according to height with the tall ones at the back. The nun in charge was Sister [LDR] We had to kneel down and Sister [LDR] would give you your character. The you'd get a big whack with her cane if you'd done something wrong.

12. Being at Nazareth House was totally different from being with my mother at home. The regime kicked in very quickly. I saw boys getting whacked. It was strange seeing a regime like that. I saw people being abused and hit. It was a very strict regime. That was a shock to me. There were about 12 tables in the dining room with 6 or 7 at each table. If it was your birthday you got an egg. You could have it any way you liked.

Bedwetting

13. In the mornings bedwetters were told to stand at their beds. They were identified when everyone else was there. I was one of them.

14. When the bedwetters got washed there were two big old fashioned baths. Three of four of us were put in to a bath at the same time.

15. In the dining room the bedwetters were made to stand up each morning. We stood up. There were about 10 to 15 of us. Sister [LDR] would make a fool of us. The other children were encouraged to laugh.

There was lots of name calling about it. It happened a lot to me at first, [REDACTED]

16. They put rubber mats under our sheets. They then put two alligator clips which were attached to a battery. When water hit the rubber mat you got an electric shock to waken you up. It was barbaric. That happened to me two or three times. People were picked at random.

School

17. We marched hand in hand from Nazareth House down Union Street in Aberdeen. We turned left for St Mary's primary school. At first I was in primary 5. Then, after I was 12, I went to St Peter's secondary school. We were marched from Holborn junction to St Mary's in all weathers. Years later they took us by bus. Some of the younger children couldn't cope with the walk.

Routine

18. When we came back from school we cleaned our shoes and changed out of our school clothes. There was a playground with monkey bars. There was a shed where the green van was kept. There was a cobblers shop and a piggery. There was also a big park which was made into a football pitch.

19. Bedtime was before 8pm, regardless of age. From when I was around 14, we would have to lock up at night. When I was at secondary school we would have to do our homework in a room after school.

20. There were two main nuns: Sister [LDR] and Sister [LJO]. Sister [LJO] tried to be kind of nice. Sister [LDR] was the main culprit. She was like a terrorist. When she went to town on you she couldn't stop.

21. The man [REDACTED] was involved in fiddling with young boys.

22. When I was about 12 it was my job to look after old men on a Saturday morning. We had to bath them. I did this with [REDACTED]. We had to change their beds. We had to wash them. We had to use a flannel to wash their private parts etc. This was a strange thing to have young boys doing.

23. Then we'd have to wax and buff the floor of the Novena room. There was an old nun called Sister Andrew. She was kind. She would give us tea and biscuits.

24. She was put in the morgue when she died. All of the nuns had to kiss her feet or head, I can't remember. We had to stand there all day. I was about 14.

25. There was a [REDACTED] nun called Sister [REDACTED] LDQ. She didn't mess about. There were about 50 nuns in Nazareth House in total. They were Little Sisters of the Poor. Their main house was at Hammersmith in London.

26. Everyone was given a number at Nazareth House. They took your name away. The nuns would tell number X to go and get number Y. Your number was on every item of clothing. My number was [REDACTED].

27. We were not allowed to mix with outsiders. We were 50 boys in overcoats and caps marching down Union Street. We were called the Nazis from Nazareth House. We were sworn never to discuss anything with outsiders such as friends at school. There were never invitations to friends' houses. That didn't happen. I was an altar boy from age 10 for about five years. I've never been in a catholic church since I left Aberdeen aged 15.

Discipline

28. We were beaten for trivial matters. [REDACTED]. Sisters [REDACTED] LDR and [REDACTED] LDQ carried a stick up their sleeves. They would hit us between the ribs or on the back with the stick. You would get a dig in the ribs with the stick in church. I even got a dig in the ribs from a crucifix worn by one of the nuns. We were also hit across the knuckles.

29. If [REDACTED] were involved in fighting, I'd try to sort it out. Once there were nuns getting weighed into a boy. I set about them. I was told that was a

mortal sin. A cross was shoved into my ribs. One time [REDACTED] was getting a doing by nuns on the stairs. This was one time I hit a nun. I told her not to hit [REDACTED] on the back because he was always coughing. I punched the nun. I got locked away for a week in a cupboard. I was given food and allowed to go to the toilet. I was not allowed to go to school. I was given a note for the teacher. I was excused school on the basis I was sick. I was in the cupboard twice. The first time was when I was 12. I was in for a week. The second time it was for three days. Boys were locked in the cupboard if they ran away. One boy, [REDACTED], ran away habitually. It affected him psychologically. I am still scared of the dark because of the cupboard. It was completely dark in the cupboard. There was a bed type thing. It was made of foam with a cover on it. The cupboard was locked.

30. Sometimes for a while I used to wake up with my bed saturated by perspiration. I had been sweating because of a fever. They said I wet the bed. I got a doing for that. I had rheumatic fever. I was about 9 or 10. I know I was off school for quite a while. [REDACTED] suffered it too.

Sister [REDACTED] LDR

31. Sister [REDACTED] LDR was the main nun. She must have been about 50-ish. She would beat us every other day. She always used a stick in the ribs or over the knuckles. She would lose control. Sometimes the beatings would last for 5 to 10 minutes. I had bruises many a time. They were always hidden. Other boys would have seen them. Sometimes I'd weigh in to help. I was always protective [REDACTED]. I was the tallest, but I was very thin. I couldn't stay back and watch. I'd weigh in then I'd get it. When children were really young it was not as severe. Beatings started at around age 8.

Bath time

32. There were two big baths on the top floor. Sometimes the water was hot. Sometimes it was cold. The nuns would be standing watching you, giving you verbal. I remember bath night at Nazareth House. There were 4

cubicles with a bath in each one. Each boy had a small piece of material to put round his waist, otherwise we were naked. This included boys aged 3-4 right up to 15 year olds. There was a nun with scissors to cut everyone's toenails. The boys had to lift their leg up to have this done, exposing their private parts. It would be either Sister [LDR] or [LJO] I thought that was totally wrong. We had to strip in the bath as well. They used nicknames for the bedwetters. I remember being in bed and [redacted] coming up to see me. That was not encouraged. There were 30 to 40 beds in two rows in the dorm, with a passage down the middle. Sister [LDR] had a cell in the corner where she slept.

33. Children maybe deserved a telling off. But they didn't deserve to be hit with a cane. Boys aged 14 and 15 were still hit with a stick or a cane. They were struck with the cane on the back, buttocks and legs. The cane came out at night.

34. At night we would have to kneel in a row. This was called getting your character. People would be criticised. For example, I was told I was a Glaswegian and the scum of the earth. Sister [LDR] would say this and then whack you with the cane. You would get a couple of whacks. She would take her frustration out on you.


35. There was a family of children called the [redacted] family. They were from Fife. There were 3 brothers and 2 sisters. They were black. The boys were treated so badly. The nuns would say "get the big darkie in here". [redacted] was the eldest. He got beatings. He would laugh.

36. We spoke on the phone about two years ago. Their mother died and they were sent to Aberdeen. The treatment of them was my first taste of racism. Their mother died and the five children in their family were sent to Aberdeen.

37. [redacted]
[redacted]



Leaving care at Nazareth House and afterwards

38. I was put out of Nazareth House when I was 15. I didn't want to go at that point. Sister  sent for me. She told me that my father had said that I had to go home to Glasgow. I was put on a train and met at Glasgow by a man and a woman. I had a little case and a name badge on. The man said "I'm your Daddy". I wouldn't have recognised him. Both my father and the woman smelled strongly of alcohol and tobacco. I then had to go home with them to the house my mother had died in.

39. The woman was as bad as the nuns had been. I used to get a beating off her. She was a protestant. My father was a catholic. They used to go out on a Saturday night. I was left in with the tv. I had never seen a tv before. I ate the woman's chocolates while they were out which she wasn't pleased about. She dragged me out of bed and swore at me.

40. I stayed for two months at my father's house then I left. I couldn't get a job in Glasgow because my name was obviously catholic. I went to Edinburgh. At my first job interview there I was surprised because they didn't ask what school I went to. I got a job in a hotel until I was 16. Then I got a job as an apprentice printer. The union boss was called the Father of the Chapel, the FOC. I eventually became the FOC. I was a printer until I retired.

41. 

 I had
my own flat in London Street, Edinburgh. 


42. I got married to [REDACTED]. That was on [REDACTED] 1966. [REDACTED]

43. The woman living with my father wanted me to join the army at age 16. I failed the medical. I think it was the effects of rheumatic fever on the whole body. I've had open heart surgery three times. I've had three different heart valves. The last was 28 years ago.

44. I love golf. I've played all over the world.

45. I got divorced from [REDACTED] and married [REDACTED] who is my daughter [REDACTED]'s mother.

Other aspects of Nazareth House

46. Going back to Nazareth House, I don't think any of the nuns I have spoken about will still be alive.

47. The girls' part of the home was run by different nuns. There was Sister [FAF] She was an evil looking small dumpy woman. There were horrific stories about her. The older the girls got, the more prone they were to sexual abuse by the nuns.

48. I met a woman called [REDACTED] years later on Friends Reunited. She was at Nazareth House. She called me by my nickname, Paddy. She told me horrific stories about Nazareth House. I think she has passed away now.

49. There was psychological abuse too. Sister [LDR] would give you your character every night. She would tell everyone Jim Buckley's from Glasgow. He is unwanted. He has a big family but no one wanted him. He is the scum of the earth. Then you got a whack. She would say it was because my mother died and my father didn't want me.

Food

50. The food was atrocious. The milk was always sour. On one occasion I didn't want the macaroni cheese. I was force fed. That was quite common. The older boys dished out the food at a hatch. I don't like apricots. I remember once a nun grabbed me by the ear. She opened a can of apricots and made me eat the whole lot. I was sick and I had to clean it up myself.

51. I don't remember lunch. I'm unsure if we got any. I remember getting chicken giblets and potatoes for dinner. The food was bad.

52. On a Saturday afternoon we were given thruppence pocket money. Glaswegians got thruppence. Aberdeen people got 1 and 6. Sometimes I'd get nothing if I'd been bad.

Holidays

53. We had a holiday once. I remember Sister [REDACTED] LDR called me. She told me Fr Duffy was arranging holidays. Fr Duffy was brilliant. He used to play football with us. I went to stay with Mr and Mrs Fraser in Annbank, Ayrshire. It was like a haven. I was 13. I can still remember their address. There was a beach. I had ice cream and proper meals. When we went back I cried every night. I cried a lot at night. A lot of boys did. The nuns came round with a stick. You had to be lying with your hands crossed over your shoulders or you'd get whacked. There had to be silence at night.

54. One night when I was about 10 I had had a bad day with one of the nuns. I wrote to my father asking him to come and get me. I said I was always getting hit. I put the note under the nun's door. She hauled me out of bed and gave me a right tanking with the cane. It left bruises on my buttocks an back. She tore up the note.

Christmas

55. Christmas was a bad time. A lot of boys got nothing. We didn't get anything. Sister [REDACTED] LDR would shout names . I don't recall ever getting a present at Christmas.

No family contact

56. The older you got the more hurtful it was that you couldn't have contact with your family. I never saw my Grannie again after my mother died. She lived in Villiers Street near St. Roch's chapel. [REDACTED] stayed with my Gran a fair wee bit. She lived in a single end. She had a kitchen with 2 bed recesses and a stove in it. [REDACTED] slept in a drawer at her house. I don't think I saw Gran again after Mum died.

Absence of heating and other matters

57. At Nazareth House I don't ever recall any heating being on. [REDACTED]

58. I used to suffer from migraines. A man called Harry Macintosh used to train us for boxing. I was punched on the head a few times.

59. I used to have to wear John Lennon type National Health Service glasses. I'd throw them away and I couldn't see. At school I started doing better in the last year when I was moved down the front. I could see. I was clever as it turned out.

60. I used to tell people that the reason I ended up in Aberdeen was because my father was transferred there for work. I was too embarrassed to give the real reason for living there.

61. [REDACTED]

62. [REDACTED]

63. I am asked if I ever told anyone before about what happened at Nazareth House. I told people at the Keil Centre in Edinburgh about 16 years ago. I was there for about two and a half hours. Cameron Fyffe, Solicitor, referred us. We were also asked to go the Stewart Street Police Station in Glasgow. We were there for 3 hours. I ended up consoling the police lady. She asked for the names of people in my year. She later phoned me and said she had been taken off the case, Her name was Kirsty McArthur. She worked in the child protection unit for Grampian Police.

64. I asked Cameron Fyffe to get my records. He got records but no details. Cameron Fyffe was acting for hundreds of us. We gave him money.

65. [REDACTED]

66. I am asked if I told anyone what was happening at the time. I do not, You daren't tell.

67. My teacher at school was Mr McCartney. The nuns gave me shoes. I wore them. You called the nuns "Sir". They addressed you by your number. The shoes were very old fashioned. The teacher had a wee smile. My toes were curled up because the shoes were too small. The only shoes that fitted me were my football boots.

Visit to Blairs

68. When I was nearly 15, I was sent with another boy from Nazareth House to Blairs College. They sent me there to see how I'd adjust and to see whether I wanted to become a priest. I served mass every day and three masses on a Sunday. I didn't want to go to Blairs. I was there for 3 nights. I was supposed to be there for a week. I was wakened up during the night while I was there by someone trying to interfere with me. It was a grown man. I kicked up a fuss and other boys helped me. The man was wearing a brown

habit. He accused me of interfering with him. He tried but didn't make contact with my private parts. Nazareth House sent a van to collect me early. I was beaten with a cane over a bench. I was beaten until I admitted that I had attacked the other man. The beating lasted a good half hour. I don't know who the man was. I never saw him again.

69. Some boys who ran away were severely beaten. They would have to stand up when they were eating their dinner.

Effect of Nazareth House experience on my life

70. I am asked what effect my experience of childhood at Nazareth House has had on my life. I would say that, as a result, I tried to run my home like the army. I ran a strict regime as a result of the way I was brought up.

71. My first wife [REDACTED] was the first person in my life who showed me affection. We had 2 children together but we were really just friends. We parted when I was 42 years old. We had a discussion when my boys were about 15 and 16. We sold our house and the boys came with me. I am still friends with [REDACTED] now.

72. My second wife [REDACTED] helped me to get rid of the strictness. [REDACTED] is the mother of my daughter [REDACTED] who is with me today. I was divorced from [REDACTED] about 10 or 11 years ago. But I have to thank her for helping me with my obsession for things having to be done properly.

73. I have never been unemployed. I have always been a private person when it came to seeking help. I did suffer from contact dermatitis. My GP thought it might be caused by stress.

74. My GP is Dr Geddes at Alison Lea Health Centre in East Kilbride. I have been with that practice since we moved to East Kilbride from Edinburgh in 1971. Dr Chisholm was my GP in the late 70's and through the 80's. I have no difficulty with the Inquiry obtaining any records relating to me.

INCAS

75. I have been a member of INCAS for a long time. I originally saw an article in the Daily Record. It was about a woman who had been at Nazareth House in Cardonald in Glasgow. It lit a fire in me. I had never told anyone about my childhood, not even my first wife [REDACTED]. I saw the article and I wrote to the papers. The East Kilbride News got in touch with me. Frank Docherty then saw it in the paper. He phoned me. He first got in touch about 17 years ago. I met with Frank. We received tremendous support from Victim Support at Hamilton Sheriff Court. Frank has fought tirelessly to his own cost.

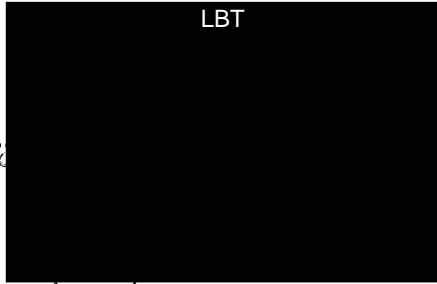
76. Frank pushed INCAS. Jack McConnell as First Minister vowed we would never have a public Inquiry. Nicola Sturgeon is different but at times she's also given us the rubber ear. By that I mean she has avoided confronting the issues we want to raise. We recently had a meeting with Angela Constance. She released a press statement about the discussion at the meeting before the meeting had taken place. I think she'll get shunted after the election. I don't know why the education secretary is dealing with this Inquiry anyway. Kenny Macaskill, the former Justice Secretary, did nothing for us.

77. My childhood experiences have stayed with me a long time. I was in my 30's before I came to admit their effect. I'm quite proud of the fact I have worked all my life.

78. There was reunion for Nazareth House people in Partick Burgh Halls in Glasgow. I was reminded that I was the tallest in the home. Yet I was made to wear short trousers even when younger boys had long trousers on. I think this was a deliberate attempt to humiliate me.

79. I have not attended the National Confidential Forum.

80. 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.



Signed.....

Dated..... 2/5/16.....