Scottish Child Abuse Inquiry

Witness Statement of

FEB [redacted]

Support person present: No.

1. My name is FEB [redacted] although I have also used the surnames FEB [redacted] while I was in care and FEB [redacted] in the past. My date of birth is [redacted] 1969. My contact details are known to the Inquiry.

Life before going into care

2. My knowledge of my early years I learned after I met my mother when I was in my twenties and is hearsay.

3. She told me that I was born in the maternity hospital in Glasgow and went to care straight from hospital as soon as I was born. Her name was [redacted] and her married name was [redacted] She'd already had two kids before I was born. Her husband was not my father, which is why I was put straight into care.

4. My mother told me that she didn't want me to go into care, but that it was a very chaotic family and she became pregnant while her husband was in prison. The family were very much involved with the gangs in Glasgow. She said that the nurses at the hospital were worried what would happen when her husband came out of prison and found me.

5. She also said that when she left hospital she disappeared. She knew she wouldn't be able to keep my birth a secret so she ran off and ultimately ended up in London.

6. I believe I was put into care at Nazareth House in Lasswade at first, but I have no recollection of there at all. I also know now that I was put into foster care when I was eighteen months old and that Strathclyde Council were the funders of my foster care. I don't know if there were other placements, there are no records.

Foster care with EVV-EVW at [redacted] Bathgate

7. The foster care was with EVV-EVW and their family at [redacted] Bathgate. EVW was a pipe fitter and EVV was a housewife. They lived in a small semi-detached council house, which was quite normal in those days.

8. Upstairs there were two bedrooms and a bathroom and downstairs there was another bedroom, the sitting room and a kitchen. It was a poor house and so the carpets and furniture were worn, but it was pretty clean and as well-kept as it could be. All the kids would do the housework and in later years, when EVV became more frail and elderly, home-helps would come in.

9. When I arrived at the age of two, EVV would have been fifty-one and EVW was a couple of years younger. EVV later told me that I was fostered because she and EVW were too old to adopt.

10. EVV had two children of her own, [redacted] who was the oldest and from an earlier marriage, and [redacted] who was illegitimate and from her before marriage to EVW [redacted] was about twenty years older than me and [redacted] about ten years older. [redacted] is still alive, but [redacted] is not.

11. They had adopted three girls before I arrived who were [redacted] and [redacted] had been adopted when she was five and [redacted] and [redacted] were adopted when they were babies. They all used the surname EVV-EVW [redacted] was seven or eight years older than me, [redacted] four years older and [redacted] was two years older than me.

12. We all called EVV and EVW Mum and Dad and I always used the surname EVV-EVW knew I was fostered because EVV told me, but I was never encouraged to think about it. In fact I was completely discouraged and any questions about my real mother would have brought punishment. I had no idea what my mother's name was or what her history might have been.

13. EVV and EVW slept in the downstairs bedroom, the girls had one of the bedrooms upstairs. I shared the other with [redacted] at first. [redacted] left home to get married about the time I arrived and [redacted] left when I was five or six.

14. My earliest memory is of uttering the words "I'm three", I presume because it was my birthday. I don't remember much else for a couple of years after that. I have glimpses of memories of going to school and primary one with the teacher, Mrs Dawson. My recollection of daily gets better as I got to primary two and then primary three. I am able to construct pretty much a whole day from the age of about seven.

Routine in foster care at [redacted] Bathgate

15. A typical day would be getting up, going to school and coming home. We weren't kids who were allowed play outside much. I would come home from school first and wait for the older girls to come home before we would be served tea.

16. We were also kids that went to bed very early. I was in bed at seven o'clock and the others were a bit later. There were always tantrums and tears about that. I can remember friends at school talking about programmes they had watched on TV and wondering how they all got to stay up so late.

17. EVV would shout up in the morning from the bottom of the stairs and we'd all get up together. I presume someone dressed me, I don't recall.

Food

18. The food was basic Scottish stuff of the time, mince and tatties and I remember a lot of soup. It was homemade, but not particularly good. EVV was no genius in the kitchen. I ate with the two younger girls, [redacted] and [redacted] once they came home from school. [redacted] and [redacted] ate a bit later because by that time they were both a bit older and had jobs.

Leisure

19. In the summer holidays we could play outside, but there was never a culture in the family of coming home from school and eating quickly so that we could get outside and play. The girls always seemed to be doing homework.

20. There were toys to play with, as much as a poor family could afford toys, and there were also books in the house, including lots of Enid Blyton and books for girls. It was so heavily gendered back then, but I didn't mind, I liked reading them. I remember being very young and reading in bed by the light of the streetlamp outside, because I was sent to bed so early.

21. One of my friends from school was allowed to come to the house to play. His name was [redacted] and he was the son of one of EVV s friends. He was around a lot until we were about eight, when he went off to boarding school. I was also allowed to play with two kids who lived up the end of the road, who weren't in the Catholic education system. I was allowed to go to their houses and they could come to my house too.

22. The greatest treasure I discovered was Bathgate library. I spent every hour I possibly could in the library, so much so that I used to get thrown out at closing time.

Schooling

23. At first I went to St Mary's Primary school in Bathgate. The school must have known that I was fostered, however the teachers never treated me any differently because of that. There was definitely a difference with the other schoolkids though. As a child I

had very dark hair and a dark complexion, so I stood out. There was a lot of name-calling, particularly racially, but by and large I was popular enough and had close friends as well as not so close friends.

24. I went to secondary school at St Mary's Academy, which was also in Bathgate. It was a Catholic school and there were kids from all over the area. I felt there was less of a difference being a foster child at secondary and, because the two older girls were there, it was much less of an issue.

25. I've never considered myself much of an academic, but secondary was alright. I enjoyed some subjects and not others and it felt like a normal education.

26. As I got older and started to get homework from the school, the oldest of the sisters, [redacted] would check what I'd done.

Social work involvement/inspections

27. My first social worker was called Miss Blain. She retired when I was around primary six age and Mrs Johnston took over. Mrs Johnston was much more jolly, Miss Blain was very severe. I think they were employed by Strathclyde Region.

28. They came to the house to visit, but I always felt it was for them to see EVV not me. I'm not sure how often they came, although it did seem to be quite a lot and very rarely when I was there. I'm not sure if there was a plan or a design around those visits nor whether EVV had prior warning that they were coming.

29. I never saw a social worker on my own and when they spoke to me it was only on a very superficial level. They would ask in front of EVV how I was, how school was and if I was working hard.

30. Bizarrely, even when the social workers were there, EVV would be drunk. She drank all day and the house would stink of alcohol. Perhaps it wouldn't be that obvious because she was such a hard drinker.

31. The social workers also came to school to see me, check how I was doing and speak with my teachers. That happened fewer than a handful of times and again there would always be a teacher there whenever they spoke to me.

32. Nobody from the social work department ever told me anything about my family. When I was fourteen Mrs Johnston told me I could be adopted by EVV I told her there was no chance, it was never going to happen. I refused to discuss it further.

33. When I reached sixteen the social work wanted to pull out, but I wanted to stay on at school and do a fifth year. Mrs Johnston told me she would need to check if there was a budget because Strathclyde Region were paying Lothian Region for my education. I did stay on, but I was a pretty messed up teenager and I didn't do well. I wanted to stay on for sixth year as well, but I was told that they wouldn't fund it.

34. I was never at any reviews there might have been about my care, if they even happened. I am aware that Strathclyde had parental responsibility for me, because I had to get written authority to go on a school trip to Lourdes and a scout trip abroad.

35. As well as the social workers, nuns from Nazareth House came round annually. I don't know if it was planned or not, but I can remember them coming and enquiring about me. Again they would ask superficial questions of me, but they would never speak to me on my own.

Birthdays/Christmas

36. Birthdays and Christmas were marked as much as a poor family could. I knew when my birthday was and we got presents and a birthday cake.

37. I remember once being banned from my own birthday tea party because I had been naughty. All I had done was try to copy an advert on the TV and cram a single cheese cracker into my mouth. I think I was seven or eight at the time and I was dragged from

the party and sent to bed at a ridiculous time. I could hear the girls all enjoying my birthday tea party from my room.

Trips and holidays

38. There were family holidays. EVV-EVW had a caravan and every summer we'd be taken to North Berwick. EVW would drive us and leave us there with EVV so there would be six of us in this tiny caravan.

39. There were no trips to museums, art galleries or anywhere like Edinburgh Castle, for example. I did go to the cinema and swimming with the school though.

40. When I was sixteen I went on my first foreign holiday, which was with the scouts, and had to get my birth certificate to get my passport. That's when I saw my surname was FEB and learned that I had a middle name for the first time.

Healthcare

41. EVV was a chronic hypochondriac, which she probably projected onto everyone. We were always getting taken to the GP, Dr Thomson, for various things, even the slightest cough.

42. I had a couple of medical complaints at the time. I used to faint a lot in church if I was kneeling or standing for too long. That was investigated and blood tests were taken and they diagnosed I had thalassemia minor, a haemoglobin condition, which I inherited from my father's side.

43. I have also suffered from terrible allergies for my entire life. While I was in foster care I had four or five operations on my sinus and in my nose to remove adenoids and polyps and to drill extra holes for drainage. I wore a hearing aid for a time, because the doctors thought I was partly deaf, not knowing it was because my sinus were blocked.

44. I was also taken to Dr Thomson for an annual health inspection. It was a full, clothes off, thorough and intimate inspection. I have no recollection of the doctor querying anything or finding anything untoward.

Treats and Pocket Money

45. There was a tradition on a Saturday night of a bar of chocolate, but other than that, there were very few acts of kindness.

46. I was raging when I discovered as a teenager that within the foster money that [redacted] received for me was an element of pocket money. I never got any of it.

Religious instruction

47. The whole family were Catholic and we children were sent off to Mass every Sunday. [redacted] and [redacted] never went.

Running away

48. When I was older I used to run away occasionally, but I was running away from the world, not home. I never did when I was a wee boy, although I did have dreams of doing so.

49. I ran away to Edinburgh and to London twice when I was fifteen or sixteen, looking for a different life. The longest I was away was four days, but I always made my own way back. By this time [redacted] was very frail and pretty much bedridden. The police were never involved.

Relationship with foster family

50. [redacted] was a monster. Our relationship was one of her being in charge and me being terrified. She was an alcoholic and, fuelled by that, her reactions to things were

often severe. I could recognise the signs when she had been drinking. I would come home from school and I always knew if she was drunk.

51. EVW was quite a gentle man even when he was drunk. He would spank me if I'd misbehaved, but not to any greater extent than was allowed in those days. He would take me and the two younger girls for walks up the hills and in some respects he was the model of a nineteen-seventies hardworking father.

52. EVW was a Geordie who was a great storyteller and had the most amazing accent. He would bring me to bed about seven o'clock every night and give me a story. One of my earliest memories is of when I was very young, asking him to tell me the story of 'Jack and the Beanstalk' every night. I must have been very annoying, but he would make it magical and it was lovely.

53. EVV and EVW had almost no relationship and the culture of violence they perpetrated between themselves was almost unimaginable. They would beat lumps out of each other constantly. They were both very serious drinkers and their drinking would tip over into fistfights.

54. EVW was a man who perpetrated domestic violence on EVV but she would attack him as well. She would get to the point with the booze where she would launch herself at him and the two of them would roll around the floor, punching lumps out of each other.

55. On one occasion it got so serious that [redacted] the oldest of the adopted sisters, ran next door to get Mr and Mrs [redacted] the neighbours. She thought they were going to kill each other.

56. EVV and EVW would fight frequently over the allowance they got for fostering me. It was their money for drink. It came fortnightly and I remember it being quite a decent amount of money, although I never saw a penny of it. Eventually, in the week that Elvis died in 1977, EVV and EVW split up and he left the house.

57. EVV never told me the reasons why they had parted. I remember I'd climbed up a rowan tree in the garden and watched as EVW packed his bags and drove off with the caravan. There was never any discussion or explanation about what was happening. No social worker got involved to my knowledge, EVV just continued to foster me as a single parent.

58. I do know that at some point afterwards Mrs Johnston, the social worker, approached EVW and asked him what role he still wanted with me, but he said none. I now know that was to clarify who was to get the allowance.

59. EVW never came back to the house after that but the girls still wanted to see their Dad. Friday night was pay day so he would come into Bathgate from Livingston, where he had got a house. I went along and he would hand over his money because he still had to support the girls. We'd have a juice and a packet of crisps and then he'd go away. That went on for a couple of years until he stopped working and didn't have to pay anything anymore.

60. My relationship with the other children was mostly one of fear, they were powerful people to me as well. There was such a culture of violence that the violence I was receiving from them, as modelled by the parents, was pretty savage at times. Often EVV would delegate a punishment, she would tell one of the others to give me a "leathering" as she called it.

Abuse in foster care at [redacted] Bathgate

61. EVV explained that I was fostered because no one else wanted me and because my mother was no good. Beyond the constant criticism and put downs were verbal attacks where every swear word imaginable was launched at all of us children.

62. When I was about ten, I was made an altar boy and I was so proud. I was given my cassock and surplus, which were to be washed and ironed. EVV was drunk so she got the girls to wash and iron them and I put them on. When she saw me I vividly

remember her saying "Come here you fucking wee bastard." It was an immediate put down. She was saying how dare I even think anything good about myself? I felt worthless. This was my day and I was gutted.

63. I was always threatened by the family with being sent back to Nazareth House, which was described as a house of horror where bad boys go. They called it "Nazzie House". EVW would use it as a coercive threat and EVV and the girls threatened me with it too. There was always the difference that I was fostered, whereas the girls were adopted.

64. Any infraction whatsoever resulted in physical punishment, which could be for the slightest bit of cheek or speaking back. EVV would beat me with whatever she could get to hand, a belt, a stick, a slipper or a wooden spoon. If there was nothing to hand she would use her fists. This happened far more often than I could ever have counted. It wasn't a daily occurrence, but it was certainly more frequent than once a week.

65. I have a terrible reaction to cruciferous vegetables, which is now known as a normal condition. Eating anything like broccoli or cauliflower causes me to gag and that would result in the most appalling beatings at dinner. I don't remember when it started and I don't think there was ever a time when it stopped. It wasn't a spank, it was several punches in the face. She was a very angry woman. I can remember being tiny, with food all down my front and her fist coming down on me repeatedly.

66. Those vegetables were served up constantly and mealtimes were an absolute horror story. It was always a relief to come home from school and find she had made her terrible soup.

67. There was one episode when EVV had taken a waist belt to me, but I can't remember what I had done to enrage her. She belted me so severely that I had bruising and marks all down my legs, which EVW discovered. He went absolutely crazy at EVV because, in his words, "We'll get the jail".

68. I'm not sure how old I was, but I was certainly at school and older than primary three because I remember having to go to physical education with Mrs Whelan, the teacher. I remember worrying because I knew I was going to be wearing shorts. I made some story up that I had been in a fight.

69. There are certain moments that stick in my mind particularly. I remember the day EVV decided to teach me how to polish shoes when I was about eleven years old. She had been in the army and had military training in how to shine shoes, but I couldn't get the rhythm. She gave me beating after beating with her hands until I got it right. It felt like it went on the whole day, although it was probably less than an hour. Every time I got it wrong she would slap or punch me on the head. I kept thinking she would get tired, but she didn't.

70. Those beatings from EVV continued until I was old enough and big enough to put a stop to it. By the time I was about fourteen I was quite a big boy and EVV was becoming frail. On one occasion she tried to hit me with her walking stick, but I just took it off her. I think at that point she gave up.

71. If EVV was too drunk and couldn't be bothered she would say "somebody hit him" and one of the other children would get up and do so. Sometimes it would be a slap on the back of the head, sometimes it would be a kick.

72. She hit the other children savagely as well, I saw her do so, but she never treated them as badly. [redacted] the youngest, has since acknowledged that and told me the way EVV treated me was 'mental'. My take on it as a child was that they must have been much better behaved than me and that they were less worthless than me.

73. All my childhood was spent being scared. The consequence was that I was quite badly behaved at school, probably because at school I could be badly behaved and get away with it. The belt at school, even twice a day, was nothing compared to what I'd get at home.

74. EVV talked a lot about her own childhood in the 1920's. She told us that both her parents were alcoholics and were very abusive to her. I now understand that what was happening in her behaviour to me was very much about power and domination.

75. She wouldn't go upstairs to go to the bathroom, which I now realise was because she was too drunk to do so. Instead she would go in an adult-sized potty in the kitchen every night. When she'd finished, she would shout on me because it was my job to go and clean it up. It was only ever me that had to do it. None of the other children did.

76. I would leave the other children sitting watching the telly and I emptied that potty every night with alacrity. I wanted to be a good boy.

77. Sometimes she would stand and watch and sometimes she would just walk away and close the kitchen door behind her. Closing that door was very significant, because that door was never otherwise closed. It was almost as if she was saying "I'm leaving that with you. This is where you belong. This is all your worth".

78. I can relate that to a story she told about her own mother. It was a pure repetition of her own neglect and abuse in childhood.

79. Food became a very serious issue for me. As EVV got older, frailer and drunker, we'd come home from school and she would be in bed asleep. By this time I would have been in first year at high school, [redacted] would be in third year and [redacted] two years above.

80. We'd come home from school and wonder what was to eat. Tea might be a slice of toast and I remember the horror of that. If we came home and EVV was drunk then it was going to be terrible. If we came home and she was drunk and asleep it wasn't so terrible, but I knew I was going to have the horror of hunger. I would know I wasn't going to eat anything proper until school dinner the next day.

81. [redacted] seemed to use food as a way of maintaining some kind of power. She was just a child and she was only following the modelling, but it would have been clear to her that I as an eleven year old needed more food than I was getting.

82. Food became a weapon. [redacted] seemed to take a perverse pleasure in telling me a slice of toast with cheese spread on it was all I was getting.

83. It was terrible and I remember dreaming about food. In my bedroom there was woodchip on the wall and there was one really big nugget that I used to pretend was a button I could press and someone would arrive with food. I was absolutely ravenous, so much so that it was actually painful. My stomach was so empty all I could produce was acid, which I could feel and taste in my mouth.

84. As I got older and saw how my friends behaved at home, I came to realise it was different in other families. I couldn't believe it if, for example, they just took a biscuit. I could never have done that, or even ask to do that. I would be angry, thinking the family were chaotic and a mess.

85. Although EVW [redacted] might have appeared the model of a nineteen-seventies father, he was a prolific paedophile. He raped me, often anally, often orally, on an uncountable number of occasions from before I can remember until he left the house in 1977 when I was eight. It didn't happen every night, but it certainly happened more often than weekly.

86. After he'd put me to bed and read me a story, EVW [redacted] would go to the pub and come home about ten or eleven o'clock at night. When he did, he would come upstairs and that's when it would happen. There is no way of counting the number of times it happened to me, and not just to me.

87. It happened in the bedroom at night and it happened in the bathroom if there were other people in the house because then he could lock the bathroom door. It also happened in the caravan, which was where he went during the day to sit and drink. I would be playing with the other kids outside and he would shout for me to come in. I

would know what was going to happen, but I would go in willingly. It also happened at the foot of the stairs for some reason, when the whole house must have been empty.

88. There never seemed to be a threat of violence, there was always a gentleness about it. I never tested or resisted him. He was forceful and there was no way it wasn't going to happen. I have no recollection of him beating me or being violent as he was abusing me or raping me. Other than instructions about what to do, or how to perform, there was no communication.

89. There was a constant implied warning that I would go back to Nazzie House, but it was never said in the context of a threat if I told anybody what he was doing to me. There was never any discussion about what he was doing either before or afterwards.

90. Looking back as an adult I wonder where EVV imagined EVW was when he came home from the pub. They shared a bedroom, so she must have wondered what he was doing upstairs.

91. In those days sex offending against children was dressed up. I once overheard EVV speaking to someone, possibly a neighbour, and referring to EVW as "a dirty old man in every sense of the word". I remember thinking she didn't know the half of it, but maybe she did.

92. At that age I had no comprehension of biology or what sperm was, but if EVW had ejaculated inside me it would find its way out. Sometimes it would be messy and it would be in my underpants, or in my pyjamas, or on the bed. When she saw it EVV thought that I had shit the bed and she would shout it around the house. She would scream "he's done it again". I would be cleaned up by EVV or one of the sisters in the morning and one of them would wash my clothes or the sheets. I was shamed and humiliated.

93. The shame is quite toxic. If a rape happened during the day I would be aware that the sperm would be coming out of me until the next morning. It was grotesque. I was a child running around with faecal-infected sperm in my underpants. I would be anxious

whether people would be aware, whether they could smell it. I would feel it getting colder as the day or the evening progressed. There was no way I could ask to change, that would have resulted in a severe beating.

94. I didn't have the knowledge or the ability to put together that this was from what EVW was doing and I thought I my body was doing something really bad. I worried about going to sleep and it happening again.

95. In the later stages, when I was around seven years old, I asked EVW what it was. He just said "sperm". That was it, there was no explanation of it or of how to clean it up, even though he knew EVV was reacting as she did and all the trouble it was getting me into.

96. Kids can be very clever and survival mode is a powerful weapon. I realised by about six or seven years old that if I could make him ejaculate with oral sex then he wouldn't go for anal sex. Anal sex caused such unimaginable pain, particularly as for a lubricant he would use soap. He would run the soap under the tap and get his hands all wet before lubricating me and it burned.

97. I think I thought at the time that it was the soap that was causing me the pain, not the tearing and damage that he was doing. I don't recall there being any blood, but because of the colour of the sperm, perhaps it wouldn't be noticeable.

98. EVV and EVW also took in short-term foster children, usually girls of around my age. My assumption is that they came from Nazareth House during the holidays. They would suddenly appear, stay for a week or two and disappear. I can't remember any of their names or anything else about them.

99. On one occasion when I would guess I would have been about six, EVW abused me and a young girl at the same time. I don't know who this girl was, whether she was there for short-term foster care, or whether she was a girl from up the street.

100. This incident sticks in my memory because by the age of six or seven I was very familiar with young girls' anatomy. I have a very distinct memory of being in the bathroom with EVW and this girl with the door locked. I can remember her physiologically, but nothing else about her.

101. My memory of that incident is very shady, however I do recall that both this little girl and I were naked. I can't remember whether EVW was or not. I also remember having a very close look at her anatomy, but I don't know if it was because EVW was doing something to me or to her.

102. I also remember one specific incident of sexual abuse by a male neighbour who lived three doors down from us in [redacted] and who was a friend of EVW There may have been more incidents, but the one I remember is when I was five or six. This man's name was EXH short for EXH and he would have been older than EVW His name sticks in my mind because I'd never heard it before and because he was a grown up and I used his first name. I don't now recall what his surname was.

103. I now know that he was grooming me. He'd see me playing in the garden and bring me little gifts. Plastic toy soldiers or marbles. EVW took me to his house one afternoon and I remember performing oral sex on this man. I don't know if EVW was there or whether he'd dropped me off.

104. I think this EXH may have died by the time I left home, although his wife was still around. They were old then, so if they are still alive now they will certainly be in their nineties.

105. When I was about twelve I was told I was going to have to babysit for [redacted] the second oldest son, and his wife at their house in Boghall. They had a couple of boys of about four and five and they were going out to do something. I remember it was Christmas time because there were decorations everywhere. While I was there EVW turned up in his car and he was very drunk. I hadn't seen him for about three years.

106. I had found their drinks cabinet and I was having a few drinks while [redacted] and his wife were out. The boys were in their beds before I even got there. EVW [redacted] came in and I told him that [redacted] and his wife weren't there, but he just ignored me and went down the stairs to the bathroom. He was there for ages.

107. I knew something was going on but I didn't know what to do. I was frozen. I was absolutely terrified. I was twelve and thinking with a twelve-year-old's brain and I thought I was in so much trouble. After a while he came back upstairs to the living area and just told me he was leaving and that was that. I never told anyone about it.

108. Much later on when I was fourteen and EVW [redacted] was living in Livingston, [redacted] wanted to go and see him. I agreed to go with her. I know now that I agreed because I had post-traumatic stress and everything was dissociated.

109. He had just moved into a new house in Eliburn and I wondered what all the drawings were that I could see on the walls. EVW [redacted] told me that it was because the local children came round and they liked to draw on the walls. I knew exactly what was happening and I just had to leave. The man was clearly a prolific offender.

110. A family called [redacted] lived nearby, who had a son called ESD [redacted] who was at least ten years older than me. He was in the army and when I was about eleven or twelve he was commissioned by EVV [redacted] to toughen me up. She wanted him to teach me to fight, to stop me being a "wee sissy".

111. In the middle of our livingroom, with EVV [redacted] and the girls sitting round, he and I would have to fight. He would beat seven bells out of me whilst the family were watching and critiquing my inability to fight back. It was like a gladiatorial contest with this guy punching and kicking me as I lay on the floor crying.

112. I remember three, possibly four occasions, this happened, once even on Christmas day. It stays with me because that level of intense pressure nurtured the hyper-vigilance that I lived with every day. The humiliation of it, rather than the actual violence, is what hurt the most.

Leaving foster care

113. I stayed on at school for fifth year because I wanted to go to university. I messed it up though, because my head was messed up and I think I passed one exam and failed everything else.

114. Strathclyde Council pulled the plug and I was told that was it, I had to go and get a job. I was given the option of getting a council house, because I was coming out of care, but I didn't want that. EVV had stopped drinking by then and was very manageable so I stayed with her until I was eighteen.

115. I had to sign myself out of care when I was seventeen. I went to the social work offices in Bathgate and spoke to two women I'd never met before. I just had to sign some papers and they told me that was it. There was no offer of support and I had no further involvement with the social work department.

116. I had no sense of the significance of what I was signing. Although I thought I was a fully grown man, I was a child and I was just doing what I was told.

117. I left Bathgate just after my eighteenth birthday. I got a job on the Youth Training Scheme (YTS) with Edinburgh Council, which got me as far from Bathgate as I could get. I made friends with other people on the YTS and stayed at different houses with those friends as often as I could.

118. I got a fulltime job with the Council from that YTS placement, which became a very good and a very well paid job. At eighteen I had my first mortgage on a flat just outside Leith. I had got out of Bathgate and that was the most marvellous thing I could ever express.

119. At first I led a bit of a crazy life with no sexual boundaries. I had nothing but a determination to survive. I was working for Edinburgh Council during the day and at night I was working as a rent boy, just to get enough money to afford the mortgage.

120. By this point EVV had become this very frail, elderly, permanently dying, woman and had become a really sweet old lady. After all of the insanity she became this helpless soul and I had amassed an enormous amount of victim empathy. I presume I was suffering from Stockholm Syndrome.

121. It's every child's instinct to be a good child and I was getting the love I'd never previously received. I became her carer and I would go home at weekends from Edinburgh and look after her personal care. She was great fun. She changed completely towards me and I became the blue-eyed boy. She doted on me and told everybody how amazing I was. I will never really work it out. I continued caring for EVV until she died when I was twenty-one.

Life after being in care

122. In 1992 I met my partner at a time when it was much more difficult to be gay. After about a year-and-a-half of dating we ended up living together and we are still together.

123. I progressed at work in Edinburgh until 2002 when I moved abroad. By that time my partner had repeatedly been offered a job abroad by his employers but I kept refusing to go. I had a really good job. Eventually my partner's employer gave me a job as well and we both went abroad and stayed there for four years.

124. While I was abroad, I started to question what I really wanted to do.

125. My partner and I returned to the UK and I went to university to study for a professional qualification. After I had qualified, we moved to Edinburgh and I started my own practice. It is now well established, with a sound client base.

126. My partner and I have been married twice. We had a civil partnership at first and then we went to the council and changed it to a marriage.

127. I finally got in touch with my natural mother in November 1992 and developed a relationship with her. I had spent about a year-and-a-half trying to find her and then, out of the blue on the day Bill Clinton was elected, she 'phoned me and told me she was the woman I had been looking for.

128. I hadn't realised how crazy the family were. Just a few weeks after we had our first contact, the husband that my mother had been running away from was murdered and then his brother was murdered as well. It was some awful gang thing.

129. I had no interest in having any kind of relationship with the rest of my natural family, but my mother was sweet enough. Unfortunately she died in 2006. She had multiple sclerosis and died young.

Reporting of abuse in foster care at [redacted] Bathgate

130. While I stayed in Bathgate I would never have dared tell anyone about the way I was being treated. Not even at confession. It was all internalised. I just felt it was my lot.

131. Since then I have never reported to the police and I don't know if the police ever investigated EVW

132. I have told the various therapists I have seen over the years about EVW and about EVV and I told one therapist about EVW coming to [redacted]'s house when I was babysitting. I also told [redacted] the youngest sister, in a phone call about two years ago. All the sisters know what happened to me now because I told [redacted] to tell them.

133. Some of my close friends know I was abused in foster care, but they don't know any of the detail. I leave it there and don't go into the level or the extremity of the abuse.

I could pretend it's not about shame, but a lot of it is. It's also because I don't know anybody that could handle the material. I certainly couldn't handle it if I hadn't had the training I have.

134. Even my partner doesn't know the extent of the abuse. He knows all of the black-and-white, but none of the grey. He knows there was sexual abuse and there was violence from a psychotic foster mother, but not the level of the impact, or the chaos, or the fear.

135. After managing to track my mother down on my own, I wondered what else I could do so I wrote a very long letter to Strathclyde Regional Council Social Work Department. In it I wrote that lots of stuff had happened to me, how can this not happen to somebody else? I didn't go into detail, but I said it was a crazy family and I had been sexually, physically and mentally abused. They never got back in touch.

Impact

136. I'm still frightened of EVV even though she's been dead for almost thirty years now. EVW wasn't as bad as EVV I knew what EVW would do and then it would be done. It was predictable and to some extent as a child, it was manageable.

137. With EVV it was just insanity. A constant madness. A childhood of hyper-vigilance. I was constantly waiting on the next punch, the next attack, the next criticism or whatever would come.

138. I have had thousands of hours of therapy over the years, but I've only ever told two therapists about having to empty EVV s potty every night. When I told the first therapist, I actually had to stand up, walk away and talk to the window, the shame was so deep.

139. Looking back as an adult I now think of that as possibly the most shameful thing I have ever had to do. The most humiliating thing and the most scarring thing. I didn't, until my adult life, really grasp what was going on.

140. I suffered pain and injury at the time EVW was raping me anally and I still do. It has impacted my sex life and I have never been able to have anal sex. As a gay man in a gay relationship, it's a part of our life that we have never been able to explore. I feel like it's something we have been robbed of. Emotionally and psychologically I couldn't ever imagine myself doing it. Physiologically there is a fair bit of damage, scarring and occasional bleeding.

141. I had tried to re-invent my life when I moved to Edinburgh at eighteen. I cut everything off and refused to tell anybody about any association I had with Bathgate. It meant I had to invent a whole life that didn't actually exist. When anybody asked about family I would just say I grew up in care and not go into detail. People would immediately pull back as soon as they heard that.

142. In 2018 I was persuaded to go to the Gay Pride event in Edinburgh and I met a girl who grew up along the street and who hadn't seen me since. It knocked me back. I had to get away from her and jump in a taxi. I was very shaken.

143. I actually phoned [redacted] the adopted sister who was closest to me in age, to tell her. She already knew because the girl had put it on Facebook. That was the last time I actually 'phoned [redacted] I explained to her that to the world I had created for myself, she and none of the others exist.

144. I have a relatively good, but very distant, relationship with [redacted] I could never have developed any meaningful relationship with her or her children because they are too close. I see them and they remind me of my past. I can't have them anywhere near.

145. When I lived abroad, [redacted] and I had occasional phone conversations. It seemed that there was enough of a distance and we'd talk about the sheer insanity of our childhoods. I realised the depth of her guilt about what she'd seen happening to me

and what she'd taken part in. I disclosed to her about what had really been happening with EVW and she had no idea. That was quite shocking for me because I did have an assumption that all of us were being abused.

146. That has been really hard for me to process over the years. I wondered, why me? What did I do?

147. I do not have any relationship with [redacted] because of her abuse of power with food. Even today, despite all the therapy I have had, I have a real horror about being hungry. I've always got to have food in my cupboards. I hoard food. I need the safe knowledge of there being food available.

148. I could very easily just give up and become an alcoholic, but I don't want to. I want to work and I want to see clients. There has always been a battle with the temptation of alcohol and it will always be there. I either have nothing or I go daft and drink to excess. I'm stronger and more able to deal with it now, but I could not deal with it in my teens. In my teens, before I received therapy, alcohol probably saw me through.

149. I don't think I can form intimate relationships with women, even within the professional sphere. There always was and continues to be a fear of women, particularly women who may be more dominant. Even if they're just being assertive, they suddenly become EVV and I go to a place of absolute terror.

150. I once worked beside a lady who described herself as a "feisty woman". For the first couple of weeks we got on great but as she began to assert herself more, it became such a deeply traumatising experience that I actually had to quit the job.

151. I loved the job but I couldn't work with this woman and she had no idea why. I gave up what was probably the best job I have had because I couldn't have a trusting relationship with a powerful woman. Instead I was terrified. That has upset me enormously ever since, but I think I will always be the same. I go to a victim place. There will never be a recovery, it will always be a case of managing it and surviving.

152. I have worked through the hyper-vigilance, the constant alertness and the stress and exhaustion that comes with it, in therapy. It is at a much lower level now, but I don't think it will go away. It has become manageable and it has faded enormously, but along with hyper-vigilance comes other stuff, which manifests itself as stomach complaints.

153. Stomach complaints have been lifelong for me. I have to be very careful about when I eat and where I eat and where the bathroom is. I have to plan everything and if I'm not sure or clear I have to cancel plans and arrangements. That has always been around and is something that I have had to learn to live with and to manage. Those stomach complaints are also a physiological and a psychological product of what EVW did.

154. My partner now is the only adult relationship I have had. I have had lots of sexual partners, but I've not been able to form the kind of relationships I would have liked. People felt I was strange and often they avoided me. I compensate for that by forming such professional relationships as I can. That gives me something. That gives life purpose. All of that madness has some meaning because I can use it and I use it every single day in the course of my professional practice.

155. Living with the memories of EVV which bounce out of nowhere, brings me moments of absolute blinding rage, which then just go. I can be sitting watching TV and it will just happen, there is no conscious trigger. Afterwards I'm often left feeling very shaky.

156. In the past the memories would come and there would be no emotion accompanying them. Now it's a justifiable rage and that is actually really healthy, but it's so spontaneous and unexpected that it can't be part of an anger management program. It is something that I can't see will ever clear away.

157. As well as the rage, I also have moments of absolute despair, during which I have terrible suicidal thoughts. As with the rage, they only last a few moments.

158. My adult life has been haunted, but it hasn't stopped me.

Treatment/Support

159. The first time I spoke to anybody about my time in care was in 1988 when I sought help from a clinic in Edinburgh. I knew that lots of really messed up stuff had happened to me and I didn't know what the impact was, I had such a deep level of dissociation.

160. I must have picked up a leaflet while I was working in the Council and I self-referred myself. I spoke to a woman at the clinic in Edinburgh and tried to tell her, but I couldn't so I made up a story that I was really depressed. I had no way of overcoming the shame and telling her the real reason for me wanting to speak to her. However, her demeanour was such that I felt that if ever there was a power imbalance, it was then.

161. I never went back to therapy for years, however what started manifesting in my relationship with my partner was uncontrollable rage. I was never violent, but at the slightest misdemeanour I would explode. I wrote it off as my having an explosive personality, but I came to realise that my partner was actually scared of me.

162. I was too ashamed to speak about it, so in my late twenties I wrote a letter to my G.P., which went in my file and I never heard anything back. After a time I had to go to my G.P. for something else and a few days later I got a letter from him saying he had found my letter. He told me I didn't need to suffer this and sent me off to a therapist.

163. I went to see the therapist, a woman in the Dean Village, and it was brilliant. I only had six sessions, but it was like she knew me and this awakened in me a fascination with therapy. There was something normalising about it. I thought that if she knew all this already, if she knew how to ask the right questions, then it wasn't just me.

164. For the very first time I heard the term post-traumatic stress and realised there was a label for my nightmares. There was a label for the binge-drinking I was doing and for the rage I was feeling and there was a label for the deep passive-aggression.

165. I continued with hundreds of hours of therapy with different professionals, deepening my fascination with the human psyche and with therapy itself. My recovery journey through therapy has been unbelievable.

166. While I lived abroad, I consulted a number of therapists and attended group sessions and I continued therapy from that time on. I have seen various practitioners over the years back in the U.K. Most recently I have been seeing a lady in Edinburgh and I also attend weekend based therapy. I know I will have to be in therapy for the rest of my life.

Records

167. I tried to find my records but I was told there are none. I wrote to Strathclyde Regional Council in 1992, just after I had made a connection with my natural mother in November of that year. The Council told me they didn't have any records of me, that all the files may have been lost.

168. After writing to the Council, telling them about my abuse in foster care, to which they never replied, I wrote again and asked if there had been any progress on finding my file. I got a letter back from a man called Eric McKenzie, a senior social worker, which was pretty much the same as the first letter. He said he had had a look, but he couldn't find anything.

169. In 1993 or 1994 I wrote to the local government ombudsman complaining that the council had lost my file. The ombudsman wrote back saying they had looked into it and found the council not to be at fault. Apparently they only had to keep the files for seven years or thereabouts. They said there was no incumbency on them to keep files for foster children for any longer. Unfortunately I no longer have that letter. Learning that was really tough to deal with.

170. I recently contacted my GP and the surgery printed out a copy of my health records from childhood. Through these records I established that I was sent into foster care

in [redacted] 1970. The records also provided me with the details of the different social work offices that had been responsible for me. I can provide the Scottish Child Abuse Inquiry with a copy of those records if required.

171. After receiving those records from my GP, I wrote again to Glasgow City Council and, after a few weeks, they provided me with some further, heavily redacted, records. Again I can provide the Scottish Child Abuse Inquiry with a copy of those records if required.

172. I learned from my records that my entry into care was planned a month before I was born, contrary to what my birth mother had told me. I also learned that there was at least one earlier foster placement before I went to Nazareth House. That was with a Mrs [redacted] in Clydebank, however I have no recollection of that.

Lessons to be learned

173. In my records, there is a recurring theme throughout that the social workers were not getting access to me, EVV was blocking their attempts to do so. Social workers need to have an independent relationship with the child in care and 'no' is not an answer if a social worker wants access to a child. My social worker could have turned up at the school, or the library. She could have got to me if she tried.

174. Children need to know what a social worker's role is. I just thought she was a woman in a car, I didn't know why she was there. If a parent is blocking access to a child, that needs to be an alarm signal, which must be acted upon.

175. No framework at all existed back then for a child in foster care, but now there is a framework. Although I'm not familiar with it, I know it exists and you can't just go and take a kid for a weekend. I know there are now government checks to be carried out, but because I don't know enough about the safeguarding frameworks, I don't know what could be improved upon.

176. What I can say is that therapy helps. There should never be a limit or a cap to the therapy that a former child in care is able to benefit from. It's hard to find the right relationship with a therapist and if it takes someone twenty years to find the right therapeutic relationship, there must be the resources for that.

177. There must be an unlimited supply of good, humanistic-based therapy, without question and with unfettered access. I am alive today because of the therapy I have received.

Final thoughts

178. The Scottish Child Abuse Inquiry is the greatest thing that's ever happened in Scotland. Being able to talk about everything that happened to me in detail means that it is no longer mine, it's someone else's as well. It is now out there. I was determined from the start that whatever it took I would speak to the Inquiry.

179. Speaking about what happened to me is my justice and it is truly awesome. I never imagined in my life that I would be able to talk about it, but then the Scottish Government decided to hold the Inquiry.

Other information

180. EVV and EVW are both long dead. EVV died in 1990 and EVW died a couple of years later in some sort of shelter for alcoholics somewhere in England. The girls went to his funeral, I wanted no part in it.

181. I saw [redacted] at EVV's funeral and also when [redacted] the oldest of EVV's children, died around 2011, I saw him at his funeral as well. I was living in England at the time and came up for it. Those are the only two times I have seen [redacted] since. We have no relationship and I have never spoken to him about EVV or EVW

182. [redacted] and the girls all know what happened to me, because I told [redacted] to tell them. I've no idea what their reactions were. I've not involved myself or engaged with them to find out.

183. I am trained in how to be in the moment and process later. I will have a lot of processing to do after speaking of my abuse, which has been a unique experience for me. Nothing that I have done or gone through today however compares to one day with [redacted]

184. 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..... [redacted]

Dated.....19/8/19.....