

Scottish Child Abuse Inquiry

Witness Statement of

ECK

Support person present: Yes

1. My name is ECK. As a child in care I was also known as ECK and ECK. My date of birth is 1972. My contact details are known to the Inquiry.

Life before going into care

2. I was born in Bellshill Hospital. My parents were called and . I had two younger brothers and an older sister. My sister was born on 1970, my brother was born on 1973 and my youngest brother, , who is known as was born on 1978. I don't know much about my father apart from what I have heard over the years. On my birth certificate it says he was a salesman but he may also have been in the army for a period of time. He died when I was eight years old.
3. Life at home was pretty grim. I suffered violence from my mother and my dad wasn't around so I had nobody watching me. I have been told that my dad left my mum when I was about three for another woman and after about a year he phoned the social work department with concerns about us. I fell down the stairs and broke my nose when I was two or three and one of my neighbours put me down a chute when I was four. I was knocked down by a car five times when I was younger because my mother didn't care where I was playing.

4. We were always dirty and there was never enough food in the house. I don't think there was any social work involvement until I was about five. Our social workers then were called Mick Moran and Margaret Kerr and they were from Airdrie Social Work Department. Before that there may have been a home help in the house now and again. I have seen a photograph of us as children when I was about five and we looked really dirty. [REDACTED] had a black eye and I had some bruises. I was in Monklands Hospital in Airdrie around that time because I had impetigo, scabies and pneumonia.
5. My mum argued with the neighbours and we went to Airdrie police station. My mum was being interviewed in a different area of the station so the police called me a smelly black bastard and they whispered in my ear that I was stinking, bogging and horrible. I had cut my hand quite badly and they didn't deal with it properly.
6. I attended St Serf's school in Airdrie. I was too scared to ask to go to the toilet so I wet myself and they took me out of school and sent me to see a child psychologist. I was given a pool ball and I was asked to peel it like an orange and I made Rice Krispie cakes.
7. We didn't have much of a diet back then because my mum didn't know how to cook at all. We lived off ice cream vans and crisps, sweeties and juice from the local shop. The social workers decided to take us into a local children's home for a spell to see how things would go.

Arranview Children's Home, Airdrie, North Lanarkshire

Secondary Institutions - to be published later

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Secondary Institutions - to be published later

Leaving Arranview Childen's Home

10. We left because the social workers thought it was a better idea to put us back to my mum's to see if she could manage with support. There were two agencies involved with us. One of them was The Six Circle for vulnerable children and they would take us to a country park and play sports like football. We also had Jim McKnight who was a support worker assigned to us by Airdrie Social Work Department from a place called Gartness in Airdrie. He would take us out of my mum's house and take us to the swimming pool.
11. We moved to St Edward's School because my mum moved from one part of Airdrie to another. I had problems at school and my mum didn't look out for me.
12. My mum had two or three men coming and going into the house. We were home for a few months and then my brother [REDACTED] was born. He suffered a broken arm as an infant at the hand of one of my mum's partners, [REDACTED], who was seventeen or eighteen at the time. My mum never took us to hospital when we injured ourselves or the men injured us so I don't think it was ever reported that [REDACTED] had a broken arm. I stood on a nail and it went right through my trainer and into my foot. We were asked to play with neighbours who were really dirty.
13. We were home for a few months before we went to Waverley Drive.

Waverley Drive Children's Home, Airdrie, North Lanarkshire.

Secondary Institutions - to be published later

14. [REDACTED]

Secondary Institutions - to be published later

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Secondary Institutions - to be published later

Leaving Waverley Drive Children's Home

31. When I was seven or eight Norrie Gallagher and Susan Ingles took over as our social workers and they put us back into the care of our mother. I used to challenge my mother and her partner, [REDACTED] and they would hit me. My mother would hit me with a poker. [REDACTED] was reported to the police for abuse at one stage but nothing happened to him. He had two children with my mother and they were taken into care at a very young age before they were a year old.
32. When I was ten or eleven I was in Monklands Hospital for six weeks. I was being chased by a gang of boys and I ran into the middle of the road where I was knocked down by a Royal Mail van and the driver drove off. They also treated me for the impetigo, scabies and lice. I think social work visited me once or twice in hospital. I remember being clean in hospital and the food was decent.
33. One day I came in from school and my mum gave me a bit of paper which she had signed. It said that me and my brothers would no longer be staying with her. I didn't know what to make of it and I remember crying. My brothers and sister cried too.
34. I think the social workers had linked in with family members that were connected to my father's side of the family and they were going to look after us. My sister went to my grandparents. I don't think they wanted to look after us boys so I went into foster care with the ECS-SPO in [REDACTED]. [REDACTED] went to the ECR-ECP in Larkhall and [REDACTED] went to a family in Coatbridge. We were all split up and that was a difficult time.

Foster Care with the ECS-SPO Family, North Lanarkshire

35. I was in foster care with the ECS-SPO for about six months. This was in 1983 or 1984. It was pretty bad. The father was called ECS and his wife was called We lived in The mother cared for us and he was the disciplinarian. Mrs was alright. She sometimes raised her voice but that was pretty normal.
36. I went there the first day and found out that Mr ECS was a prison officer. On the first or second day he took me into a room where there was a filing cabinet and his batons and handcuffs were in it. He said that he had heard I was a difficult kid and that if I gave any trouble he would treat me like the scumbags in the jail.
37. The ECS-SPO had a son and a daughter who were older and they were in the process of moving out when I was there. I think the son was called They had another foster child there who had special needs. I shared a bedroom with him and we slept in bunk beds.
38. There was another foster family who lived nearby called the and they had a great reputation. Mr was a prison officer as well and so they were in touch. It was bad luck that I ended up with the ECS-SPO

Mealtimes/Food

39. I hadn't eaten a potato or mince or noodles until I was about six or seven years old so I found the food fine. I lived on sweeties before that. If I didn't like something Mr ECS would be annoyed but Mrs wouldn't so they would give me something else to try.

Clothing/Uniform

40. I think the social work department covered the cost of my clothing.

School

41. I went to [REDACTED] I had dinner tickets and I was bullied at school so it was a difficult time. This was because I was in foster care. I was bullied at St Edwards and St Serfs too because I was dirty and because my uniform came from the charity shops.

Leisure Time

42. I played in the bedroom with the other foster boy and sometimes we would go out the front to the ice cream van and get a ten pence mix up. The [REDACTED] were into stock car racing so I was involved in that sometimes which was good fun. The father and son would race each other going up the motorway to it and then they would compete.

Washing/Bathing

43. The [REDACTED] told me when to go for a shower.

Visits

44. I had no visitors apart from the social workers who came once a month to check on me. They took me out to the car and talked to me there because I had complained about getting hurt by Mr [REDACTED]. Norrie Gallagher and Susan Ingles were in a relationship and were kissing each other in the car whenever they thought I wasn't watching. I was really anxious and concerned about my other family members but they wouldn't give me much information.
45. I didn't visit home and I didn't return home at all after my foster care placement with the [REDACTED]

Running Away

46. I ran away about three times. I ran away because I was getting beaten up and the social workers weren't listening to my concerns so I thought I had to get out of there. I ran back to Airdrie but not to my mum's. I just wanted to be back somewhere that I knew but I didn't want to go back to her. Sometimes I got a lift in a car and I remember somebody giving me a drink of whisky. Sometimes I was dropped off near Airdrie and other times I would walk all the way.
47. I was found by the police but they didn't ask me why I had run away. Sometimes the police got social workers involved and other times they just dropped me back. Mr ECS hit me a couple of times and told me not to run away again. The last time I ran away the social workers asked me why I had run away. They didn't listen for four or five months so every chance I got I ran away. I ran away so often they knew I wasn't going to settle there so they had to make a decision one way or the other because I refused to stay.

Bedwetting

48. I wet the bed occasionally and Mr ECS told me I was too old to be doing it but Mrs was more sympathetic.

Abuse

49. Mr ECS hit me a couple of times a week on the arms, the back of my legs and my back with the wooden baton. I was bruised and I showed the bruises to the social workers and they asked what had happened. Mr ECS said I was in fights at school and that was why I was bruised. I remember getting upset and asking the social workers why they didn't listen to me and why would I tell a lie about this.
50. The bruises were noticed in school but I didn't tell them what had caused them.

51. Mr ^{ECS} was used to dealing with prisoners and he brought that home with him. I was a difficult child and I must have annoyed him to a stage where he hit me. I was angry and confused that I had been separated from my family and was a bit of a rebel but Mr ^{ECS} should never have been a foster carer. The ^{ECS-SPO} were a disappointing start to my journey in foster care and it had a big impact on me.

Foster care with the Family, North Lanarkshire

52. From there I went to foster carers in called the . Mr was another prison officer so I thought this was a strange decision because the same thing that had happened with the ^{ECS-SPO} could have happened again.
53. I lived with the in for six weeks and it was a good experience where I was surrounded by a loving couple. They had a big family and they were all nice to me. They were kind hearted, decent people. The food was good and I was clean.

Leaving Foster Care with the Family

54. I was disappointed when the social workers told me my stay was only going to be temporary and I wasn't told this until near the end of my stay. For the first time the social workers had realised it would be a good idea to try and place me with my brother so that we could be together as a family. The people that was staying with were doing such a good job with him that they thought I would be happy there. I don't know why they didn't do that initially. Finally somebody, somewhere had a brain.

Foster Care with the [ECR-ECP] Family, Larkhall, South Lanarkshire

55. The [ECR-ECP] were an older couple and they were very experienced foster carers. [REDACTED] had been with the [ECR-ECP] for a year and a half before I arrived. He looked like a totally different person to what he was in Airdrie. He was nicely dressed in knitted jumpers, clean clothes and had a nice haircut. The [ECR-ECP] had moulded [REDACTED] into something better. He was looking well so I was optimistic although I was also sceptical because of what had happened to me with the [ECS-SPO]
56. The social workers took me to their home in Larkhall. Mr [ECR] was called [ECR] and his wife was called [ECP]. They were in their fifties or sixties and they had a grown up son and daughter. Their son had two sons who were a similar age to us and they lived next door. Mr [ECR] was semi-retired and he did a lot of gardening.
57. [REDACTED] and I shared a bunk bed. He was in the bottom and I was in the top.

Christmas

58. Initially we didn't have a lot of toys but I got a Raleigh Gifter for Christmas and it felt like the best bike in the world. It was my first proper Christmas.

Discipline

59. I met some friends when I was there and I nearly drowned in a reservoir. It was icy and I slid in. I was there with another boy and my brother. If the other boy hadn't reached in with a pole I would have drowned that day. I got disciplined because I came back wet. I don't think the [ECR-ECP] were as concerned about me as they were about [REDACTED]. I think they wanted me out of their hair during the day.
60. There was a couple of instances where Mr [ECR] used the slipper on us on our backsides but that was down to me because I thought foster carers were all the same and I wasn't settling.

61. I got hit with the slipper because I kicked a bees' hive on a nature trail and I was stung all over my body.

School

62. I attended Holy Cross Primary School in Hamilton. I was in a remedial class at school because my education had been so disrupted. Every school I went to they knew I was in care and I was bullied in that school as well. It was the realisation from my fellow pupils that I was poor and I didn't have nice clothes. I asked a girl if she wanted to be my friend and she said no because I was on a dinner ticket.

Religion

63. We went to chapel and I became an altar boy for a short period of time. I think the [REDACTED] were Protestant but they took us to chapel.

Visitors

64. I was with the [REDACTED] for about a year and the social workers visited once a month. They sat with us in the living room with the [REDACTED] present. I felt scared to say the wrong thing.
65. The social workers decided to bring [REDACTED] to the [REDACTED] to stay with me and [REDACTED] and even [REDACTED] was considered. [REDACTED] joined us about two months before we moved when he was four years old. The social workers were thinking they could get us all adopted.
66. They took us to Airdrie Social Work Department to video us playing together to produce a video for possible adoptive parents. This felt embarrassing and scary. They told us how to behave and how to act for the purpose of the video. I think they advertised in the [REDACTED] as well to try and get us adopted as a family. I think Susan Ingles and Norrie Gallagher were still our social workers at that time.

67. I thought the adoption was a good plan because I was constantly worrying about what was happening to my other brother and my sister and how I wasn't able to help them. So I settled down for the last period of time with the [REDACTED] I don't think overall the [REDACTED] were bad parents maybe just a bit old fashioned. The social workers ended up leaving [REDACTED] where she was with the [REDACTED] although she wasn't happy there. I didn't know that at the time.

Running away

68. I ran away twice from the [REDACTED] The police brought me back the first time and they didn't ask me why I had run away. The [REDACTED] gave me the slipper that night when I told them I didn't like it there. They said I was the one that was causing problems and that [REDACTED] was happy. [REDACTED] told me at one stage that I was ruining things for him and that they were treating him differently because of me.
69. I took [REDACTED] with me the second time. I didn't tell him we were running away. I pretended we were playing a game. The police brought us back and the [REDACTED] were annoyed and angry with us. I think this was because they had a really good record for fostering and I made them discipline us because of how I was behaving. They said I was the one that was causing problems and that [REDACTED] was happy.
70. I have mixed feelings about my time there and I think I shouldn't have gone. [REDACTED] was a perfect fit for the [REDACTED] I went there a different person and I ruined it for him because I was suspicious because of my previous experiences and I was already traumatised by that time. I felt that I was a difficult child to look after. I didn't settle and I put negativity into [REDACTED]'s head and ruined it for him. I wonder if [REDACTED]'s life would have been so much better if I hadn't stayed there. He was very happy and they were loving and caring to him. I came in there as a different prospect and a different person.
71. My time with the [REDACTED] was up and down and I made it difficult for myself at times. I affected how they dealt with us by my behaviour. I failed to recognise the positive

effect they were having on [REDACTED] and I carry that regret from then to now. I don't think the ECR-ECF fostered anybody after us. [REDACTED] was upset leaving them but I was glad to get out of there.

72. The positive treatment I had at the [REDACTED] didn't override the experiences I had at home and I had a bit of hatred towards my mum for letting us go or for sending us away. I think that is why I reacted and became difficult. I have wrestled with this for a number of years thinking it was my fault and what would have happened to [REDACTED] if I hadn't gone there.

Foster Care with the ECQ-SPO Family, [REDACTED] South Lanarkshire

73. We went to live with ECQ-SPO [REDACTED] in [REDACTED] in 1984 or 1985. There was a choice of two adoptive families but I think one of the couples had an illness or someone passed away so we ended up with the ECQ-SPO [REDACTED] instead. I stayed there for six months and it was a bad experience for me.
74. The three of us left together in a car with the social workers and they took us up to [REDACTED]. I was a bit nervous initially but my first day was good. I thought the house looked nice. It was in a bit of a secluded area.
75. The ECQ-SPO [REDACTED] had a daughter called [REDACTED] who was about nine or ten. Mr [REDACTED] worked for a computer company so he travelled a lot. He was a workaholic and Mrs ECQ [REDACTED] was stuck in the house. The dad wasn't in the house a lot at all because he was abroad with work.
76. The ECQ-SPO [REDACTED] had a good life. They had a nice house and they seemed to be financially secure. They lived in a detached bungalow which had a big garden out the back and they had stables and a pony for their daughter. There was a bedroom for me and [REDACTED] and [REDACTED] shared a room. [REDACTED] and [REDACTED] went to primary school but I don't think I went to school although I remember going to chapel.

77. They made [REDACTED] do the laundry and they made us iron our own clothes which I thought was dangerous. I questioned things and pretty soon there was conflict between me and Mrs ECQ [REDACTED]. There were heated arguments and she lost her temper a couple of times and slapped me, scratched me and burst my nose. She didn't seem to care what we were doing outside the house or checking up on us much, like my mum. It became apparent after a time that she was quite unstable and couldn't manage things.
78. She had a spare room with nothing in it and she locked me in it overnight for misbehaving and I went to the toilet on the floor. I think Susan Ingles and Norrie Gallagher were still my social workers but they didn't visit us very often. Mrs ECQ [REDACTED] warned me not to say anything to them about her locking me in the room so I don't think I told them. I ran away a couple of days after they left. I ran away once or twice at most and the police returned me.

Leaving Foster Care with the ECQ-SPO [REDACTED] Family

79. I was removed because Mrs ECQ [REDACTED] said I was a troubled child. I said I didn't want to go back and Mrs ECQ [REDACTED] said she didn't want me in the family because she thought I was difficult and too hard to handle. She was quite happy with [REDACTED] and [REDACTED] although after I left [REDACTED] and [REDACTED] ran away too

Carluk Children's Home, Carluk, South Lanarkshire

80. I was taken from the ECQ-SPO [REDACTED] straight to Carluk Children's Home in 1985 where I spent over two years.

Secondary Institutions - to be published later

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Community Parents, Rutherglen

115. I think community parents were people who could look after a child in an emergency situation as a stop gap. My community parent was a middle aged woman who had a son. There was no husband there. She got me into employment in my first job in a tyre fitting place. It was in [REDACTED] just outside Rutherglen. I hung around with boys my age and played a bit of football. The woman was quite nippy and was always telling me off.
116. I went on the bus to see my mum a couple of times so I probably wasn't very settled. I was maybe a bit difficult because of what I had experienced. Mick McKenna told me that I had a last chance because my behaviour had made it difficult to find somewhere for me to live. He told me I could go to Redheugh in Kilbirnie for a year or two until I was ready to leave care but if I didn't go there I would be homeless again.

Redheugh Adolescent Unit, Kilbirnie, North Ayrshire

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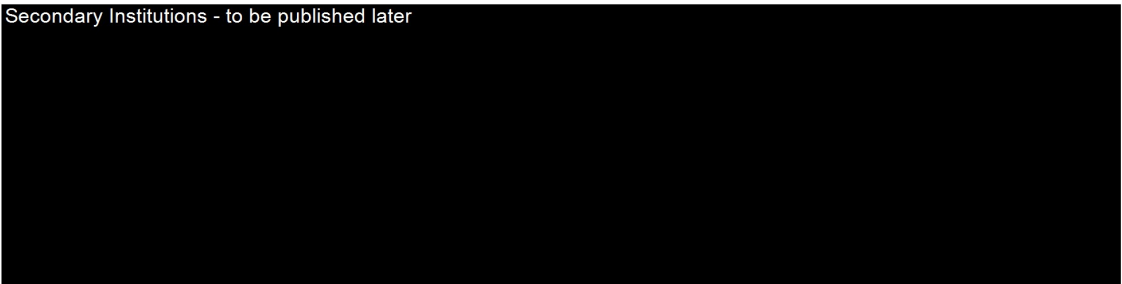
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151. My life has been chaos since I was twenty. My sister had a terminal illness and
Secondary Institutions - to be published later I went off
the rails a bit because I couldn't deal with this. My sister died and I ended up in

trouble with the police. I had some issues with violence back then and I ended up in prison. I have been in prison three times. I was given twenty seven years in sentences and I served seventeen years. I got out eighteen months ago.

152. I have done a bit of hairdressing. I received training in Shotts prison.

153. Secondary Institutions - to be published later



Impact


154. If you have been in care you are messed up, you are vulnerable and you don't have the help of family to get you a better lawyer. I never stood a chance. When I went to court they just threw everything at me because I had nobody to speak up for me and nobody to advise me to get a lawyer. I lost a lot of years through being in care and I was ill-educated and ignorant of the law. Things are made very difficult when you don't have an education. I think there was injustice because I didn't have support and because of my circumstances. If I had anybody who had been clued up supporting me I don't think I would have spent so much time in prison. Each time I have left prison I have felt that I didn't know what was happening.

155. My education was non-existent for most of my life. I felt stupid all the time later on in life as a result of not having a good education. I couldn't communicate with people and I couldn't put my point across in a way that they would understand. I felt I was misunderstood all the time. Having a lack of education impacted on me massively as I couldn't communicate with lawyers or social workers properly. I felt misunderstood all the time. I struggle to deal with social work and the council. I got support from Future Pathways eighteen months ago and I genuinely believe I won't go back to prison. I have asked Future Pathways to deal with the council on my behalf.

156. I have been advised never to see my mother again. I went to see her about a year ago with a female friend and my mother told her that what she liked about me when I was a child was that she could hit me with pokers and slippers and I never grassed her into the social work. She laughed about this when she was telling her. I think she is a bit mental to come out with stuff like that.
157. I try to keep myself clean all the time now. I think this is because I was never clean as a child when I lived at home.
158. My brother [REDACTED] is dead and I have limited contact with my brother [REDACTED]. When you are separated from your family and you go down a particular road it is difficult to repair relationships. So much time passed and so little time spent with people who should care for me.
159. My family members and friends have had a life over the last forty years and I haven't so when it comes to Christmas and New Year I feel resentment towards them or maybe envy as I feel isolated. I don't feel that I am connected to people. I don't understand what love is and I don't understand what proper relationships are. It has made life almost impossible.
160. I want to work on those things over the next few years. I need to piece together what kind of life I could have and who could be good for me and who I could reach out to that I could trust. I have been let down so many times and I feel anxious about that. I believe I have a good heart and in different circumstances I wouldn't have been where I have been.
161. I believe I have good qualities which I can use to try and make my life better. I tried to use my time in prison constructively and tried to understand myself a bit better and what I could do to try and help people but there's a lot I need to do to try and help myself. It's hard for people to understand my world and where I have been.

162. Sometimes I ask myself if it is beneficial for me to be alive and whether I can contribute to other people's lives. I have had some very dark times but I have survived so much that there doesn't seem to be any point in going down that road. I have fought to get to where I am now and I appreciate the benefit of the support from Future Pathways which has been amazing this year and last year. I don't think I would go down the road of taking my own life but I have certainly thought about it in the past as I suffer from depression and anxiety.
163. I was interviewed by a clinical psychologist about a year ago and they were hoping to allocate me to a place in Motherwell but there is a big waiting list. Niamh from Apex has recently linked me in with the Moira Anderson Foundation and I think they are going to try and arrange for me to get counselling sooner.
164. As a result of physical abuse and some medical conditions I have been left infertile.

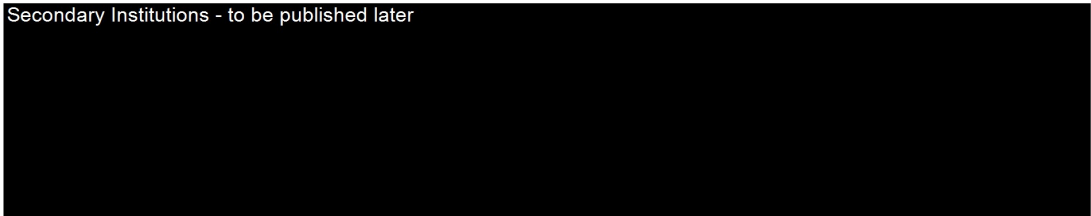
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Records

166. I read my records about fifteen years ago. One of the things that I remember refers to my time with the ECQ-SPO and said that the adoptive parent was like a child in the relationship rather than being a parent and her lack of maturity allowed the abuse to happen. There are other upsetting things in them that I don't want to think about.

167. Secondary Institutions - to be published later



Lessons to be Learned

168. The people who are working behind the scenes to keep children safe need to do a better job and be a bit more involved in every child's life. They need to make sure they are meeting regularly with these children to see what is happening in their lives and who they are associating with. There needs to be proper support when children are leaving care because I am still trying to figure stuff out now.

Hopes for the Inquiry

169. I hope the Inquiry can reduce the incidence of abuse on children. I hope it makes the people of Britain if not the world more aware of what has been happening and have a better understanding of the impact it can have. I don't want it to be forgotten about.
170. Social workers have told me that I was the reason I was in prison and that I was a bad person so I want them to be a bit more understanding and sympathetic in the course of dealing with people whether they have been in trouble or not. The people I worked with didn't have much sympathy for me. They saw me as a certain person and acted that way. I told them that I was trying my best but that I didn't have support and I didn't know what to do.
171. There should be more organisations looking at the after effects of abuse. People in their twenties should be given counselling at the earliest possible opportunity. People who have drug and alcohol addictions get a lot of support but people like me who have not gone down that road and try to do things the hard way don't get the help or financial support that they do.

Other information

172. Secondary Institutions - to be published later

Secondary Institutions - to be published later

173. I was a victim of abuse from the police as well. About a year and a half ago twelve police officers came to my house for a breach of the peace and I reacted violently so they charged me with assault. I ended up with a lacerated skull and losing four teeth. I was concussed and I thought I was going to die. My lawyer said it was the worst injuries he had seen at the hands of the police in a long time.
174. 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.....

ECK

Dated.....

22 February 2021