

Scottish Child Abuse Inquiry

Witness Statement of

LCL

Support person present: Yes

1. My name is LCL. My date of birth is 1946 and my contact details are known to the Inquiry.

Background

2. I am a retired and now work part-time as an actor. I am married to We have two grown up children, those being our son and our daughter
3. I was an orphan, and all I knew of my parents were that my mother was a Londoner and my father was an American soldier. I was born in Glasgow. I have never delved further into finding out about them as I didn't want to. I have no idea if I have any brothers or sisters.

Nazareth House, Lasswade

4. My first memory was sitting on a swing crying my eyes out. I think I was about three at the time. I don't know why I was placed in Nazareth House or the circumstances that lead to me being there. I am not aware of any legal reason for me being there and I think I was put there on a voluntary basis.
5. To put what I'm about to say into some sort of context, I would add that I was only a toddler when I went into Nazareth House and was adopted when I was about six. However, from the age of nine until I was twelve I was returned to Nazareth House each summer for six or seven weeks at a time.

6. Nazareth House was run by nuns and I would say there were about fifty or sixty children therein. You would be there up until school leaving age. My recollection is that all discipline was done by the nuns.

Routine – Nazareth House

Mornings and bedtime

7. The routine was very regimental. You would get up at about 7:00am, wash your face, then go to church which was indoctrination as far as I recall and then have breakfast. Then you would be allowed out to play or have religious instruction. I didn't start school until after I was adopted at the age of five or six.
8. The dormitories had camp beds in them and there was twenty to thirty in each dorm with both boys and girls sharing the same dorms. You moved dorms as you got older and think I moved from the nursery to the dorm when I was about four years old.
9. I don't recall my time in the nursery though I do recall being in fear, crying a lot and people shouting. I do remember there was no love, and I recall a lot of sadness in there. I don't recall making any friends.
10. We didn't wear uniforms but wore clothes which I think were donated. I remember I wore shorts till I was fifteen which I found embarrassing. I hated wearing them.
11. At night we wore night smocks. Everybody said prayers before getting into bed which was supervised by the nuns. They would whack you over the head if they thought you weren't saying your prayers properly. I think saying prayers lasted about half an hour.

Leisure time

12. We had no access to radio or TV. I didn't see a TV until I was about fourteen.

We had a lot of wooden toys which I think were donated, but you could only play with them for a short while and then it was back to religion. We had no comics or books, and I think that's why I now love to collect books.

13. Nazareth House was set in big grounds. Although you could get out and kick a ball about, you were limited in what you could do. It was usually in the afternoon when you went outside, and the only thing to play on was a solitary swing. We didn't get out on trips or anything like that. I've no recollection of being outside the home until I was adopted.

Food

14. The thing I remember about the food was the fat on the meat. If you didn't eat it you got beaten. If you continued not to eat it you got put in the cupboard. To this day I have to cut the fat off all meat I eat. We used to try and sneak the fat outside to get rid of it.

Bed-wetting

15. Bed-wetting was a problem. The nuns would call you evil. I don't know who dealt with the soiled sheets. I was wetting the bed for quite a while.

Occasionally, if you wet the bed three nights in a row, you would get beaten.

Hygiene

16. I've been thinking about bathing and washing at the time and, while I recall washing, I have no recollection of having a bath or even brushing my teeth.

Medical care

17. I don't recall any dental care at all, and I didn't see a dentist until I went to sea.

18. I've no recollection of ever seeing a doctor or any dedicated nurse. Somebody would put a plaster on you if you cut yourself but that's all I recall.

Schooling

19. Prior to being adopted I wasn't really given any education. I would get given sums and stuff like that to do but it was basically a group of us in a room getting religious instruction. There were children of all ages in the group. I believe we weren't educated because we were not deemed worthy. We were considered to be of low status. It was drummed into us what they thought of us.

Chores

20. The only sort of work I recall was making baskets and the like with raffia and I think it was only done to keep us occupied. We didn't get paid for it and we didn't get pocket money.

21. We did chores like washing up and cleaning the floors. That was done twice a day in the morning and early evening. You would be on your hands and knees scrubbing. I don't recall doing gardening or anything like that.

Christmas and birthdays

22. I didn't have too many Christmases in Nazareth House. I think I was there on one occasion when I was eleven. I think my adopted father was ill. I think the place might have been a bit happier and we got presents that were donated. I recall making Christmas decorations. I can't remember if we got Christmas dinner. I can't really recall if it was a happy occasion or not.

23. Birthdays weren't celebrated. I only found out when my birthday was after I left the home.

Visitors

24. I never got any visitors. I did see adults there from time to time but I always thought they were there to look at and adopt the kids.

25. I have no recollection of any official visitors. I suppose I wasn't well enough educated at that age to know who was coming and going.

Abuse at Nazareth House

26. My experience in Nazareth House was that they weren't very nice to me. The place was so regimented, and you couldn't do anything by yourself. You couldn't just talk to others, and if you did you got whacked with a broom stick. You could get that simply for laughing or maybe not saying your prayers as well as they thought you should. You would be hit on the back or the shoulders.

27. The whacking would be done by the nuns. I don't remember any of their names, but I do remember one of them being very tall. My only recollection of her was that I thought she was evil. Getting whacked was a regular occurrence and could be every day. All of us in the place used to get hit regularly.

28. Another punishment was getting locked in a cupboard. The cupboard was dark with no windows and was very small. You could be in there for hours and I don't know if it was locked but you knew not to even try and get out as, if you did, you would get a whack. When I was in the cupboard I would feel lost, unwanted and alone and it has led to me being claustrophobic. That was a regular thing that happened to me.

29. The nuns taught us to hate everybody who wasn't a Catholic. This was a constant thing. If we were mixed with a Protestant school and you spoke with a Protestant you got a whack. Up until I eventually left the place for good I always thought Protestants were evil.
30. In school we would get hit with a strap, but in the home we got hit with a cane which was usually on the back of the bare legs and usually just because you were laughing or spoke out of turn or perhaps not doing your catechism.
31. Another punishment was that you wouldn't get your dinner if you had done something wrong. We all ate together though I don't recall if the nuns ate with us.
32. The place was bleak. We seemed to be marched everywhere. The atmosphere was very subdued because you would get whacked or put in the cupboard if you did anything wrong. You were very rarely allowed to talk to each other.

Leaving Nazareth House – being adopted

33. I want people to realise how bad the procedures and follow-ups were for adopting children in those days. The people who adopted me had a son who had died when he was sixteen. I felt they blamed themselves but punished me for it. I was frightened every day of my life of getting beatings from them. People simply didn't follow up adoptions to see what happened to you.
34. In Nazareth House we were lined up like a cattle market, and couples would come in and look at us to see if they wanted to adopt us. I was lined up with others on at least two or three occasions before I was chosen.
35. When I was eventually chosen I remember I was happy. We were all brushed up with nice clothes and lined up. The people would come and look at us though I don't recall being asked any questions. The next thing I remember

after being chosen was being taken to their home. The couples' names were [LWX] and, I think, [LWZ]. Their daughter [LXA] was a teenager.

36. It was only years later that I learned their son had died. The couple were in their late thirties though both died while I was living with them. They stayed in Newtowngrange. This would be about 1952.
37. At first it was great because it was a house and I had a room to myself and a big high bed I had to climb up to.
38. I think the adoption happened quite quickly though I don't know the details. They changed my name to [REDACTED] I changed it back to [LCL] later in life. It was a big stigma in those days to be adopted. I'm pretty sure I was adopted rather than fostered. I was never told why I was adopted.
39. Once I was adopted I started school, but being adopted and having been in a home, I was treated differently as if I was unclean and I was placed in the bottom of the class. That was the class where all the rubbish were sent. The teachers treated us differently and the other kids bullied us.
40. Shortly after I moved in with the [LWX/LW_Z] maybe about after a year, I started getting the belt off all three of them. The daughter, [LXA], was probably the worst especially after her parents passed away. I would get belted regularly on the back and on the legs, and I just recall living in fear.
41. Once the [LWX/LW_Z] started beating me it was terrible. I wasn't allowed to have friends. I ran away from the [LWX/LW_Z] a couple of times. When I was eleven or twelve I ran away heading for Edinburgh when the police caught me and took me back to the [LWX/LW_Z]. After that the beatings got worse. I particularly remember that the [LWX/LW_Z] hated Protestants and anybody who wasn't Catholic.

42. Even when I was fifteen or sixteen and I would be out at the dancing, I would be getting beaten by [REDACTED] LXA [REDACTED] for coming home late.
43. The school I went to was near the pits, but I can't recall what it was called. I do remember going to [REDACTED] School. It had Protestants in it as well as Catholics but if I got caught talking to the Protestants I got the belt.
44. The [REDACTED] LWX/LW
Z [REDACTED] gave me no encouragement as to my education, and I hated school. We were treated differently at school, especially at secondary school. I think the teachers let the other kids know we were adopted. I was frightened to say anything in case I said anything wrong and got punished.
45. The only happy memory I have at school was on one occasion being able to answer a question which was "What do you call a person who makes barrels?". I think it was asked by a visiting headmaster or something like that. Nobody knew but I put my hand up and said "A cooper". It was like winning the X Factor.
46. I got bullied at school by being called names and called stupid, especially by the teachers. This made me scared of exams. When I would take my reports back to the [REDACTED] LWX/LW
Z [REDACTED] they would beat me with the big leather belt for getting a bad report.
47. I blame the nuns for putting me with the [REDACTED] LWX/LW
Z [REDACTED] and the fact that there was no checks done on them, though society has to shoulder some of the blame for that. I suppose though that I was lucky not to be sent to Australia.
48. The [REDACTED] LWX/LW
Z [REDACTED] had an internal bathroom and bathing was never a problem. They had a radio, but no TV and I got to play with toys okay.
49. When I wasn't at school and was back at the [REDACTED] LWX/LW
Z [REDACTED] I was allowed out to play in the street, but was never allowed in other houses and nobody was allowed in our house. I could go in and out of our house but nobody else's.

50. The [LWX/LW
Z] were a very religious family. It was church every Sunday and holy day and eating fish on a Friday. Apart from the beatings I would also be sent to bed early.
51. When I was with the [LWX/LW] I never received any visits from anybody official. Even when I ran away the police didn't ask me anything. If I ran away I wouldn't be allowed out for weeks. I don't recall feeling any love or affection from the [LWX/LW] I don't know if they received any money or benefits for me being there.
52. Mrs [LWZ] died when I was ten or eleven. Mr [LWW] died not long after that. That left me and [LXA] in the house. She was about ten years older than me. She was also very religious and continued to beat me after her parents died. I recall when I started going out to the dancing I slept outside in a pig-sty rather than go home and face her.
53. I have no recollection of the circumstances of the deaths of Mr and Mrs [LWX/LW
Z] and have no recollection of their funerals. I don't think I was taken to the funerals.

Return visits to Nazareth House

54. I don't recall having it explained to me as to why I was being sent back to Nazareth House but for three to four years, from when I was nine until I was twelve, I was put back in there each summer. Each time I went back in it was worse and I felt I was being punished further because they thought the reason I had been sent back was because I had been bad. It was the same big nun and she would beat me with a stick and put me back in the cupboard.
55. When I got put back in to the home for the summer I would be there continually for six to seven weeks with no visitors. At the end of the holidays I would go back to the [LWX/LW
Z] and back to school.

56. We went to the swimming baths and they were trying to teach us to swim, but it was awful and they would push your head into the water. This was in Edinburgh near Barnardo's.

57. I think I was taken to a psychiatrist when I was eleven and got sent back to Nazareth House. I remember him asking me questions and that he worked somewhere near the Meadows in Edinburgh. I am not aware of any report that may have been done in relation to that. I can't recall if it was before or after Mrs LWZ died that I was sent back to Nazareth House.

Abuse at Nazareth House on return visits

58. I think I was thirteen the last time I was in Nazareth House. I remember some of the kids would disappear for hours then come back crying. I knew something must have happened but I was never told what.

59. All I can say is how regimented Nazareth House was - the beatings, how they put you down all the time and the psychological effect it had on me.

Life after being in care

60. When I left school at fifteen I worked for a joiner doing shop-fitting for a while, then for a butcher for a while in [REDACTED] as a messenger on the bike, and then for Whites the cleaner. I had a bad experience when I was working in the butchers and was fifteen years old. I was abused on one occasion but I don't wish to discuss that.

61. I then spoke to one of the drivers who had been at sea and I thought that that sounded a great life. I worked in [REDACTED] Hotel in Edinburgh in the kitchens as a commis waiter for a while and then headed to Southampton where I worked [REDACTED] on a ship. I went to sea training school in 1963

for three months then I went to sea. The nuns always taught us to hate the Jews and that they were evil. When I went to sea I realised none of this was true.

62. I never saw [REDACTED] LXA [REDACTED] after I left Edinburgh. She would be in her nineties now if she is still alive.

63. I started in the coaster ships in Leith. I then went to the [REDACTED] offices and, after waiting for four days, I got a job as a door boy on the [REDACTED]. I was at sea for nine years till I was 25 then went to [REDACTED] for a year where I worked driving taxis.

64. I moved back to England and moved to Jersey. For a while I didn't know what I was doing and felt a bit lost. I was in a bad place in my life and I actually went there to pick daffodils but ended up [REDACTED] and met my wife. That is what changed my life. I had never really had any friends, but suddenly I had somebody who believed in me. I still remember the first time I met her, the length of her hair and even what she was wearing, even how and where she was standing.

65. Me and my wife moved to London where I was working in cabaret and she was working as a nurse.

66. With the [REDACTED] LWX/LW [REDACTED] I always wanted to be happy but could never be. I think the first time I was happy was when I met my wife. I enjoyed my time at sea where I learned that things could be good.

Impact

67. Both Nazareth House and the [REDACTED] LWX/LW [REDACTED] impacted on my life. It took so long for me to become myself, and it took me so long to make friends. I seem to get on

with everybody but I still find it difficult to relate to people. I love the sea and going on cruises, but to this day I hate the idea of swimming because of what they used to do. I even have problems if water gets in my nose when I'm in the shower.

68. When I got an MRI scan I freaked out. It was only when the nurse asked me about my background that I realised it was because of the times I was put in the cupboard. I hate confined tunnel-like, dark places and I don't like flying.
69. I felt insular because I always felt unwanted, and now I always want to be liked and want to do the right thing.
70. I feel sorry for those who went through what I went through but who were never able to get over it. They have never learned to believe in themselves and I was lucky that I was able to do that sort of thing. I'm also lucky that my lungs are in good condition and I can sing.
71. I still feel insular to this day and really only feel comfortable in my own house or my daughter's house. This is because I was always beaten for going into other people's houses by the LWX/LW I don't even like going into neighbours' houses. I do think I am more understanding of people's problems and I listen to people.
72. It never goes away. It's always there. For me I think about it a lot and every time I see a nun, though I'm okay with churches. The whole experience certainly turned me against religion. I believe in others having beliefs and to me life for people is what they are taught and brought up with, but I don't believe people should force their beliefs on others. I am more open to people's thoughts.
73. To this day my spelling is poor. I could read and write when I left school but my writing was poor. This impacted on my ability to get work. When I read scripts I sometimes have difficulty interpreting them and I'm always frightened to get things wrong.

74. I suppose in a good sense the experience has made me who I am and I think I am more understanding. I am not anti-religious. It was when I came back from [REDACTED] that I changed my name back to [REDACTED] LCL [REDACTED] from [REDACTED]

75. When I went to Jersey I felt empty, suicidal and felt I had no-one to turn to.

76. I've never sought help other than having a good wife which is what changed my life. I've never felt depressed since that day.

77. I've only ever told my family about what happened to me and that was only last year.

Lessons to be learned

78. You have to make sure that when children are taken into a home or adopted that their care has to be monitored and followed up. People don't believe me when they hear what it was like in those days. You should never give up and I've always done things because life is what you make it.

79. I am not a self-confident person, but I enjoy doing things though I always worry about whether I'm doing things right. The things I've done, the acting, the cabaret have almost been therapeutic for me.

80. Education is the key to life though I feel I am self-educated and have taught myself about life. I like to think that I have passed that way of thinking on to my children.

81. I hope by speaking out some people will see that there is hope out there. You need a family. I feel that some don't understand how your life can be affected by what happened in your childhood.

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

[Redacted] LCL
Signed [Redacted]
Dated 19th July 2017