

Scottish Child Abuse Inquiry

Witness Statement of

FNU

Support person present: Yes

1. My name is FNU my date of birth is the 1977. I am 42 years old. My contact details are known to the inquiry.
2. I spent most of my childhood in foster care in Fife and Dundee and it is these experiences I want to tell you about. Between 1979 and 1982 I was at unknown foster placements in Fife. Between 1982 and 1992 I was in foster care with the FNN-FNO family at Glenrothes, Fife. Between 1992 and 1993 I was in foster care in Dundee with four families whose names I am unable to remember.

Background

3. I was born in Belfast. My father was called and my mother was called at birth but changed her name to She had other surnames which she used in her three marriages. My grandfather was African-American at a time it was not considered to be politically correct. He had the surname My grandmother remarried and took the name so my mother had these surnames at one time or another. My mother passed away about fifteen years ago.
4. I have two sisters and three step brothers and and one step sister I am the third oldest in the family. I do not remember living in Belfast and when I was very young we moved to Dundee. I have checked some of my records and learned that I went into foster care when I was about two and a half years old.

Life before being put into care

5. My very limited records told me that the social services were involved because my father was abusing me and my sisters. My mother went to jail for setting the house on fire so [REDACTED], [REDACTED] and I were placed in foster care. My father denies that this is the truth and that he did not assault me. My mother was adamant before she died that she was admitted to the Liff Hospital with mental health issues and was not in prison.
6. The result of the social work intervention was that [REDACTED] [REDACTED] and I were placed with a foster family in Fife. I do not know how it came about that we were placed in care in Fife. I think that prior to the placement in Fife with the [REDACTED] FNN-FNO the three of us may have been with other families but I have no memories of that.

Foster care with The [REDACTED] FNN-FNO family, [REDACTED], Glenrothes. 1979 - 1992

7. From checking my records I know that I was five years old when I went into foster care with the [REDACTED] FNN-FNO family. I am not sure but I think that initially I was at a different address from [REDACTED] staying with the [REDACTED] FNN-FNO and that they moved when I was in their care but I can't be sure. Both [REDACTED] FNN-FNO are both deceased.
8. When we stayed with [REDACTED] FNN and [REDACTED] FNO we had to call them Gran and Grandad. They told us that we were part of the family and it was what their own children called them.

The [REDACTED] FNN-FNO foster care 1979 - 1992

9. I joined the [REDACTED] FNN-FNO family when I was about five and remained with them for ten or eleven years until I was about fifteen nearly sixteen. The [REDACTED] FNN-FNO were called [REDACTED] FNN and [REDACTED] FNO. When I arrived at the [REDACTED] FNN-FNO I learned that they had older children and grandchildren although they didn't live in the house with us.

10. When we arrived at the FNN-FNO I had a room of my own and my two sisters shared another room. The house itself was a three bedroom semi-detached house in Glenrothes. Both my sisters [REDACTED] and [REDACTED] left foster care at the FNN-FNO when they were about fifteen or sixteen in the early 1990's.
11. [REDACTED] left because she was sixteen and [REDACTED] didn't want to stay there anymore because she didn't feel safe. I think she was placed with another foster family in Kirkcaldy until she came of age to leave. A short time after that I was also moved to different foster placements in Dundee because my sister [REDACTED] reported the abuse she had suffered at the FNN-FNO to the police and the social workers felt that I should also be moved. I was told that I was too much of a handful for the FNN-FNO to deal with which was just not true.

Routine

12. I was always woken up at seven thirty in the morning and had to go downstairs for breakfast. I then went off to school with my sisters who attended the same school. I think we left for school at about half past eight. We would stay at school for lunch.
13. When we came back from school we would have to play outside. The FNN-FNO had a saying that if the sun was shining we needed to be outside. They didn't really care what we did as long as we were back in time for tea. My sisters and I used to just hang around the area until we had to be home for five o'clock.
14. We were sent to bed at seven thirty and before that we would sit and watch television. We also had to do our homework first and although [REDACTED] and [REDACTED] did theirs I never bothered to do homework.

Washing and bathing

15. They made sure that we were always kept clean and I don't recall much about the routine of washing or bathing.

Clothing

16. Most of the clothing that I wore was handed down from my sisters. I realised that it was second hand woman's clothing. I didn't want to have to wear it but I had no choice. If money was being supplied by the social work department for clothing I didn't see any of it. I do remember having to wear a ladies burgundy coloured jacket which had been worn by my sisters.

Visits/trips

17. We would get regular visits from the social workers but before they arrived we were told what we were allowed to say to them. These visits were always staged by the FNN-FNO and were by appointment. I always had to wear my best clothes for these visits. I can't recall the names of any of the social workers.
18. I think that my father came to visit us on a few occasions every year. My mother had left my father and she had remarried twice since then. I think that my mother tried to visit on one occasion because I knew that she owned a mint green coloured Volkswagen Polo which was an usual car. I saw one parked near to the FNN-FNO house and I think that she was in it but she couldn't bring herself to actually visit.
19. When my father visited it was usually every three months. It was always by appointment and he would take us out for some food and a walk round the shops.
20. When my sisters had left I remember that I would be taken to the swimming baths by the oldest daughter because she was taking her children and to take me with them made sense. That was one of the few occasions I went on any trips. I think that the older daughter also suspected that some bad things were going on in the house and she wanted to get me away from them.

Holidays

21. We would all go on holiday to Montrose every year to stay at the caravan park there. We were often joined by other members of the family.

Schooling

22. I first attended Carlton Primary School in Glenrothes. I then went on to attend Auchmuty Community High School in Glenrothes. I had no problems at school apart from the fact that I suffered from dyslexia.

Food

23. The food was very good as FNO was a trained chef. I didn't have any issues with the food that was supplied.

Chores

24. We had to keep our rooms tidy and we also had to do all the dishes after a meal was served. The FNN-FNO said that they had cooked it so it was up to us to clear up afterwards. We had to do this to earn pocket money.

Healthcare and medical issues.

25. We went to the doctors once a year for a check-up. During my stay with the FNN-FNO I also attended the doctor and the hospital when I broke both my arm and my collar bone. These were broken in accidents playing outside with other children and were not attributable to the abuse I was receiving from the FNN-FNO.
26. I suffered from dyslexia and I found that other people were always answering questions on my behalf. I seem to recall that we went to the dentist for a check-up every six months.

27. I was not aware of any medical condition that would cause the FNN-FNO family to accompany me every time that I went to the toilet. I wasn't aware of any special medical provisions being made to treat any condition. My mother told me in later life that I did have a problem with my abdomen when I was very young but she didn't expand further. It was another thing that didn't make sense.

Leisure time and activities

28. All leisure time was spent outside the house. I started to play rugby and that took me out of the house at weekends to go to matches. Other than that we were told that kids played outside and only adults could stay inside.

Birthdays/Christmas

29. My birthday was never celebrated. When my birthday was coming round I was always told that I had misbehaved and wouldn't get any birthday presents and that there wouldn't be a celebration.
30. Christmas was always the cheapest of the cheap. I liked books but they never gave me any.

Religion

31. The FNN-FNO were not religious and I think that the only time I would go to church would be at Christmas.

Pocket money

32. I remember that I used to get 75 pence a week as pocket money but you had to earn it by doing your chores. I could spend that on quarters of sweets at the local shop.

Running away

33. I never bothered to run away as I had nowhere to run away to and it wouldn't have done me any good. I often wanted to go back and see my mother but I didn't know where she was living.

Abuse at foster care with the FNN-FNO family. 1982 - 1992

34. FNO was very violent towards us. If we did anything wrong she would hit us with anything that came to hand including belts, wooden spoons and slippers that had a hard plastic sole. She hit us all over our body. She always said that it was the way she had been brought up and it would be character building. You could be hit for looking at her the wrong way.
35. FNO treated us differently to her grandchildren who were about the same age as me. If something happened or went missing it would be [REDACTED], [REDACTED] or me who was responsible and we would be punished whether we did it or not. When things went missing she kept saying that if it wasn't us then it must have been the invisible man. I would estimate that she hit me at least ten times every week. The abuse continued up until the day I left foster care at the FNN-FNO
36. We always ate our meals at the kitchen table and I remember an incident where one of my sisters used her spoon to "ping" some custard at us. We thought that this was hilarious but FNO came in and went ballistic. She took my sister through to the sitting room and we could hear her screaming. She pinned me against the wall and poked her finger into my chest whilst hitting me. We couldn't stop laughing because we thought that it was funny but she told us we were wasting good food and there were lots of starving children in the world.

37. FNN was more of a shouter. I recall one incident with FNN when I woke up one night and went downstairs. I decided that I was going to take some sweeties from the sweetie jar which was kept in the kitchen. You were not allowed to do this without permission. My sister caught me and must have told FNN because he stormed into my room shouting at me. He asked me to hand back the sweeties which I said I didn't have. He and FNO both gave me a hiding and he also told my sisters that if they took any sweets they would get the same.
38. He also punished us further by telling us that he wasn't going to take us swimming at the baths because we didn't behave. We had never been told that we were going to the swimming baths in the first place. He was punishing my sisters for something that they hadn't done.
39. FNN started by sexually abusing my sisters and then started to abuse me sexually. The sexual abuse started when I was about seven and went on until the day that I left care at age fifteen. I recall that I could hear him going into my sister's room in the night and could hear him abusing them. I felt responsible for my sisters.
40. FNN started coming into my room at night. He would touch my privates. He came to my room almost every night. He was continuing to abuse my sisters. I know that he was doing more with my sisters because they told me. He never managed to penetrate me. I am sure that FNO must have known what was going on because the floorboards in the house creaked and you could tell where someone was at any one time. FNN would make excuses to FNO to go to our rooms but I am sure that FNO knew what was going on.
41. There was an occasion when I was in primary seven and one of the girls at the school brought in some photographs for a project we were doing. Two of the photographs went missing and for some reason FNO suspected it was me that took them. When I went home she gave me a leathering as she didn't believe I hadn't taken them. Even the girl that lost the photographs didn't think that I had taken them and she had just misplaced them.

42. There was a shop on the way to school and I used to go there and purchase cans of juice which I then sold to other pupils at a profit. I made a lot of money which I kept hidden in my sock. I was caught and ended up in the headmistresses' office where she found all the money in my sock. She phoned home and told FNO what had happened. I then had to walk home knowing what was going to happen to me when I got home. I got another hiding.
43. When I went to the toilet in the house there was always a family member standing watching me in the toilet. It was either FNO FNN or one of the daughters. They told me that I had medical problems and they had to be there. I have no idea what this was about but it made me feel very uncomfortable. They didn't expand further on what my medical condition was.
44. I am very sure that some of FNO and FNN's children knew that something bad was going on in the house. They would often find an excuse to get me and my sisters out of the house on trips to the swimming pool or other similar places that took us out of the house. The FNN-FNO children would shout at us but did not physically hit us.

Reporting of abuse

45. When my sisters left foster care they made a complaint to the police about the sexual and physical abuse that they suffered at the hands of FNN. I didn't want to tell the police what had happened to me [REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED] I didn't make an official complaint against FNN [REDACTED]
46. The first time that I reported what had happened to me was when I was in prison. I was about twenty years old. I sat down and wrote about my experiences in care on four pieces of paper. I was not good at spelling so I got one of the prison officers to read it through and correct the spelling. That officer then arranged for me to receive counselling when I was in jail. I think that the counsellors were from an organisation called Open Reach. At this time FNN was already dead.

47. When I was about twenty four I made a further complaint to the police in Aberdeen about the abuse ^{FNO} had inflicted on me but I was told by the police there that she was also deceased and that they would not take the matter any further. I am very sure that ^{FNO} knew that ^{FNN} was sexually abusing us.

Leaving foster care

48. I left the foster care placement at the ^{FNN-FNO} after my sister made a complaint about the sexual and physical abuse they suffered and it was deemed by social workers that it was not a safe place for me to continue staying. I was taken by a social worker to their office in Dundee where I was left on my own for a couple of hours whilst they found me an emergency foster placement.
49. The social worker told me that my sisters had made a complaint to the police and they asked me if I was sexually abused by ^{FNN} I was not ready to talk about this and I didn't want to admit to anything. I was caught unawares. The social worker I had in Dundee was quite nice but I can't remember his name.
50. I am not able to recall the names of all the foster placements or where they were apart from they were in the Kingsway, Downfield, Menzieshill and one other place all in Dundee. All these placements I thought were fine and I had no issues at any of them.
51. The social workers told me that the foster placements were not working out and so it would best for me if I moved into a hostel or a bed and breakfast. As it happened I moved in with my sister I had no issues with the foster care in Dundee and I learned from these people how a normal family should behave. The last family I was with taught me how to fly fish and I had good experiences.
52. The reason that I was in so many placements was because of me because I was so messed up. I had built a wall to stop me thinking about the abuse and I didn't want anyone to find out what had happened and I wouldn't open up to anyone.

Life after foster care

53. When I became sixteen I was no longer under the care of the social work department and they wanted nothing further to do with me. They did not provide me with any further support and didn't help with the transition from foster care into adult life.
54. I had the choice to find a place of my own or move in with my sister. The social services did say that they would pay for a bed and breakfast but my sister [REDACTED] did not like the thought of me living in a bed and breakfast and took me in to her own house.
55. My sister [REDACTED] and I had the most ridiculous argument over the world cup and she accused me of influencing a result in the world cup which caused her team to be knocked out and mine to go off and win it. We fell out and I left.
56. I have spent most of the rest of my life in and out of homeless shelters. I have stayed with the Salvation Army at Clement Park in Dundee and I found that they treated you like human beings and make no judgement of you providing you stick to the rules.
57. I also did YTS training and am a qualified bricklayer and a chef. I have worked all over depending on where the work is. New rules were introduced surrounding health and safety on building sites and I didn't want to sit all the tests and have to carry around a piece of plastic to do a job that I was already very experienced at.
58. I got involved in drugs and in order to finance my drug habit my friend and I tried to rob a shop and we were caught. I spent some time in prison. I have taken a lot of illegal drugs apart from heroin because I am a blood donor and take that responsibility very seriously and want to continue to donate blood.

Impact

59. I don't know why I did this but I went back to visit the FNN-FNO family after I had left. I think that I just considered them to be part of my family. It is something that I can't explain.
60. I no longer have a relationship with my sisters [REDACTED] and [REDACTED]. I stopped talking to my father when I was about seventeen because I learned that my father had hit my mother and I didn't want to have anything to do with him.
61. My foster care has definitely been the cause of my mental health issues. Every day I was with the FNN-FNO my mental health was deteriorating. I have never recovered although nowadays I am better supported in the community with help from organisations like Well Being in Dundee. I feel that I have been dealing and coping with everything that happened to me for such a long time.
62. I saw a number of counsellors when I was in prison but they didn't do me any good and I stopped going to all of them. I went to these counsellors after being referred by the prison doctor. I can't recall their names. I have also seen some psychiatrists but they have never been able to help me and I have kept away from them. I still take illegal drugs.

Records

63. I first tried to access my records when I was sixteen. I went to the social work department and ended up with two sheets of paper that told me very little. When I tried to find out about my parents I was told that I was not able to gain access to this information as it was about other people. My mother had maintained just before she died that she had never been in prison.

64. When I was in prison in later life I asked one of the prison officers if he was able to confirm whether my mother had been in prison. At first he told me that he could not pass on this information but after a while he came to me and told me that what I was told by social work was correct confirming that my mother was in prison for a period of time. It just meant that I had more questions than answers and I still do not know the truth.

Lessons to be learned

65. I have nothing nice to say about the social work department. They need to be better trained and I feel that they should be recruiting from people who have been through the care system and have a better understanding of what kids need. It's all about how you click with someone
66. I have documented what happened to me on 47 pages of paper and I have said that I have met the kindest and the most evil of people that live in this world. I hope that the Inquiry will listen to what people who have been in care say. It is important that children in foster care should be kept in touch with their birth families.

Other information

67. I have reported the abuse I suffered to solicitors with a view to seeking an apology from the social work department. I spoke to Bruce Short Solicitors in Dundee but they told me that because I wasn't speaking to my family it would be hard to prove. I think that I also spoke to Digby Brown Solicitors but they were of the same opinion.
68. I have now contacted Thomson's Solicitors with a view to taking action against the social work department. I only contacted them recently and they have already responded to me and are going to investigate further.

69. 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 ^{FNU} 

Dated *6th March 2020*