

Scottish Child Abuse Inquiry

Witness Statement of

Peter KELBIE

Support person present: No

1. My name is Peter Stewart Kelbie. My date of birth is [REDACTED] 1963. My contact details are known to the Inquiry.

Life before going into care

2. My mother was called [REDACTED]. She was known as [REDACTED]. She was born in Aboyne on [REDACTED] 1934 into a very large Scottish gypsy Romany family. As a child my mother was in care for a couple of years in a children's home in Aboyne and she learned to read and write there.
3. My father was called [REDACTED]. He was born on [REDACTED] 1933 in Tarland which is in Deeside. He, too, was born into a large Scottish Romany gypsy family. My dad was known as [REDACTED]. My parents were cousins. They fell in love around the age of seventeen or eighteen but there were many family disagreements regarding their complex relationship. The relationship should have been given a chance but it didn't work out at that time.
4. Mum had her first child when she was eighteen or nineteen in 1951. She had a second child to a man called [REDACTED]. I think this child was born as the result of a rape. These children were called [REDACTED] and [REDACTED]. They are in their sixties now. I have never had any contact with [REDACTED] because he is in custody.

■■■■ lives in Margate. She was in care as a child however she remembers our mum very well.

5. Mum then rekindled a relationship with my dad and they married in Aberdeen on ■■■■ ■■■■ 1961. He and my mum really loved each other and it was a relationship built on trust and faith. They had two children together. ■■■■ was born in or around 1955 or 1956 and Alexina was born on ■■■■ 1957 at Maryfield Hospital in Dundee. ■■■■ and ■■■■ became dad's stepchildren and he loved them very much.
6. The family moved to Dundee because dad wanted to earn some money for Christmas. He went to Dundee with my Uncle ■■■■ to collect aluminium and scrap metal. Mum had a party at ■■■■ where they lived in a tenement block, while Dad was out with Uncle ■■■■. The police kicked open the front door of the flat. There was a CID officer and five uniformed officers. I believe that Alexina was injured in the police raid and that she sustained a broken arm. I believe the CID officer overreacted and nothing was done about it.
7. The four children were taken into care. This was because it is against the law for a woman or a man to be in charge of children if they are drunk and mum had taken a drink. Alexina's injury was undetected. It should have been picked up when she was medically examined after being taken into care. Dundee County Council were of the opinion that mum had injured Alexina before being arrested at Christmas 1957 and that she had broken her arm. My mum said that she was not aware that Alexina had a broken arm.
8. My siblings went into care in Dundee. ■■■■ was about five years old, ■■■■ was about four years old, ■■■■ was about three years old and Alexina was a couple of months old. They were placed in the Dundee night shelter by Ruth Haring. She was a former barrister who became the children's officer in Dundee. She was chief of the social work department which was based at 22 Crichton Street. Ruth Haring was not prepared to release or discharge my siblings from care.

9. There were many gypsy children in care at the time and they weren't the only Kelbie children that were taken into care in Dundee. There were about 28 cousins who were taken into care dating back to the 1930's. There is a long history of Scottish gypsy children being falsely removed from their families and being taken into care and some of them have been abused.
10. My mum went to the Dundee Sheriff Court in 1959 or early 1960. There was a family court hearing and Sheriff John Christie said the raid at the flat was totally illegal. He said the police entered the building without due regard for the safety of the children and there was no warrant. Because it was illegal and because one of the children was hurt during the raid, he said that the children could be returned to my mother and father. The court order was made and three of the children were returned to my parents who had by now moved to Aberdeen. Sheriff John Christie was a wonderful man who cared a lot for family life and for children and I am really thankful to him.
11. Ruth Haring objected to the children being released to my parents but they were returned except Alexina who had to stay in care. She was fostered, living at [REDACTED] Dundee and the excuse was that she was getting on quite well with her new mummy so she must remain. Ruth Haring said that Alexina was being monitored and that she was improving. The court order was clear, however, and she should have been discharged from care.
12. Alexina's foster father was a bus driver. He was working for the corporation at the time. I believe that Alexina was being battered by the foster parents even as a baby. My parents had no contact with her while she was in foster care.
13. Mum and dad were in Inverurie when police sergeant Hunter came up to them on 31st August in the afternoon and he told them that they had to go through to Dundee. They already had [REDACTED] and [REDACTED] and [REDACTED] so it was baffling. Mum said that she had kids and hardly any money and that they wanted her to go to Dundee because something had happened to Alexina. Dad had a mental collapse. They got some money from somewhere and they went on a bus back to Dundee.

14. The social work department said that they were terribly sorry but they were afraid there had been an accident and that Alexina was dead. She was at the mortuary. Alexina died at precisely 3.35pm on 31st August 1968 at the foster home which was [REDACTED] in Dundee. There was no post mortem or police investigation or inquiry. My mum met Sheriff John Christie outside the court some time later and she told him that Alexina was dead.

15. It was Ruth Haring's attitude that I didn't like. Even though I wasn't born then I know all about it from my sisters. Her attitude was 'Tinkers, so what?' In 1958 we found out that another child was murdered in care before Alexina. Her name was [REDACTED] [REDACTED] She was fifteen or sixteen at the time.

16. I know what happened to Alexina. It was a hot summer's day on 31st August 1960 and there was a boiling tub of water. All the foster mother had to do was put one finger in the bath to check if it was too hot but she put Alexina into it. She had another foster child in her home, a little boy, and she had things to do like cooking for her husband. Alexina lost her temper and the foster mother told her to shut up. Alexina was screaming because her legs were in pain as a result of being put into boiling hot water. The foster parent hadn't realised what was wrong and she gave Alexina a slap. Alexina's head struck the wall along the left hand side of the bath and she lost consciousness. The foster mother took Alexina out of the bath, placed her on the settee, left the building and took the foster son with her. He was only about three at the time. She took the foster boy to the neighbour's so he could be looked after.

17. The foster mother went to the neighbour and said something had happened to Alexina and she had to take her to hospital. She couldn't wake Alexina up but anybody would have seen that Alexina was in a coma. She was in a coma before she was placed on the settee. There must have been blood in the living room. The foster mother had wasted an hour from the moment that Alexina was being battered in the bath because she wanted to cover her tracks. In foster care back then taking a stick or a weapon or a book across a kid's head was okay.

18. Alexina arrived at Maryfield Hospital about 4 or 4.30pm on 31st August but she was already dead. The matron phoned Dundee county police but they didn't answer the phone. Alexina was placed in the mortuary. There was no post mortem and there was no police involvement. There was no police investigation and there was no social work enquiry. Back then police officers did what they were told. If a social worker told you to do a job you went and you obeyed the order. That was the power of social work in Scotland.
19. There was a medical examination by Dr W Dorwood Fifie who was the pathologist on duty. Alexina was black and blue all around her face and her head. She had many other injuries to her body also. Ruth Haring tried to say that Alexina had hit her head against a fire fender or a television set or both.
20. I was born on [REDACTED] 1963 around 3am. My mum lived at [REDACTED] Aberdeen in a council flat. I was a premature baby and I had died when my mum was in labour and I had breathing problems. I was 3lb in weight and I had to be put into the incubator. I was taken into care at 10am by a social worker called Margery Urquhart and her colleague who came onto the maternity ward. Mum said that Margery Urquhart had said that she had neglected me but that she had everything in the flat for my needs. Mum went home without me. I felt a strong connection with my mum when I was born.
21. I was placed in Arnha children's home which was on Station Road in Ellon. I was put into the baby unit because I could not breathe. A nurse looked after me for a long time. I have no memories of Arnha apart from the nurse. I didn't get to see my parents when I was in the children's home. My mum attended the children's panels at 3 Albyn Place, Aberdeen where Margery Urquhart's office was. There was a vicious fight to try and get me out of care but this was not successful.

FFL-FFN ██████████, ██████████, Fraserburgh

22. I was fostered in 1965. My foster parents were called FFL-FFN ██████████ Mrs FFL ██████████ had fostered 56 children during her time as a foster parent. Mr Donald, who was a welfare officer or social worker, drove me from Margery Urquhart's office and I went straight to Mr and Mrs FFL-FFN ██████████ on the outskirts of Fraserburgh.
23. The FFL-FFN ██████████ lived in ██████████ cottage which was in the middle of nowhere. It was surrounded by fields with a country road coming down the left hand side of the cottage. It is still there to this day. It was a two bedroomed cottage and there was a living room. There was a bedroom at the front and there was a bedroom at the back. There was a coal fire but there was no central heating. I don't think there was hot water. There were woods on the left hand side. We were surrounded by cattle and livestock. The farm was about a mile down the road and Mr FFN ██████████ worked there as a cattle man.
24. One of the bedrooms was occupied by a girl called ██████████ who had been fostered by the FFL-FFN ██████████. She was about fifteen years old. She shared the bedroom with a male called FFI ██████████ who slept in a different bed. He was in his twenties. ██████████ had the other bedroom. He was fourteen or fifteen and he had red hair. He shared with FFK ██████████ who was in his thirties. I think FFK ██████████ was a lodger. FFK ██████████ had something wrong with his neck. It went from side to side and it was uncontrolled. I think it was some sort of nervous disorder. When he spoke his head shook violently. He had black hair. FFK ██████████ worked on a pig farm in a place called ██████████. Mr and Mrs FFL-FFN ██████████ slept in the living room on a settee that turned into a bed.

Routine at The [FFL-FFN]

First day

25. Mr Donald took me to the [FFL-FFN] in a Hillman Avenger. He didn't explain where I was going or what was happening. Mrs [FFL] opened the door. She must have been in her late sixties and she had an apron on. She had a weird accent. Mr Donald said, "Here is Peter" but Mrs [FFL] did not cuddle me. She handed me over to [] who picked me up and cuddled me. I felt protected and safe in her arms. I didn't realise the door was going to close and Mr Donald was going to leave me there. Mrs [FFL] told [] to put me down and to get me through the back so that I could meet my dad for the first time.
26. I went in to the rear garden and saw Mr [FFN] and a younger boy called []. There were vegetables in the garden. [FFN] had a hose and he asked me in a strong Scottish accent if I wanted to give him a hand. The [FFL-FFN] had fifteen dogs and they all wanted to come and see who had arrived. [] had two cocker spaniels and they started to lick my face. I had never met a dog before and I started to cry. [] got me ice cream to stop me crying. Mr [FFN] said " [] you have left the pen open, allowed the dogs out, and now the wee tinker boy is crying." I just knew the [FFL-FFN] were too old and they should never have been allowed to foster a young child like me.

Mornings and bedtime

27. Mrs [FFL] asked me who I wanted to sleep with. I wanted to sleep with [] but she wasn't going to be there full time. She was attending Mintlaw Academy and she had a boyfriend so I shared a bedroom with [] and [FFK]. [FFK] had one bed and I had to sleep with [FFK] in the other bed.

School

28. I was at [REDACTED] school for seven or eight years but there were periods when I didn't attend school because of the intensive beatings I was getting. I was expelled from swimming and the gym because I was covered in bruises.

Visits

29. Doreen Walker was my social worker. She never visited and neither did Margery Urquhart.

Abuse at The [REDACTED]

30. I remember standing in the bathroom naked when I was very young and Mrs [REDACTED] touched my testicles. She used to play with my penis, rubbing it and kissing me. She would kiss me all over. Mrs [REDACTED] masturbated me up until I was eight years old. She lay on top of me and I felt my penis locked inside her. This happened regularly.
31. [REDACTED] who was the lodger, took me into the bedroom and into his bed when I was three years old. My first recollection of any abuse by him was being smacked by the palm of his hand on my nose because I was begging to keep my pyjamas up. I still have a scar across the bridge of my nose which was caused by that. I remember my striped pyjamas being covered in blood. [REDACTED] was violent and I was assaulted regularly. The [REDACTED] blamed my asthma for the damage to my nose and the blood. I always used to get beatings from the [REDACTED] before I went to school because of the blood on my pyjamas.
32. [REDACTED] inserted his penis into my anus and rubbed his penis on me. As a three or four year old I didn't know what rape was. I know it was dirty because he stank. I remember I couldn't walk after I was raped and I got beaten quite a lot because I couldn't walk. It was bad enough being sexually abused and raped by [REDACTED] but I

remember him holding me down with his hands around my neck and I couldn't breathe. He left me black and blue. He also used to masturbate on a regular basis when I was in bed beside him.

33. [REDACTED] was being raped too. It was not consensual and I remember [REDACTED] saying no. Sometimes FFI [REDACTED] was in the bedroom too. I thought it was homosexual activity between FFK [REDACTED] and FFI [REDACTED] but you don't do that in front of kids.
34. From the age of nine or ten I was repeatedly raped in the living room and also in the bedroom by FFK [REDACTED]. FFI [REDACTED] was also actively involved. At this time FFK [REDACTED] had gone to work for [REDACTED] in Fraserburgh. He drove a red Datsun Cherry. His registration number was [REDACTED]. I was raped in the back of that car quite often at the pig farm. I used to keep the area around my anus dirty hoping that this would deter him from raping me. FFK [REDACTED] would take me to the shop and buy me sweets on a Friday.
35. One day I was in the living room and I wanted to draw on a piece of paper. I took a five pound note and I drew a cow or Hamish the bull. This was bull which was looked after by Mr FFN [REDACTED] and I was very fond of it. Mrs FFL [REDACTED] asked where the five pound note was. I knew I would be in trouble because I had scribbled on it. I threw it in the fire and she found out. The next fourteen years were going to be hell. I was told to go into the bedroom and I was stripped by Mrs FFL [REDACTED] but she didn't hit me. She came back in with a leather belt and told me to wait until my father got home because he was going to beat me. Mr FFN [REDACTED] came back and came into the bedroom. He had dungarees on. He hit the pillow with the belt and asked me to cry as though he was hitting me. Mrs FFL [REDACTED] knew that he didn't touch me and she had a look in her eye which said 'I'm going to do that little bastard. I'm going to make his life hell.'
36. I used to get a beating for going under the barbed wire to go and see the baby calves and Hamish the bull. I couldn't understand why I was being hit with a stick and a leather belt all the time and the dogs weren't beaten although Hamish was.

The dogs got better treatment than me. This was because I was a tinker and I represented something Mrs ^{FFL} and Scotland hated. I wondered whether she had once been hurt by tinkers and that was why she was so abusive towards me. I then found out that the ^{FFL-FFN} had fostered my brother, ^{FFL}, in the weeks before I was fostered, when he was six, and I am wondering if it is connected to that. He was so physically beaten and raped over a long period of time that he didn't know his own name. He didn't recover and he is still in care now.

37. I had to chop wood for Mrs ^{FFL} in the winter and I was beaten if I didn't do it. That had to be done before school and after school. I was subjected to slave work and I was beaten. There was a section of black hosepipe which was used as a cow stick and that was commonly used on me at a later stage. The only time I was free from the physical abuse of Mrs ^{FFL} was when her father, ^{FFL} visited.
38. We were watching a television programme about Cliff Richard and ^{FFK} busted my eardrum for saying that he was a poofter during a conversation about Cliff Richard. His head was rocking from side to side. He was really angry. I don't know if this is the reason why I now suffer from migraines.
39. On a Saturday if ^{FFN} was on duty on the farm he would come into the bedroom when I was in bed with ^{FFK} and wink at me and say "Hamish?" He wanted to take me to the farm with him to see the bull. With the ^{FFL-FFN} there was neglect, abuse and complete torture but I found comfort in the farm livestock.
40. We moved to ^{FFL} when I was aged eleven. The sexual abuse continued there and the physical abuse by Mr and Mrs ^{FFL-FFN} I was isolated and not given any freedom.
41. In 1975 Mr ^{FFN} had a stroke when he was trampled by Hamish the bull. He was found on the main Aberdeen road in a coma. He was admitted to hospital and he was paralysed for the rest of his life. His personality completely changed after he had the stroke. He was not the same man. He had a walking stick following his

stroke. It was a brown walking stick with a cross on it and he used to beat me with it regularly.

Reporting of abuse by FFL-FFN

42. Somebody reported to the police that there was a little boy looking out the bedroom window of the [REDACTED] cottage and that he was always crying. John Catto the police officer saved my life. He said he knew what was going on but he needed me to tell him. He was based in Fraserburgh and he was a senior inspector. I used to stutter because of the abuse and I couldn't tell him because I was scared.
43. News got out that I was in danger. [REDACTED] was the mother of my friend at school. She told Mrs FFL [REDACTED] if she ever caught her abusing me in any way that she would report her. She said it was obvious that I wasn't happy. I didn't go out and I didn't go to school at this stage because I was so severely abused.

Leaving FFL-FFN

44. I was fourteen when I left the FFL-FFN [REDACTED] in 1977 and I was sent to a children's home. I know now this was due to my behavioural problems as a result of my abuse. Robert McArthur was the duty social worker. He was based in a children's home in Peterhead. He collected me from the cottage just before Christmas. My belongings were packed in boxes and I was told I was going to Secondary Inst. FFI [REDACTED] was in the living room at the time and he was by that time working as a social worker there.
45. I had been introduced to a few boys that he had brought from Secondary Inst [REDACTED] back to the farm on quite a few occasions. He raped them at the farm. I heard the screams in the room next to me. FFI [REDACTED] and FFK [REDACTED] abused one boy in particular whose name was [REDACTED] I heard that he was subsequently killed by car or a bus.

Secondary Institutions - to be published later

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Secondary Institutions - to be published later

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Secondary Institutions - to be published later

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Mayfield Boys' Home, Banff

Secondary Institutions - to be published later

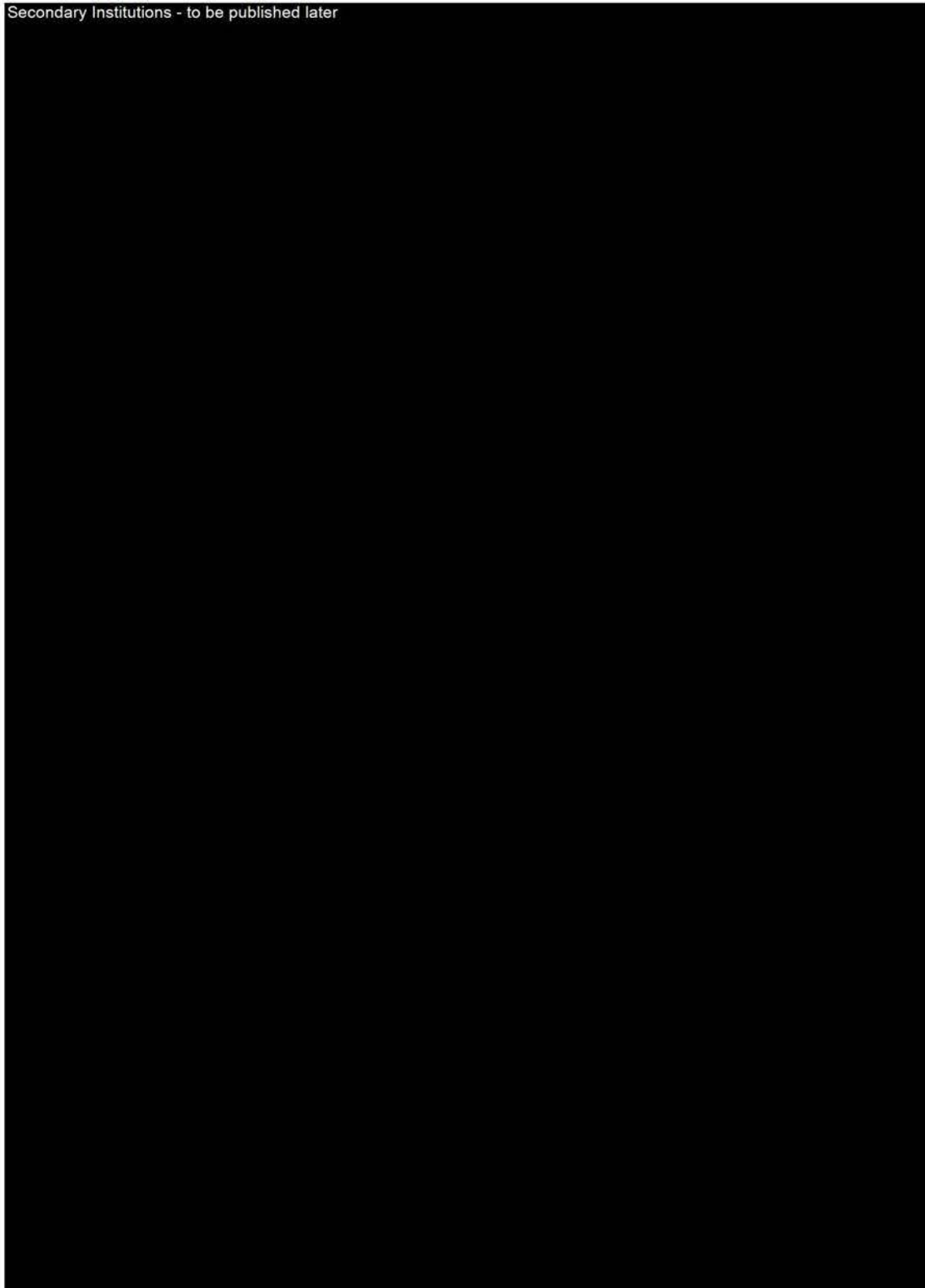
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Secondary Institutions - to be published later


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Secondary Institutions - to be published later



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68. When I was fifteen or sixteen I went to do my training in occupational health, garden therapy and escort duties in Woodlands which was up the road from Pitfodels. It was an institution for mentally handicapped children. I worked there from 8am until 5pm. I was an assistant in garden therapy and groundwork. I also did occupational therapy for daycare patients. My senior nursing officer was Ian Thompson. He was responsible for logging any incidents involving me and patients as I was a member of staff for the Grampian Health Board.

Life after being in care

69. I left Pitfodels in June 1979 and went into a halfway house at North Anderson Drive, Aberdeen. This was a cottage owned by the social work department. I stayed there with [REDACTED] and [REDACTED]. [REDACTED] worked for Asda. [REDACTED] was the head groundsman for Woodlands and I took over his job. You weren't allowed to bring girlfriends back so I left. I did six months nursing training in Cornhill hospital and then went back to Woodlands. Doreen Walker was my social worker and she was on the scene. I then found out that my brother, [REDACTED] was in Woodlands while I had been working there although Dr Drummond denied he was my brother.
70. My sister [REDACTED] who was living in London made contact with me. She had been phoning the social work department regularly but they denied I was in their care and the messages weren't passed on to me. I left the cottage in 1982 after I found out that [REDACTED] was in Woodlands and that Dr Drummond had lied to me.
71. I went to Tooting in London to be reunited with both of my sisters, [REDACTED] and [REDACTED]. They told me about what had happened to our sister Alexina. I stayed in London for 33 years. I started my acting career in 1992. I moved back to Scotland in 2015. I have also written a script of the story of my mother's life.
72. I have lived a good life since I left care. My career motivates me. The performing arts is how I can channel my emotion and be a voice for other victims of child abuse.

Impact

73. I still have scars on my legs, my head and my hand. Most of the scars on my body are from the abuse I sustained at the hands of the [REDACTED] at the [REDACTED]. The scar on my right ankle was as the result of a beating by [REDACTED] [REDACTED] at [REDACTED]. I have a dislocated lumbar spinal cord and this was due to the force of being raped when I was a child. The muscles around my back have also been torn apart. I still suffer from migraines occasionally because of stress.

74. I have difficulty trusting people and communicating with people. I am back in Scotland now as an older man and I am frightened of old Scottish women. I run as fast as I can from them.

Lessons to be Learned

75. My hope is that everybody will become reunited no matter what walk of life they come from. If we can help the younger generation to communicate we can be united against the abuse of children. We can change the course of the future but we cannot change the past. There won't be any justice for me but I would like to reunite Scotland through my testimony.
76. I am to ask for new policy at NHS Medical Council Scotland, England, Wales and Northern Ireland. There should be new guidelines regarding the period of time that children who are the victims of abuse and survivors of abuse, should have to wait to have medical treatment on injuries arising from violence as a child, be it current recent injuries or historical injuries sustained over the passage of time.
77. Extensive bone structure injuries are prolonged as victims age and these injuries return in the passage of time. Broken bones, soft tissue injuries and nerve damage are often overlooked by doctors and medical staff.
78. If a victim's arm was broken three decades ago the pain returns to the same impact as the time that the injury was sustained. Therefore, I ask that the Scottish Medical Council, the Scottish Government and the House of Commons do the following:
79. Make sure that victims of child abuse are seen first in GP practices and throughout hospitals, NHS Boards and Health Trusts. There needs to be a clear understanding on the subject of intensive bone fractures including the return of intensive pains, leading to depression and the state of prolonged suffering caused by the attacks.

Other information


80. The best way to get round the laws regarding homosexuality was to rape children and if they were in a foster home or a children's home nobody was going to believe them. This was common in Scotland throughout the 1960's.

81. I have known the police since 1976. I have kept close to police officers who have shown great dedication and great love to me. I have used them and when I have left care I have gone forward for higher education and I have demanded to know everything. I have had no help from Margery Urquhart or from Dundee City Council but I have had help from the Retired Police Officers Association in Scotland.

82. Secondary Institutions - to be published later



83.

84. We must, without question, dedicate all the children who died in care and we must not forget them.

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

Signe

Dated.....


28/11/2019