

Scottish Child Abuse Inquiry

Witness Statement of

MLL

Support person present: Yes

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

Life before going to boarding school

2. I spent my early childhood living in Penicuik with my mum and dad and my three sisters. My mum's name is [REDACTED] and my dad is called [REDACTED]. My three sisters are [REDACTED] born in 1961, [REDACTED] born in 1962 and [REDACTED] MLW who was born in 1964.
3. I went to a primary school in Penicuik called [REDACTED]. I had a bad time at that school and I was badly bullied and beaten up after school. Some of the other children took exception to me and I was weak. When I left the school another boy injured one of the bullies for what he'd done to me. Nothing happened at school as a result. My sisters were at the same school and they were fine and they stuck up for me. At the [REDACTED] pupils would get the cane from the head teacher for things like swearing. I was once caned on the bottom at this school and one of the nuns told my mum about it after I left.
4. My dad was a civil servant and he got a job in the European Commission and we all moved to Brussels in 1972 or 73. He was involved in the running of [REDACTED] in Africa and the Indian Oceans and he travelled all over the world. This meant I went to a European School in the city. There was no discipline in the European School. I could

do what I wanted and it made me a bit wild and I didn't behave well. You would get detention and that would be the worst you'd get for bad behaviour.

5. I ran away from the European School because I thought a master called Mittler was really called Hitler and I was scared of him. .
6. I was at this school for two years. The lessons were taught in both French and English and I had difficulties with learning the French and never settled in. My dad then sent me to a day school run by Jesuits called Colege St Michel for one year. This didn't work out for me and then my parents decided I should be sent to Fort Augustus Abbey School in Scotland. My parents decided it would be a good thing for me and it was a prestigious Catholic school and they could pay the fees. After I had been there for one year my sister [REDACTED] began to attend a boarding school in Perthshire and she was there at the same time I was at Fort Augustus.
7. I believe that in preparation for me attending the school my parents visited and were shown round at the end of summer. I didn't go on a visit myself. I did not have to take an exam to get into Fort Augustus because Colege St Michel wrote a report for them that set out my academic achievements.

Fort Augustus Abbey School, Inverness-shire, Scotland

8. Both of my parents took me to school on my first day in [REDACTED] 1975. My dad drove from Brussels and the three of us stopped in Edinburgh overnight before heading off to the school. I told myself to not be upset and to be strong about it. About a month after arriving I got homesick and I used to cry in bed at night.
9. When I'd been at Fort Augustus for a couple of years the Carlekemp school closed and there were twenty new young pupils who came up to our school. There were already around 280 pupils at Fort Augustus. The new younger boys stayed at the lodge by the main gate and didn't mix with the main school. Having the new pupils made a change to the school in accommodating that number in the dorm.

10. There were prefects and they were senior boys chosen by the head master from the sixth form for a twelve month period. A lot of them were sportsmen. There would be two house prefects and other prefects in charge of the study room. Prefects had their own study rooms in their own corridor. When boys got to the fifth form they moved into smaller rooms for three boys to share.
11. There were around three hundred boys at the school. They were all boarders. There were three girls and one boy at the school who were not boarders. Two of the girls and the boy were the children of [REDACTED] MIG [REDACTED] and the third girl was the daughter of a [REDACTED] from the local village.. The pupils at the school were aged from thirteen up to eighteen.
12. There were three floors in the building. On the ground floor there were classrooms, a cafeteria and study rooms. On the first floor there were more classrooms and dorm rooms. Then you went upstairs again to an enormous dorm with lots of beds and there were masses of them.
13. The pupils were divided into three houses and these were called Calder, Vaughan and Lovat. Calder was for the youngest boys who were housed separately by the school gates and Lovat and Vaughan were for the main stream school. When I started at Fort Augustus I was in Calder house and then moved onto Vaughan house.
14. I was addressed as [REDACTED] MLL [REDACTED] and my school number was [REDACTED] MLL [REDACTED] I had a nickname [REDACTED] MLL [REDACTED] when I went into the secondary school. I addressed the teachers as 'Father'. Father [REDACTED] MFG [REDACTED] wanted to be called sir or major. He ran the [REDACTED] known as [REDACTED]
15. I think there were 20 or 30 priests at the school. There were a lot of other monks who weren't involved in the school. The monks had a monastery that was attached to the school. The school and the abbey were two separate entities.

Staff

16. In terms of staff I remember Father [REDACTED] MFG [REDACTED] He was house master for Vaughan house and taught [REDACTED] He had his own rooms and the rest of the priests were housed in the monastery. There was also Father [REDACTED] MRQ [REDACTED] and he was the house master of Lovat house. He was a big, tall guy with a lot of power behind him. He taught [REDACTED] After I left the school he became [REDACTED] SNR [REDACTED]
17. The [REDACTED] teacher was Father [REDACTED] MEW [REDACTED] and his nickname was [REDACTED] MEW [REDACTED] Father [REDACTED] MFA [REDACTED] taught [REDACTED] Father [REDACTED] MEV [REDACTED] was the house master for Calder for the first year I was at Fort Augustus and he taught [REDACTED] and [REDACTED] [REDACTED] Father [REDACTED] MFC [REDACTED] became the house master for Calder house after Father [REDACTED] MEV [REDACTED] left the school. Father [REDACTED] MFC [REDACTED] was quite nice to me.
18. There was a lay teacher called [REDACTED] MZV [REDACTED] and he taught [REDACTED] He lived in a house provided by the school. Another lay teacher was [REDACTED] MIH [REDACTED] and he taught [REDACTED] There was also a Mr Holby who taught geography. David Cavine was the geography teacher before Mr Holby took over. He was a good guy and not abusive and didn't beat up boys in class. At one stage there was a [REDACTED] teacher called Mr [REDACTED] MZU [REDACTED] and he took his own life [REDACTED] after his wife and child left him. I remember him as a nice guy.
19. There were other staff members such as the chef and the school nurse. The chef, I can't remember his name, was ex-army and once he invited me into his house and he had lots of guns on display in the basement. It was just me and him. He had cleaned my air rifle for me as it was blocked and when I went to collect it he wanted to show me his collection of guns. There was a school nurse and she was useless. If you showed her injuries from the caning she'd just give you lotion to put on the scars.

Routine at Fort Augustus*First day*

20. I arrived at school in [REDACTED] 1975 with my mum and dad. It was a big and scary place. I was shown round the school, I think by Father [REDACTED] MEV, and saw the young people's area. There was a different dorm for thirteen year olds and the rest were in the main dorm. I also met [REDACTED] SNR Father [REDACTED] MMF who welcomed us. He seemed very pleasant.

Mornings and bedtime

21. I was initially in the separate dorm for the younger boys. For the other boys there was one big dorm and separated into different sections. A prefect was expected to sleep every night in the dorm to watch over us but he would go back to his own room in their separate wing when we were asleep. He didn't spend the whole night on the dorm. There was no other supervision.
22. Nobody dealt with misbehaviour through the night. At night boys would run around the grounds in their pyjamas. The atmosphere in the dorms was scary at night. I didn't get involved in the misbehaviour and used to tell people to shut up and go to asleep. When I was first there I used to cry when I was in the first form because I was homesick.
23. The Fathers stayed in their own cells overnight. There was a doorway in the Calder dorm that led straight to the priests' cells.
24. We were woken at 7:15 in the morning by the house master walking the corridor and ringing a bell and sometimes he would tap the chest of drawers by your bed. The single beds were partitioned off by panelled walls from each other and we called them horseboxes. We also had a wardrobe each. You'd get dressed and you'd take your wash bag and towel to the washroom on the lower ground floor. You'd get a wash and maybe a shave. At 8:20 or so you'd be off to the study room to finish off last night's homework. Then we went for breakfast until 9 am.
25. On a Saturday we would get up a bit later at 7:40 and go for a wash and have breakfast at 8 o' clock. From 9 am we'd be in our study rooms until having lunch at 12 noon.

After 1 pm there was a period of time known as 'all out'. This meant everyone was expected to vacate the school for three hours and in that time we couldn't stay indoors, no matter what the weather was like. Sometimes we would go up to the hotel for a cup of tea. The pupils were out by themselves and no Fathers with them.

26. At 3:30 we would be back at school for tea and bread. We were then in our study rooms from 4 to 7 pm. After study time we went to dinner. In the time after that we were left to do what we wanted until 8 o' clock.

Mealtimes / Food

27. Breakfast was cornflakes for three days, then porridge for three days and boiled eggs on Sunday, bread and tea and milk. The food was often disgusting. I remember cold macaroni cheese. There was lobster bisque that wasn't. If you didn't want the food you could throw it away. There was no punishment for not eating. One time Father MFG threw a piece of bread because it was being chucked away. Someone went [REDACTED] as his nickname was MFG. He was furious and demanded to know who it was. Of course no-one would say who did it. That was the one time I recall any issue with boys not eating food.
28. All the boys ate at the same time, but not the monks. Our mealtimes were not supervised. Prefects were there. The monks dinner was before ours and held in the monks refectory. Father MFG had dinner there and then he came through to the boys cafeteria for a second meal.
29. We got a treat on a feast day, it was just an iced bun and it was for days like St Patrick's Day. Father MRQ kept [REDACTED] at the end of term. I had about £10 left of my pocket money and used it to buy some [REDACTED] to eat on the train back to Edinburgh.
30. Every Wednesday, Friday and Saturday I took 50 pence out of my pocket money to spend in the tuck shop. The tuck shop was run by Brother Adrian. You could buy

sweets, juice and crisps or you could buy stamps for sending letters home. Sometimes you would trade your stamps for sweets in the tuck shop.

31. I could also buy cigarettes from the local shop in the village. I remember one occasion when the chalice from the chapel was stolen and when everyone was searching for it, my stash of cigarettes was discovered. I got three of the cane for it.

Washing / bathing

32. There were washrooms downstairs in the basement so we had to walk down two flights to get to the wash rooms. There were around eighty wash hand basins at one point. The washing wasn't supervised. We were left by ourselves to do our own wash and brush our teeth. The showers were open. It was a row of open showers. Showering wasn't supervised by staff or prefects.
33. There were about ten baths. In the first form we had a bath once a week and we had showers in between.

Clothing / uniform

34. We wore a uniform that consisted of a tweed jacket for everyday wear, a shirt and tie and jersey and black trousers and shoes. We also had a red blazer for more formal occasions, it had chequered lapels and a black Raven on the pocket. We went to a shop in George Street that sold the school clothes and I went there with my parents before I started.
35. The Fathers wore plain black cassocks.

School

36. After breakfast there would be classes from 9 am, then a break for biscuits and coffee before returning to classes at 10:30 until 12 noon. After that we went to the cafeteria for lunch until 12:30. Then we got changed for sports and at 1 o'clock we'd play sport

such as rugby until 3 pm. Then back to the school for showers and at 3:30 there would be tea and bread. Then we had classes again between 4 and 5 pm. At 5:30 we went into the study rooms until 7 pm when we had an evening meal. After 8 pm we would return to our study rooms until we started getting ready for bed at 9:30 pm.

37. There were class rooms on the ground floor and first floor. I didn't do well in the exams. I started to hear voices after the abuse. In class, no-one would be talking but I could hear voices. I did very poorly in school. My mum was beginning to think I was autistic.
38. If you were struggling in school there was no-one to help you on a subject. There was no extra tuition available. There was no guidance teacher. If you were good at sport you would be well thought of, particularly rugby. We played other schools at rugby and hockey.
39. My parents received report cards from the school. They showed that I didn't do well in school. I got really bad report cards for mis-behaving and smoking. There were hints of taking drugs, though I didn't, and there were drugs available at the school.

Religion

40. On a Sunday we had mass and it was compulsory. You could also go to morning Mass at 6 am during the week if you wanted. That meant you'd go to the monk's refectory for breakfast and you'd have a good meal that was much better than the cornflakes in the school cafeteria. I did that sometimes. Behaviour in church was a nonsense. I'd be out of bed so early I would fall asleep in church and would then be punished with the belt for sleeping. The punishment would be given after the service had finished. I got this punishment twice and there could be four or five of us lining up outside the office waiting to be belted twice each.
41. Mass was held in the main church just off the cloisters. It was taken by one of the priests from the monastery. There were also prayers before bed time and we would sing hymns.

Leisure time

42. There was the [REDACTED] and I was in the [REDACTED]. It was run by Father [MFG] and [MIH] ran the [REDACTED]. We went sailing on the loch or canoeing on a Thursday and I loved it. That was between 1 and 4 pm on a Thursday afternoon. We stood for attention in the inspection and Father [MFG] paraded up and down.
43. There were sports to play in the afternoon and these could be rugby, cricket or hockey or athletics. The sports were organised and they were good. There was some bullying in the rugby. I remember one guy got his leg broken, he was called [REDACTED] and he was taken away in an ambulance. It was an accident and not intentional. He had a full cast on his leg afterwards and he walks with a limp now.
44. We weren't allowed to walk along the cloisters between 6 and 8 pm as the monks had their daily ritual and they were singing in that time. We would disturb them if we were outside.
45. We had access to rifles in the school. There were eight 303 rifles in the armoury as well as guns and pistols and ammunition. I was able to handle a gun once I was in 4th year. We would be taken to the firing range and get bullets to shoot with. You would then be selected if you were a good shot and you could move on to using the rifles.
46. There was weekly shooting practice. I enjoyed it. It was very poorly organised. We used to use shotguns to fire at clay pigeons. It was a treat for older boys to go out with shotguns to an estate to shoot pheasants. One master was looking after bullets and guns. He was a lay teacher called Dempster. He was incompetent. He was also a maths teacher. The armoury was secure and it was locked and bolted gates and had alarms on it.
47. In our leisure time we could go sailing or canoeing. There was TV every Thursday between 8 and 9 pm so we could watch Top of the Pops. We had to put seats out in a row for the prefects. Sometimes there was a film shown on a Saturday night for everyone to watch. We could also play snooker in the common room. There was a

library and I was a librarian in the school and there was an office round the back for the librarians. It was provided by the history teacher called Michael Haynes and he was ok.

Visits / Inspections

48. I saw my parents at school at the end of first year and they came up to Fort Augustus to pick me up and then we drove back to Edinburgh. At Christmas I went home to Brussels and I would fly from Edinburgh. When my sister [REDACTED] started boarding school in Scotland we would both be flown home at Christmas, Easter and for the summer holidays. We had a family friend who was based in Edinburgh and she would get us to the airport and on the plane. No-one else came to visit me.
49. One time we got navy guys coming to inspect us. We were set an exam and we were told all the answers beforehand and we all got 100%.

Healthcare

50. There was a nurse at the school. I can't recall her name. There was also a local GP, Dr Buchannan, who came into the school twice a week for a 10 am surgery. He was killed in a car crash when I was in first year and he was replaced by Dr McRae who was a GP in the village. He will have seen a lot of boys from the school in his time. I saw him when I had a cold and he told the nurse to give me Benylin or Beechams. If I was feeling unwell otherwise I'd be sent to my bed during the day.
51. There was a room for the doctor to see you and the nurse sat in, but there was no sick bay with separate beds in it. If you were feeling ill you'd go to the house master who would send you to bed and get the nurse to come to see you. There was no dentist.

Bed Wetting

52. Bed wetting was an issue in the dorms, but not for me. I remember a boy that did wet the bed and it was quite well dealt with. He was told it wasn't his fault. It was Father MEV as house master who told him this.

Discipline

53. The discipline in the school wasn't explained to you when you started there. You just knew yourself that you didn't grass on anyone and that if one of the prefects asked for some of your cigarettes then you had to hand them over.
54. Father MFG was a nasty, nasty piece of work. He picked on me. He dealt out punishments in the house masters room. He caned me on the backside over my clothes for stealing money out of the tuck shop. One time I got thirteen of the cane from him in the same day. It was just me and him in the room. That was for swearing, having my hands in my pockets and smoking. It was three of the cane for having my hands in my pockets, six for smoking and the rest for swearing. I had to bend over and grip the back of a chair. He caned me over my clothes and not on my bare skin. It was very sore and I had red marks afterwards.
55. Another time Father MFG was to give me six of the cane. He gave me three on the backside and three on the testicles. I was wearing trousers at the time and I was very sore afterwards. He frequently drew blood. No-one said anything. If I went to see the nurse because of injuries she just told me to put lotion on it. I went to her on more than one occasion and she never asked me where the marks came from and I didn't tell her as I'd learned there was no point. Both the nurse, and the doctor who came in to see us, must have known what was going on.
56. Father MFG's cane was a couple of feet long and it was wooden. He kept it behind his desk in his room. An American boy got hold of the cane and broke it into three pieces. A friend of mine went up to the room to get the cane later on and told me that Father MFG was complaining that "someone has broken my beloved cane". He replaced it later.

57. There was another occasion when Father **MFG** told me to clean the steps to the armoury by myself with a toothbrush. This was for not doing what I was told in cadets.
58. Father **MEV** gave me both the cane and the belt on different occasions. He gave me the cane for various things like smoking or having my hands in my pockets. This would happen in his office. He'd say to bend over the back of the chair. He hit me six or seven times and it varied between cane and belt. He caned me over my clothes. I heard from other boys that he used to cane boys on their bare skin. His cane was bigger and longer than the one Father **MFG** had.
59. Amongst the lay teachers, Mr Holby was very strict in class. Mr **MZV** hit me on the top of my head with the knuckles of his clenched fist. It made my eyes water. I saw him doing it to other boys and not just using his knuckles, he used to slap them too with his hand. **MIH** beat me up in class and used his two hands to slap me over my head and face. It was sore and embarrassing. He did this on a regular basis and did it to anyone if you answered a question wrong in class.
60. Father **MRQ** gave the belt and would hit boys on the wrists until they were red raw. He used to hit the inside of the wrists and missed the hands deliberately. It would draw blood. It didn't happen to me, but happened to boys that I knew. I saw him belting other boys. I can't say what behaviour would merit that sort of punishment, but imagine it would be things like smoking. His **[REDACTED]** came to the school and apparently Father **MRQ** insisted he went into Vaughan house so it meant he wouldn't have to belt his own **[REDACTED]** and Father **MFG** did it instead.
61. There was another pupil who was called **[REDACTED]** He was the son of the **[REDACTED]** teacher who was called **MIG**. We also called him **MIG**. **[REDACTED]** was beaten up badly by Father **MRQ**. I don't know what led up to it and I saw the aftermath. His eye was all puffed up and swollen and his face was red. His dad said he would resign, but didn't. I was beaten up by **MIG**. He would grab you by the hair and pull you over the sink and pour water over your head and soak you.

62. Father **MEZ** was another nasty piece of work. He was a teacher. He taught in a small church just off the cloisters in the grounds of the monastery. This was within the same grounds and in a separate part of the school. If you got wrong he would down on your fingers. It happened to me. He once grabbed a boy in my class by the lapels and dragged him out of class and gave him a good kicking. This was a boy called
63. Up to the year before I started at the school, prefects could beat younger boys with a cane. I wasn't caned by them, but using hands and feet were considered to be ok. In terms of other punishments, they could send you to the house master for smoking so he could administer the cane as punishment. You could be beaten up by the prefects, by punching or kicking and this meant you could be beaten up by other children. A lot of boys got this. The prefects behaviour was endorsed by the monks and they would not be pulled up for it. The lay teachers in the school could also punish boys. Mr **MZV** used to slap boys and I heard that Mr **MZU** used to hit boys too, but not me. The lay teachers were not allowed to cane pupils.
64. I never told my parents about the physical punishments. About six weeks before the end of term, when you'd expect to go home for the holidays, they would stop caning you. This meant the red marks on your bottom and wrists would heal up and not be visible. When I was in school I would see other boys in the showers who had bruises or red marks on their bum. You could see the cuts and scrapes on their wrists too. The boys didn't discuss it amongst themselves and we simply accepted it was what happened. You never grassed on anyone.

Abuse at Fort Augustus

Father **MEV**

65. There was a trip in the summer of my first year. We went up the river to a waterfall and we were wearing trunks. Father **MEV** was looking at me. I was scared and uncomfortable because of how he was looking at me. It was one of my first

experiences with him. I didn't understand why he was looking at me. It led to the abuse and it was early summer time in 1976 when he started to abuse me. There wasn't any grooming and his behaviour was quite unexpected.

66. Not long after that, I remember it was still summertime, I was in the dorm and I was told by another boy, I don't remember his name, he might have been a prefect, to go to Father [REDACTED] MEV's office as he wanted to see me. This other boy told me Father [REDACTED] MEV wouldn't cane me and he'd done something similar to him. Father [REDACTED] MEV's office was on the first floor. I can remember there was a desk, settees, chairs, bookcases and books. It was an office and not his bedroom. I can't recall anything else about the room. He made me close the curtains before he abused me.
67. He got my penis out and he masturbated me. I said to him, something's happening and I came. He then sucked my penis and then he wiped his hand with a tissue. Then he made me kneel down and put his penis in my mouth. I remember looking down at the ground and seeing that he was wearing brown sandals and had bare feet. He came and I can remember the taste of chicken soup in my mouth. He was angry after he'd done it and told me to "get out of here you bastard".
68. There was another time, he asked me again to go to his office for a chat. I was saying "please, please no". He was asking me to come and sit by him and saying sorry about what had happened before. He started to feel me up and made me feel him up and he made me masturbate him. He was angry again and told me not to tell anyone.
69. After the first occasion he abused me I told my friends [REDACTED], [REDACTED] and [REDACTED]. [REDACTED] told me not to tell lies as I'd get into trouble. After the second occasion I don't think I told anyone. [REDACTED]'s parents removed him from the school the next year. They didn't want him involved in the scandal. After I told my friends there were rumours and gossip circulating around the school about me. The whole school knew. Anytime I was involved in a fight, boys would say things to me like '[REDACTED] suck suck'. Some of the boys were supportive.

70. There were no further verbal exchanges with Father [REDACTED] MEV after that second occasion and the last time I saw Father [REDACTED] MEV was at the end of that summer term. After the incidents of abuse described above he no longer physically punished me with the cane or the belt.
71. Just after the first occasion of abuse, Father [REDACTED] MEV told me he'd done it to another boy. I don't know who that was and he didn't give a name. I think now it must have been Hugh Kennedy. He said it was sometime before me at the school and I don't know how long it was before me. Hugh Kennedy was a couple of years ahead of me in school. Also after the abuse took place Father [REDACTED] MEV told me his family in Australia was rich and owned a huge ranch. He didn't offer me any money not to say anything about the abuse.

Prefects

72. After Father [REDACTED] MEV had abused me, after the second occasion, he told some of the prefects to beat me up and they really did. At the end of the school year they took me into the office and said sorry, but they were instructed to do it by Father [REDACTED] MEV. They told me they were told to make a man of me.
73. [REDACTED] was one of the prefects and he was another nasty piece of work. Father [REDACTED] MEV was quite friendly with him. He took me to the shower area and put me in a cold shower and then dragged me into the drying room to beat me up. Then he pushed me back into a cold shower and pulled me back into the drying room to beat me again with his hands. He did it about eight or ten times over one night. He was smacking me over the head and body with his hands. I burst out crying and then he left me alone. I was still in my first year and he was eighteen.
74. Another prefect who had been instructed to beat me up was called [REDACTED]. He punched me in the tummy and I was winded and on the floor. I was in the dinner queue at the time and another prefect came and dragged me by the lapels up the stairs and into the common room for first years. Father [REDACTED] MFG and [REDACTED] MIH saw it all and did nothing and said nothing. The second prefect, I can't recall his name, slapped

me repeatedly in the common room for falling over when I was standing in the queue. [REDACTED] told me at the end of the term that that I was to be made a man of, and that was the expression he used. They made no reference to the sexual abuse. Another one of the prefects who beat me up was called [REDACTED] and he was from Calder House.

75. I eventually settled down after the incidents of abuse. It took away my homesickness as it gave me something else to think about.
76. About eight years after leaving the school I met some of the prefects socially and went for a drink with them. They were friendly to me and told me they were sorry for what they did to me.

Other staff

77. There was an [REDACTED] teacher called [REDACTED] MFH. He was a paedophile. One time a friend of mine was taken up to his house and sexually abused there. The house was separate from the school and was [REDACTED]. I prefer not to give his name and he was in the year above me at school. One night he came back crying his eyes out. I think I'd been at the school for two or three years when this happened. Another pupil, called [REDACTED], told me my friend had been abused by [REDACTED] MFH who took his penis and held it and told him this would be a big boy when he was older. I don't know any more about this teacher.

Reporting of abuse at Fort Augustus

78. I was raised a Catholic. The last time I was in church was 1979 when I was at school and I've not been since I left the school. We went to Mass when I lived in Brussels. I've not been to confession since 1975. I told a priest at confession after the abuse and he told me not to tell anyone else and told me to stop telling him the story. I gave him my name when I was in confession. I told him the name of the abuser and I expect he will have known Father [REDACTED] MEV. I don't know who the priest was, but he will have been a priest from the monastery attached to the school. He was expected to

keep anything he heard in confession strictly confidential under papal law. It was about one week after the first occasion of abuse. I felt betrayed and never went back.

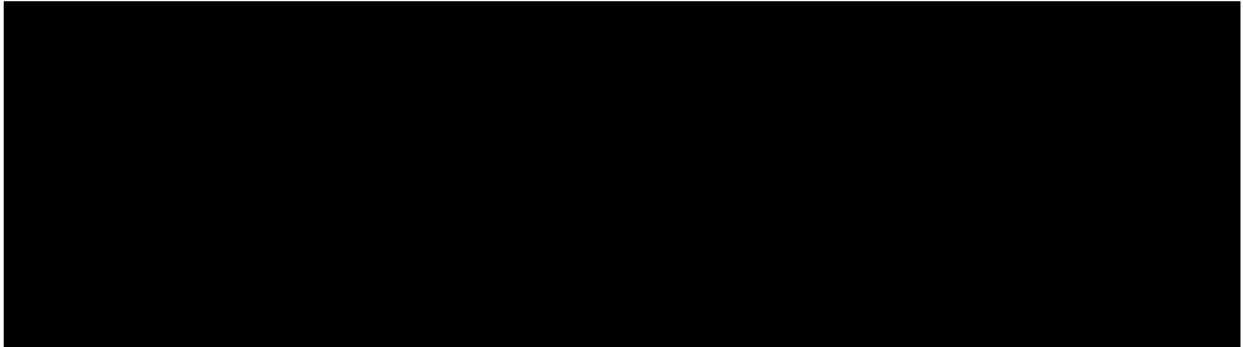
79. I tried to run away from Fort Augustus school after the abuse, when I was still in Calder house. I got my stuff together to leave and I was walking down the corridor. An older pupil known as [REDACTED] this was what he was called because he was so huge, saw me and he grabbed me and pinned me against the wall. The whole dorm got up and surrounded me. Someone sent for [REDACTED] MEV who told me to come and have a chat with him. I told him I didn't want to have a chat. He still took me to his office and said to me 'I hope you haven't told anybody about our little incident' and I told him 'no'. I got up then and left the room. There was no punishment for running away. I don't know of any other boys running away, but I was told one or two years before I started at the school that a boy had taken his own life. I don't recall his name. There was also a boy in my year at Fort Augustus when I was in my second or third year who tried to take his own life. His name was [REDACTED] We were told this was because of the pressure of exams. He didn't return to the school.
80. I told my parents when I went home to Brussels for the summer holidays about what was happening at the school. I told my mum by herself first and I only told her about the first occasion [REDACTED] MEV had abused me and not the second. Then my dad was told by my mum and my dad rang the school and spoke to Father [REDACTED] MMF and was angry and threatened to sue the school unless Father [REDACTED] MEV was removed. I knew my dad had spoken to Father [REDACTED] MMF as I heard him shouting on the phone at the time. There was no report made to the police and I don't know if my dad ever requested that one was made. I don't think my parents were updated in anyway over the summer holiday.
81. My parents took me back to the school in the following September. The three of us were taken into [REDACTED] SNR office and Father [REDACTED] MMF suggested I might have enjoyed what Father [REDACTED] MEV did to me. He said that in front of all three of us. My parents were very angry. My dad told me to leave the room. When I was outside I could hear my dad swearing. I think Father [REDACTED] MMF also said it was best that I came back to the school as other schools might get to hear about what happened to me

through the grapevine. I think I heard him say something like, 'don't worry he'll be safe here'. He was keen that I should come back to the school. My parents will have been told that Father MEV had left the school. Father MMF told us he had been told to return to Australia where he is from and he'd already told me that his family was not short of money and they owned an estate there. As far as I was aware MEV had left the school and the country. I am not aware of any investigation into the abuse being conducted by the school. I am not aware of the police being told about the abuse.

82. After we spoke to Father MMF the three of us were taken to the cloisters to meet the Abbott, whose name I can't now recall. I think the meeting had been pre-arranged as it would have taken some time to set this meeting up. The Abbott was surrounded by about twelve other priests from the monastery, I didn't recognise any of them, and they were talking to him and advising him on what to say with regard to the allegations I had made. The priests were wearing their cassocks. The Abbott told my parents he was sorry about what had happened to me at the school. After that my parents and I were taken away, we were in the room for about five minutes and I cannot remember what was said between the Abbott and the priests, but we were there just to witness their conversation and my parents were not allowed to address them. The priests clearly knew about the abuse. My parents didn't meet with Father MMF again after this second meeting.
83. I was left at Fort Augustus and my parents returned to Brussels. I don't know why they decided I should stay at the school after what had happened. I asked my dad if I had to go back to the school and he told me yes. I think my dad thought that if I went to another school they would know I'd been abused at Fort Augustus. I never told my parents that other boys at the school knew I'd been abused and that there were rumours and gossip about me and what had happened. My dad told me a long time afterwards if he knew that other boys knew about what had happened he would have removed me. I cried after they left me and I cried a lot. Sometime after that I became hardened as a result so no-one at the school would mess with me.

84. I had no support or counselling from the school with dealing with what had happened. I was not treated as a victim of abuse. Apart from Father [MMF] no-one from the school staff spoke to me about it. I felt wasted and tired over what had happened.

85.



86. Now Father [MEV] is in [REDACTED] in Australia. I didn't recognise him when I saw him in photographs. He used to have black hair. At the time [REDACTED] I couldn't believe it. I thought he was going to get punished and it was clear he didn't get punished enough for what he did to me.

87. When I was at school I told Father [MFG] that I was abused by Father [MEV] and I made it clear what the nature of the abuse was. This was when he called me up to his office as other boys had been saying to me '[REDACTED] suck suck' and when I told him he just smiled at me. It was never mentioned again.

Leaving Fort Augustus Abbey School

88. I was eighteen by the time I left the school in 1980. I remember, on the last day at school, Father [MFG]'s Land Rover was driven to a field and the wheels were taken off and hidden and the vehicle was put on bricks. Someone had written on the windscreen 'all my love from Russia'. He went mental and demanded to know who was responsible for this. No-one would tell him where the wheels were and he had to get replacements.

89. I went on the bus to Spean Bridge and then by train onto Glasgow and then the train to Edinburgh. Then I flew to Brussels with my bags and cases. Everyone else was

travelling at the same time. There was no final assessment from the school. I think the pupils would have been better off in a comprehensive school and they would have got a better education instead of being part of the old boys network.

Life after being in care

90. With regard to friends from school, there is now no-one I am in touch with. When I was at school I was friends with people like [REDACTED] and [REDACTED]. They were good friends and they didn't slag me off or talk about the abuse to me or to other boys. A lot of other boys liked to slag me off. When new boys came into the school they were told about me and the gossip. It was a vicious time.
91. After I finished school I went back to live in Brussels. It was great at home. I went out with my younger sisters [REDACTED] and [REDACTED] and they had a good bunch of friends. I had no contact then with friends from Fort Augustus. I initially did some gardening jobs. I did a lot of art work and had some exhibitions and I sold paintings in an art shop. I also had a short term job in photography. We remained in Brussels until my dad retired in 1996 and we moved to Edinburgh.
92. After we returned to the UK I went to study at the College of Art in Wolverhampton. I had to leave as the voices started again and I returned home. I started to see a psychiatrist in Edinburgh and he put me on medication. I went to the Contact Point in York Place and they helped me so much. Then the service moved to Lauriston Place and I continue to use their services now and it works for me. I was diagnosed with schizophrenia. They have not linked it to traumatic incidents in childhood. There is a possible link to past trauma, but it's not definite.
93. I continue to live in Edinburgh and photography and art is my focus and I [REDACTED]
[REDACTED].

Impact

94. I thought I was gay for a while at school. I didn't really know what that meant. It came out more so in third form. I was prohibited from playing rugby and hockey and going to the showers with other boys. The teachers who took the classes wouldn't allow it. I was considered to be a poof. I don't know how they came to form that opinion. I think this was instructed by [REDACTED] MIH [REDACTED] who was [REDACTED] and possibly by Father [REDACTED] MFG [REDACTED] too. I felt ostracised.
95. I started to see a psychiatrist from 1996 when I returned to the UK from Brussels. I have seen a psychiatrist since then and that is ongoing. My first psychiatrist was called Meg Davies and she was great. Now I have one called Mark O'Connor and I don't like him as much. I see him once every three months.
96. The events at Fort Augustus had a catastrophic effect on me. I'd change everything if I could. It has affected my relationships with my family. I don't get on with my dad. My sister [REDACTED] also has schizophrenia. She has been hospitalised and I have been in hospital twice, once for eight weeks and once for four weeks. I've also had testicular cancer and the chemotherapy in 2016 made me very ill. I don't know if it was linked to the physical abuse I suffered at Fort Augustus.
97. In terms of intimate relationships I have had girlfriends since I left Brussels and came back to Edinburgh. There has not been a long term sexual impact.
98. With regards to my education, I got my Highers, but didn't need them in the end. I continue to love painting and it is a great escape for me and I love Gaelic music.

Reporting of Abuse

99. I was interviewed by the police a number of years ago and they approached me. I gave a statement to them face to face and there were three officers who spoke to me and they were based in Inverness. Someone from the Procurator Fiscal office

telephoned me and I told her I didn't want to take the matter any further. I'm thinking about whether I want to be involved with the police if Father [REDACTED] MEV [REDACTED] is extradited [REDACTED]

Records

100. I don't think any records of my time in school exist. The school closed in 1993. I don't know if the Benedictine Order has any records now and I have not made any attempt to recover anything from them.

Lessons to be Learned

101. Children need to talk to someone and know they are not alone. There will be other boys in the same position as I was. The people in charge need to speak the truth and not hide it any longer. [REDACTED] MEV [REDACTED] has claimed that none of it ever happened, but he abused so many people as children and told them to keep it secret. He just wanted to protect himself.

102. The abusers from the school need to be brought back for trial and I don't care how old they are now. The victims need closure. I was very upset that Father [REDACTED] MRQ [REDACTED]

[REDACTED] I hope it never happens to anyone else.

Other information

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

Signed. [REDACTED] MLL

Dated. 15 August 2019