

**Scottish Child Abuse Inquiry**

Witness Statement of

**Robert MARCHMONT**

Support person present: Yes

1. My name is Robert Marchmont. My date of birth is [REDACTED] 1949. My contact details are known to the Inquiry.

**Life before going into care**

2. When I was a small child, I lived with my dad, [REDACTED] and my mum, [REDACTED]. I also have one brother, George, who is a year younger than me. I had two sisters, [REDACTED] who died when she was 41 and was two or three years younger than me, and Josephine, who is about a year older than me.
3. We were born at [REDACTED] in Glasgow. It was a big house, a tenement like all the rest. I think the street had been bombed in the war. The houses round about it were black with coal dust and smoke. Where I was born was lovely, yellow sandstone and it looked quite new. We also lived in another house in Glasgow, but the only thing I remember about that house is blackouts on the windows, shutters or curtains.
4. My dad was in the navy during the war. When he came out of the navy, he got a job in [REDACTED] fish shops in Govan. He was the manager of the two branches. I can't remember dad being there much. The only occasion I remember him being at home was when I had earache. I distinctly remember him walking me up and down, trying to get me to sleep. I don't think my mum and dad got on. Mum didn't want us. She

met somebody else when we were taken into care and went on to have two more children, [REDACTED] and [REDACTED]

5. Most of the time, we didn't have our parents in the house. We hardly had any food and there was often no electricity. The electricity was either switched off or my mum couldn't afford it. Mum was out most of the time. Neighbours reported us for wandering about the streets or being cooped up in the house with no adults there. In the end, we were taken away.

### **Dunclutha Children's Home, Dunoon**

6. Secondary Institutions - to be published later



- 7.

**Foster care at [REDACTED] Elgin**

*Journey to [REDACTED]*

8. When I was about seven years old, my sister came and told me we were going to be fostered to somebody in the country. We were taken to a place on George Square to get kitted out in clothes. We were measured up and then they gave us pants, trousers, shoes and wellington boots. We got dolled up in our new clothes. I remember going to the train station and seeing all the big glass work and steam engines. It was fascinating to me. We went on the train and it took ages, hours and hours. I think a woman from the corporation came with us.
9. We should have got off at Elgin train station but the train went on to Inverness, about fifty miles too far. The lady who was responsible for us needed to get two taxis to fit us and our clothes. They looked like big funeral cars. She showed us the house, [REDACTED] which was about half a mile off the main road. There were tyre tracks up to the house. It was five or six miles from the village of [REDACTED] Elgin was a further five miles or so away. Even though we'd had a long journey, our hearts dropped. It was terrible. Even before we reached the house, something inside me told me that I was going to hate it, but we had no option. It didn't have a proper toilet, a proper table or electricity.
10. A lady came to the door wearing a head square and old fashioned clothes. Her name was [REDACTED] known as [REDACTED] or [REDACTED] We had to call her aunty, although she was no aunty of ours. She had a straight leg, which she had bandaged up most of the time. She could still walk faster than we were able to run from her. I didn't like her and I didn't like the house. We went into the house. The lady from the corporation talked to her and told her our names. We just stood there, not knowing what to do.
11. When the taxis left, I dropped down and cried and cried. I should have said, "No, take me back." But I didn't. We were there and we had to give it a chance. I just wish things had been different.

*Layout of the house and land*

12. The house was quite old. It had a corrugated tin roof. Every time it rained, the rain seemed twice as loud because the roof amplified it. There was a lobby within the

front door. There was a grandfather clock and a hat stand in the lobby. There were two doors from the lobby, one leading to the front room and another leading to the bedroom which JCU used. We didn't go in there. There was another bedroom through the lobby, where we all stayed when we first arrived. People from the corporation told her that boys shouldn't be sleeping in with girls, so she had to change the sleeping arrangements after a while. George and I went into the small bedroom and shared with Jo. JCU then slept on a bed settee in the living room. There was an old, black, open fire in the front room. It had hooks above it. She didn't have a proper oven, so all the cooking was done on that fire. All her pots were black.

13. She told us the toilet was in a shed outside. We had come from Dunclutha with a proper toilet and running water. The toilet at [REDACTED] was a bucket. It was awkward in the dark because it was always full of spiders. There was no flush. We had to wash the dishes in rain water which came off the roof. We had two buckets of water, one for drinking which came from a well about half a mile away. We collected the water every day. It was beautiful water. The other bucket was for doing the dishes. The bucket of drinking water was kept in a three legged holder. The cats couldn't get up to drink it. She had a dish washer, which was about a dozen cats that licked clean all the pots and plates. They were allowed to roam around and go up on the table.
14. Our bedroom had one big bed and one small bed in it. There was also a round table and a commode. She allowed us to use the commode for the first week, but after that we had to go to the toilet outside. There was a wardrobe and a set of drawers. There was also a coal fire in the bedroom. I think it was only on twice more after we first arrived. She didn't like burning wood or coal. We used to have a little paraffin lamp, turned right down. The black charcoal from the flame gradually covered the glass so it got harder and harder to get any light from it.
15. Aunty could weave patterned mats in big frames. They didn't cover the whole floor, but we had them next to our beds. She sat in a chair next to the fire. There was also a three-seater sofa and two seats next to a small window. The bedding was an

eiderdown. I was in the single bed with George. Jo slept in the big bed and [REDACTED] slept there when she arrived.

16. [REDACTED] was a working croft at one time. JCU [REDACTED] owned twelve acres of land. I think she rented out the land to a farmer, who would decide what to do with the land. Sometimes he would grow potatoes, sometimes it would be corn or wheat and sometimes it would be left barren. She got money for allowing a man to keep cows and sheep on the land. In the winter, we kept an eye on the sheep.
17. There were sheds outside the front door. The wood was kept in one, which was left open. She kept geese and chickens in one of the sheds. One year, we were sitting outside around the door. It was elevated by big slabs. We were wearing our Sunday best. The geese came over. My brother George was sitting with his zip open. The big goose tried to get in and peck him. It wasn't funny at the time.

#### **Routine at [REDACTED]**

##### *Mornings and bedtime*

18. JCU [REDACTED] got us up at what seemed like three or four hours before school. We collected the water from the well and did any other jobs we had to do. We would feed the chicken and geese and make sure the cows and sheep were alright. She would degrade us all the time. Whoever she called first, she would usually fall out with. She would then call somebody else. He or she had to make her a cup of tea. The last four years I spent at [REDACTED], JCU [REDACTED] lay in bed all day.
19. Bedtime was sometimes good, but sometimes it was bad. On good days, we'd kneel down and say our prayers at the side of the bed. We'd hop into bed and in the winter we'd be given a hot water bottle because the room was so cold. As George and I got older, JCU [REDACTED] would tie the bedroom door shut so we couldn't get out. I think she did this because I was growing up and I had a little bit of strength behind me. We would look through the keyhole to see what she was doing. She had a wireless next



door and I used to like to lie and listen to it, if I wasn't crying. The hot water bottles became our toilets because we had nowhere else to go. If they were full or we'd had too many pees, we had to piss round the back of the drawers or through the slats of wood.

### *Food*

20. Breakfast was porridge. At first, JCU made it. After a year or so, Jo or I made the porridge. On a couple of mornings, if I wasn't well and the others had gone to school, I got a boiled egg. Lunch didn't happen very often. Sometimes, she'd give us scrambled egg for breakfast and lunch. We got school lunches at [REDACTED] I thoroughly enjoyed them because I was starving. When we came in from school around 4 o'clock, there would be a pot of soup nearly every day. She would thin it out with water. When dinner was supposed to come around, we had one slice of cheese or a jar of meat paste from the butcher or jam sandwiches. We sat at a table with JCU at the head. On Saturdays, we might have mince and on Sundays we might have mince and dough balls, but it was very small measures.
21. Some Saturday mornings, she would make a cup of tea. She would put her glasses on and have a fag in her mouth. She would be in a good mood. She would invite us in with her whilst she drank her tea and we would be like a happy family. Those moments were few and far between. We had to wait until she told us to have tea or wait until she made it for us. We couldn't just go and help ourselves.
22. Sometimes, I'd steal a slice of bread from the cupboard. If we took food from the cupboard, we wouldn't get it for our dinner and that would be it. There were at least a dozen cats and a dog. The cats got pride of place in the house. They had the best of everything. She would buy loaves of bread from the baker. She would take the lovely inside out and put it into a saucer of milk for each cat. We had to make sure the cats had had their feed. Because we were so hungry, I would eat the cats' food. We called it saps. If she was in a good mood, she would let us have the crust of the bread.

23. There were no shops so we sometimes depended upon vans coming up to the croft. One would sell lemonade and another was a baker's van. If she wanted something from him, she would ask one of us to look out of the window for him coming. That made us late for school. She would buy a loaf of bread and fancy biscuits. She bought me a bike. I had to go into [REDACTED] so I could pick up bit and pieces. We had to go to [REDACTED] which was over a mile away, to get milk. I cycled to school and into Elgin.
24. When she sent me off to buy her fags from [REDACTED] I started to pinch them. I started taking one at a time. My head would go round and my body was shaking. I thought I'd better run away, because she'd know something was wrong. I was frightened to go back to the house for a couple of hours. Sometimes she'd notice. I would deny taking them. I lied about a lot of things. I would still get hit for taking them.
25. There was one day during the school holidays. We got a lot of dock leaves all around the croft. I would be sent to pull them out. I could never pull all the roots out. She told me that I would find a penny at the bottom of every root. I was out there with George. I threw a penny into the hole and made it look as if it had been there for a long time. I ran in and showed her the penny. I carried on doing that over the next couple of hours. It was my way of telling her I had money. I'd pinched them from her.
26. [JCU] [REDACTED] was given money by various people. I knew where she kept it. In the morning, when I was having my porridge, I would open up the drawer and go into her purse. I started off taking silver. I would take a crown or half a crown. I got more and more and I stole a £20 note. It seemed to take months and months to spend it. Every day, I would wait on the van and fill my belly as much as I could. My sister would ask me where I had got the food. I told her I'd stolen it so she said she would tell on me unless I got her something to eat as well. We were starving. We had no food.
27. One day, I remember going to school and I was so hungry. A child had thrown away some food. It was a piece of pastry and jam. I saw it and I crept up to the bin. I waited until nobody was looking. I took such a big bite of it that it stuck in my throat

and I couldn't swallow it. Eventually, I spat some of it out and I managed to get it down.

### *Clothing*

28. Glasgow corporation sent JCU money for our clothes. She would tell them what we needed for school. We had every day clothes for the croft and Sunday best. Sometimes we had to wear our Sunday best for school. Mostly, we wore hand-me-down clothes given to us by friends of JCU. There was a lady called Mrs [REDACTED] who had a son a bit older than me. She would give JCU his old clothes. The trousers had a big leather patch on the backside. I hated them. We had tackety boots like you might get in the army. If they were too tight, we would get blisters. We had to take them off and walk home bare footed.

### *Washing and hygiene*

29. We used cold water for our face and hands in the morning. We used carbolic soap. We had our own flannels and toothbrush which we kept in a little bag. I only remember actually getting into the bath once. We had been in Elgin and we had to walk home. I needed the toilet. I tried to go as fast as I could, but I couldn't keep it in. I soiled myself. JCU cleaned me up. On other occasions, we just washed the bits that needed to be washed. It was freezing cold water, so we often pretended that we'd washed everything when we hadn't. JCU would sit in her chair, watching us so we had to make it look like we were doing it. We never washed in warm water. When I started at Elgin Academy, I could have a shower after sport.
30. As I grew up, I didn't want to take my clothes off in front of my brother and sisters. She used to make us stand in the room and take our clothes off. She would say that she was a nurse. One day, JCU lost her temper. I think she said something rude to me. I nearly threw the enamel bath bucket at her. She made me strip off in front of my brother and sisters. I ran out of the room. I had no clothes on. I didn't hit her, but she knew I could have. It made her realise that I wouldn't take any more.



31. When I was eight or nine, the toilet blew down in a gale force wind. I couldn't lift it because I wasn't strong enough. The toilet was moved in with the geese. Every time we went to the toilet, we were surrounded by geese. Sometimes, we would just do the toilet in the midden, which was where she buried dead animals or rotten food. It was fully visible to people on the road. We would use the midden if somebody else was in the toilet or the bucket was full. I had to empty the toilet bucket. I had to dig a hole and empty the contents of the bucket into the hole. Sometimes, it was too heavy for me to drag. JCU had a commode in the back bedroom. She didn't have to go outside to use the toilet.

### *School*

32. We went to Primary School. I was put in the same class as Josephine at school. When the teacher started writing on the board, I hadn't a clue what the teacher was doing. I couldn't understand. They took me out of Jo's class and put me in the infant class. I was there for about three days. I cried every day because it wasn't like Dunclutha. I used to get strapped at school. I couldn't read, but if the teacher asked me a question, I knew the answer but I was last or second last all the time. I was put into another classroom and I did very well.
33. I hated primary school. We were bullied. The children would say we were dirty and we had fleas. We did have fleas. I saw them on my arms a couple of times. Whoever they jumped on wouldn't have been too happy. We had different clothes from other people. We wore hand-me-downs. Sometimes, I had to wear my sister's navy blue knickers for sport because I didn't have shorts. It was very embarrassing. I got through it. I was good at running. We walked to school until we got our bikes.
34. When I was about thirteen, I went to Elgin Academy. By that time, I could fight off any bullies. When my class was going to the swimming pool, there was no teacher there. We had to queue and wait. Somebody pinched somebody else's towel and grabbed his trunks. They were being chucked around. The boy was running after everybody to try and get them back. When he got to me, he knocked me over. I smacked him and took half his lip away. I didn't mean to hit him that hard. I felt so

bad. I never saw him again. I don't think he came back to the school. I got six of the best for that from the PE teacher. My life changed that day. The people in my class realised I wasn't a pushover. From that day, people respected me. I wasn't bullied or teased any more.

35. I quite liked Elgin Academy. I came first in religious instruction and third in the class all round. I got one book for coming first. I'd been coming last, year after year and told I was no good all of the time. I was really proud of myself. I'd come third and I knew I wasn't a waste of space and I'd managed of my own accord. When I left school, I couldn't read, I couldn't write and I couldn't count.

### *Work*

36. When we first arrived, we were told to go out and get some potatoes. Jo and I went out with the bucket and fork. We went to the potato field but we couldn't see any potatoes. We were there for an hour or so. We went back into the house and told JCU JCU that we couldn't find any potatoes. She told us that there was a whole field of them. We said, "Yeah, but we can't find any." She said, "Put the fork in, dig the thing up, shake it out and the potatoes are there." We also had to look after the hens and geese and make sure they had clean water and feed.
37. Before we arrived, JCU did all the work on the croft. When we moved there, we took over all the work. We had to go and get the water from the well. We walked down a steep, dirt track where tractors would go up and down. It was all uphill on the way back. It was quite a trek. For a seven year old child, trying to carry two buckets of water up the hill was very difficult. If we didn't bring full buckets, we had to go back and get more. We had to make sure there was enough water for JCU to use during the day.
38. We came home from school one day and saw the big telephone pole. We could switch the lights on. We got a telly in eventually and a proper cooker. We also got running water after a while. George and I had to dig a trench from a farmer's field, where the pipeline ran. We had to dig through to the road and all the way up the



garden path, past the outhouses and past the front room window. I had to do it when I got home from school. The earth was so compact. It took me weeks. She would hit us to get us to work.

39. The main job we had was collecting fire wood. When we were very young, we spent our summer holidays going over to the woods. We came back with branches or bits of wood that we could carry. We had to saw them and cut them into sizes that would burn. We had a big saw and my sister, Jo, held one end and I held the other. The saw was blunt so it took ages and ages. I used to saw round about it and then put the wood on a rock and break it with sheer weight.
40. I think JCU was given money by the corporation for fire wood, but she only bought firewood on one occasion whilst I was there. I only remember her getting coal on three occasions. I quite enjoyed collecting fire wood. It meant I was out of JCU way and she couldn't get me.
41. JCU used to give geese to her friends as presents at Christmas. Initially, she killed the geese. A couple of years after we arrived, she made me kill the geese. It was very frightening. We liked the geese but she made us kill them. I used to see JCU or Mr the man who kept the cows and sheep, kill the geese. I thought it couldn't be that hard. I put its neck down, put the stick on it, put my feet on the stick and pulled it up to break its neck. I thought it was dead. I tied its feet together and hung it up on the apple tree. Before I could get it up on the apple tree, it jumped out of my hand. It was flapping about the garden. It frightened me to death. I didn't know it was going to flap about like that.
42. I had to kill the birds every Christmas or whenever JCU wanted a hen or a goose for dinner. She would tell us which goose to kill. My little sister, had seen us carrying the dead birds under our arms. She decided she would try to do it herself. She went and got a chicken but she forgot to kill it. She was plucking it. The poor chicken was trying to get away. That was a big laugh for us.

43. There were apple trees on the grounds. One of our summer jobs was picking the apples. Jo and I had to go and work for people who lived near the croft. We would go off in the tractor, singing songs. We planted carrots, potatoes and turnips and went howking neeps. We went grouse beating and weeding carrots. We didn't get paid, but we would be given a bucket of tatties or a rabbit to take home with us. We used to get paid for berry picking in the summer holidays. I used to enjoy doing that. At the end of the day, your basket would be weighed. I used to put a few stones at the bottom. I never made much money from that because I used to eat more than I picked.
44. JCU would manipulate me to do jobs. If crops weren't growing on the fields, they would be riddled with thistles and nettles. We had to go into the fields with a scythe to cut down the nettles and thistles. She made me think that I had to catch the thistles before they blossomed. I would be out there almost every day of the school holidays. I didn't know how to sharpen the scythe properly. It broke so the only way I could chop them down was to take the blade and chop as many heads off as I could.

*Clubs and leisure time*

45. I went through the cubs and progressed to the scouts. I had a uniform. JCU was friends with Mr EEN through the church, who sexually abused me. He was involved in the cubs and scouts and he got me my uniform. JCU didn't have to pay for it. I enjoyed the cubs and the scouts. The man in charge of the scouts was a teacher at School. He did a very good job. I think his name was Mr Raffin.
46. I don't remember there being any toys. One year, I do remember getting some sort of yellow tractor for Christmas. I used to play with it outside. I don't think there were any books, except books that we took home from school. There was nothing in the house to entertain us. JCU listened to the wireless. I could relate to a couple of the programmes and I would listen through the bedroom door.



*Church*

47. The church was [REDACTED] Church. From the time we arrived, we went to Sunday school first and then on to church. Most of [REDACTED] JCU's friends were church people. When she applied to foster children, a lot of the church people were telling her that it would change her life but it didn't. They had a collection. When the plate came round to me, I would put my penny in but I would take about two shillings out. I would go to the shop and spend it on sweeties. Somebody saw me.
48. One day, I was in the church by myself. There was an old organ. You had to pump your feet and pull things out to start playing. I was singing a hymn. I couldn't play it properly, but there was nobody there. I wondered if there was any money lying about so I could go and buy a sweet. I got half way to the door and something took me by the back of the neck. I could see, but I couldn't see. I was in the middle of the road and I nearly got knocked down. It was as if somebody had frog marched me out. It was as if God knew I was going to steal money and dragged me out of the church to stop me. It was a warning. I've tried to be honest ever since.
49. The minister's name was [REDACTED] He was a lovely man in every respect. He gave lovely sermons. When I got my bicycle, he gave a special sermon about a little boy and a bicycle. Because I'd been seen stealing the money, he looked after me. He took me out in his car. He took me out on his boat, fishing. I enjoyed rowing the boat but I didn't know anything about fishing. I think his wife might have discussed us with people in the congregation. His wife wrote to Glasgow corporation about us because she was concerned about our welfare.
50. When I left to return to Glasgow, [REDACTED] gave me a wallet. It was the most beautiful thing I had ever seen. It must have been very expensive. It was a bit big to carry about so I used to carry it in my case. When I went to Aberdeen on the trawlers, I kept it for years. One day, I came in from sea and forgot where I'd left my bag. I lost the wallet. It must have cost him a fortune and he'd given it to me and I lost it.

*Visits/inspections*

51. A woman from the corporation came to visit about once a year. She would take a statement from JCU JCU would tell her what clothes we needed or what we needed for school. Sometimes, she visited when we were still at school. We would see the car marks. JCU would tell us she'd been. As time went on, JCU would tell the lady that I had been naughty and that she needed to smack me. The lady from the corporation would write it down. She told JCU that she had to keep me in tow and that if I deserved a smack, she should give me a smack. That was where JCU got the green light to nearly murder us.
52. We didn't have any visits from family. Either they didn't come or they weren't allowed. I think contact was made on one occasion. I think it was because our father had died. JCU had to tell us. I think we were asked if we wanted to see him. I remember Jo and I speaking about it. We thought that he hadn't tried to find us in seven or eight years, so he mustn't have wanted to know us at all. At the same time, we didn't give him a chance to see us. I think the Glasgow Corporation kept it that way and kept our mum from knowing where we were or how we were doing.

*Medical treatment*

53. I think the doctor had to call to the house once a year. Most of the time, he called by when we were at school so I don't know what was said.

*Birthdays/Christmas*

54. Our birthdays weren't really celebrated. We had a big goose on Christmas day. The smell of it cooking was lovely. We got presents from church people who lived locally. They sent us selection boxes. JCU would give us one little sweet at Christmas time and then put them away. She must have eaten the rest because we never did.
55. A friend of JCU would invite us to her house at Christmas time. We would have a family dinner. It was always motor racing on the telly at her house. I used to

enjoy that and watch a lot of telly. We would have chips. We didn't know what they were.

*Running away*

56. I ran away a few times. On one occasion, I was gone for about a day and a half. I was making my way back to Glasgow to the corporation. I didn't get that far. I still smelled of creosote. I ran away two or three times. The police brought me back. I thought they'd known something was wrong because it was the third time. If they'd just asked, I would've told them. I never told them. I was too frightened of the consequences. If JCU lost her temper, she could've done anything to my brother and sisters.

**Abuse at** [REDACTED]

*Abuse by* JCU [REDACTED]

57. JCU thought more of her cats than she did of us. One night, she got us up at one or two in the morning. She sent us out in our pyjamas, to look for the cat. Josephine went one way and I went the other, shouting the cat's name. We shouted and shouted. I went all the way down to the well and towards the wood. I got through the last gate before the wood. I was praying that we'd find the cat. If we went home without it, we'd get into big trouble. All of a sudden, the cat came from out of the blue. It looked up at me. I picked it up and I nearly killed it for getting us out of bed at that time in the morning. I grabbed hold of it and got her back. JCU went on about the poor cat, nothing about us in our pyjamas.
58. Sometimes I ran out of the house and stood outside so I wouldn't get a smack. I knew I would get beaten if I went back inside so I stood outside in the freezing cold in my pyjamas for half the night. On a number of occasions, JCU would use her commode. She was on her way to empty it in the midden. Instead, she threw it over me. I had to stand there, sticking of urine and faeces.



59. Past the midden, there were more sheds. They were often empty. I kept one shed for myself. I would creep in there in the rain if I had ran out of the house to get away from her. I would stay there most of the night, in my pyjamas, in the snow. I would go back into the house because I was so cold and so hungry and I thought she would be asleep. I had to walk past her bed. She knew I was there. She would lock the door, take the key out and come through with her stick. I was either in bed or saying my prayers. She beat me almost to death.
60. If I had been hit by a dog's lead, it left a mark. Both my arms were full of marks, nearly every day. If it wasn't a strap, it was a hockey stick, or a poker, or a block of wood. It could be anything she got her hands on. She would hit us and kick us. She could throw things at us or she would belt us. Nine times out of ten, she'd hit our funny bones because we put our arms up to protect ourselves. It hurt. Hardly any days went by when none of us got hit.
61. She cut me several times, throwing blocks at me. She made an excuse to the farmer, saying the block had slipped out of her hands when I was being naughty. I knew she meant it. She told the farmer and the social worker that I was getting out of hand. She kicked, spat and grabbed my testicles through my clothing. She put her cigarettes out on my hands or face. It burnt me, but my hands got used to it.
62. On one occasion, Jo and I went into Elgin. Because we had taken longer than we were supposed to, JCU [REDACTED] wanted to know what we'd been doing. I had bought a big, thick stick of rock. I thought she could share it out and have some herself. She started complaining that we had spent so much money. She took the rock off me and hit me over the head with it three or four times. The rock smashed into pieces. In the middle of the chaos and her beating me, I started eating the rock off the floor. I didn't want her getting the better of me.
63. On another occasion, she was angry with me and Jo for spending too much money. She asked Josephine what we had bought. Jo said she'd bought a little cake and told her what size it had been. A little while after, JCU [REDACTED] started on me. She asked me what Josephine had bought. I said we'd bought cake, but I said something



completely different from Jo about the size. She knew right away it was a lie so we both got beaten up again.

64. JCU [REDACTED] had a lovely little Shetland Collie dog. Towards the end of my time there, she used the dog to bite me and my sisters. When she was giving us a hiding, she would bring the dog through and it would be snapping at our heels and legs. She made the dog do it.
65. There were so many beatings. There were just so many. After the beatings, she would leave us in the room, crying. Then she would play us against each other. If I was in her good books, her slave for that day, she would make me smack my brother or sisters after the beating. She made us all do that to each other. Jo found a better way to do it. She would scream and shout and hit the bed with a slipper.
66. I can't remember what Jo did or didn't do, but I vividly remember JCU [REDACTED] pulling Jo back into the bedroom. She was hitting her and smacking her at the same time. She had to pass me in the lobby. She was bashing Jo's head against the wall. I nearly broke down. I knew it wasn't right. I didn't know what to do. If I'd stopped it, I wouldn't have been responsible for my actions.
67. My little sister used to crawl under the bed to get away from the beatings. JCU [REDACTED] kept her pee and poo bucket under there. She would come in with a hockey stick and poke her out and beat her again. That has haunted me all my life. I would ask myself, "Could I have stopped it?"
68. When I saw [REDACTED] being beaten, I would tell myself, "Stop this, Bob." The trouble was, I was frightened in case she made my little sister's life worse. I thought that if I hit JCU [REDACTED] I wouldn't have been able to stop. That's what still worries me to this day. Even my big sister would get pulled by the hair and bashed against the wall. She would brush past me and look at me. I would say to myself, "It's not right." I was angry at myself because I couldn't stop it. I didn't know how to stop it. She could've killed me, she could've killed my sister or I could've killed her.

69. When I finished school and started work, I knew I was quite strong. I hit somebody and it took half his lip away. I vowed I wouldn't do it again because I'd get jailed. I knew I could do some damage to JCU [REDACTED]. I wasn't frightened of that, I was frightened of what she would do to my siblings to get revenge.
70. She wasn't a suitable person to have children. God knows what the people at Glasgow corporation were thinking. She only wanted one child to look after. She told us that many times, especially when she was beating us. She would degrade us all the time and tell us we were nothing, that we were a bit of shit on the wall. There was hardly a day that went past when she didn't do that. She only put a different face on when she wanted us to do something for her. If she wanted me to go to [REDACTED] to get her fags or something, I used to stay and have a game of football or sit at the garage and watch the different cars coming in. I used to steal a sweetie from the counter of the shop. I used to fill up the cars with petrol, then the man started giving me a sweetie. If she was nicer to me, her anger or frustration would be taken out on the others in my family.
71. I remember going to collect our milk from a nearby farm owned by the [REDACTED] family. They had a telly. They had made some toffee. I pinched a couple of bars as I came in. They didn't mind. I stood watching the telly. I was in there for too long. JCU [REDACTED] came down to the farm and knocked on the door. She didn't say anything, she just belted me full force across the face in front of everybody. Not only was it sore, it was embarrassing. I burst out crying.

*Sexual abuse by Mr EEN [REDACTED]*

72. Mr EEN [REDACTED] was a church man who got very friendly with JCU [REDACTED]. He was quite high up in the church. He used to cut the grass and keep the church clean, that kind of thing. He treated me and my sister to a meal out once a year. We looked forward to it. We went to [REDACTED] Café and had lovely coffee and cakes. I think it was all planned so that he could get me at the right age for sex.

73. Mr EEN [REDACTED] had been good to me. He'd taken me to air displays, he'd taken me to the pictures, he'd taken me to cafes. Every time he came over, he wanted me to sit on his knee. Every time I sat on his knee, his hand would be there, in the middle, between my legs. That was when I knew it wasn't right. JCU [REDACTED] was there but she probably wouldn't have known what he was doing. He would come over to the house to take us out. He would laugh and joke. JCU [REDACTED] would tell me to make a cup of tea for Mr EEN [REDACTED]. I would get up to put the kettle on and then he would draw me back to his knee again.
74. As time went on, he'd have me over to his house. It was absolutely terrible. He would want me to touch him. It happened nearly every time I was alone with him. It started when I was about eleven years old. By the age of twelve, he took me to Edinburgh and we stayed with a lady called Mrs [REDACTED]. He went to the Edinburgh Festival every year. We shared a bed. I didn't have anywhere else to sleep. He did sexual things to me. It didn't stop until I left school. I knew what he was after by then so I cut contact with him.
75. My body stayed the same. I was picked on, hit and spat upon. I think my body just froze over time. Mr EEN [REDACTED] was interfering with me down below. Because of the embarrassment of having to stand, naked in front of my brothers and sisters to wash and because of Mr EEN [REDACTED] making me feel like what he was doing to me was an everyday occurrence. I knew it wasn't right but I didn't know how to say it.

#### **Reporting of Abuse whilst at [REDACTED]**

76. When the lady from the corporation came, we didn't get a chance to speak to her on our own. We were frightened to say anything to her. If we had, JCU [REDACTED] would just have said that we had been playing up. I was also scared that if the corporation found out, they would split my family up. The lady from the corporation just wrote down what JCU [REDACTED] told her. Most of her reports were the same from year to year.



77. I think most of the neighbours knew what JCU was like. Mrs saw her hit me across the face. We were too frightened to say anything to them. I wanted to tell the church minister about the abuse but I was frightened. I didn't want our family to be split up. I was scared to tell the lady from the corporation as well, although we never got to speak to her out with the presence of JCU. We thought we might end up in different homes where we couldn't see each other. I also worried that another home might be worse than where we were.

### Leaving foster care

78. My sister, Jo, moved out about a year before me. She was learning to be a nurse in Aberdeen. I had to ask to get out of there. Because Jo had moved out, JCU anger was transferred to us. Each time my little sister ran away crying or screaming, I didn't know what to do. When I left school, I was old enough and strong enough but she would still beat me. I left when I was fifteen. I left school on the Friday and started work on the Monday. My first job was working in a tree nursery at . I was old enough to work, but she gave me no money. I had to walk twelve miles to work and twelve miles home, in the rain, in the snow, everything.
79. I worked at the nursery for about a year and a half. My first wage was £7.50. JCU would take my money and I wouldn't get anything. All she gave me was my fare to get to . Because I was a smoker, I had to use some of that to get fags. I started getting credit from the man in the shop, but I'm still due him money.
80. I wrote to Glasgow Corporation and asked to get out of . They wrote back to me, asking why I wanted to leave. I told them that if I didn't get out of there, I was going to end up killing JCU. They moved heaven and earth to get me out of there. A date was arranged and I got the train to Glasgow. Somebody met me at the station. She sat in the front of a taxi and never said a word to me. I sat in the back, wondering where I was going. I was taken to a hostel for boys of my age.



**Life after leaving care**

81. After leaving [REDACTED] I stayed in a hostel in Clevedon Drive, Glasgow. Because I was quiet, the other boys thought I was pushover. Three or four of them got together and told me that I was wanted downstairs. They were in the toilet. Their ringleader said he wanted this and that. I took him by the throat, punched him, let him fall down the toilet feet first. I told him not to pick on me again. From that day forward, I never had any trouble.
82. It was a good hostel. On a Friday evening, all the boys went in the shower. Each boy had his own bundle of clothes. The only thing I disliked about the hostel was the jeans. They came back so starched, I couldn't get my feet through them.
83. The first job I got was in a five minute car wash. I then got a job in a shop called Cooper's. It was a little supermarket. I liked it there. Because I had to use my hands in the trees and my hands were so sore, I would hide my hands whenever I went for a job interview. Because I was one of the better boys, I was taken from the hostel and put into a house. It had space for five lads. Nobody ever had any money, but we all got on quite well.
84. I lost my job at Cooper's and got a job at Biggar's, the music store. I went into somebody's house, carrying a telly. I tripped over a step. Rather than just drop the telly, I managed to twist my body round and fall with the telly on top of me. My manager was coming up behind me and thought this was great. He told the boss and I was taken in to his office. It was all over the shop. I was really embarrassed, but at the same time it was nice to be praised.
85. One day, I got home to the house and two of the lads had stolen the landlady's meter. They were dividing up the money. I didn't want to be left out so I took a share of the money. Because the landlady liked me, she didn't think I could have been involved in it. She threw everybody out, except me and another boy. She then found out I'd been involved and slapped me across the face. I respected her and I realised I deserved it. She chucked me out in the end.

86. The other lad that was left was called [REDACTED] We became quite close mates. Neither of us had anywhere to go. Because we were over the age of sixteen, Glasgow Corporation wouldn't take us back in again. We went up to Aberdeen to visit Jo. I thought she might know how we could get work. [REDACTED] and I went to Market Street round the docks. We went into the Seaman's Mission for a cup of tea. We realised they were always looking for men to go to sea. We tried to find a job to tide us over. We ended up getting a job in one of the big fish factories. We worked there until it was our turn to go to college.
87. When we got to college, we left the job at the fish factory. We worked as apprentices and did everything we were asked to do. We both passed out together. I was given a job on a trawler. I enjoyed it and I got better and better at the job. I was able to take command of the ship. I then came to get my third officer's ticket. The skipper, the mate and the owner of the ship all had to agree that I was competent and I was signed off. I did all of that despite the fact I couldn't read or write when I left school.
88. I was working on a privately owned ship. It had to go on to dry land for a re-fit. At that time, I was trying to locate my family in Glasgow. I spent all my money and didn't return to the job on the trawler. I had found out that my father worked in the fish shop in Govan. I found out that he had married again and his wife was still living in [REDACTED] Glasgow. I went up to the door. I didn't know what to say or what to do. My dad's wife treated me very nicely. There were so many questions I wanted to ask but I didn't know how to ask them. I didn't know how or when my dad died. I feel bad about that because I would've liked to honour him. I would've liked to have asked him questions.
89. I tried to trace my mum as well. I can't remember how we found our mother, but she lived in [REDACTED] in Somerset. She made herself known to us, but initially told us that she was our mother's sister. She was living as another woman, with another family. We didn't know anything about her. When we did meet, I didn't know how to treat her. I didn't have any love or respect for her. At the back of my mind, I was thinking that she'd put us through all this hardship and misery. She didn't want to know us

before and then she was telling everybody that she'd found her long lost son. I lived with her for a while in Somerset.

90. I worked in a brass factory for a while and then joined the fire brigade in about 1976. I met my wife, [REDACTED] in 1979. We got married in 1980. We have three children together and I adopted [REDACTED]'s oldest child. We have nineteen grandchildren and our ninth and tenth great grandchildren are on the way.
91. I suffered from a slipped disc when I was 41 and a heart attack when I was 42. When I was 43 I had blood clots and pleurisy. I've had two shoulder replacements and a collar bone replacement. At that time, they discovered that I had bone death. My collar bone was twisted. In the 1950s and early 1960s, the crofters put their hay in big stacks. When I was at JCU [REDACTED] croft, we had made three or four big stacks of hay. I was climbing one of them and I did something silly. I moved awkwardly, lost my grip and slipped all the way down. I hurt my shoulder. I think it was broken then. I didn't tell JCU [REDACTED] and I didn't go to the doctor. Over time, it healed but it didn't heal properly. It had to be pinned together. I still get a lot of pain from my shoulders.

#### **Reporting of abuse after leaving care**

92. A few years after I got married, I decided to write a book. I wrote page after page after page. Over a period of months, things would come into my head and I would write them down. I didn't know how to put it into sentences and paragraphs because I left school without being able to read and write. I wrote to Esther Rantzen. She was doing the programme, "That's Life". She had helped people who had been abused. I was hoping she would help me. She couldn't help me until the book was finished. I never did finish it because I wasn't allowed to use real names. At that time, nobody knew about me and my siblings being abused. Josephine told me I should tell people because it might prevent another child from being beaten or treated like we were.
93. I had the book at home for months and months. I burnt the book in the fire. It was like being reborn. After that, it was as if somebody had taken a load off my mind. I don't

worry about my time in care, it's just gone. Now, I can just carry on with my life. Before I wrote the book, there was always something I would remember about being in care. If there were good times, they were followed by bad times. After I wrote the book, there was a sense of it being out of my system.

94. I used to write to my sister, Jo, about what had happened. I never reported it to the police. I didn't know who else to talk to. Josephine and I didn't want to tell anybody. Over the years, the news would have more and more stories about children being hurt. Jo and I decided we needed to talk about what happened. We came forward to the Inquiry to put things right.

### **Impact**

95. Being in care is something I've had to hide from a lot of people. I daren't tell people because they don't know the truth of what you're saying. It's such a long story to tell and each part is a different story. At first, I was always embarrassed. I didn't like to form relationships. I would get a terribly red face. Since I burnt my book, I'm able to talk openly about my time in care without being embarrassed. I don't need to hide anything.
96. I try to think of the good times on the croft. When I was lying in hospital, I was able to remember times when we were outside playing, shouting, screaming and laughing at one another. We did have a few good times. I can see these images and I can relate to them. I'm able to see me with a smiling face. They're in my mind only and I've had nobody to share them with. George went his own separate way and [REDACTED] died.
97. I don't remember much about my sister, [REDACTED]. She was emaciated and very poorly. She joined us in Elgin two years later. By then, we hardly knew her. We didn't know what to say to her. She was quite fragile. We didn't know what to ask her. She knew we were brother and sister, but she was like a lost sheep. [REDACTED] was at the croft a long while after the rest of us left. I can only imagine what she went through. She



had nobody to turn to. She died of [REDACTED] when she was in her thirties. We'd just found her again.

98. I've thought about being in care a lot. I've cried about it a lot. The damage is done. I hate to say it, but sometimes I regret that I didn't kill the woman when I could've and should've. I've been back to the house a few times. I didn't feel anything. It was just a place where I spent many bad hours. At the same time, it had some kind of pull on me and I felt like I was home. But I wasn't home because it was a foster home.
99. I think my time in care has impacted on me as a parent. I've tried to be a good dad. I used to smack my sons over the bottom several times when they were naughty. I asked my children for honesty. I didn't always get it, but that's what I asked for. When the boys didn't own up, I would smack both of them in the hope that one of them would own up. I tried to be fair with them. I used to tell them that I didn't care what they'd done, I just wanted the truth. I told them that whatever they'd done, I'd probably done it myself .

### **Records**

100. Josephine recovered records and sent them down to me. It was yearly records that the corporation prepared. I couldn't make out a lot of it because I couldn't read the writing. A lot of it was repetition. They would come to see the children, but the children were at school so information was obtained from JCU [REDACTED]. Some of it referred to me being of an age that I was trying to exert my authority and use my strength. The records would say that if I'd been naughty, then I deserved a smack. That gave JCU [REDACTED] a green light to play merry hell with children that she shouldn't have had in the first place.

**Hopes for the Inquiry**

- 101. I hope that my story might help a child out there who's going to go through the same thing. A lot of children keep things bottled up when they have nobody to turn to. Later on in life, they start lying about different things. It's a difficult thing to get round.
  
- 102. As much as people do their job, there should be a trial receivership between the person who is going to be in care and the person giving the care. That should be the case especially for youngsters who cannot express themselves or explain themselves. It should be done in stages and explained to the child in stages. I think that children in care should be told why they are in that position and have it explained to them.
  
- 103. If you're taken away from your parents at a fairly early age and dumped in the middle of nowhere, where you don't know anybody, I think the person giving the child their love and their home needs to put respect and honesty first and foremost. It's hard to explain to an upset young child that their mother and father can't take care of them. If the child is crying or shouting in temper, it's hard to do but there has to come a time when the child knows why he's in care. It doesn't happen overnight but there has to be a degree of trust. The person caring for the child needs to know the child and needs to give and take a little bit of everything. Nobody told us where we were going or why we were going there. There was no monitoring of me and my siblings.
  
- 104. 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..



Dated..

25/4/2018