

Scottish Child Abuse Inquiry

Witness Statement of

MZL

Support person present: No

1. My name is MZL My date of birth is 1968. My contact details are known to the Inquiry.

Life before Fort Augustus

2. I was born at Duke Street hospital in Glasgow. I am the youngest of three children. My father's name is My mother's name is My siblings are who was born in 1966, and who was born in 1967.
3. My dad ran an Italian restaurant. He would work fourteen hours a day, six days a week. He wanted something better for us, he wanted me to make something of myself. He didn't want his children to be working the way he did.
4. When my dad's business took off, we moved to a more affluent area, Newton Mearns, on the south-side of Glasgow. I went to Denistoun, Glasgow. My siblings went there too. I got picked on and physically assaulted by other children, and the Priest, Father MZN hit me. I got hit by the nuns too, but I can't remember their names. They picked on me, I hated it. I didn't want to go to school.
5. I didn't do anything to merit the beatings. I was a good looking boy with blonde hair but I was left handed. The nuns used a tawse. I would get battered on both hands because I was left handed. It happened all the time, about three times a week, three of the belt on each hand. I think the abuse by the nuns was sexually motivated.

6. My next school was [REDACTED] in Glasgow. I was there until primary six, when I was about ten or eleven years old. I was there for about three years. Again, I got bullied at school because I was Italian. I wasn't Jewish or Protestant. Kids were hitting me and saying things about losing World War 2.
7. My teacher at [REDACTED] was Mrs Hayes. She was a fantastic teacher, she was my form teacher. She really encouraged me and I flourished under her. I can't remember which teacher I had after her.
8. My brother got beaten at [REDACTED]. It was Mrs [REDACTED] MZO or [REDACTED] MZO I'm not sure. She would beat my brother with a tawse and encouraged the class to pick on him too. They picked on us because we were Catholic. I remember seeing his arms black and blue from his forearm right up to his elbow. He was crying his eyes out. What happened to my brother was serious abuse.
9. I got beaten with the tawse at [REDACTED] too, twice. It was Mr [REDACTED] MZP who beat me, I think he is dead now. I think it was because I was fighting with boys who called me a Fenian. Some people in Glasgow are quite primitive, they don't know what's going on. There was one occasion when I was beaten so badly that I soiled myself. My dad had to come up and pick me up from school. He had to wrap me in a blanket because I had soiled myself. I told him that the staff kept hitting me. It got to the point where one of the teachers abused my brother so badly with a tawse that my parents withdrew us from the school. I don't think my parents made any formal complaint.
10. My next school was St John Ogilvie Hall, I was there until primary seven. [REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
11. Next, I went to [REDACTED] for my first two years of secondary school. We had to go eight miles on a bus and then there was a big hill to walk up. It was a boy's only school. They introduced girls just when I was leaving, in the last few weeks I was there. I was picked on because I was Italian, the other kids made comments about the IRA to me, and they would sing IRA songs. I didn't know anything about the IRA, I was

from an Italian family. I got into a lot of trouble at [REDACTED] because I didn't agree with their religious stance and their pro-IRA stance.

12. I also suffered physical abuse at [REDACTED] When the troubles in Ireland were happening, all hell broke loose at the school. People were bullying me and my brother, singing IRA songs. Various pupils and teachers bullied me. [REDACTED] MZQ was my maths teacher. I couldn't do algebra, and I would get beaten with a ferula, a whale bone covered in leather. It was thicker than a tawse. It was absolutely excruciating.
13. When you got beaten at [REDACTED], it would be at lunchtime, or at the end of the school day. You were sent to get beaten with the ferula, either two, four, or six strokes on each hand. The teachers and the Priests called it, cashing a bill. The teachers, Priests, and prefects thought it was funny.
14. I got abuse from the gym teacher. I would get sent on a run. One time I got sent on a run to Kelvingrove Park. I had an asthma attack. I had this P.E. teacher screaming at me, "Why can't you run? Are you a fat, lazy, useless bastard?" I got abuse from the teachers and the pupils.
15. [REDACTED] MZR my Latin teacher, used to hit me. I didn't see why I needed Latin in this day and age. I spoke Italian then, I spoke it well, so I understood Latin.
16. There was a guy called [REDACTED] MZS who used to beat me. Mr [REDACTED] MZT was my head of year, he used to belt me.
17. My next school was [REDACTED] Ian Climey was the Headmaster. He allowed sectarian nonsense to go on. I was pissed on, spat on, punched and kicked by other pupils. There was no safeguarding whatsoever. It was a non-denominational school. My friends went to a different school. I was picked on because I was Catholic, and because I was Italian. It was sectarian abuse. The other kids would spit on me, punch me, kick me, and stick notes to me. It was Jewish and Protestant kids again. My brother was at [REDACTED] too.

18. I had had enough of the school and I told my mum I was not going back. My parents took me away from there in 1983 and I went to Fort Augustus at the end of the summer term. When I was younger, I was a big boisterous boy, like a ball of energy. I think I was becoming too much for my mum to deal with. She was running a café, while my dad was running a restaurant. I think that's why my parents sent me to Fort Augustus.
19. My dad spoke to a friend of his, Mr [REDACTED], who said his son [REDACTED] was doing well at Fort Augustus. I couldn't stand [REDACTED]
20. Following that, Father [REDACTED] MMF came to our house at [REDACTED] to talk about the school. I was involved in the discussion. He sold my parents a very rosy picture of Fort Augustus. He was telling them what a great school it was, what a great education I would have and what great career prospects I would gain. My dad had the money to pay the fees. I didn't visit Fort Augustus before I started school there.

Fort Augustus Abbey School, Inverness-shire [REDACTED] 1983 to [REDACTED] 1987

21. Fort Augustus was up a pass over the A9. We used that road the first time my parents took me there. The school was up a driveway and the first thing you saw was the church and the monastery, then the west wing of the school. There was a cricket field with a pavilion and a tree lined avenue. Then you would see the whole school, the Hanoverian fort, and all the bits added on by the monks. The school was a dilapidated dump when you went inside. It was the opposite of what Father [REDACTED] MMF described to my parents.
22. When I went to Fort Augustus, there were about 130 pupils at the school in total. By the time I left, that number had dropped to about 80. The number of pupils in each year changed because boys would come to the school and others would leave. There were only about ten to fifteen boys in each year by the end. Boys left because it was a hell hole. They told their parents what it was like and their parents removed them. My parents didn't remove me when I told them about the school. They said I had to stay and be a good Catholic.

Routine at Fort Augustus Abbey School, Invernesshire

First day

23. I started at Fort Augustus in [REDACTED] 1983, when I was fourteen. My parents just dropped me off on the first day. I was terrified. There was no effort made to introduce me to other kids. I knew [REDACTED] the son of my dad's friend Mr [REDACTED]. There were lots of boys who came from very wealthy families. I had nothing in common with them, there was a lot of upper class right wing stuff. They were all Conservatives. The staff put all these right wing papers in the library. I couldn't relate to the other pupils. I started half way through the last term of the school year, then I was made to repeat third year.

Staff at Fort Augustus

24. Father [REDACTED] MMF was [REDACTED] SNR initially. Because of the falling school roll, which meant it was loss-making, Father [REDACTED] MMF wanted to shut the school in 1985 or 1986. There was a big campaign to keep it open. I ran a campaign to shut it down.
25. The Abbot was Nicholas Holeman. After Father [REDACTED] MMF Father [REDACTED] MRQ was [REDACTED] SNR for a year. Father [REDACTED] MRQ had a large collection of pornography and a blow up doll. I saw these things in his study in the east wing. He would confiscate pornography from pupils and he was supposed to burn it, but he didn't. He would flirt with any female visitors to the school. [REDACTED]
[REDACTED] He was removed as [REDACTED] SNR in the spring of 1987 because of his behaviour. The Abbot told him to resign and he wasn't allowed to teach. He was out of the school, but remained in the monastery. Father [REDACTED] MFA and Father [REDACTED] MEZ were both at Carlekemp School and I heard stories at school that they abused infants at Carlekemp.
26. Father [REDACTED] MEW was [REDACTED] SNR at the end of my time at Fort Augustus. He put in a smoking room for the over sixteen's. When it had been Father [REDACTED] MRQ [REDACTED] MRQ as [REDACTED] SNR if [REDACTED] MRQ caught you smoking you were beaten with a cane. Boys

in Vaughan House who were caught smoking were just given a fine or manual labour, but **MRQ** would cane you. I think he was into sadomasochism. After Father **MEW** **MEW** it was Father **MER** who was **SNR** but I had gone by that time.

Lay teaching staff

27. **MZU** taught **[REDACTED]**. He committed suicide **[REDACTED]**. I can remember we all went to his funeral.
28. Michael Haines was a gentleman of the highest calibre. He is the only member of staff I would exonerate. He encouraged me, he tried to keep Father **MRQ** out of my way. He had run in's with Father **MRQ** over me. He died of a heart attack a year after I left.
29. **MIH** was OK. He taught **[REDACTED]**. He was nice to me too, but some of the boys didn't like him, because he was quite authoritarian. He was an old boy of the school.
30. Andy Dempster was the maths teacher. No one respected him, he had no control over his class. Those who were not A+ at maths would take the piss out of him. He was a pathetic excuse of a man. He sent me to my housemaster a lot of times for petty things, like not being able to do my algebra. The lay teachers weren't supposed to physically punish you themselves, they had to send you to your housemaster.
31. Gary Morris taught Geography. He had come from the Army Education Corps. He was OK, he was quite a nice guy. He came from St Helen's. He sent me to get caned for smoking when I was seventeen. I resented him for that so I didn't speak to him after that.
32. Gordon Wilson was the English teacher. He was a nice guy and I got on very well with him. I only got a C for my English Higher but I was well read in lots of French literature which was on the Catholic register called the Vatican Index. The Catholic Church had

a register of things that were banned because they were against the teachings of the Church.

33. The other monks who taught at the school were Father [MFA], Father [MEZ] [MEZ] Father [MER], and Father [MKT]. Brother [MNS] Father [MFF] and Abbot Holman did not teach. Father [MKT] was the [] responsible for the day to day running of the monastery. There were other monks at the monastery, but I can't remember their names.

Lovatt House, Fort Augustus

34. There were three houses at Fort Augustus, Lovatt, Vaughan, and Calder, which was the junior House. I was in Lovatt House. Father [MRQ] was my Housemaster. Father [MFC] was the Housemaster of Vaughan House. Father Anthony Haine was the Housemaster for Calder. Father [MRQ] would beat and cane the boys in his House. Father [MFC] used a belt, he didn't use a cane, at least not when I was at Fort Augustus. I asked various times to be moved to Vaughan House, so I wouldn't get caned but Father [MMF] said no. When Father [MRQ] [MRQ] became [SNR] Father [MER] became my housemaster. There was a Head Boy. In each house there were several House prefects, and one School prefect

Mornings and bedtime

35. We got up at 8.00 am. You either went to a prep meeting or you went to Mass. I would sneak off and have a coffee and a cigarette in the library annex. Then we had breakfast, then school.
36. The dormitory was like a big church hall, with wooden partitions. There was no privacy at night. The dormitory changed half way along from Vaughan to Lovatt. Off to one side was the junior dormitory. I was in the dormitory until the end of fifth year. In sixth year, I got a little study of my own. That was in the East Wing, a different part of the

school that the monks built using breeze blocks. They made little studies, like bedsits. It was freezing cold, but at least I had privacy.

37. At night, pupils went to bed at different times, depending what year you were in. Third and fourth year pupils went to bed at 9:30 pm. Fifth year pupils went to bed at 9.45 pm and sixth year pupils could go to bed when they wanted, although the official bed time was 10.00 pm or 10.15 pm. You had a bit more freedom by the time you were in sixth year.
38. The prefects would supervise bed time. House Prefects would take it in turn to sleep in the dormitory. The housemaster would also come along and shine a torch into each individual cubicle, to check no one had absconded.
39. At night, you could hear everyone masturbating. There was a lot of noise. There were fights. One boy from Nigeria brought a quarter of a pound of grass back from Nigeria and would sit in his cubicle smoking joints and listening to Bob Marley. Father MRQ MRQ was convinced I was addicted to cannabis, because I briefly hung about with the boy from Nigeria, although I was smoking cigarettes.

Mealtimes/Food

40. The food was so bad that after I left school, I was drinking three or four pints of milk a day because I thought I was suffering from some form of infection. I went to my G.P. I was diagnosed with suffering from *Helicobacter pylori*, a stomach disorder, and got medication. The food was just slop. I grew up with my father running an Italian restaurant, I was used to eating nice Italian food.
41. One night, we were given veal chops and everyone refused to eat them. Father MRQ was screaming and shouting at us all, but we never got given them again. We usually got things called Golden Cutlets. I don't know what was in them, probably just processed rubbish.

Washing/bathing

42. There were showers and sinks in the basement. You had to shower naked and I didn't like showering naked in front of these guys. I mean the pupils as well as the monks, as some of them were closet gays. Father [REDACTED] MRQ would come down and watch us shower, so did Father Anthony Haines, Father [REDACTED] MFA and Father [REDACTED] MFC. From the stories going round the school which I heard, Father [REDACTED] MFA was a notorious paedophile, he would come down and watch the junior boys shower after they played rugby.

Clothing/uniform

43. We had to wear a white or a grey shirt, charcoal or black trousers, a House tie, a tweed jacket during the week, and a red blazer at weekends. We had to wear the red blazers for Mass. There were specific clothes for specific events. I even had a set of whites for playing cricket.

School

44. The school was an old fort, with a tower in the middle. When you went in, there was a big long corridor. Mr [REDACTED] MIH had a classroom on one side, there was another classroom on the other side. Then there was the study hall, then the refectory. Then you went through doors to the cloisters, the monastery, and the church. On the first level there were more classrooms, and the next floor was the dormitories, like a big church hall with wooden partitions.
45. We had classes in the morning until 12.30 pm. In the afternoon we had games until 3.30 pm, or on Wednesday we did Combined Cadet Forces stuff. Then we had tea, then more classes from 4.00 pm until 5.00 pm, and then we had free time for half-an-hour. From 5.30 pm we had an hour of prep. We had dinner, then more prep until bed at 9.30 pm. At weekends we had classes on Saturday mornings until 12.30 pm then we had free time, unless you were in a sports team or on CCF stuff. On Sunday after Mass we had prep or letter writing, writing letters home to our families. They didn't tell

us what to write, but they would ask to see your letter. Sometimes, they would throw it in the bin. This was the routine the whole time I was there.

46. On my return to school after the summer of 1983, I repeated my third year of school at my parents' insistence. We were all told by [REDACTED] MZX [REDACTED] that discipline would be tightened up as it had been too lax. It was then that the hierarchy of the school was brought home to me, with the prefects acting like the police force of the school and who were a law unto themselves, and who frequently abused their authority and played God with the rest of the pupils. They would send us to our housemasters for minor infractions, knowing full well that we would receive a beating.
47. Although it was a boys' school, there were two girls who attended as day pupils, [REDACTED] and [REDACTED]. They were from quite a wealthy family. They just came in every day for classes, they didn't stay for prep. A lot of the boys didn't go near the girls because they were closet homosexuals. I got on well with [REDACTED] and [REDACTED] so I would speak to them all the time. They would go home at 12.30 pm on Saturday, they weren't there the rest of the weekend. There weren't any male day pupils, they were all boarders.
48. Initially, I did well at school. I got the English and History prizes in fourth year but towards the end of fourth year Father [REDACTED] MRQ [REDACTED] brought in the cane for punishment. After the beatings started, my grades just fell through the floor. My grades got so bad that Father [REDACTED] MMF [REDACTED] said that if I didn't buck up academically, I would be expelled or given corporal punishment by my housemaster. I complained several times to Father [REDACTED] MMF [REDACTED] that Father [REDACTED] MRQ [REDACTED] was picking on me. I requested a move out of Lovatt House so I wouldn't get beaten by Father [REDACTED] MRQ [REDACTED]. Father [REDACTED] MMF [REDACTED] said it was up to Father [REDACTED] MRQ [REDACTED] how he chose to discipline me. He later denied [REDACTED] that he had any knowledge of Father [REDACTED] MRQ [REDACTED] beating me, but he is a liar. He was lying to try to save his own skin.
49. The school did provide report cards. When my grades dropped my parents wanted to know what was going on. I became clinically depressed. The villagers used to call me

Arthur, after Arthur Fowler the character in EastEnders who had depression and went nuts. I was in the village at the filling station. They had a pool table and video games through the back and a lot of the boys from the school used to hang about there. Some of the boys went out with girls from the village, but I found them a bit rough.

50. If you were struggling with a subject at school, there was no extra tuition or support. Father [MMF] just threatened me with expulsion or corporal punishment. In any event, who would want extra tuition from Father [MRQ] or Father [MFA] [MFA]? There was no guidance teacher or careers advice.
51. I remember during my Higher English exam, Father [MRQ] said that no-one was to move a muscle, that no-one was to move their desk or they would be caned. [REDACTED] who was in the year above me, moved his seat and his desk slightly. Father [MRQ] blew his top and told [REDACTED] to go up to [REDACTED] for a caning. [REDACTED] then came back down crying. He said he had been caned by Father [MRQ]. This was literally ten minutes before the exam. I sat in the exam vomiting in my own mouth and crying my eyes out. I wanted to throttle [MRQ] for being a bully.

Chores

52. We had to do manual labour at Fort Augustus. It could be anything that Father [MRQ] saw fit to make you do, from helping out with his [REDACTED] to chopping sticks. In autumn it was always leaf-raking. Other times he would get us to do ridiculous stuff like cleaning toilets, cleaning drains. This was despite there being ground-staff. There was a weekly rota of things Father [MRQ] would get people to do.

Leisure time

53. There wasn't much leisure time at Fort Augustus. There were club activities on a Tuesday night. They had a rifle club and a cinema club. I was in the rifle club. I was [REDACTED] at the school. I was in charge of semi-automatic rifles and sometimes fully automatic rifles. They had pistols and pump action shotguns. One night, I had to

clean forty rifles. I was twenty minutes late for prep and got caned for that by Father [REDACTED] MRQ [REDACTED]

54. There was a tradition in the Combined Cadets Force that [REDACTED] was given the rank of Sergeant. I was [REDACTED] during my time at Fort Augustus, but I was just a [REDACTED] Mike Haines wanted to promote me to Sergeant, but Father [REDACTED] MRQ [REDACTED] wouldn't promote me. It was just another way of having a wee dig at me.
55. I can't remember all the other clubs but there was a homebrew club. Bear in mind, this is thirteen and fourteen year old boys we are talking about.
56. Fort Augustus was awash with alcohol. I don't just mean amongst the pupils, I mean the monks too. Every week, you had a social gathering with your housemaster. Normally you would sit and drink tea and eat toast. Father [REDACTED] MRQ [REDACTED] made homebrew. It was really strong, like Special Brew. One time he gave us some at a Social, which was the weekly meeting with your Housemaster. We were all steaming drunk at thirteen or fourteen years old. We went up to the dormitory singing and talking after lights-out. Father [REDACTED] MRQ [REDACTED] came up to the dormitory, dragged us all back down to the room in the tower where we had been for the social gathering, and gave us all three strokes of the belt on each hand for making too much noise. I got three extra strokes on each hand for wearing a non-regulation shirt. Father [REDACTED] MRQ [REDACTED] picked on me, I think it was sexually motivated. This was in the room where he had been giving us drink and acting like our best mate twenty minutes before.
57. Father [REDACTED] MRQ [REDACTED] would drink the homebrew too. He would go into a psychotic rage when he was drunk.
58. Father [REDACTED] MER [REDACTED] was my housemaster when I was seventeen, from fifth year until the end of sixth year. At weekends, he would give me a few cans of cider or beer.
59. Father [REDACTED] MER [REDACTED] was in charge of the church at Fort Augustus. He was responsible for arranging which boys were to help with serving Mass. These altar boys were the most zealous Catholics. He would have social gatherings for the servers and

they would all get steaming drunk. I remember seeing vomit in the corridor after one of these Socials. I think it may have been a form of grooming, giving out alcohol at these meetings.

60. I remember seeing a beer lorry arrive at Fort Augustus. I have never seen so many cans of beer in my life. There must have been about fifty pallets of beer. I stole about six cans of McEwan's Export. I thought they would never miss them.

Religious instruction

61. On Sunday we had to go to Mass. We had to go to confession and receive the Benediction. We had to confess if we had thoughts of a sexual nature, and we were asked if we touched ourselves. It was usually Father [REDACTED] MEZ that took confession. I found this both disturbing and disgusting. Since leaving Fort Augustus, I have not attended a church at all.
62. I became a Buddhist at the age of thirteen or fourteen. I told the staff at Fort Augustus and they just laughed at me. I still had to go to Mass.
63. Father [REDACTED] MEZ would ask us inappropriate questions during confession. He would ask if we gave each other oral sex. Whilst asking these questions he would masturbate. I could see his hands making the movement. Father [REDACTED] MFA and Father [REDACTED] MEZ would both also seem very aroused and would be touching themselves through their trousers during confession.

Trips/Holidays

64. During the school holidays, I would go back to Glasgow, I would see my friends and my girlfriend. We had summer, Easter, and Christmas holidays. We had a mid-term as well, just three or four days. The staff would take us in a van to Spean Bridge, to get the train, and we would be picked up by our parents at Queen Street station in Glasgow.

Pocket money

65. My parents would deposit money with Father [REDACTED] MRQ for sweets, or stationery. We would just spend it on cigarettes that we bought in the village. If you got caught smoking you would be fined. Initially, it was £1.00, then £2.00, then it went up to £5.00. It was funny that at the end of every school term Father [REDACTED] MRQ would have a new TV, or a new cassette player, or something. Instead of giving the fines money to a charity in Africa or whatever, I think he was embezzling the money. The tobacco smokers had a loose sort of society because there were no recreational facilities. We would go out and have a smoke. Some of the non-smokers tagged along too, just for something to do, somewhere to go.

Visits/Inspections

66. Jimmy Saville turned up at Fort Augustus. He was a regular visitor. I remember seeing a red Rolls Royce and asking another boy whose it was. Jimmy Saville was a Papal Knight so he had every excuse to go to Mass and receive the Benediction. There were bishops and priests who would visit too.
67. There were visits from retired senior military persons, people who would talk about the Crimean War and things. They were there for inspection of the Combined Cadet Force. I wanted to pursue a career in the Royal Marines. I was interviewed for the Royal Marines and the Engineers. My grandfather had fought in the First World War, in the engineers. The reason I couldn't join was because I was asthmatic. I wasn't able to join the army or the police.
68. I didn't have any visits from my family when I was at Fort Augustus, but two of my friends from Glasgow, [REDACTED] and [REDACTED] did come up to visit. Visitors would stay at the Lovatt House hotel. [REDACTED] MFA was protestant and he wanted to see how the Catholics were treating me. He was appalled by the state of Fort Augustus. He said the place was a dump. He couldn't believe what a tip it was. I asked Father [REDACTED] MRQ if I could go up to the hotel to see my friends. He said no, but I went anyway.

Healthcare

69. There was a matron at Fort Augustus. Her name was Mrs Gunn. We called her Ma Gunn. She was some kind of quasi-qualified medical person. She was ancient, I think she had been a nurse years before. She was a nasty old witch. I had to see her because I was asthmatic and I had to get inhalers. One time, Father [REDACTED] MRQ hit me so hard that I broke one of the knuckles on my hand and I had to go and see her for that. I had to get referred to Raigmore Hospital in Inverness. They said I had a hairline fracture.
70. Mrs Gunn wasn't really interested in our wellbeing. It was just a job to her. She certainly wasn't reporting to the police that boys were being beaten at Fort Augustus. I'm sure she saw injuries that couldn't have been considered accidental. She didn't say anything, nobody did. Nobody said anything about Fort Augustus until the Sins of our Father documentary came out.
71. William John McCrae was the village G.P. at Fort Augustus. I had to go and see him for an injury on my hand at one point, it would have been in fourth or fifth year. I had been caned the night before. I showed him the marks on my buttocks and said it was disgraceful. He said it was disgraceful that something like that should happen under Mr [REDACTED] MIH watch, because he knew Mr [REDACTED] MIH quite well. He said I should report it to the police but he didn't report it. I didn't go to the police.

Running away

72. Boys tried to run away five or six times when I was at Fort Augustus. It was a joke, their parents just sent them back. We would sing The Great Escape music to them. I didn't try to run away, my parents would have just sent me back. I don't remember if boys got punished for trying to run away. In Lovatt House they probably just got a lecture. God knows what Father [REDACTED] MRQ would have done if a boy tried to run from Vaughan House.

73. I said to Father [REDACTED] MRQ [REDACTED] that he might as well put up a sign saying, "Arbeit macht frei" which was the sign they had above the gates of Dachau. The school colours were red, white and black, the same as the Nazis.

Abuse at Fort Augustus Abbey School

74. I instantly noticed a climate of fear at Fort Augustus. It was common for boys to be beaten. Usually it would happen in third and fourth year. There was a lot of violence and punishment by prefects and housemasters. The worst of the prefects were [REDACTED] MZX [REDACTED] [REDACTED] [REDACTED] [REDACTED] and [REDACTED]. Typically, punishment would involve being hit with a belt or cane or an open hand. You could also be fined, made to do physical exercise, or made to do manual labour.
75. My first experience of abuse at Fort Augustus was during the first couple of weeks. I was caught smoking by a prefect, and he reported it to Father [REDACTED] MRQ [REDACTED]. I was beaten by Father [REDACTED] MRQ [REDACTED] for this.
76. In the third week of the summer term when I arrived at Fort Augustus in 1983, I was attacked in my dormitory cubicle, after lights-out. I was pinned down on my bed and a pillow put over my face in an attempt to either asphyxiate me or silence my cries for help. I was then assaulted about the body with a hockey stick. I managed to push my assailant off me, using the pillow over my face, whereupon I was punched and another assailant groped my penis and testicles. At this point, one of my assailants put his penis in my face and ejaculated. My anus was penetrated, but I don't know if it was by a penis, a finger, or another object. I fought the assailants off with the hockey stick and my fists, and I chased them out of my cubicle. Both my assailants were dressed in black but I do not know who the individuals were, I couldn't identify them. I was absolutely terrified and complained to the duty prefect, but nothing was done. I am not aware of this sort of attack happening to anyone else in the dormitory, however, it was not uncommon to hear crying, shouting, and distress within the dormitory.

77. Two weeks after that incident, I was belted four times on each hand by Father [REDACTED] [REDACTED] because I had been caught smoking in the village. I also received a £5.00 fine and two hours manual labour.
78. I was not allowed to change cubicle from May 1983 until July 1986, when I was in sixth form and I got my own study. At night in the dormitory you could hear the boys masturbating. It was disgusting, and I was stuck in the same cubicle where I was assaulted in May 1983.
79. Father [REDACTED] [REDACTED] would beat you at four times of the day, 1.30 pm, 3.30 pm, 6.30 pm, or at bedtime. He would cane you or use the tawse. He would beat you in the tower, or the [REDACTED]. If you were getting punished in his office, it would be just the tawse on your hands, if it was in the [REDACTED] it could be the tawse or the cane. He was just mad. He had two tawse belts, one thicker than the other. When he beat me, he always used the thicker one.
80. When someone was being belted or caned last thing at night, the rest of the pupils would go into the maths class and turn off the lights, so Father [REDACTED] [REDACTED] couldn't see who was watching. He didn't want any witnesses. The maths class overlooked the [REDACTED] and we would watch the person being belted.
81. From the outset, I found Father [REDACTED] [REDACTED] extremely intimidating and most pupils were scared of him. Father [REDACTED] [REDACTED] was prone to outbursts of what can only be described as psychotic rage. He was a thug and a bully who should never have been allowed near children. On each of the numerous occasions I was belted by him, I was left with severe bruising to the hands and on several occasions my wrists and the insides of my forearms were bruised to the extent that I was unable to write or open and close my hands for two or three days at a time, due to the bruising and swelling. It was not uncommon for boys to be belted twice on the same day, leaving the victim with severe bruising and acute pain for a considerable length of time.

82. The corporal punishment was the tawse administered as twice-three, or twice-four. That meant you would get three or four strikes to each hand. This was also used to describe the number of strokes of the cane you would get.
83. At the end of third year, Father [REDACTED] MRQ [REDACTED] told us he had procured a Malacca cane, and showed it to us in the [REDACTED] Father [REDACTED] MRQ [REDACTED] said he oiled it with linseed oil so that it was supple and very flexible. It made a whooshing noise.
84. Father [REDACTED] MRQ [REDACTED] would cane people last thing at night. You would be terrified all day, knowing you were going to get caned. He made you take your jacket off. If you got caught with books down your trousers, you would get two extra strokes. The cane was about six feet long. He would say, "I've oiled it for you."
85. If you refused corporal punishment, he would either get prefects to hold you down, or you would get beaten by the prefects. I always told the prefects that if they touched me, I would either fight them or phone the police.
86. I was caned on fourteen occasions during a two and a half year period. This was mostly for smoking even though I was legally allowed to buy cigarettes after I turned sixteen. The majority of the times, my skin would be broken. There was bruising and sometimes Father [REDACTED] MRQ [REDACTED] drew blood. On one occasion I suffered a broken knuckle. I went to Raigmore Hospital in Inverness for treatment. I had to get my hand X-rayed. The other boys saw the marks. [REDACTED]
87. Father [REDACTED] MRQ [REDACTED] also caned and victimised [REDACTED] a pupil from [REDACTED] who was about 5' 4" and only weighed about seven stones. His nickname was [REDACTED], as in [REDACTED] He was in the year below me. He was often with me when I got

beaten, maybe seventy per cent of the time. I would say he was picked on even more than I was because he wasn't physically strong so he couldn't fight back. I also believe that he was sexually assaulted as well by Father [REDACTED] MER and Father [REDACTED] MFC [REDACTED] MFC I saw him coming out of both those Housemasters' rooms and he was limping. Those Housemaster didn't use a cane, so he couldn't have been limping from that. He was always being picked on by the Housemasters, especially Father [REDACTED] MRQ [REDACTED] MRQ I would be quite happy to go to court to support him and confirm the abuse he suffered, which I witnessed.

88. During my first half term, I was taught [REDACTED] by Father [REDACTED] MEW I was frequently slapped and hit for poor work or [REDACTED] incorrectly, and as a result I did not continue as a [REDACTED] student on my return in September 1983.

89. I was caned five times because of [REDACTED] He caught me smoking when I was sixteen and I was legally able to go and buy tobacco. His brother [REDACTED] was in my year and he was a bully too, according to the junior boys, but he didn't bother me. Their family was very influential in the running of the school. [REDACTED] was [REDACTED] and later [REDACTED] was [REDACTED] too.

90. Father [REDACTED] MFA sexually assaulted me. In my fifth year, I studied [REDACTED] and was taught by Father [REDACTED] MFA He would often chastise me and punish me for bad work. He would often ask me to remain behind after class for extra tuition. On four separate occasions, he groped my crotch and made inappropriate remarks of a sexual nature. I was shown sado-masochistic homosexual pornography by Father [REDACTED] MFA [REDACTED] MFA He kept it in a green filing cabinet along with his cigarettes and whisky. He was an alcoholic. He would also watch us showering, as did Father [REDACTED] MRQ

91. I had to study under Father [REDACTED] MFA again in sixth year. One time, near the end of my stay at Fort Augustus he said I was more beautiful than Venus and began attempting to grope me again. He wanted me to go to Rome with him and be his secretary. He told me that he loved me. He offered me cigarettes and whisky to go to his room in the monastery and have sex with him, or perform oral sex. He would threaten to have me caned and beaten if I didn't do what he told me to. He never beat

me personally, he would get the housemaster to beat me. These beatings would always be on my buttocks. I complained to Mr Paul Vallot, the Chemistry teacher, who said he would do something about it, but nothing was done.

92. At the time I was being abused by Father [REDACTED] MFA I was between sixteen and eighteen years old. He was eighty years old. His abuse lasted for a couple of years. Other people in the school used to make fun of me regularly. They would say pain is pleasure and that I was [REDACTED] MFA servant. On the final occasion I was abused by Father [REDACTED] MFA I punched him in the face. By that time I was eighteen and six foot three inches, so he knew he couldn't do anything to me.
93. The monks running the school delegated duties to the prefects, but they gave the prefects far too much power. The monks didn't take enough responsibility for the day to day running of the school. There were two school prefects, five or six house prefects in each house, and there were two College men in each house. They would be responsible for turning the lights out at night. I was never a prefect, I was always overlooked in that way.
94. The prefects could give you punishments. We were made to do press ups. I was forced to empty the bins all around the school, which was ridiculous as they had ground staff employed to do that. We were forced to do manual labour. We were forced to take cold showers naked, in front of prefects. You could be given lines, 400 or 500 lines a time. We were made to do press-ups if we were caught with our hands in our pockets, and this could be outdoors, or even in the village.
95. We would be made to run up and down a small hill, with an extremely steep incline. It was known as the ski slope. You would be given 25 to 50 repetitions for something as trivial as disagreeing with a prefect. I always found this hard as I am asthmatic. We could be made to run around Ardachee or to the Christ Lives landmark which was more than halfway up a hill on the side of the Great Glen.

96. We could be punished by not being allowed out of the school for one or two weeks. We would be given lines, usually given out in lots of fifty. It was not uncommon to receive 500 lines. Detentions would be for half an hour, or an hour, in the study room.
97. When [REDACTED] MZX [REDACTED] was [REDACTED] in the academic year 1983 to 1984, he singled me out for ridiculing Mr Andrew Dempster, the Maths teacher. His classes were nothing less than a riot. When he left Fort Augustus he went to teach at Kilgraston Catholic girls' public school in Perth where he was locked in a cupboard by the sixth form girls. [REDACTED] MZX [REDACTED] said that I had been winding up Mr Dempster and wanted to teach me a lesson. He made me go on a cross-country run as a punishment around Ardachee, which was a four kilometre run up a hill and round a track. I suffer from asthma, so I found this punishment difficult.
98. [REDACTED] MZX [REDACTED] brought a silver topped military cane with him which he used to repeatedly hit me with. He was telling me that if I didn't start behaving I would get more of the same treatment, and I was to treat Mr Dempster with respect. I was left from 3.30 pm until 9.00 pm, missing dinner that night. I was left with bruises on my body and legs. This happened in the Christmas term of 1983. I think this shows the attitude of the prefects, and the staff that left the prefects in charge.
99. At Fort Augustus, if you were good at sports or in a school team you were one of the boys. It meant you weren't subjected to the draconian punishment the rest of us got. This often led to pupils of low intelligence being put in positions of authority. They were often bullies and cronies of the prefects.
100. When I returned for fourth year, I was caned for the first time in September. I was caught smoking. I received a £5.00 fine, two hours manual labour, and four strokes of the cane on my buttocks. It was Father [REDACTED] MRQ [REDACTED] who caned me, in the [REDACTED] [REDACTED]. He told me to take my jacket off, to bend over, and put my hands to the side. He then caned me. After the second stroke, I asked him to stop as I was in excruciating pain. It was to no avail, he carried on. After four strokes, I was left with severe bruises and welts on my buttocks. I was unable to sit down without severe discomfort, I had to sleep on my stomach to avoid exacerbating the pain.

101. Father [REDACTED] MRQ caning was at its worst during my fourth year of school. At this point it was not uncommon to be beaten three or four times a day, to the point where I became suicidal. I would walk around crying my eyes out all of the time. This had a negative impact on my grades at school.
102. In the weeks leading up to my sixteenth birthday, I joked with Father [REDACTED] MRQ that I would be legally allowed to buy cigarettes on my birthday. I was belted after lunch for a minor infraction, twice-three belted in the evening for another minor infraction, and caned for smoking as well as being given a £5.00 fine and two hours of manual labour.
103. On one occasion, I had to see the village G.P. Doctor W J MacRae at his surgery about my asthma. I had been caned the previous night. The Doctor saw the severe bruises and welts on my buttocks. He was shocked and gave me painkillers. Each time I was caned, I was left with severe bruising, had to sleep on my stomach, and had difficulty walking.
104. Father [REDACTED] MRQ brought in a rule that if you were caught smoking outside twice in one day, you would be caned. I have lost count of the number of times I was belted from my arrival at Fort Augustus until the abolition of corporal punishment. I was belted about twenty times a term for minor infractions, each time leaving my hands severely bruised.
105. Father [REDACTED] MRQ would deduct money from our pocket money. He would get me to do all sorts of manual labour. I had to clean up leaves, I had to clean drains and do sanitary work. I had to dig up stones from the grounds and do joinery work. Basically, I had to do everything they were too tight to pay the groundsmen to do.
106. Our mail was frequently opened by our housemasters. A prefect called [REDACTED] read my mail, he was trying to intercept cigarettes that my mum sent me. This was because he smoked the same cigarettes as me. He kept sending me to my housemaster because of smoking. I would get letters from my parents, and they had

already been opened. Both Father **MMF** and Father **MRQ** told me that they censored the mail.

107. **[REDACTED]**, **[REDACTED]**, and **[REDACTED]** bullied me. They were either prefects, or friends with prefects.

108. The **[REDACTED]** **MZX** **[REDACTED]** and **[REDACTED]** should be brought to justice. They were directly responsible for much of the belting and caning of pupils, as they were above the age of criminal responsibility when they were imposing their draconian regime.

109. If you were caught mucking about at Combined Cadet Forces training, you were known as a Defaulter. You would have to do cleaning work on a Monday afternoon, in your cadet uniform.

110. I remember seeing a pupil, **[REDACTED]** coming out of Father **MER** office one time. He had gone in smartly dressed and when he came out he was all dishevelled. I had seen him going in and coming out. I heard him in Father **MER** **MER** office shouting, "No Father, no." When he came out, it looked like Father **MER** had been shaking him about. That kind of thing used to happen to **[REDACTED]** all the time too.

111. I remember once I saw **[REDACTED]** coming out of Father **MFC** room. He was crying and limping. I asked him what was wrong. He said, **MFC** got me."

112. I don't know if the abuse of caning and beltings was recorded anywhere. It was every-day. The discipline of that type wasn't recorded in our report cards. There might be a comment about **MZL** discipline is "XYZ." I hate to think what a psychopath like Father **MRQ** could have written in my permanent school record because the guy was a nutcase.

113. When I was in fourth and fifth year, the prefects aided and abetted the regime of the staff. Particularly **[REDACTED]** and **[REDACTED]** should be in jail,

he was a monster. He colluded and aided and abetted that regime and endorsed all the punishment and sexual abuse. All the pain and suffering the pupils endured was because of people like Father [REDACTED] MRQ and [REDACTED]

114. I remember Father [REDACTED] MRQ talking to me about the church, and how the [REDACTED] family had paid for [REDACTED]. I asked him if he didn't think it was immoral to have these paid for by money earned from gambling. I reminded Father [REDACTED] MRQ about the biblical quote about not building your house on sand. Father [REDACTED] MRQ went nuts, and threw a hatchet at me.

115. I was caned by Father [REDACTED] MRQ three weeks before the abolition of corporal punishment. After the date of abolition I said to him, "Ha ha, you can't cane me anymore." He said, "I can fucking rape you." Those were his exact words.

116. When I was at Fort Augustus I was verbally abused and threatened by the [REDACTED] family from Glasgow. [REDACTED], [REDACTED] and a third brother whose name I can't remember, used to follow me about over a two year period at school, calling me a fat Italian bastard and things like that. I complained to Father [REDACTED] MRQ but he said [REDACTED] was a lovely chap. [REDACTED] and the other one would have me in tears, and said that if I said anything, that they would get their brothers to beat me up in Glasgow. [REDACTED]

Reporting of abuse at Fort Augustus Abbey School

117. When I was attacked in the dormitory at night, in the summer term 1983, I told [REDACTED] [REDACTED] who was on duty. He told me just to ignore it. At that time, [REDACTED] was about to leave school and go to university. He did not want to become involved. I did later report this assault to the police.

118. I attempted to complain to Father [REDACTED] MMF about my treatment by Father [REDACTED] MRQ. I was met with the response that Father [REDACTED] MRQ had every right to punish me as he saw fit. Father [REDACTED] MRQ replaced Father [REDACTED] MMF

SNR toward the spring term of my fifth year. When Father MER became my Housemaster, it was like night and day. Father MER was a compassionate man with a good understanding of the human psyche and he helped me a lot.

119. I did tell my parents about the abuse, but they didn't believe me. I told Doctor McCrae, and I told my friend from Glasgow [REDACTED]. He had no idea that was going on. The people who say that Fort Augustus was great, that those school days were there halcyon days were the ones who were involved in the abuse. I can't believe the police aren't taking action against them.

Leaving Fort Augustus Abbey School

120. I left Fort Augustus because I was eighteen. I left in the summer of 1987. I had done my Highers, I failed all of them. I have got twelve or thirteen O Grades at C level.
121. When I was thirty, I went into adult education. I got the qualifications to get into Glasgow University, but I had a lot of alcohol and substance abuse issues at the time. The old building of Glasgow University was like Fort Augustus and I kept having flashbacks and I had to leave. If I hadn't been abused, and if I hadn't been taking substances because of the abuse, I don't know where I could have been in life. I could have studied Archaeology, I could have done anything I wanted.
122. Just after leaving school, I worked briefly as a porter at Glasgow Fruit Market for a couple of months. Next, I went to Langside College but I dropped out. I bummed about for a while, then I went to do an HND in business studies, but that fell through.
123. In 1988, I started to see a psychiatrist. I was given a massive dose of anti-depressants. I had six months of psychotherapy. I have been hospitalised several times. I have been diagnosed with schizophrenia, stress induced psychosis, and Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder. Anything to do with the military, priests, monks, anything ecclesiastical, or uniforms like that causes me post-traumatic stress. Because of the way my symptoms manifest themselves, I have to be careful where I go and who I speak to.

124. Father MRQ turned up in barber's shop in my street in Glasgow, and started trying to speak to me. He shouldn't have done that, he shouldn't have been there. I told him to get out of the shop. He had been visiting a former pupil of Fort Augustus who stayed next to the barber's shop.
125. I have suffered further harassment from the Catholic Church. I have had leaflets about Catholicism put through my door. Another priest who was at Fort Augustus, Jerry something, saw me in Glasgow and said, "Your sins are numerous." I didn't know what he meant.
126. I have been unemployed and in receipt of disability benefits since I was 25. I worked briefly for a firm of stock-brokers, I should have had a promising career in front of me, but due to the PTSD and the abuse I suffered at Fort Augustus, I couldn't handle it. The initial wages were a pittance, and I couldn't hang about waiting to be promoted. I was better off unemployed, rather than being an office junior.
127. I have had four or five sessions of psychotherapy with It was organised by Future Pathways, it was rubbish. She asked me if I was violent. That's no way to speak to someone who has been physically, sexually, and emotionally abused. It is easier for a doctor to say that it is drug induced psychosis, rather than look at the real problems, which were the physical, sexual, and emotional abuse I suffered at Fort Augustus. I told about this at sessions, twice a week for about six weeks. She was the only person I opened up to about the abuse. I have been hospitalised many times, I can't remember how many.
128. I now get my medication from a nurse. I wouldn't miss a session. It helps me, it helps to stop all the horrible thoughts about Fort Augustus. If I didn't have my medication, I don't think I would be responsible for my actions. I would try to track down people like Father MRQ and

Impact

129. I first started having psychotic forms of depression around my sixteenth birthday. I was already quite depressed and when I started receiving the cane, I started having what I now understand to be psychotic episodes. I began having nightmares, disturbing thoughts, and spent most of the 1990's in and out of mental hospitals. I had to undergo six months of psychotherapy at Parklands Hospital, where I was on a very large dose of anti-depressants. When my illness showed no signs of improving, I was diagnosed with a stress induced form of schizophrenia. In 1995, I was hospitalised for six weeks due to malnutrition because I just wasn't eating. I have had periods of being homeless, I have had to live at some unsafe addresses, and periods of financial destitution when I was on basic benefits.
130. As a result of the abuse I endured, I suffer from Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder. I get medicated every three weeks. This had been the case since 1988. I have been in and out of psychiatric hospitals since 1993. Dr [REDACTED] is my psychiatrist. I was originally diagnosed with schizophrenia. This was partly induced by substance abuse. I was treated with anti-depressants. I was mis-diagnosed, and have now been diagnosed with PTSD. I had no specific counselling for abuse, just generic treatment. I have been diagnosed with stress induced psychosis. I handle stress very badly. I will be on medication for the rest of my life.
131. I also have a painful injury to my left knee as a result of playing rugby in a House match. I was offered no treatment for it at the time, and it is sore to this day.
132. I have spent the last thirty years of my life arguing with my parents about what happened to me at Fort Augustus, about why they ever sent me there in the first place.
133. I am not getting any psychotherapy at the moment. I did recently have a few sessions with a woman called [REDACTED] but she was useless. She could not handle the amount of pain and anger I felt. She kept telling me to calm down, I didn't go back.

Compensation

134. The Catholic Church have ruined the lives of countless individuals throughout the world, and they have tried to cover these crimes up, they must be held accountable and made to compensate for the damage, both physical and psychological, that they have inflicted on innocent children. No amount of apologies or even money from the Catholic Church or the Benedictine Order can ever adequately compensate for the suffering we endured. We only get one life, and mine was ruined by the Catholic Church.
135. I have received £10,000.00 in compensation from the Benedictine Order, through Hugh James Solicitors in England. The Benedictines have admitted that their members abused me. As far as I am concerned, that should be the first of many payments. I want to inflict as much damage on them as I can.
136. Future Pathways, the government organisation that should have been helping me didn't bother their backside with me for two years. They made a pay-out of £14,000 to [REDACTED] two years ago. I have phoned them up on about fifteen occasions asking about help and when they were going to see me. They kept postponing meeting with me. Eventually they sent two guys up to my flat. I told them about things I needed, but they have refused to reimburse me for things that I bought that they said they would pay for. I think it is a disgrace the way they are dealing with public money. I told them on about the tenth or eleventh time I phoned that they were nothing but a bunch of crooks and liars. They have lied to me on numerous occasions.
137. I think the apology by Archbishop Tartalia and the Scottish Government ring hollow unless they are prepared to seriously engage with abuse survivors, to compensate them, to give them the health care, and the treatment they require.

Reporting of Abuse

138. After I left school, in my twenties, I told my parents again about the abuse. I told them about that first incident in the dormitory where I was attacked at night. Even then, my mum didn't believe me. It caused a lot of trouble in our house.

139. In 2014, the police came to see me. This was because [REDACTED] reported the abuse he suffered to the police. I met [REDACTED] in fifth or sixth year of school. [REDACTED] was insignificant to me, I just wanted out of the place at that point. On one occasion I saw him coming out of Father [REDACTED] MER office in a state of extreme distress. [REDACTED] would always turn up in weird places, like the fire escape. He would say he was hiding from people, often Father [REDACTED] MER
140. I had wanted to report the abuse I suffered to the police for a number of years, but I didn't know how to do it. I thought no one would listen to me. When [REDACTED] came forward, so did everyone else. I gave the police a four page statement. It was the police from Inverness. They just asked me general questions about the school. The abusers are all dead apart from Father [REDACTED] MRQ Father [REDACTED] MFC and Father [REDACTED] MER By the time the police spoke to me, Father [REDACTED] MFA was dead. As for Father [REDACTED] MFC I don't think anyone witnessed this abuse, so no one could vouch for that.
141. I have not had any further involvement with the police since [REDACTED] [REDACTED] I think Father [REDACTED] MRQ knew people in the SAS, the Diplomatic Corps, and the civil service. There were pupils at Fort Augustus when I was there who told me their fathers were in these organisations, and some of their fathers were former pupils of Fort Augustus. [REDACTED]

Records

142. I have not tried to get my records from Fort Augustus. I expect it would be lies, just a fabrication.

Lessons to be learned

143. I think the English Benedictine Order and Catholic boarding schools should be shut down. The Catholic Church should be shut down. They shouldn't be allowed to practice, not only in Scotland but in other places where there has been abuse by

Priests, such as Ireland, the USA, South America, and Italy. Wherever they go, the exact same things that happened to me, happens to other people.

144. The Catholic Church have ruined the lives of countless individuals throughout the world and they have tried to cover these crimes up. They must be held accountable and be made to compensate for the damage inflicted upon innocent children, both physical and psychological.


145. However, no amount of money or apologies from the Catholic Church or the Benedictine Order can ever adequately compensate for the suffering we endured. We only get one life, and mine was ruined by the Catholic Church.

Hopes for the Inquiry

146. I hope the Inquiry will make all this abuse public, to shame these organisations into doing something. I would like to see all of the people I have named as being abusers in this statement being prosecuted.

Other information

147. 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..... 21/8/2019