

Scottish Child Abuse Inquiry

Witness Statement of

FDR
[REDACTED]

Support person present: Yes

1. My name is FDR [REDACTED] My date of birth is [REDACTED] 1981. My contact details are known to the Inquiry.

Life before going into care

2. My mum had issues with alcohol as well as mental health issues including depression. I probably wasn't an easy child and because of her condition she couldn't really look after me properly. I have a wee brother called [REDACTED] though we have different dads. I also have two other brothers and two sisters to different mothers and fathers. It was only me and my mum who stayed together.
3. I think I was four or five when it was first decided that I should go into care. I don't have a lot of memories of my time with my mum though. For years after I went into foster care I was back and forward to my mum's now and again. I don't recall the first foster home I went into.

Foster care

4. The first foster care I do recall was in England and I only recall that because I fell off a swing and had to get stitches in my head.

5. The next one I recall was after my wee brother [REDACTED] was born. I had been back staying with my mum but she took an overdose. Me and [REDACTED] were then put on a placement for two weeks but all I can remember was that the couple were very controlling. I was about seven years old. My recollection is that [REDACTED] was strapped in his buggy for the whole two weeks.

6. I was then moved around quite a bit but I can't recall all the places I was in. The first place I really remember was when I was thirteen and was with a family in Prestonpans who were really nice. They were called [REDACTED]. However, I was a difficult child and was their first foster child so it was decided to move me to somebody more experienced.

Foster care with [REDACTED] Longniddry

7. The place I was moved to was in Longniddry. It was to the home of [REDACTED]. [REDACTED] They were quite old and had older kids of their own as well as grandchildren. My social worker, Jill, went to work on a new Children's Act that had come into being and because of this I was left without a social worker for a while.

8. [REDACTED] were very strict and said that if me being with them didn't work out then I would be sent to a secure unit. Every second Sunday they would have a big dinner for all their family. After it I had to do all the dishes and clean the kitchen on my own. I wasn't allowed out till it was all done.

Routine with [REDACTED] family

9. [REDACTED] would get me up in time for [REDACTED] getting in from his night-shift, at about 6:00 am. I would have breakfast, which was a bit of toast or cereal, and then I would be kicked out of the house. I would then hang around the streets till it was a decent time to go see one of my pals.

10. On schooldays I would head to school and JAL-JAN would give me a play-piece of a sandwich, a biscuit and a packet of crisps which is all I would have to eat during the day. I would go home at tea-time and then would get kicked out till I met JAN off the bus from bingo later at night.
11. If I wanted supper I had to be home for 9:45pm and then it was straight to bed.
12. My room had two single beds, a set of drawers, a cupboard, a TV and a Mega drive. I wasn't allowed posters. I didn't have many personal items that I had brought from my mum's.
13. During holidays I was forced to get up at 6:30am and was kicked out of the house by 8:30am. I then wouldn't be allowed back in until lunchtime after which I'd be kicked back out again until tea-time. After tea I would be back out of the house again until later at night which was when I usually had to go meet JAN when she got off the bus coming back from bingo.
14. I was never allowed in the house myself and had to study for my exams in the local community centre.
15. I was only allowed a shower twice a week and if I was any longer than five minutes she would shut the water off. I recall at least once having to rinse the shampoo out of my hair with freezing water.
16. I didn't realise at the time that I got a clothing grant. She only ever took me shopping twice for clothes and it was always cheap stuff. I looked like a tramp and got bullied at school because of it.
17. When my periods started they refused to believe me when I said I still had them after two weeks and accused me of being pregnant. I had to be taken upstairs by JAL JAL who made me pull my knickers down and prove to him that I was bleeding. They gave me sanitary towels but limited me to three a day and my friends had to

help me out. JAL-JAN only gave me the cheapest sanitary towels they could buy and bags she took from the toilets at the bingo hall to dispose of them.

18. I had a friend called [REDACTED] who was a couple of years younger than me. I was fifteen by this time so [REDACTED] would have been thirteen. JAL-JAN had a son in his thirties called JAU who had split up with his wife and moved back into the family home.
19. At first it was quite good because he used to let me into the house and would also give us drink. JAU had a pal called JAT who was 28. I don't recall his surname.
20. The four of us, that is me, [REDACTED], JAU and JAT would all go down to a secret place at the beach. JAU started going out with [REDACTED] and I was going out with JAT. I look back now and realise we were being groomed. JAT tried to have sex with me but it was too painful.
21. I wrote all this down in a diary and JAL and JAN found it. I had to say that what I had written down was all lies and then they burnt the diary. However they then told the rest of the family about what I had written and everybody started calling me a fantasist. I was just ridiculed, especially by their other son.
22. I had a phone number for my mum but they wouldn't allow me to phone her as it was too expensive. I complained to the social worker but, even then, JAL-JAN would only allow me to call her about once a week for about five minutes. I would have to phone on a weekend when apparently the calls were cheaper.
23. I think the best way to sum up my time with JAL-JAN is that I just felt unwanted. My mum didn't want me, my dad didn't want me and JAL-JAN certainly didn't want me. When I look back I realise it was my pals who were my family and were the ones who got me through it.

Food

24. I wasn't starved but I always felt hungry. I have a really bad problem with food. I tend to eat in the middle of the night. Looking back I recall that that's what I used to do at JAL-JAN I would get up in the middle of the night even though I was terrified of being caught.
25. Yes I got breakfast, lunch and supper but it was never adequate. I always had to eat at the table while JAN would eat in the living-room. When JAU stayed there he would often help me out by eating something that I didn't like, like Scotch pies. The only time I would eat with the rest of them was the Sunday dinner.

Schooling

26. I attended Preston Lodge High School. I wasn't allowed not to go to school. I quite liked school and I think that was because, while at school, at least I wasn't with the JAL-JAN There was one time which was a school holiday but they refused to believe me that the school was closed. They made me get up, get dressed and go out for the bus. I had to stand about for an hour in the cold, it was Winter, before I went back and said to them "I told you, the bus didn't come". It was only then that they phoned the school.
27. I think if I had had a little bit more support and simply been allowed to study in my own bedroom rather than in the community hall I could have done a lot better at school.
28. I don't recall JAL-JAN attending any parent's meetings at the school.

Visits/inspections

29. My mum and wee brother came up from England to see me when I was fourteen. They stayed away from JAL-JAN because, I think, they insulted my mum and called her an alcoholic.
30. Although JAL-JAN took in other kids for respite, I was the only one who resided there long-term. I think they fostered children simply for the money. They certainly didn't seem to want for anything though certainly didn't spend the money they were getting for me on me.
31. I don't recall any reviews or visits from social workers when I was at JAL-JAN. It's possible I did have one or two reviews during my time there but have no recollection of it. I did get a few visits from my social worker, Jill, at first but after she left to work on something else it was organised for me to see an art therapist and a befriender but I was still left without a social worker and I didn't feel I could open up to them. This was due to the overhanging fear, from JAL-JAN that I would be sent to a secure unit if my placing with them didn't work out. As a confused fifteen year old this terrified me.

Trips

32. I remember JAL-JAN took me to Blackpool one time and even let my pal come. That was actually quite a nice time and JAL-JAN were okay during that holiday though I think that was just because they were on holiday as well.
33. I recall when I was fifteen I got to go down to England to see my mum. I remember I had to fly because that was the only type of transport that would take a fifteen year old on their own.

Birthdays/Christmas

34. Birthdays weren't celebrated properly by JAL-JAN like a card and a present if that. I don't recall Christmas there. I must have been there at Christmas time but have no recollection of it. That seems weird.

Doctors/Dentist

35. I only recall being taken to the doctors a couple of times, one of which was for an ear infection which Mrs JAN didn't even believe I had until the doctor confirmed it.
36. I kept my own dentist and went there whenever it was necessary. I wore braces. It's possible that Mrs JAN took me to the dentist now and again but I don't recall it.

Leaving JAL-JAN

37. The placement with JAL-JAN came to an end after an incident one night when I had gone outside for a cigarette. As I was going back in I took a dizzy turn and tripped on the steps and bumped into their daughter. She said "what the fuck are you doing?" and I said "Sorry, I tripped". She became really abusive to me. She started calling me a piece of shit and said that I was the only piece of shit in the house and said I was not to speak to her like that.
38. I met with my social worker, Julie Alston though I believe she's now married and called Falconer, and told her I had to get out of that house and that, if I didn't, I would run away and live on the streets. The social work moved me two days later and I moved in with [REDACTED] and [REDACTED]
39. I still see [REDACTED] to this day and she says it was wrong what they did to us. I think she continued to see JAU after I left the house.

Reporting of abuse

40. I don't recall there being anybody during my teenage years that I could turn to and tell about what it was like living with JAL-JAN except for when I eventually told my social worker and she got me moved.
41. I spoke to [REDACTED] and [REDACTED] about what happened to me at JAL-JAN but I didn't go into any detail. I know they did put a report in about the state of my clothing when I arrived there and [REDACTED] and [REDACTED] had to put in an appeal for a further clothes grant. Other than that I think that, after I left JAL-JAN I just shut down within myself and didn't discuss it with anybody.

Life after being in care

42. When I went to stay with [REDACTED] and [REDACTED] I became an angry teenager and although they were so good to me, and the fact they had two young children of their own, I ended up getting numerous warnings about my behaviour. I was drinking and smoking weed and ended up going into a homeless unit at sixteen. That was my fault and my choice and [REDACTED] and [REDACTED] continued to give me support while I was in the homeless unit.
43. When I left care I was street-wise but I tended to put myself into dangerous situations with guys that were too old for me.
44. There was one older guy that I had a relationship with but I later found out he was a paedophile. I think I went with these guys because they showed me love.
45. I was a damaged and depressed teenager. I've been diagnosed with OCD and feel as if my brain is constantly on the go. That tends to be exhausting and I have constantly suffered from anxiety.

Impact

46. It definitely had an impact on me as a parent. It didn't help that an abusive partner I had at 24 got me into heroin. My daughter [REDACTED] was born when I was seventeen. I didn't know how to be a parent.
47. My daughter [REDACTED] was born next shortly after I started taking and I was not in a good place because of the heroin. [REDACTED] ended up being fostered while [REDACTED] stayed with her dad. Social Work wanted me to give [REDACTED] up for adoption but I refused to sign the papers.
48. I feel the Social Work let me down as an adult as they gave me no support at all with my heroin addiction or as a parent. They screwed me over as a child and I feel they've done the same to me as an adult.
49. I would get frustrated by the Social Work and would get angry. That resulted in them putting in records that I was "angry and violent". My relationship with [REDACTED] suffered a lot because of all of this.
50. I've been off drugs for ten years now. I had fallen pregnant with my third child, [REDACTED], and decided there and then that I could no longer do this to the children. I ended up in hospital with a blood clot where a health worker was really supportive.
51. I ended up boarding myself in [REDACTED]'s dad's flat and just locked myself away for months. [REDACTED] was born next and by that time I was off drugs altogether except for the odd joint.
52. I didn't see [REDACTED] again until about four years ago. She's now thirteen and I see her every couple of weeks. My other two children are [REDACTED] who is four and [REDACTED] who is one.

53. [REDACTED] is a good kid but he needs a lot of one-to-one attention. He stays with his dad, [REDACTED] though that was a joint decision between the two of us. [REDACTED] is now eight.
54. I work as a carer which I got back into about two years ago though I only stayed there for six months as my son [REDACTED] was due. I didn't really like dealing with people in homes as I felt they were never treated as individuals. I've recently gone for an interview and will soon be starting a job where I will be caring for people in their own homes which I think will be better.
55. I have to get up four or five times a night to eat which is mentally exhausting. I don't like going out much. I've had a CBT therapist but I found it difficult to deal with.
56. I think that in some ways some of the things that happened to me in care has affected me. Sometimes I don't even know who I am and at times I just feel broken inside.

Records

57. I asked to see my files once but, as I was about to send a postal order to pay for them, I chickened out of it. I didn't feel ready to see them.

Lessons to be learned

58. Scotland has the highest proportion of kids in care and I just feel that the Social Work Department need to be better trained into the fact that it's not all the kid's fault. Also, there has to be better follow-up care. You can't just throw a kid of sixteen into the mainstream without proper help and support. My life could have been so much better if I had had proper support.

59. 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.

FDR
[Redacted Signature]

Signed.....

Dated..... 23. 02. 2018