

Scottish Child Abuse Inquiry

Witness Statement of

Stewart WILSON

Support person present: No

1. My name is Stewart Wilson. My date of birth is [REDACTED] 1964. My contact details are known to the Inquiry.

Life before going into care

2. My family were from [REDACTED] in Govan which was a slum. My granny had a stillborn child, [REDACTED] who was born in 1948. In 1950 she was given another daughter, [REDACTED]. The nice story is that her neighbour gave her a daughter as a way of getting over the grief. That was a common practice in the west coast of Scotland and in Ireland. I have since found out that that wasn't the case.
3. My grandfather had been seeing a lady of the night. That lady kept their daughter for a year but couldn't cope. She went to my granny and handed the baby, [REDACTED] over. I know this for a fact because [REDACTED] who lives in London told me. She was there at the time. [REDACTED] grew up with my grandparents' [REDACTED]. There was [REDACTED] [REDACTED] had been [REDACTED] and she became [REDACTED].
4. [REDACTED] became the legal daughter of my granny and grandfather [REDACTED]. [REDACTED] was taken and placed in [REDACTED] in Alloa which was a correctional facility for young ladies. At fourteen she was allowed back into the household. [REDACTED]
[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

5. My grandfather [REDACTED] became my adopted father when he and my granny legally adopted me. [REDACTED] left me with the only person that she loved at the time which was her adopted mum, my granny. My Granny's name was [REDACTED] and my dad was [REDACTED] I was named Stewart Wilson. My mum then went down to Middlesbrough. She never married but was a common law wife. She died in 1983.

6. My granny died in 1968 from a blood clot. She only had one arm because the other arm had been ripped off in an industrial accident in 1960. [REDACTED]

[REDACTED]
[REDACTED] We lived at [REDACTED]
[REDACTED] which was round the corner from [REDACTED]

7. My dad kept [REDACTED] myself, [REDACTED] because he needed the child allowance. He used to go to Bingo halls and persuade women to take pity on him. He would ask for a bed for the night because [REDACTED] his wife had just died. That woman would wake up in the morning and her valuables would be gone from the house. He would steal them so he could go and buy more drink. He was an aggressive alcoholic.

8. [REDACTED] taken from him and put to a home in Barrhead. By this time my grandfather was legally my dad [REDACTED] I don't remember what it was called. I wasn't in there for long, it might have been a month. I went to the boys' unit [REDACTED]
[REDACTED] My dad came back under the pretence of a visit and [REDACTED] I was left because [REDACTED] I needed nappies and baby milk. That was where I disappeared out of the equation. [REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

9. For a period of time before [REDACTED] the home I lived with my dad basically in a hovel that was rat infested. It was a drinking den for him and his pals. [REDACTED] no one thought about the three year old boy. [REDACTED] remembers me covered in rat bites. We ate out of bins. When I was four he handed me over to the care of the Corporation who put me in Dundonald. I don't remember anyone speaking to me about going there.

Dundonald Children's Home, Ayrshire

10. [REDACTED]
11. [REDACTED]
12. [REDACTED]

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23.

Foster care with Mr and Mrs [REDACTED] [REDACTED]

24. Living with Mr and Mrs [REDACTED] was very different from being in Dundonald. I went there when I was four or five years old. There was no verbal or physical abuse. They were happy clappers. They were very religious, boisterous and always happy. They already had two daughters but something had happened and Mrs [REDACTED] couldn't have any more children. I was told by the matron at Dundonald that I was on trial and I was to fill the gap.
25. I don't remember their first names. Mrs [REDACTED] was a primary school teacher in [REDACTED] [REDACTED] and Mr [REDACTED] was an insurance salesman. I don't remember the daughters' names. When I lived there I had my own room and I was well fed.

Routine

Clothing/uniform

26. They provided clothing for me. I don't remember there being a school uniform but if there had been one then I would have been given it.

Schooling

27. I had to go to school because Mrs [REDACTED] was the primary teacher but I have never been a natural student.

Supervision oversight / inspection by fostering authority

28. Douglas Scott was my social worker and he continued to be my social worker during the rest of my time in care. I believe he is now dead.

Relationship with foster parents / other children

29. They were nice people and they were Christians. The only problem was that I didn't agree with religion of any kind. I had to say prayers before meals and I went to church services all the time because they went. They were Presbyterian.

Discipline

30. There were no periods of me being violent or anything. It was just the fact that I couldn't settle. I was disruptive at Sunday Bible School.
31. I became an embarrassment by going to Church on Sundays. I would shout out swear words while they were singing and I continued to do that. Mr and Mrs [REDACTED] were so embarrassed. They sat down and spoke to me but I just didn't agree with religion. I probably put two and two together because the matron in Dundonald was in a habit. I thought there was something not right with religion.

Bed Wetting

32. I was still wetting the bed. There was no shame attached to it. I had a rubber sheet under my sheet. It was very civilised. They knew I was nervous and they tried not to make me feel bad about it.

Leaving foster care with Mr and Mrs [REDACTED]

33. I was there for just under a year and they handed me back because they couldn't control me. They wrote a letter to Douglas Scott, asking for me to be taken back and he replied saying it was because they spared me the rod. I know this from a handwritten note on my file

34. I went to Quarriers but I was only there for two or three weeks. I remember the church. It was a huge, big imposing church. Everyone was dressed the same and they all went about in groups. I remember it being very regimented but I didn't have a lot of involvement with it. I don't remember who looked after me because I was there for a very short time. I don't remember whether or not I went to school in Quarriers.
35. Douglas Scott appeared and said that I was going to a place with lots of children. I said ok and he told me I would be living in a big house. I was frightened but who was going to listen? I had learned in the system that if you showed fear then it was acted on so I showed nothing and I was building walls.
36. Douglas Scott came to Quarriers to take me to Tiree but we never discussed it before then. I thought that the adoption hadn't worked so I was probably going to be in Quarriers until there was a bed for me to go back to Dundonald. [REDACTED]

Secondary Institutions - to be published later

Boarded out placement with [REDACTED] Tiree

37. We lived in a farmhouse on Tiree. There were three bedrooms upstairs and one bedroom downstairs. There was a toilet, living room, dining room and a kitchen. The house was warm and comfortable with a coal fire in the living room. [REDACTED] [REDACTED] had a one hundred year lease over the farm from the [REDACTED]. She had lived in Tiree all her life and moved to the farmhouse when she married [REDACTED] [REDACTED]. He lived there too but he was one of these people who had four different jobs as well as a croft to make ends meet. [REDACTED] worked all of the time. He was a [REDACTED] a fisherman, a crofter and [REDACTED] of the local pipe band. He was native to Tiree.
38. [REDACTED] and [REDACTED] had their own daughter, [REDACTED] who was a lot older. Their daughter had a bad relationship with [REDACTED] and she didn't live with us. They are

both dead now as is their daughter. After the daughter I have found out through her son that at the funeral it was said that although [REDACTED] was their only natural child, they took in 45 boarded out children. That would have been pure profit for [REDACTED]^{EVI} [REDACTED] It wasn't done for love.

39. All of the children were placed there through Glasgow Corporation. We were legally classed as boarded out children which was a legal term in the West of Scotland. It was the most economical way. Glasgow Corporation basically paid people to look after us without us being in residential care.
40. The majority of families who took in boarded out children had crofts and they predominantly picked boys so they would work. From the 1940s there were about two thousand children taken off the streets of Glasgow and sent to Tiree.
41. There were twenty one children in that house and there were more boys than girls. There was the [REDACTED] family, the [REDACTED] family, the [REDACTED] Family and [REDACTED] [REDACTED] who was the only [REDACTED] there. Everyone was from the Glasgow area except for [REDACTED] who was from South Shields in England. Given the Scottish and English social services were separate you have to question how he ended up in the Hebrides. Douglas Scott was working with him as well.
42. [REDACTED] was the oldest girl there and I think she was eighteen. Her younger sister [REDACTED] was sixteen. When [REDACTED] finished her time in care, she and [REDACTED] were joined at the hip. [REDACTED] applied to the Corporation to become [REDACTED]'s legal guardian. She was allowed to go back to Glasgow and [REDACTED] went with her. They then found family that had been denied to them.

Routine

First day

43. We travelled to Glasgow and then boarded a flight to Tiree. When we arrived in Tiree I was brought to a farmhouse and taken in to see ^{EVI} [REDACTED]. Her first words to me were "I'm your new mum". I don't know if I was confused and I thought Mrs [REDACTED] was my mum or if I had another idea but I told her that she couldn't be my mum because I already had a mum. She told me that my mum was dead and she had been a whore so she was my new mum. She told me that I was a bastard. The social worker was standing right beside her and didn't correct her. I thought here we go again. I was sent out and then Douglas Scott said goodbye to ^{EVI} [REDACTED] and he left.
44. ^{EVI} [REDACTED] wanted to be called mum but the Gaelic name for an old man was Bodach and ^{EMY} [REDACTED] was quite happy with that.

Mornings and bedtime

45. There were five people in my bed and we were top and tail. I still pee'd the bed so when I pee'd the bed, everyone got wet. I wasn't popular. The girls had their own room called the pink room.
46. We worked the croft so we were woken up at half past four. I was very slight and I would have a bale strapped to my back I had to walk about a mile and a half to a field to drop the bale off for the beasts to feed. That was before I had breakfast.
47. All of the children went to bed at 7 pm every night. ^{EVI} [REDACTED] said that was their time and they tied us in the rooms. She tied a rope from the top of the banister to the handle of the door. If you wanted the loo in the middle of the night then that was tough. Sometimes boys would pee out the window.

Mealtimes/Food

48. We were up at 4 am to do chores on the croft and then we had our breakfast which was porridge before going to school school. We had to work for our breakfast and nine out of ten times it was cold. Mrs ^{EVI} [REDACTED] did all the cooking. The food was rough and ready. She didn't ask you what your favourite meal was. We grew up on salted herring

which still had the head on it and the eye looking at you. You were given potatoes with that. At dinner time there was a mini trough in the middle of the table and we would just pile round it. The idea was to take as much as you could, as quick as you could.

49. You weren't allowed to help yourself to food outside mealtimes. When we were working in the turnip fields we used to eat raw turnips and they were lovely and sweet.

Washing/bathing

50. We had a bath every Sunday. We went into the bath one at a time and ^{EVI} [REDACTED] was standing there to scrub you. She was always there and I remember she did the same to [REDACTED] who was about thirteen and going through puberty. She didn't care.

Healthcare

51. Accidents happened on the croft like hitting your hand with a hammer. It was hard physical work. There was a doctor but he was on the other side of the island and we didn't get to see him. I was given any vaccinations I needed at school.
52. We all used to get ringworm. Anything transferable from animals we would get and it would go round everyone. ^{EVI} [REDACTED] would go and get a tub of ointment which we would all share.
53. There was a school dentist who you saw once a year. I had no decay on my teeth because we had no sweets or juice. We had nothing.

Chores / Pocket money

54. We were there to work the croft. There were sheep, cows, and hens. They grew vegetables. It was a large croft. There were five fields behind the house and two to the front. They used to graze cattle at the far end of the island. We always had farm dogs and I hid out with the dogs most of the time. They had a lean-to made from bits of metal.

55. When we came back from school we mucked out the byre and did whatever jobs needed to be done. We helped at lambing time. I remember a couple of times a cow died and four or five of us had to dig a hole for a cow. We had to dig ditches and the shovel to dig a ditch was bigger than I was. It was a big curved shovel that you had to put your foot on to dig down.
56. If it was dark when we came home from school then you still had to do your chores. She sent us out with old paraffin lamps. We worked during the weekends as well. We were there to work.
57. The girls did all the inside chores and the outside chores if we couldn't cope. I didn't have any indoor chores. They didn't class indoor chores as man's work. If you weren't wearing dungarees and wellies then it wasn't a guy's job.
58. The school recognised a "potato holiday" in the summer and if you didn't have a croft then you had ten days off school but all we did was go and dig potatoes and turnips by hand.
59. We didn't get any pocket money or treats. There was an allowance given by Glasgow Corporation that should have been paid to the children but they never gave it to us. They never rewarded good behaviour and there was no pat on the back or anything like that. I was given no pocket money, no Christmas money, no birthday money, nothing.

Clothing/uniform

60. I wore shorts until I was sent away from Tiree. That way you didn't get holes in your trousers because you didn't have any. I wanted school shoes and I was given wellies.
61. For working outside, rather than a pair of jeans, I was given a pair of dungarees. I had heavy boots. Everything we were given clothing-wise was so we could work outside. Everything was name tagged and she would wash it. Everything was handed down.

Schooling

62. I went to Heylipol Primary in Tiree. All of the children of primary age went there and the older children went to Cornaig Secondary. It was a tiny wee place. It was basically a house that had primary one to primary seven in it. There were partitions to divide the classes. There were probably about forty in the whole school and there were a lot of boarded out children. There were something like seven local primaries in Tiree and the majority had boarded out children.
63. We had a tiny wee playground in Heylipol and it was just people running around and there might be a football. It was the size of a garden and there was nothing there.
64. The normal teacher we had was fantastic and she was called Dolly Cameron. She sparked my interest in history. When Dolly Cameron was there she took a lot of time with the boarded outs because she knew we were in a strange environment. She knew the people most of us were staying with. She took time and effort to calm us down. She did a bit extra so we were keen to learn. Every Christmas we had a Christmas party and Dolly Cameron spent her own money buying every single person in the school a present. She made a great show of giving it to you. Nine times out of ten it was the only present we got.
65. I was taught in English but the teacher and all the locals spoke Gaelic. I didn't have a clue what was being said. Gaelic was their first language. If you were on a break then everyone in the playground spoke Gaelic except for the boarded out. I was not too bad at reading, writing and arithmetic. Half the time I couldn't concentrate. I struggle with maths and always have.
66. I had a few friends at the school but being boarded out in a strange environment, you get picked on. If they were local then they might have four brothers and you were being hunted by five boys but you stood your ground.

67. We walked to school and it was about half a mile. We had lunch at school. School would finish at four o'clock.
68. ^{EVI} [REDACTED] wasn't interested in homework and if you came back from the school with homework then and asked for help then she would say no. She would say that we should have done that at school.

Leisure time / books/ games

69. They had a television but it only went on for special occasions. It was in a cabinet and you had to open the doors to see the television. You could only get three channels from Mull.
70. The Croft dominated our lives and we never had time to play.

Birthdays and Christmas

71. There were no birthdays and no Christmas. I knew when my birthday was because they would tell you in school that you were moving up to the next class.
72. She was anti-religion. When I was about seven or eight, we were all digging ditches at the front of the house and the minister who was a nice old guy came up and said to her that he hadn't seen her or the children at church. She told him to fuck off and that there was more Christianity in her arse than in the people who went to church. She chased him off the croft.

Personal possessions

73. I had very few belongings. I probably had the clothes that Mr and Mrs [REDACTED] had bought me and I had a small fire engine. I had always had that and it was my prized possession. When I was fifty I found out that it was my mother, [REDACTED] who had given me it but it was long gone by then. She had given me it before she went down south. It was my only grasp on reality. I knew someone had given me it but I had no

idea who. To me, it was mine and I wasn't sharing it. I had no other possessions to speak off. My mind-set was that the less I had, the less that could be taken from me.

Trips and holidays

74. We never had any holidays and we weren't allowed to leave the croft to mingle with other families. We were always working.
75. There was a rare occasion when we were allowed to go to the beach. [REDACTED] told me that seaweed was a monster and it would kill you if you went into the water. I believed her and I was petrified of the water.

Family Contact

76. By the time I was in Tiree, I had almost no memories of [REDACTED] [REDACTED] I didn't know about my mother, [REDACTED] either.
77. All contact with your own family was broken and none of us had any contact with our own families. [REDACTED] [REDACTED] was told the same. The others there had their own siblings.

Supervision oversight / inspection by local authority

78. A year to the day after he had placed me there, Douglas Scott came back for a visit. I only remember two visits from him in the four years I was there. You were supposed to have thirty minutes with him.
79. We went to a room and he asked me how I was. ^{EVI} [REDACTED] wasn't in the room which convinced me that it was confidential and he was taking it seriously. If she had been in the room then I wouldn't have said anything but she wasn't so I really opened up. I took my top off and I was black and blue from my neck to my buttocks due to beatings from ^{EVI} [REDACTED] I broke down crying and I told him I hated it here and I needed to get

off this island or I would die there. He told me not to worry and that he would make moves to bring me back to Glasgow.

80. I came out and another child went in for their supposedly confidential chat with him. When he was finished speaking to all of the children he went and told ^{EVI} [REDACTED] what I had said. He was just getting in his car when I was getting leathered again. I was six and I thought I am not going to trust anyone.

81. I thought the conversation had been in confidence so I told he and I showed him my body and he handed me straight back to the person who was leathering me. I just shut off. I trusted no one and I spoke to no one. I spoke to the other children who were boarded out and I still do. A lot of them went through the same things as me.

Running away

82. I tried to run but given I wouldn't go in the sea and it was an island I was limited. Everyone on the island knew who you were. There was nowhere to go.

Bed wetting

83. I was still prone to peeing the bed now and again ^{Secondary Institutions - to be published later} [REDACTED] She humiliated me, stripped the beds and I would have to wash all of the sheets with cold water and a washboard. It was hard on my hands but I had to do that even though she had a perfectly good washing machine. I was told that I was disgusting.

Abuse at boarded placement out with ^{EMY-EVI} [REDACTED] Tiree

84. ^{EVI} [REDACTED] would hit me with a bulls-halter. It is about an inch thick bit of rope that you normally seen put through the ring of a pull. I was hit by bits of wood, anything she could lay her hands on. It was all her and it always happened when he wasn't there. He was a huge man. He was around six foot three or four and built like the side of a

house. I don't think he trusted himself to hit anyone because he would probably kill you.

85. It was mostly myself and [REDACTED] who were hit by ^{EVI}[REDACTED]. She centred on us. She just lost the plot as far as we were concerned. It was a temper attack until she got tired. There were no trips to the doctor and her sister was the district nurse. I never had any care while I was there.
86. You were battered if you swore. Mrs ^{EVI}[REDACTED] wanted us all to call her mum. I refused half the time. She thought I was being awkward and would hit me with anything that came to hand.
87. I never cried and that made punishments worse. If you are hitting and you don't see a reaction then you keep on hitting until you see tears. I just refused to cry. It was the only thing that I had that was mine. Pain is temporary but I knew they couldn't touch me.
88. I was always looking over my shoulder. There was no one to turn to at the time and the policeman was related to the ^{EMY-EVI}[REDACTED] family. It was a small island and everyone was related to everyone.
89. When I got there they both liked a good drink, they were alcoholics. I remember them having loud parties with about twenty people in the house. They would have a ceilidh while we were locked up in the bedroom upstairs.
90. There was a roasting hot day and we were out working but ^{EMY}[REDACTED] would always stop if there was a Western on the television. We stopped and went into the sitting room of the house. She had the big fire on and we were melting. I was sitting and to my left was the toilet and my right was the kitchen. I got up and went to the toilet and came back in. Three minutes later ^{EVI}[REDACTED] appeared at the door and asked who had taken an orange. She said someone had stolen it and no one was leaving until she found out who had taken it. Then she changed tactics and asked who had left the room, everyone said it was me.

91. I had been to the other side of the house but ^{EVI} [REDACTED] dragged me into the kitchen and turned the cooker on. She grabbed my head and pushed put my forehead onto the rings so I had three rings burning on my forehead. That wasn't good enough for her so she grabbed my hands and put my fingertips on. All of the other kids were horrified. Two hours later [REDACTED] sister [REDACTED] said that she had taken the orange. I was sitting there bleeding.
92. There was no trip to the doctor and I went to school the next day. The school never asked what had happened and they weren't interested. I couldn't confide in anyone because I had already tried the system when I told Douglas Scott what was happening.
93. I was at primary school one day and there was a dinner lady who looked like a man. On this occasion there was a stand in teacher who was a much older woman. She stood in when Dolly Cameron was on holiday.
94. [REDACTED] was at a table not far away from me and he put his hand up to go to the toilet but he was ignored and ignored. The stand in teacher mostly spoke Gaelic and the boarded outs and I would get our knuckles rapped because we couldn't understand it. By the time [REDACTED] got her attention he had pee'd himself. He couldn't help but pee himself. He couldn't ask to go to the toilet in Gaelic so the teacher had ignored him. They left him sitting in his seat and started serving dinner. The woman who looked like a man said something or shoved [REDACTED] and I reacted by trying to hit her.
95. They cleared the room and the stand in teacher phoned ^{EVI} [REDACTED]. She came down in the Landover with a big bamboo cane. I was whipped round that classroom for a good fifteen or twenty minutes and I wouldn't cry. Everyone who was taller than me could see in.
96. I had forgotten about it until I was on a course in Glasgow around 2010. I went down to the Park Bar and [REDACTED] who had been in the class two years above me was there and asked me if I remembered the day I was whipped in the school. I said yes. I hadn't seen him since school.

Leaving boarded out placement with [REDACTED] Tیره

97. According to my file I was a disruptive influence in the school and in the house. I was the smallest person in the house. I think the disruption in the school referred to the incident when I was whipped in the school.
98. They came up with a story that [REDACTED] being in the [REDACTED] had to attend a course in Glasgow. They said there would be a family holiday and I was to go with [REDACTED] a day early so that he could log on to his course and [REDACTED] would come with [REDACTED] the next day.
99. [REDACTED] and I flew to Glasgow and then got a taxi to [REDACTED]. He knocked on a door and an old man with a walking stick came to the door. They greeted each other by the name and obviously knew each other. The man was called [REDACTED]. We went into the house and I was told to sit on the sofa. [REDACTED] told me that he could be back in a couple of hours and then he left. Four or five hours later I was thinking that I had been abandoned again. I never saw [REDACTED] again for another two years.
100. [REDACTED] turned out to be [REDACTED] who was [REDACTED]. He was the person [REDACTED] had been sent to as a child. He was [REDACTED] which also made him [REDACTED]. He still lived at [REDACTED] round from where my grandmother's house had been.
101. I wasn't warned that I was being moved, I was just moved. My place with [REDACTED] [REDACTED] was arranged through the Corporation but I never saw Douglas Scott at that time.

Foster care with [REDACTED] Glasgow

102. I went to [REDACTED] in March 1974. He had two sons and a daughter living at home and there was also an old lady who lived there. I can't remember her name. His sons were [REDACTED] and [REDACTED]. His daughter was [REDACTED]. They were all over eighteen. [REDACTED] was

the youngest and was probably in her twenties. They were all working. Young [REDACTED] left about six months after I got there and [REDACTED] left about a year after I got there. The old woman also left but I don't know if she died. There was just one day when she wasn't there anymore. I don't know who she was but I assumed she was his mother in law. Once everyone had left it was me, [REDACTED], my EZY [REDACTED] and the dog.

103. It was a two or three bedroom house and it was always packed. EZY [REDACTED] made me aware, from the minute that I got there, that I was there out of the goodness of his heart and I should be thankful. There was no love lost between us.

104. EZY [REDACTED] was an ex-army veteran, possibly living with PTSD by that time. His main hobby was taking people's televisions and radios to repair them. That was all he ever did. He was over retirement age.

Schooling

105. I went to [REDACTED] Primary in primary six and seven. I attended school regularly when I lived with EZY [REDACTED]

Work/Chores

106. I had to do the cleaning and the washing. It was like the croft but I was inside. [REDACTED] [REDACTED] had left less than a year before and they had just swapped [REDACTED] for me. She had been a skivvy at EZY [REDACTED] until she was sixteen which was the legal age for her to move out. [REDACTED]
[REDACTED] During a casual conversation with [REDACTED] she had found out that someone was staying with EZY [REDACTED] and then she found out that it was me.

Family Contact

107. [REDACTED] was one of my very good friends at [REDACTED] Primary and the two of us were inseparable. The council must have been doing something to his close because

there was scaffolding up the front of it. The two of us had gone up the scaffolding one day and a woman came and shouted up to [REDACTED] "who is that with you?" He said "that's Stewart" and she asked if it was Stewart Wilson. [REDACTED] said that it was. She then asked him if I as the one staying with EZY [REDACTED] and [REDACTED] said that it was. [REDACTED]

108. Young [REDACTED] was the only one who was pleasant to me. He told me one day that I [REDACTED] Someone came in and the conversation was stopped. I was the family secret. I was around eleven at the time.
109. On another occasion, I had just come in from school one day when the door went and this guy walked in. He was no any bigger than me and very smartly dressed. He asked [REDACTED] is that him, looking straight at me. [REDACTED] said yes and then the man pulled out a wad of one pound notes. He pulled one off, flung it at me and walked out. [REDACTED] didn't say to me that this was my dad. He didn't say anything about who the man was.
110. I had a man who walked in and flung me a pound note [REDACTED] [REDACTED] I was confused, upset and disorientated. I didn't feel safe there.

Discipline

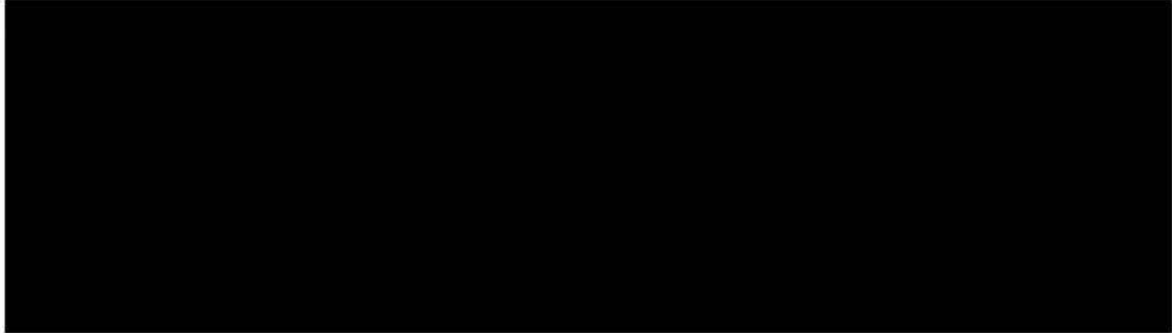
111. I started running with a gang. I had a friend called [REDACTED] When I first met him he asked me who my mum was and what her name was but I didn't know. He told me that I looked like my mum and I asked him how he knew that. Eventually I found out the [REDACTED] were cousins of my mum through the [REDACTED] so I started running with the gang as a substitute family. They listened to me and I listened to them. I had a feeling of belonging.
112. There were a couple of incidents with the police. There was a pigeon loft up beside school and four or five of us decided to go and have a look in the pigeon loft. We didn't have a clue how to do it. The noise of us even being there alerted the owner and he

came from somewhere with a dog. Everyone ran through the close to get out and I ran upstairs thinking he would run after everyone else but the dog ran upstairs and I was caught by the police. I got a boot in the ass from the police and then they took me home. EZY [REDACTED] shouted and bawled but he wouldn't hit me again, having hit me twice previously. Unbeknown to me, he then contacted Douglas Scott and Douglas Scott came and took me away.

Abuse at foster care with EZY [REDACTED] [REDACTED] Glasgow

113. EZY [REDACTED] was strict and he was cantankerous with his stick. He hit me with the stick twice but I can't remember why. I know on the second occasion it wasn't warranted. He was in a mood and this was an attack with the stick. I told him to sleep with one eye open.

114.



Leaving foster care with EZY [REDACTED] [REDACTED] Glasgow

115. EZY [REDACTED] was aware I was running with a gang so I assume he told Douglas Scott. I had been in front of children's panels when I was with EZY [REDACTED] I went to two or three panels. I ended up at an assessment centre in East Kilbride for three weeks or a month and it was grim. Nothing had been stolen in the incident with the pigeons and no crime had been committed but that was the straw that broke the camel's back. Mr Scott said that I had to go to the assessment centre and it might have been because I had been running with a gang but I have no idea.

Assessment Centre, East Kilbride

116.

Secondary Institutions - to be published later



Auldhouse Boys' Home, Thornliebank Road, Glasgow

117.

Secondary Institutions - to be published later



118.

119.

120.

121.

122.

123.

124.

125.

126.

127.

128.

129.

130. Secondary Institutions - to be published later

Second boarded out placement with [REDACTED] Tیره

131. I went back to stay with [REDACTED] and the same set up there was the same as it had been when I left but with less children. There was [REDACTED] [REDACTED], [REDACTED] [REDACTED] and [REDACTED]. They hadn't taken any new children on.

Routine

First day

132. Douglas Scott took me back on the plane again. I was a bit bigger then and about five foot five or six and seven stone. I was bigger and probably wiser. I had attitude but I kept that buttoned because Douglas Scott said that I had a year and if I did anything in that year then I would be locked up until I was twenty one. I tried to be the best child ever. Sometimes I slipped but I did try.

Chores / Pocket money

133. I was still getting up early and going out to work on the croft. There were less children but we were all bigger and stronger so the same jobs took less of us.

Schooling

134. The school's name had changed from Cornaig Secondary School to Cornaigmore Secondary School. When I had been there the first time, the school offered only first

year to fourth year. If you wanted to do fifth and sixth year then you went to stay in a hostel in Oban so that you could attend Oban High. However, something had changed and all the rural primary schools had shut. Cornaigmore now had a primary school attached to it and you were allowed to do fifth and sixth year. I did alright at school and then the army recruitment team came round when I was fourteen. I thought this could be my way out so I did the test and passed with flying colours. They said they would be back in a year and I would be going to join the army. I saw that as getting out early because I would be able to leave before I was sixteen.

Supervision oversight / inspection by fostering authority

135. Children were still being boarded out but they were now being supervised by Argyle and Bute social work. The children had been the responsibility of Glasgow Corporation until 1976 when Argyle and Bute took over. They would then have had control of who was living there. I was the last boarded out child to go to Tiree when I returned in 1976.
136. There was a female social worker from Oban and she was very critical of the way EVI handled us. Douglas Scott was gone and I now know from my file that he was investigated by the Corporation. There is a hand written letter in my file saying he was removed from my case. He had placed every single boarded out child in Tiree. I was part of the reason he was investigated but I don't know what the outcome of that was. I think he had been caught out. He had been personally taking children to Tiree and dropping them off to people who were ill trained, who weren't vetted and who abused the children. I think he retired and is now dead. I would say he was late thirties when I first became involved with him. I think he was from Glasgow. He didn't have any distinguishing features.

Abuse at second boarded out placement with EMY-EVI

Tiree

137. There was still violence and EVI would still lose the plot with us. She was hitting me two or three times a week and she still had the bull-halter to hit me with. She always hit you below the neckline where it couldn't be seen.

138. I came back with eczema on my head and she would basically shave my head and then use a brush to scrub my head removing the dead skin. Then she would put ointment on it called Polytar. She would do this outside and then I would go inside to bed. The ointment would stain the pillows and I would be battered for staining her pillows and sheets. I would have to wash them in cold water. I couldn't win because she was putting it on me.

139. EMY was hardly ever there. He hit me once and it was completely warranted. I was fourteen and had just passed the test for the army. Being on a croft they had guns. There was a rifle for pest control. EVI and I were winding each other up. We took the gun out and had a couple of shots and he pretended he was going to do it at me. I asked for a shot of the gun and he said I was too young and he took it and put it in the cabinet. I saw where he put the key and I took the gun out. I put five rounds in it and I told him to run. I didn't shoot at him, I shot nowhere near him but the sound was enough. When EMY came home from work EVI told him about it. EMY called me over and slapped me. I thought my head had come off my shoulders. I hit the ground and thirty seconds later he put his hand out to help me back up. He said that he shouldn't have done that but that I had to remember not to muck about with firearms. I learned that lesson.

140. I went on a school trip to do outward bound activities. It had finished and we went to a community centre for a big party. Boys being boys, bottles were being passed around. The next morning we were on the coach and Mr Robertson, the deputy head at the time was there because he had taken the trip. My seat kept being hit at the back and I was being pushed over. I had been woken up violently before in my life. I shouted out for the person to stop it and they didn't stop it. I turned round and punched out

twice. It turned out to be a girl, [REDACTED] I reacted before I could think and then I was so sorry.

141. Mr Robertson stopped the bus and told me to get off the bus which I did. He drove away heading to Inveraray. I walked the other way and then sat on the side of a hill thinking that I had already done the test for the army and I had ruined it. It was nine o'clock at night on a dark stretch of road. After about half an hour the minibus came screeching back to where I was. Mr Robertson who was tall and skinny told me to get in the bus and I refused twice. I told him to apologise and he said that he wouldn't. I told him that if he didn't apologise then I wouldn't get in the bus. He must have realised that he was in charge of the trip and he had overstepped the mark by throwing me out on a dark stretch of road so he apologised and I got back on the bus.
142. We went back to Oban and the school had phoned the girl's mother. I was dropped off at the house and [REDACTED] went ballistic. I was leathered. I admitted that I had done wrong and reacted when I shouldn't have.
143. About three hours later the police arrived and I came through quite sore but she had hit me below the neckline where it couldn't be seen. They said they had spoken to everyone sitting on the bus and they had confirmed that I had been asleep. They said that I had overreacted but I hadn't been at fault. Thanks to four or five witness statements they took no further action. Her mother was trying to press it but nothing came of it. I sweated it for six months until a decision was made by the social worker in Oban that, taking everything into account, the incident would not impede me from joining the army. I am eternally grateful for that.

Leaving second boarded out placement with [REDACTED] EMI-EVI

Tiree

144. When I joined the army I found out that I had a bank account with a fiver in it. [REDACTED] [REDACTED] made a big show when I left about taking me to the bank. She handed me a fiver and said that it was my savings. She told me that she had scrimped and saved to give

me that so as soon as I joined the army I had to set up a standing order to start paying her back. I didn't. I think the council had been sending money to her but I received no money.

Life after being in care

145. I joined the army at fifteen and they sent travel warrants for me to leave Tírree. I took a flight to Glasgow airport and then a bus to Glasgow Queen Street before boarding a train to Folkestone. I went there on 2 June 1980 and stayed until 2 June 1981. The Infantry Junior Leaders Battalion were based in Folkestone and being there was like being back at school. Everyone was brought up to a standard of education and we sat exams which I did alright in. We also did basic army training.
146. After Folkestone, I went to the Infantry Demonstration Battalion in Warminster before going to my battalion in Ballykelly, Northern Ireland. I was about seventeen when I joined my Battalion and then in July 1982, when I was eighteen, we went to Cyprus.
147. Up until I was eighteen in the army I had a social worker who was corresponding with the army and getting reports from them. The army didn't tell me that I still had a social worker and the social worker never came to see me once I was in the army. I think my social worker was still the woman in Oban but I don't know her name. I believe I was discharged by the social work when I was eighteen.
148. My notes make reference to a meeting that was held in the social work department in Glasgow in November 1981 when I would have still been in Ballykelly. During that meeting they discussed telling me who my family were and where they were. They agreed to do that on my eighteenth birthday, however, that never happened.
149. I married in 1986 and I am now divorced having been married for 28 years. I have three children who are all grown up now. They all have partners and their own homes. I also have a granddaughter who I see all the time.

150. After the army I worked as a porter in the Western General. I went from there into the post office for two years and now I am in the Ministry of Defence Guard Service. I have worked there for twenty eight years. I was promoted to a senior position in that job but two years ago I decided to step down and spend more time with family.
151. I went through life on an adoption certificate. It confirms you have been adopted and it gives you all of the relevant information. It says who you are. I got my first passport in Ballykelly about six months before I went to Cyprus. When that ran out I never travelled abroad.
152. I had never seen my birth certificate but my records show that when I applied to join the army my records were unsealed and a copy was given to the army to prove who I was. The army never told me that and according to them they didn't have my birth certificate.
153. When I was forty I went to the Hall of Records in Edinburgh and I asked the guy at the counter if I had a birth certificate. I explained that I was asking because I had an adoption certificate. He sent me to a woman who looked elderly. She took a few details and handed me a card telling me to go and see the man next door. I found the man and said I was sorry to bother him but I had been sent through by the woman. He said no problem and went away for ten minutes. He then came back with an A3, sealed envelope. It was marked "for the attention of Stewart Wilson". I asked the man what it was and he said it was for me. I asked what was in it and he said that he didn't know because it had been sealed by a court order. I asked him if he could open it and he then went and made a phone call to a judge who granted him permission to open it. He said that he couldn't give me what was in it but that he would photocopy everything. He asked me to stand beside him while he did that.
154. My documents were sealed by Glasgow Sheriff Court. It says "sealed this day, 10 September 1965, by order of Glasgow Sheriff Court". I don't know if someone applied to have it sealed. I was only one year old when it happened.

155. [REDACTED]
[REDACTED] I found out from the documents [REDACTED]
[REDACTED]. I realised that what I had been told when I stayed
with EZY [REDACTED] had been correct. I couldn't take it in. I threw it away and hit the
drink. After about three weeks I picked it back up again and decided that I had to have
a look at it.

156. This was in the days before Facebook. Using my daughter's skills I went onto friends
reunited and found the only common denominator which was [REDACTED]. I
traced [REDACTED] from a picture. I must have contacted half the planet and
then six weeks later I got a reply from Australia and it was a woman, his wife [REDACTED]. She
asked if it was really me. I was waiting for her to put [REDACTED] on but then she told me
that he had died of a brain tumour aged 53. The last ten years of his life he had been
trying to find me and couldn't. [REDACTED] came back to the UK before he died and they had
a family reunion. The first thing he asked was whether they had found me or my mother
but they couldn't. That was bittersweet. No one could trace my mother because she
had also been legally adopted and her records are sealed like mine were.

157. Over a couple of months [REDACTED] gave me the last known addresses of the family. I then
spent fifteen years going round the locations including Canada and Australia finding
them. Every one of them had memories of me as a wee boy in the crib. I didn't have
any memories of them.

158. [REDACTED] had tried to find me but she was told that I had immigrated to New
Zealand when I was three. [REDACTED]

[REDACTED] The family gave up and never looked [REDACTED]

159. [REDACTED]

160. My mother's records were sealed so I couldn't find out any information about her. I had a friend who was also in care and was on Tiree. He left care and joined the army. When he came out his skill set was private investigation and he is authorised to look at sealed records so by the time I was 52 he had found four [REDACTED] and it was a matter of going through them.
161. We found out she had died aged 34 in Glasgow in 1983. My mother had died of an accidental overdose. She had been on medication for depression. I looked up the medication that she had been on and found out that two hundred people that year had died of an accidental overdose. That medication was then withdrawn. My father died in the early nineties.
162. When I found out about [REDACTED] I went back to Tiree to try and find out if [REDACTED] had any information or picture of me as a wee boy. She threw a picture at me of a wee ginger boy saying that was me. I am not ginger so it obviously wasn't me and I later found out it was another boarded out boy who had died in an accident. I have no pictures. Photographs weren't taken because they were an expense.

Impact

163. If the meeting with social work had happened and I had been told who my family were in 1981, when I turned eighteen, then I would have found my mother before she died and I would have found the rest of my family twenty years before I did find them. I would have had a relationship with my mother and [REDACTED]
164. Thanks to the Corporation not giving me that information, I never got to meet my mother. [REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
165. The social work department knew the information and I think they had a responsibility to tell me about my family. The army didn't know all of this. They had my original birth

certificate to confirm who I was but it didn't give any information [REDACTED]. The Corporation had all that information at their fingertips. They were meant to give me that information at eighteen but that day came and went and I was told nothing. As a result the next of kin I used in the army was ^{EVI} [REDACTED] because I didn't know any different.

166. I tried not to go back to Tiree on leave and I cut all ties. I went back to Tiree for a cheap holiday when my kids were growing up. I didn't stay with ^{EVI} [REDACTED] but I stayed near them. Apart from the bad things that happened to me there, Tiree is a beautiful place. The beaches are beautiful and I am still friendly with some of the people I went to school with there. The kids got lots of fresh air, running about daft and they enjoyed it.
167. The long term impact on my mental health has included diagnoses of PTSD, Anxiety, Relative Adjustment Disorder and Displayed Depressive Symptoms at various stages in my life.
168. I have feelings of guilt with no explanation as to why I feel that way. The feelings I experienced [REDACTED] were partly confusion and then guilt. I wondered why no one had wanted me and whether there was something wrong with me. Was I as dirty and worthless as I was continually being told as I grew up?
169. Given that all I knew in my childhood was criticism, I have had, and still have, periods of low self-esteem. I have felt like I am worthless. I have trouble sleeping, depression and some dis-association. I have a fear of rejection. In relationships I was always watching my back and wondering if I was doing things right. The transition from childhood to adulthood is difficult for everyone but I had no guidance or structure. I had a mistrust of adults and a lack of confidence. I was involved in self-abuse through alcohol. I had a strong fear of being abandoned. I couldn't tolerate conflict. I would rather lock myself in my head and take the punishment because I had grown a thick skin.
170. I always feared what might happen and I feared the worst. I had despondency in relationships and an emotional reliance on my partner without knowing it. I had a

difficulty in identifying my feelings. I had a difficulty making decisions in a relationship. On the back of that I sought help two years ago and I went to see a mental health trauma counsellor in Edinburgh.

171. The reason I sought help was because I was watching Dances with Wolves and there was a bit where he is on the horse riding towards the village and the wolf comes up to him and is running beside the horse. He gets off the horse and is going to shoot it. The wolf knocks him to his feet. I was sitting watching that and I burst out crying. I howled for about ten minutes and then when I came to, I was wondering what was wrong with me. I went to the doctor but he said I needed to go and speak to someone.
172. I researched it and I found Lorraine Sorley. She never judges me. She had no airs and graces and I have never felt so secure and safe. It has never been an interrogation, we would just have a normal conversation but she was able to take so much out of it. In the sessions I can go from bawling my eyes out to laughing my head off. I laugh as a defence mechanism. I'm not cured but I am better than I was two years ago now.
173. I've been checked over and done tests. I now know that for most of my life I have operated out of my frontal lobe and not used the rest of my brain. That's why I wasn't a student. My sense of fight and flight are off the scale. I'm getting better and I can handle things now but up until I joined the army I was scared and in the first fifteen years of my life I built walls in my own mind because of that.
174. I didn't do as long as I wanted in the army. I came out because we already had a daughter and my wife wanted to build the nest. In the army you do two years here and then two years there. The year my daughter was born I was in Ireland for a six month tour, I was in the Falklands for six months and I was in Canada for six months. Family was important to me because I had never had that family unit. My wife and I divorced after many years because we had nothing in common. The children were the only thing we had in common. When I [REDACTED] she wasn't that impressed. She wasn't impressed with the area that [REDACTED] lived in.

175. I was very protective of my children and I would never raise my hand to them. They would ask to go abroad on holidays and I would tell them to wait until they were a bit older so they would have more memories. The biggest thing for me was apologising to my kids. They have all reassured me. I could be awkward but they have seen through that. I didn't receive hugs or affection during my childhood, the result being I was unable to hug my own children as it made me feel awkward and guilty. Basically I can hug my kids now. It has taken me until fifty six but I can hug my kids now. That is a massive change for me. They would try when they were younger and I couldn't. It shouldn't have been like that.
176. I have felt unloved, worthless and uncared for long periods of my childhood leading to periods of depression. I had my own battle between body and mind. My body accepted hugs as an awkward practise which was needed but my mind was unable to comply. I now know hugs to a child or adult indicate comfort, safety, support and demonstrates affection and emotional warmth.
177. It also builds emotional trust which is so important to a developing child or adult and most importantly gives a sense of safety. To deny me hugs or acknowledgement led to touch deprivation and it occurred when I experienced little or no physical contact with anyone, apart from physical punishment, and it lead to profound emotional and physiological consequences.
178. I have broken the cycle through my granddaughter and can only thank my son and his partner for letting me bond with her. I am able to give my granddaughter what I was too awkward and guilty to give my own children.
179. There were about 700 in my battalion and about 350 had been in care. Most of them came from Quarriers. They had good stories and bad. The army never offered any mental health assistance. Joining up at fifteen, we were four men to a room which was like the care system. There were boys crying at night because they were homesick and missed their parents. To my knowledge I didn't have parents so it didn't affect me.

180. One of the boys who I was boarded out with was [REDACTED] and he was the first rebel. He was hit even harder by ^{EVI} [REDACTED]. He was probably a teenager. As a boarded out no one cared, nurtured, listened or advised us and we had no life skills. [REDACTED] left care and went down South. He married and had kids but something happened with his marriage and it broke up. His wife wanted to take the kids. [REDACTED] had no life skills to fall back on so he killed himself.
181. My friend, [REDACTED] who had also been in care and in the army, and I set up an online page which supports people who have been boarded out. We are not professional but we help them track down family members if possible. The children were boarded out to different islands including Tiree, Islay and Barra and all the records were on paper so are gone now. Even houses where people were brought up are gone now. Their relatives don't know who you are. We look at school photographs but they are held in the Mitchell Library in Glasgow so you have to try and get access to them there. They have only just started to release school records.
182. If people who were boarded out can have a photo of themselves at school then that confirms they were on Tiree and who they were in a class with. [REDACTED] has family connections in Tiree who can help with identifying people from photos. People remember where they are but they don't have confirmation.
183. I am lucky that my file was kept. The majority of people had their files destroyed. I have friends who are social workers who say that everything was on paper until the eighties or nineties and if they have had a file for sixty years without the person asking for it, then those files were legally destroyed. It doesn't make it right but they don't want to spend the time and effort putting it on a computer system. We help people piece together their early childhood if we can. We have grandchildren of people who were boarded out on the website trying to find out about their relatives. People don't tell others that they were a boarded out. [REDACTED] and I run it and there are something like seven hundred people who use the website.
184. I have since joined up with a couple of women who want to do this for the whole of Scotland, on a national level. I know Jo Duffy who wrote a book about being boarded

out. Before lockdown we compiled evidence to put in front of the government. We gave them documents, statements, examples and newspaper articles. The social workers and members of the government who were there said they had never heard of boarding out and no such thing existed. It was a system in a system that no one was accountable for. The **EMY-EVI** may have been classed as guardians but there is a big difference between boarded out children and foster children in residential care. We were the cheaper option.

Reporting of Abuse

185. I never complained to the police as a child but I did as an adult. I reported it on the 23rd January 2021 to a PC Wylie and PC Birtles and my statement was taken at Wester Hailes Police station. The crime number was 2289. I have had no update since.
186. The law changed in September 2017. If you had been in care for three years then you could make a claim. I have a friend who is a lawyer who told me about the law change. I have spoken to Digby Brown. I used to be with Thompsons in Glasgow but in three and a half years they didn't do a great deal for me.


Records

187. When I was forty I eventually got my notes from my time in care. My handwritten notes said that nobody wanted me because I was an embarrassment to the family.
188. I have a booklet "Boarded out children in private dwellings" which contains instructions for people who took in boarded outs.


Lessons to be Learned

189.



190. The aftermath of being disconnected leaves you isolated, disconnected and alone as a result  leading to a lifetime of trying to piece a jigsaw together either blindfold or with missing pieces because of decisions that were made by strangers. My own journey took 36 years until I had all the pieces and then another 10 years to piece the jigsaw together.

191. Decisions made by strangers was and is wrong as it leads to lifelong mental health issues, isolation, sadness, guilt and loneliness. It leads to people seeking love, assurance and acceptance from the wrong people which in turn may lead to self-harm or suicide.

192. The care system was made up of inadequately trained staff who made decisions that affected children and they made those decisions without listening to the very people they were employed to protect and nurture. 




193. The ability to give and receive hugs and affection is a basic human right and need, offered to the majority of children growing up. For the state to deny that basic need to children confuses and limits their emotional and physiological growth especially when separated from siblings or parents and leads feeling such as confusion or guilt. As those children grow up and have relationships, it places barriers in those relationships due to a sense of awkwardness, confusion and guilt with no explanation as to why you feel and act this way.

194. There is a stigma attached to being in care. You are considered to be a liar and a thief so if something goes wrong then it was probably you that was to blame for it. Boarded outs is actually a derogatory term.
195. In my time children weren't listened to. The child has to be listened to. It may take someone completely independent of the system to step in and investigate.
196. I used to go to school black and blue from the beatings I had received. I would be so embarrassed getting changed for sports when I was in secondary school. People looked at me in disgust or horror. Teachers knew what was happening but none of them got involved. The doctor would have known, or had a good idea of what was happening, because on a small island everyone knows everyone.
197. In my case. I had a distrust of adults but someone should have stepped in. It wasn't just me this was happening to it was happening to lots of children. They should have done their homework and spoken to the teachers to find out if a child's behaviour had changed. If they have become sullen, withdrawn or aggressive then there will be a reason for that. I have learned that from my own children. If they have gone from an A student to a Z student then someone should ask why that is. A child in care tries to throw out signals without actually saying "someone help me". The system has to listen and if it does that then it can learn.

Other information

198. 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.....

15TH JUNE 2021