

## Scottish Child Abuse Inquiry

Witness Statement of

ABZ

Support person present: Yes.

1. My name is ABZ My date of birth is 1965. My contact details are known to the inquiry.

### Life before going into care

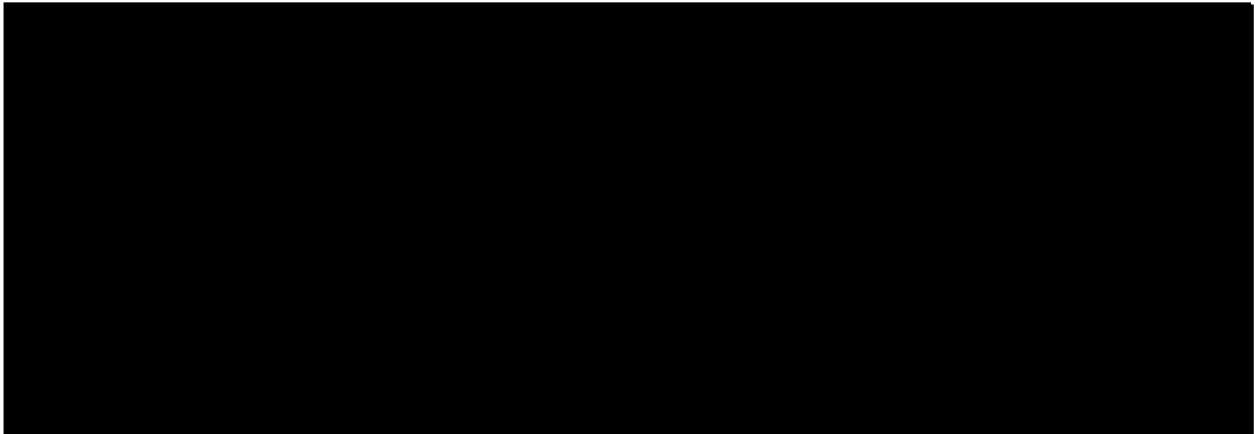
2. My mum, and my dad, were Irish. They moved about a bit. I had two younger brothers, KAV was a year younger than me and was a year younger than him.
3. We started off living at Argyll Street in the West End of Glasgow. We then moved to the Blackhill area, then Dalmarnock. My last address before I went into care was Preston Street in Govanhill, Glasgow. There were nights my father came home in a good mood and my mother would get chocolate. There were good times. My dad loved to laugh, but he was shy without a drink in him.
4. Our home life was carnage. My father was violent. He used to take the belt to me and my brothers, the buckle side. My father would come home drunk. My younger brothers would be in bed and I would sit on my mother's knee. She'd give me salt and shake crisps and Dunn's lemonade. I now know she was trying to soften the blow. I didn't realise then that my mother was taking a drink. She was on the road to being an alcoholic as well.

5. At a young age, I would run to Craigie Street police station. I was a whippet. The police were at our door quite a lot because of the violence and my father would get taken away. One minute, I was running to save my mum and the next minute my dad was in cuffs. I would cry because the police were taking him away. I saw more than my brothers because I was the oldest.
6. We were in the police van quite a lot. We were out at all hours of the night. The neighbours were feeding us and they'd phone the police. The police would come and pick us up and give us chips. It was a Glasgow thing. There was a lot of poverty. I couldn't go past a fruit stall without taking an apple or an orange. I didn't know where my next meal was coming from, even if I didn't need it right at that minute. I don't feel bad about it because it was about survival.
7. We had another brother who died on [REDACTED] when he was seven and a half months old. Eventually, my father got put away for a bit and my mother decided to move to Manchester. My mother left in 1972. She left us at Anderston bus station. She gave us money to go into the shop and the police came and got us. She told me years later that she was watching us.
8. I've forgiven my mother. She left her children, but I know she was subjected to severe violence. I know why she left. She was afraid for her life. She was full of remorse, shame and guilt so she couldn't come back. Her mother died when she was fourteen months old and she didn't know how to be a mother. She must have been in so much pain.
9. After my mother left, my father couldn't cope. He worked on the roads and he drank. He got what I call his new fancy bit, [REDACTED] but what woman could cope with three boys, two years apart? My dad did try his best to keep us, but he couldn't cope between working and drinking. That's why we ended up going into the homes.

## Care homes in Glasgow

10. We had a couple of years in and out of care in Glasgow before being placed in Smyllum. We had one or two different social workers. I think we were in homes in Pollokshields and Anniesland. There were matrons running the homes. Some of them were tough, but some were okay. I was always kept with my brothers. We were the new kids in these homes, so we learned to stick together. The other kids used to say if you fight with one [REDACTED] you fight with them all.

11.



12. My dad kept trying to get us back, so we were back and forwards. He kept turning up at the homes with drink in him and drink on him, saying, "I want my boys." I was told by the social worker that was why they put distance between us and we were sent to Lanark. I was nine, [REDACTED] was eight and [REDACTED] was just coming up for his seventh birthday.

## Smyllum, Lanark

13. Smyllum was ran by nuns. It was self-sufficient. It had its own farm, its own school, its own chapel, its own everything. There were six houses in Smyllum. There were twenty children in each house with a sister in charge of each house. We were put into Roncalli House. It was separate from the main building. Sister [REDACTED] AEG ran Roncalli House. Her name is Sister [REDACTED] AEG now.

14. There were civilian staff in the house as well as Sister **AEG**. They could be good to us, but they could also be cruel. There was **AGR** who later became **AGR** **AGR** **FBN** who became **FBN** **FBQ** who became **FBQ** has now passed away. There was a young woman called **AHW** When the other houses started shutting down, they moved some of the staff to keep them in employment. I remember a lady called **FBO** at that point. I remember **AHX** in St Kentigern's House.
15. The house was mixed with boys and girls, but boys and girls were very much kept separate. If a boy even waved to his sister at Mass, he would get a cuffing. The other children in Roncalli House became our family. Sometimes we fought against the other groups, St. Mary's, St. Joseph's, Ogilvie House, St. Anne's and St. Kentigern's.
16. When you got older, you looked after the younger ones in your house. You had pals in other houses, but at the end of the day you went back to your own house. Your heart sank when people left because we were all like family. There was a baby came into Smyllum, **[REDACTED]** We would come back from High School to see the wee baby. I remember the nun telling us he was being fostered out and the tears came down my cheeks. He was going to a better life, but I wanted to keep him.

## **Routine at Smyllum**

### *First Day*

17. I'll never forget my first day at Smyllum. I can remember everything about it, even what I had for my tea that night. It was either **[REDACTED]** 1974. My brother **KAV** birthday is on **[REDACTED]** and my dad had given him a wee fire engine. That was the only possession we brought with us. We went up in the big, black social work car. I'd never seen a car like that. There were big black gates, like a lord's house. We went along a long avenue, lined with trees and hedges. It felt like it went on for miles and miles. Smyllum was thirty miles away from Glasgow, but as a wee boy it was like going to Australia. I was terrified.

18. Prior to going in, all the kids came out and ran round the motor. We were inside the car, looking out. The building was like a big castle. We had come from the tenements. We were full of fear. We went up the stairs and into the right where there was what seemed like a big, massive room. It seemed like there were 150, 200 chairs of different types. We went in to see the sister superior, Sister AGK and the social worker left.
19. We were then allocated to our house. The first day was a free day. It was the only day we didn't have to finish our food. I can still feel the heat coming off the macaroni cheese. It made me feel sick. We were allowed to leave it. We were allocated house coats, pyjamas and slippers. It was frightening, as there were twenty children in the house and we'd had experience of being attacked by other children in the other homes. My brothers and I planned our escape the very first night. It was in our head that we had to get out of there. We never did run away. Maybe we were just too scared.

*Mornings and bedtime*

20. In the morning, we had to make the beds perfectly, with envelope corners. We were all given chores to do. If I was dry, I would be so relieved. If I was wet, I would steal somebody else's sheet to survive. There would be an inspection. We then got dressed and went down to breakfast.
21. Bed time varied with age. The younger children would go first. We got an extra half hour at the weekend. Sometimes, the staff would let us watch the football on TV on a Saturday night. There were big shutters on the windows. There were tiny holes in the shutters, but it was pitch black. When the shutters came down, you weren't allowed to leave the room. We weren't allowed access to the toilet.

*Washing*

22. Sunday was bath night. We used to share the bath water because it was cost effective. They would put three or four in the baths. Sometimes the water was a bit mucky. I was alright with baths because I was getting one in the morning. We used to be examined for nits. We'd call it fine comb night. Sister **AEG** would go about your head with the metal comb. It was agony.

*Food*

23. There were four dinner tables in each house. Five children sat at each table, along with a staff member. We'd be given lumpy porridge for breakfast. I hated it. I still hate it to this day. When the toast was made, twenty kids would be waiting to grab it. They couldn't butter it quickly enough. The guy from Mother's Pride took pity on us. He used to come to the home and throw a tray of cakes in. We'd be all around the van.
24. We didn't go hungry. There was a kitchen in the main house and food was taken over to the houses. We were fed. I just couldn't take to the food. If it was a school day, we got away with it because they had to get us out to school in time.
25. I started gambling at secondary school so I had a bit of money. After school, I would get off the bus and buy a big bag of chips and a bottle of Stripe cola. I would pay somebody to eat my dinner.

*School*

26. When I first arrived, we went to the primary school on the grounds of Smyllum. The teachers were Mrs **AEW** and Mrs **IAR**. They used to bring the milk in and the fastest one to finish got a free carton. I was always one of the fastest to finish. Mrs **IAR** was old fashioned. She'd throw dusters around. She was straight faced and looked about eighty. We had swimming and singing together. I enjoyed primary school. I was clever. I knew the answers before the teachers had finished the

questions. But I couldn't put my hand up. I couldn't take the attention or the limelight. That was what being in Smyllum did to me.

27. It got worse when I went to high school. We had to go to a Catholic secondary school. We got a bus to Wishaw, twelve miles away. I was running up to the dux at primary school. I remember meeting Mrs AEW after secondary school. She said, "ABZ you were one of my best pupils ever. What did you get?" I got nothing because I was up through the night, washing and drying my sheets, embarrassed. In first and second year, I was at school and I was knackered.
28. In second year, I remember carrying on in class. The teacher shouted out, "ABZ ABZ I'll be telling Sister." The whole class went quiet. I thought, "Oh no. My cover's been blown." I was ashamed of being in the home. I was almost two years into high school and I hadn't told anyone. The other pupils asked, "What does she mean sister? Does she mean your mum?" After that, I wanted to drop school. I didn't want to be a part of it because of shame. I started gambling the 25p I got for my dinner ticket. Most days, I would win. I was walking about with pockets full of money, but my education was going downhill. It was to do with all the worrying about bed wetting and the shame. I didn't have anybody to tell me that it wasn't my fault.
29. I remember a fifteen year old girl in my class, telling me to stop misbehaving because others were trying to learn. She got into my head. I'll never forget it. I knew she was right. I was on a slippery slope. I'd go to Wishaw on the bus and not even go into school. I was afraid of failure. I didn't even appear for some of my exams.

### *Clothing*

30. Every now and again, we got new clothes. If you had grown, you would be told to go and get new clothes. We would go if we were told to go. There was a big warehouse with clothes that had been handed in. I remember taking an Adidas top that was two sizes too big. If I saw a good pair of football boots, I wanted them. Even if they were too small, I would squeeze into them. My toes are a mess now, from squeezing toes into shoes that didn't fit or wearing shoes for too long. I call them E.T. toes.

*Staff*

31. I used to go to watch football with [AGR] boyfriend. It was only amateur football, but it felt like I was going to Hampden.
32. [BAC] He would play cards with us and tell us stories. I found them fascinating. He spoke of being sent away to Ireland, aged fourteen, to work on the farms. He would have to send half his money back to his siblings [REDACTED]. Scary things happened to him there.
33. We loved [BAC] to bits, but we were afraid of him. He would drive around the grounds in his Morris Minor. We'd all be hiding in the trees or knocking off strawberries or in the orchard. We'd hear [BAC] engine coming and he'd shout, "I know you're in there." We'd send somebody out as a sacrifice. We'd get back to the house and we'd have been reported to Sister [AEG] He never did me any harm other than give me a right hook.
34. There weren't many men in our lives. [BAC] ran the football team. We idolised him. He was my confirmation sponsor. By the time we got there, he was 65 and almost a pensioner. I've read things about him and I keep an open mind about what he might have done to children when he was younger. The last thing he said to me was, "[ABZ] you're going to do well at the football but stay away from women and stay away from the drink." Those were his parting words to me, and he was right.
35. My best friend, [REDACTED] was great friends with Bert, the gardener. I used to go to Mass with Bert. I loved him talking about Celtic players, Charlie Tully and Bertie Peacock. He did a great job The garden was immaculate. I never saw Bert lift his hand to a child once.
36. Bert asked us if we wanted to make some money, working for Father McDonagh in the church garden. Some of the boys from Lanark were there too. We worked away for a whole week. Because we were poor, we worked harder because we were always trying to impress. The housekeeper gave us rich teas and diluting juice. We



were paid ten bob. We were delighted, that was fifty penny bags of sweeties. Bert asked us how much we got and we said, "Ten bob, Bert." We were over the moon. Bert said, "The other boys got £1." The priest knew their mothers would put more in the envelopes for the collection and he would get nothing from us. Bert went and challenged the priest. We got reimbursed. Bert was a good man.

### *Leisure time*

37. After tea, we would get to go out and play or maybe go to football training. We weren't allowed out until we'd done our homework. There was a TV room. Quite often, it was switched off. If something went wrong, we would all be punished. If something went missing, the TV would go off until they found the culprit. You would blame your granny. Sometimes, it might've been you that did it but somebody else would get the blame. As long as that telly went back on, you didn't care. One way or the other, they would get to the bottom of it. They knew how to punish us.
38. We made our own fun. We would run up to the farms and things like that. BAC would come looking for us and we'd hide. If we got caught, we took the consequences.
39. I had a friend who I played football with. I used to go to his house out in Carluke. We would go and watch Celtic play. He came from a family of six. It was a big Irish family. I wet the bed one night there. I didn't know what to do. I was afraid. I pulled the sheets up and didn't tell anybody. I was mortified. I didn't want to go to their house any more. I was in first and second year and still wetting the bed. The parents came up to the home and asked if I had a problem with bedwetting.
40. There were dances and some people went to cubs and scouts. That wasn't for me. I played football morning, noon and night. BAC would tell me to go and hit the ball off the wall with my weaker foot till my left foot became strong. I remember an older girl called Theresa McGrane. She would be playing tennis against the wall. We'd tell her she'd need to move and she threaten to tell one of the nuns. But boys will be boys so we just started kicking the ball against the wall until she had to move away.

*Holidays*

41. We went to Girvan every year in the summer. Sister [AEG] mother used to come on the holiday. We also went to Holy Island in Northumberland a couple of the years. A trainee priest called Stephen Toner came with us on to Holy Island on one occasion. He came from Edinburgh. He was a Celtic man so we got on well. We liked him. He introduced us to a wee shandy to make us feel grown up. One of the nuns caught him and he was sent away.

*Birthdays and Christmas*

42. We got a cake on our birthdays. We didn't get a present. Christmas was great. We got lots of presents. People used to donate them. St. Vincent De Paul and Celtic Football Club used to send money for us at Christmas. We got invited to parties. We used to get taken to the Kelvin Hall. Work places would take us to parties, like Cummins Engines in Shotts. There were good times at Smyllum as well.

*Religious instruction*

43. When you arrived, they had to find out if you'd been christened. I remember trying to explain that I'd been baptised, but they didn't take any chances and they baptised me again. That was the process, that you were brought up in the Catholic faith.
44. I became an altar boy for the wrong reasons. I joined because the altar boys were getting a wee turn at the basket and a wee sip of wine. They all got caught and I ended up having to carry the big cross for two years. I'm glad they got caught because otherwise I would've done it too.
45. One of the parish priests, Father McDonagh, loved a drink and he smoked a cigar. He would give us ten bob after Mass and we'd go and buy fifty bags of sweeties. He was going to the Silver Bells for a drink. I remember Father [ADA] was the fastest talker ever. We loved when he was doing the Mass because it was over so quickly.

*Visits/Inspections*

46. I think we saw our social worker once every six weeks. If he was on holiday, we'd maybe miss a spot. Prior to a social work visit, Sister [AEG] would say, "Everything's alright, boys?" We would say, "Aye, Sister, everything's fine." That was us getting the warning that our social worker was coming out and we had to stay tight lipped. I know our social worker, Bob Hay, was aware things weren't right, but I didn't say anything to him. Initially, we'd be with him in the front living room and the tea stand would come out with all the cakes. Sister [AEG] would be in the room, shepherding us. Even if she left the room, we still felt pressured. It was better to keep quiet.
47. Bob started to take us out for a knickerbocker glory or a juice. Now I can see he was trying to get us away from Sister [AEG] I knew things would get difficult for us if we said anything. And who could say anything against somebody wearing a habit in those days? We were just wee toe rags from Glasgow. We'd been told that. Who would have listened to us?
48. In the last year or two, I found out that my brother, [KAV] had been speaking up to the social worker. We weren't even aware of it at the time. [KAV] feels quite strongly that the social work department didn't protect us enough. For me, it was easier to keep quiet. Life was difficult enough with the bed wetting and everything else.
49. My mum visited us once in Smyllum. She looked like a wee old woman. The truth is, we were ashamed of her. She wanted to take us down to a café in Lanark and we wanted to find a café that none of our pals would see us in. Maybe she sensed that because she never came back.
50. My father came to visit, but he couldn't come when he had had a drink. I can count on two hands the number of times he came to visit over the seven years. He came to visit after Archie Gemmell scored the greatest Scotland goal ever. He gave me a tenner because it was my birthday and a further £5 go split amongst the three of us. I was angry and didn't want to see him after that because he visited so infrequently.

*Medical care*

51. A doctor would come out every now and again and we'd be taken over to the big house. It was a check-up every now and again and he'd ask you to cough. There was a nun called Sister **FAM** who would assist him. I was never given any medication or anything for bed wetting. I remember going to the dentist in the town, but I'm not sure how often. I was always terrified of the dentist.

*Siblings*

52. My three brothers and I always stayed together. We had a bond. The social work department went through a stage of trying to get us adopted or fostered out. Nobody would take three boys two years apart, so they wanted to separate us but we wouldn't allow it.

**Abuse at Smyllum**

53. I already wet the bed before going to Smyllum and it continued when I got there. I didn't know it at the time, but I've since been told it was because I'd seen severe violence and I was full of fear. It was so dark, some nights I'd pee in the corner of room. I couldn't afford to pee that bed. I ended up wetting the bed until I was in first and second year of secondary school. I didn't know then why I was doing it. If I wet the bed, I'd be put in freezing baths and be degraded. I could handle the freezing baths. I could handle the beatings, but the degradation was the worst bit. The mental torture was the hard bit.
54. My schooling went right out the window because I was getting up in the night to dry my sheets on the big radiators. I slept on plastic mats so I'd wake up drowned. My pyjamas would be soaking. I didn't know that pee smelled. Eventually, I started going to the toilet to wash the sheets because I'd tried at just drying them on the radiator. If I got caught leaving the room, I'd be punished. There was an inspection every morning. Sister **AEG** would feel the sheets. We'd stand at the bottom of the beds.

They had to be made perfectly, like in a hotel with envelope corners. We were physically assaulted for wetting the bed every time. We'd get a cuff or have our ear lugged or worse. That was just standard.

55. If my bed was wet, I'd be put into the bath. Sometimes it was a freezing bath. I had to take my sheets to the laundry room. I'd be late going down for breakfast. I'd go into the dining room. Everybody else would have started their breakfast. Sister AEG would say things like, "Here come the fishes." That was obviously to make other children laugh at the bed wetter. At night time, I wasn't allowed a drink after seven o'clock. Small children would be having diluting juice. I was twelve, thirteen and I didn't know why I was doing it. The humiliation was worse than any of the physical treatment.
56. Sister AEG would use her hands, trainers and Scholl sandals. She would mark my body. I could take the beatings, but she knew how to get to me. The biggest thing that hurt me was the football. I was football mad, always have been. They would try and take football away from me. I would sneak down drain pipes to get to football training. She would get wind of it and send me back up the road. I'd go up the road broken hearted. They would get you one way or the other. They knew how to break you.
57. If you didn't eat your food, you would have to sit from meal to meal because of the black babies. Sister AEG would come and pinch your nose, grab the spoon and force feed you. My natural reaction was to spit it out. I would get a cuff for that. The food would then be scooped off the floor and put onto my plate. I would try and put my food down behind the pipes. I had to try and get rid of it, in a tea towel or anything.
58. If we were caught swearing, we had carbolic soap put in our mouths. If children were caught smoking, they were put in vinegar and the children were made to smoke them. We were made to stand on freezing floors for hours. When we wet the bed or didn't eat our food, the level of violence depended on their moods. We could get a cuff on a good day, but we could also be beaten to a pulp and we were degraded.

The nuns and the civilian staff would use Scholl sandals, their hands or anything that was nearby to beat us. Our bodies would be bruised and marked red.

59. Sometimes we would trade food. I would eat somebody's sprouts if he or she ate my carrots. Kids are cruel. Some of them would stick you in. If you got caught trading food, they would put it back on your plate and keep a close eye on you. The opportunity would be lost. If you didn't get rid of it quickly enough, you'd be stuck there. On a school day, if you left food it would still be there when you got in from school. I became better at getting rid of my food.
60. I saw other children in my house take beatings. I saw my brother **AEG** beaten and put into freezing baths. Sister **KAV** had her favourites. She got attached to the children she'd looked after since they were babies. It was unfair because the treatment wasn't the same for everybody.
61. On one occasion, I was serving on the altar for an Easter vigil. Bishop Devine was celebrating the Mass along with another three or four priests. Another altar boy, **[REDACTED]** tripped over an electric cable. We couldn't stop laughing. We tried to stop, but our shoulders would shake and we'd start laughing again throughout the whole Mass. At the end of the Mass, an Irish priest who had been on the altar slapped my brother, **[REDACTED]** and marked his face. Sister **AEG** saw the mark. She was furious and said, "Nobody will hit my boys." She went to see him and challenged him. I can only imagine it was because she was in charge and it undermined her authority.
62. Sister **AEG** was in control of our house, but if we were outside and another nun caught us doing something she would discipline us. There was a Sister **AHM** who came from Edinburgh. She was a Hibs fan. She got a hold of me one day and battered my head off the wooden worktop. I don't know what for. I must have been doing something wrong.
63. On my thirteenth birthday, we were playing two aside football. The ball was kicked into **BAC** workshop. I was punted up to go in through the window. I went through head first. I stood on a lavatory pan and smashed it. I got the ball. Nobody

said anything. Later, [AGR] pulled me out of the house. [BAC] asked me if I'd been in his workshop. I denied everything. He went for me with one hand and I ducked out the way. He punched me with the other hand and assaulted me. That was his job. He was there to sort everything out. When we were up to no good, he would sort you out but that was the only time he ever lifted his hands to me. I've no doubt he assaulted other children, but I never saw it happen.

64. The civilian staff were cruel and lifted their hands to the children as well. The nuns lead with an iron fist, but it wasn't just them. [FBN] was a big woman. She would punch into your back. You witnessed things happening to other people, but if they were getting it, you weren't getting it that time. That's the way it was, the way you learned to survive. There was severe cruelty. It became normality to us.
65. If we were caught swearing, we had carbolic soap put in our mouths. If children were caught smoking, they were put in vinegar and the children were made to smoke them. We were made to stand on freezing floors, facing the corner, for hours at a time as a punishment. When we wet the bed or didn't eat our food, the level of violence depended on their moods. We could get a cuff on a good day, but we could also be beaten to a pulp and we were degraded. The nuns and the civilian staff would use Scholl sandals, their hands or anything that was nearby to beat us. Our bodies would be bruised and marked red. I was full of fear and shame all the time.

### Leaving Smyllum

66. I knew Smyllum was shutting because there was nobody left. My brothers left a year before me but I had to stay and finish my schooling. There was a lady called [redacted] who had grown up in the home with her brothers, [AAN] and [redacted]. I think they came from Dunoon. She became one of the staff. At the end, it was just her and Sister [AEG] remaining. I can't remember much else about that last year. I don't remember how I was feeling, my two brothers being away and we had always been together. I must have been going to school and coming back to an empty

house but it's just blank. Sister [REDACTED] AEG [REDACTED] attitude had changed. There was no need to be cruel any more.

67. As the numbers dwindled, they started putting other children into my house. For some reason, it was the last house to close. [REDACTED]  
[REDACTED]. There was a sadness when I left. I'd been there for seven years. People I'd known for years were disappearing.

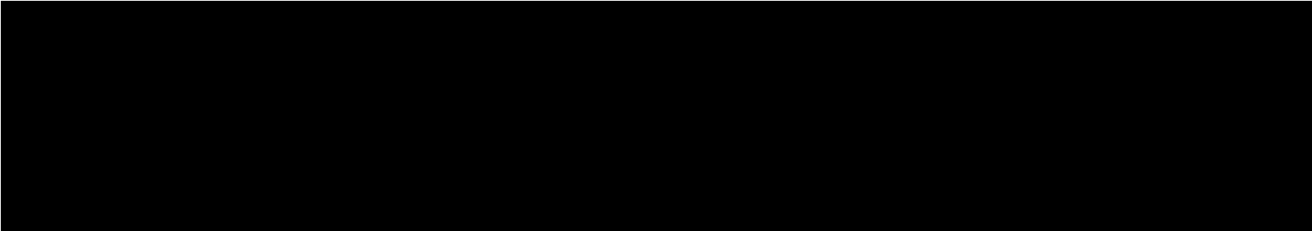
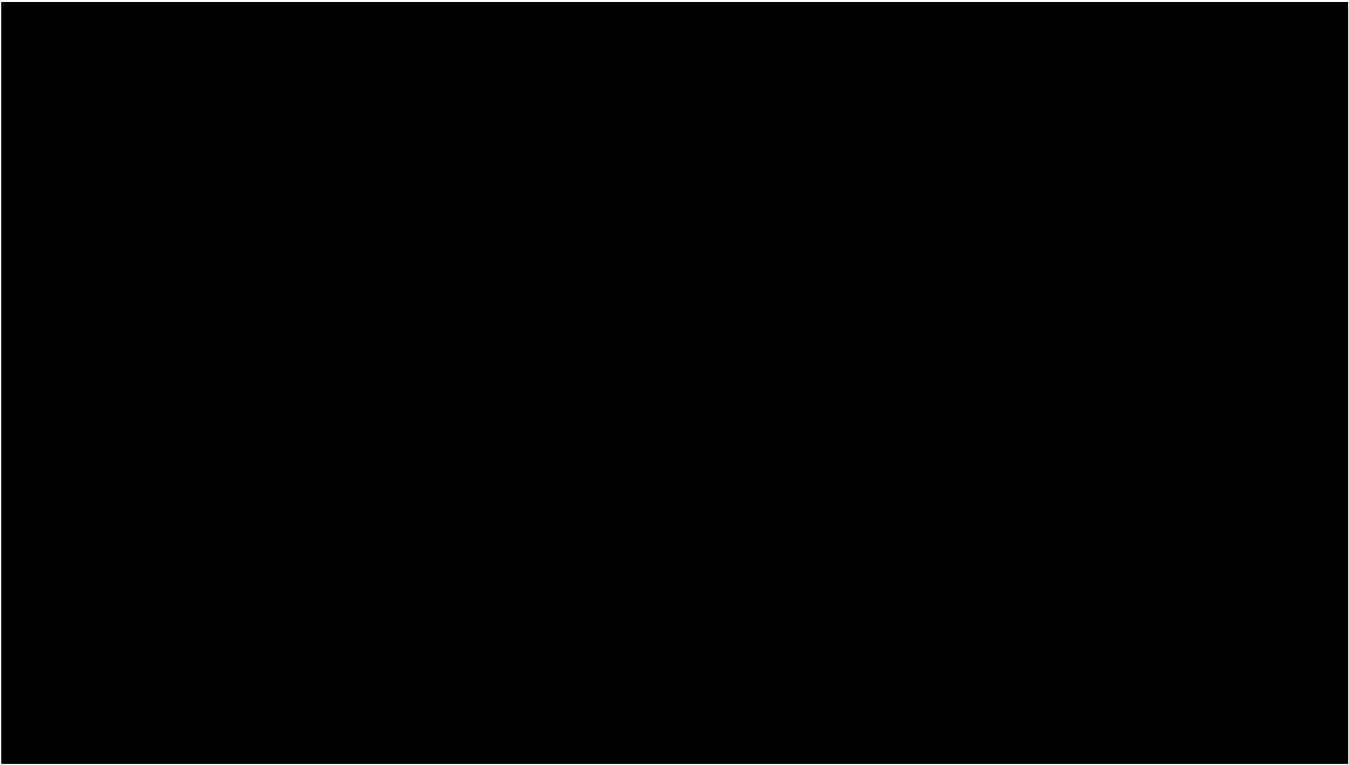
### **Glengowan House, 196 Nithsdale Road, Glasgow**

68. They moved children from Smyllum to a girls' hostel or a boys' hostel. Some children went back to their families, but they were few and far between. My brothers, [REDACTED] and [REDACTED], went to the hostel at Glengowan when they were thirteen and fourteen. It was meant to be for young adults of fifteen or sixteen to eighteen years old. I followed my brothers there after I'd finished my schooling. I was afraid, but I couldn't show it as the biggest brother. There were older boys there and my two brothers had settled in.
69. Glengowan was run by the Catholic church. [REDACTED]

70.

71.



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72. I was offered an job as an apprentice plumber, but I knocked that back. I worked for a year doing up old folks' houses. I then worked for six months with British Rail. I worked at Shields Road Depot. Six of us started and by the end only two of us remained. We were offered a full time job, painting the overhead wires on the railway. It appealed to me because they all drank at night and went to the dancing. Then they came back to the carriage and had a wee sleep. It sounded like the ideal job for me, but I was seventeen and a half and you had to be eighteen to do the nightshifts. They told me to come back when I was eighteen, but I started a job at Galbraith's food shop. I worked there for a year and a half. I was a good worker, but when I took a drink I was a bit like my father and I didn't turn up. Galbraith's sent somebody to the door to tell me to come back. But because of my pride, I couldn't go back. I didn't like letting people down.
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73.

74.



75.

76.

### Leaving Glengowan

77. I was in Glengowan for eighteen months. I got parked out for drinking on Hogmanay 1983. Me and my pal bought four cases of lager and two bottles of Smirnoff vodka. We were only seventeen and a half. I had become a great saver in Glengowan. When I left, I had £650. That was quite a lot of money in 1983.
78. I was glad I got parked out. Glengowan wasn't a good experience for me. I got my own place. My drinking had been kicking in. I had nobody to answer to. I didn't have a mother or a father, aunties or uncles. So taking to drink wasn't a problem for me and I took to it like a duck to water. I loved it. I loved going out with the boys. I couldn't wait to get my passport. I was baby faced so I carried my passport about with pride to get into the pubs.
79. When I left, my brothers were still in Glengowan. I was given a flat and it was all done up. When KAV came out, he stayed with me until he got his flat. When 

came out, he stayed with KAV until he got his flat. They couldn't cope so they ended up staying together. I had a partner who gave me a bit of security.

### **Reporting of abuse**

80. I never told anybody. I had nobody to tell. I had a best friend at school, but I couldn't talk about things like that. I was the oldest brother. We came from the Gorbals. I couldn't talk about emotions. Who was going to talk to me about bed wetting? I was embarrassed as it was. I just had to get on with it. It was just the way it was. Who was I going to complain to? I couldn't tell our mum and dad. I couldn't tell our social worker, even though he might have had an inkling of what was going on. I just went along with it and tried to find a solution myself.

### **Life after leaving care**

81. When I first came out of Glengowan, my friend and I were sharing a flat. In 1983, we were putting £20 a week each aside for food. We were eating like kings. Six to eight weeks along, we started putting £15 a week aside. A couple of months later, £10 each, weeks later, £5 each until all our money was going on drink. was a baker so we lived off leftover sausage rolls, pies and bridies. I didn't know it was happening at the time but drink had taken over.
82. I had started going out with my ex-wife in Glengowan. By seventeen, eighteen, we were engaged. At nineteen, twenty, we were having our first daughter. We should never have been together. We were too young. We were just frightened kids. We grew up in a horrible environment. She had the same kind of background as me, violence in the family then into the homes. I think we were clinging to each other. We were together for twenty two years. We've got two beautiful daughters and four grandchildren. We're not talking to each other now. That has more to do with my alcoholism than anything else.

83. I walked my youngest daughter down the aisle. I was terrified. I used to think about their wedding days when they were thirteen, fourteen. I didn't know how I'd do it without a drink in me. I did it, but I was frightened. When I didn't walk the other daughter down the aisle, I was devastated. It was the most painful thing I've ever experienced. My ex-wife walked her down the aisle, not because I was dead or on the drink but because we'd split up. But I'll forgive her. My daughter's back in my life now. She's a well-balanced girl and she's got a great job.
84. I didn't see my father for 27 years. He cuffed my half-brother and sister's mother, [REDACTED] I was seventeen and a half at the time. I thought he was never going to change. I never saw him until my mother died in 2010. I never asked him why he'd done those things to my mother. I've had to be forgiven. I've done things I shouldn't have done.
85. My dad's an example for me of where I don't want to go. When I first saw him after 27 years, he was in a caravan in a field in Ireland. I went in and the cans and whisky bottles crunched under my feet. I could go there if I lift a drink again, so I use him as an example. Three years later, he was assaulted. He was stabbed three times in the neck with a bread knife, he had seventy stitches in his head, he was stabbed in the chest, both his arms were broken and he was in a coma for 27 days. He came out of the coma and he still talked about whisky. That's how powerful the drink is.
86. I've had to take my brothers' pain and my mother's ex-partner. They don't understand how I can visit my father. I don't know how I can visit him, but I can. I know he did all these horrible things. He ruined two families. My half-sister has changed her name because she's ashamed of him. I know what damage my father did to her mother. But I'm still planning my father's funeral. Who else is going to do it? I think my faith has helped me to forgive. If I don't say my prayers in the morning, my day goes pear shaped. I've got a faith, I say my prayers, but I don't need to go to Mass every week like I was forced to do as a boy.

## Impact

87. Thank goodness I didn't touch drugs because I'd be dead today. I was greedy back then. I was a liar, a cheat and a thief and I got right into my drinking. I did things I shouldn't have done. I don't do that today. I was hiding in a bottle. I was drinking to block everything out. Now, because I'm not drinking, I can talk about things. I can see where I was going off track. Back then, I had nobody to answer to or give me a boot up the rear end, which was what I needed.
88. I hid everything in that bottle, from the age of 13 to 33 and a half. I loved my daughter and she loved me. She'd wrap her arms around me. She would be crying, begging me to take her to the football. But my mind was made up. I knew I was going for a drink. My wife would be shouting, "Take the wean with you, you dirty, rotten bastard." I couldn't because I was obsessed with drink. I'd go out of the door and the tears would roll down my cheeks. I hated myself. I didn't know the power of drink at that time. It stripped me of everything. My aunty asked why I never bought a house. I told her I could've bought three, but I bought the barman his house, his big car and his boat.
89. I came off the drink for the first time when I was 33. I loved being sober. My friend used to talk about when I stayed with my two daughters in the high flats in the Gorbals. He thought it was like Count Dracula's house because the curtains were always drawn and it was dark and dreary. Then he said I got off the drink and moved to a house with a front and back garden, the kids smiling again and people alive. I was like Jekyll and Hyde. I was in a dark, dark place and Alcoholics Anonymous, AA, got me out of it.
90. This big guy took me on at AA in 1998. He was a hard man. He said he had to be. He said I was going to be a big job. We laugh about it today, but I've always had to be ahead of everybody. I can tell a wide guy a mile away. I see guys like that at work. I was like that in the late seventies. I did things because I had to survive. When I first attended AA meetings, my tummy would rumble, I would sweat, I would fidget about in my chair. I thought I was going to fart. I was in such a state I couldn't look

anybody in the eye. The big guy would toughen me up. I think highly of him. He's met my family. I went back out for four and a half years, drinking, and it was hell. I went to back to my sponsor's house and he welcomed me in, gave me a hug and a cup of tea. I've been off the drink for nearly eight years and it's a great place to be.

91. I love children. I don't know whether that was in my genes or because we looked after each other in Smyllum. I became a kinship carer for my ex-partner's granddaughter, [REDACTED]. She used to come down on a Friday night, stinking of smoke. We would put her in the bubble bath and take her shopping the next day. We would buy her clothes. She turned up like that every week. It was the same cycle every week. We'd never see the clothes again, so we started keeping them. We loved her and she wanted to stay with us.
92. She was two years of age when we first took her. She was like the exorcist. She would spit in your face, swear, kick lumps out of you. We turned her around. She started going to swimming, Irish dancing and gymnastics. She went on holidays, to nursery and school. She became top of the class. She was blooming. She became a wee lady. She used to hide behind me, then she would be dancing and smiling because she got love and stability.
93. [REDACTED] case went to court and the social work decided she had to go back to her mother. They sent her back on Christmas day. Her mother had to carry her out over her shoulders because she didn't want to go. The tears were rolling down my cheeks. She made eye contact with me, "Grandpa, why are you not helping me?" It was heart breaking. I had to let her go because there was nothing I could do. She drew a picture before her wee sister was born. It was me, her granny, [REDACTED] and her wee sister. She loves me and I love her. You can't buy that. I would take in a child off the street. I've been to the schools in Africa. I've done a lot of good things since getting sober.
94. I was clever, but I could never put myself forward for anything. Being in care had such an effect on me. I went to one school meeting for my daughters in all my days because of lack of confidence. I've had to learn. I was offered a job as a plumber's

apprentice, but I couldn't accept it. I would never put myself forward at football. I couldn't put myself forward for anything. I've always worked, but I've had lots of different jobs. I feel inadequate. I don't feel good enough. That's the effect being in care has on you. I was full of shame. I always beat myself up and take things to heart, even to this day.

95. Things get to me. I break down regularly. I've struggled with relationships. My friend [REDACTED] is the nicest and kindest woman I've ever met and I push her away. She knows I'm doing it. It's my coping mechanism because of the effect of my childhood. My brother's partner says the same thing, the [REDACTED] can't take affection. I couldn't push a pram when my daughter was born. I carried her on my shoulders. I couldn't handle love or cuddles. I started getting that when my daughters came along. When I went to AA, people started hugging me. I couldn't take a hug. That didn't happen the way I grew up. I've struggled to give and take affection.
96. I'm still in touch with a lot of other people from Smyllum. I've got friends for life from my time in there. We might not see each other for years, but we know where we came from. They became like brothers and sisters. My best friend, [REDACTED] was in Smyllum. A lot of the people in there couldn't handle life. They turned to drink and drugs. Two of the girls became murderesses. One is in Cornton Vale and one hung herself. Some became prostitutes to feed their habits. It's scary.
97. I've had pain. I've suffered. I came off the drink seven and a half years ago. Since then, my mother's died and my father was in a coma for 27 days. I lost contact with my two daughters. My ex-partner walked my daughter down the aisle and I've not seen my daughters for three years. I've not seen my four grandchildren for three years. I became homeless last year and I came out of a twelve year relationship. It's been a lot to deal with, but I didn't lift a drink. I'm still going, I'm still laughing.
98. The doctor wants me to go and see a psychologist or a psychiatrist. Life batters and bruises you. I've never had any kind of counselling. I told the doctor that even though I'm on medication, I'm breaking down. I try to push people away and isolate myself. I don't know how to accept people caring for me because I never had it. I've learned

that in AA and now I love taking cuddles and giving them out. I look for good examples and positive people. I try and learn from them. I've had so much negativity. I've had to survive. I've felt like jumping in the Clyde, not so long ago.

99. I'm not a saint but I try to live a decent life and help people. It has an effect on you. I've had a bowel operation, I've got sleep apnoea, diabetes, incontinence, a hernia, arthritis, stress and anxiety. I'm on fourteen tablets a day. I still try and help people because I know what it's like to be at the bottom of the pile. When life gets on top of me, I try and help somebody. I was a carer for people with down's syndrome and cerebral palsy. I like looking after people. When I'm helping somebody, it keeps me away from myself. I try to help one person each day.
100. All my life, I never had anybody to talk to. I couldn't talk to my brothers. I couldn't talk about it in the pub. I blocked it all with the bottle. Talking about emotions just didn't happen. I stopped drinking and I still break down. Being in care will probably have an impact on me for the rest of my life. I struggle with life, but I've got character and strength. Maybe if I hadn't been an alcoholic, I might not have learned how to cope. Now I'm able to talk about it. I had to be taught that it wasn't all my fault.

### **Lessons to be learned**

101. Kids are kids. Foster kids are no different. They need to be given a chance. You've got to love them. My experience is that if you don't, they'll turn to drink and drugs. If a child is passed about like a comic book, six months here, twelve months there, then on to somebody else, what must that do to his or her head? The child would just be getting used to one place and then get moved on. Kids want love and stability. Getting passed about from month to month is no good. I think a lot of foster carers are in it for money. I know that sometimes you have to have short term guardians, but if you want kids and you want to look after them, why not keep them? If you've got love in your heart, you've got to take them on.



102. What happens in your childhood leads to dark roads further ahead. I've experienced it. There's an epidemic of drink and drugs in Glasgow. There are three hundred AA meetings in this city, but you could put a nought on the end of that and it wouldn't be enough. It's the West of Scotland macho thing. The place is rife with drink and drugs. Damaged kids end up damaged adults. Kids have got to be protected and cared for. It's not a coincidence that all the kids I grew up with are damaged, drug addicts, alcoholics, prostitutes. If you don't look after kids, what about the next generation and the generation after that? Children need to be loved and looked after. I think it's worse now than it was. We might have stopped beatings and freezing baths, but unless we get looking after children right the epidemic of kids going off the rails will be on going.

### Final thoughts

103. I often wonder what happened to the nuns? Maybe it was sexual frustration. Maybe looking after twenty children was too difficult. I try to keep an open mind. They were going to Mass every morning. I wonder at what point they would think they were doing wrong? I know if I started beating up children today, I'd think I was doing wrong.
104. I've forgiven Sister AEG I went to visit her and gave her chocolates and flowers. She has an illness now [REDACTED]. When I was a boy, she had hands like shovels. I'm telling the truth and she's a woman of the cloth. I've forgiven her but I can't believe those staff members and those nuns don't come forward. If you're a woman of the habit, you should come and tell the truth.
105. If I don't forgive her, it'll make me bitter. My mother was bitter and twisted until the end. She never told us we had two half-sisters. She took it to the grave. I don't want to be like that. I'm not here to crucify that nun. I'm here to tell the truth. I didn't say anything to her. I've never questioned her, but I've tried to understand. I believe it was just the way it was in those days. I believe she wasn't the only one and that

many of them did it. I try to understand why you would do that. I can't for the life of me imagine doing that to my grandchildren.

106. At the chapel at St Mary's in Lanark, there's a big cross to commemorate all the Smyllum boys who died in the two Great Wars. The priest changed it to commemorate Smyllum boys and Lanark boys. I didn't think it was right because it was ours. I still have a sense of pride in where I came from. I've got a bond with the people I was in Smyllum with. We called ourselves the Smyllum boys. I didn't know the boys who were killed in the Wars, but that's why in some sense I felt protective of them. I have a sense of pride that I was the last boy to leave it. When I read that there were 11,601 children at Smyllum, I said, "That one is me."
107. 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.....

ABZ

Dated.....

8/12/17