

Scottish Child Abuse Inquiry

Witness Statement of

FDA

Support person present: Yes.

1. My name is FDA. My date of birth is 1951. My contact details are known to the Inquiry.

Life before going into care

2. I am the fourth eldest child of ten. My other siblings are FBS who was born in 1947, FBV was born 1949. The others were born 1950, FCZ born 1952, FDB born 1953, born 1955, and who is now deceased was born in 1957. was born in 1958 and who is now deceased was born in 1959.
3. My mother was always called although her name was actually. My father had been in the army and that was the reason for me being born in Singapore.
4. When we stayed in Stirling before moving to Dundee my brother FDB lost when he was run over by a lorry. He was about three years old when it happened. I still call him. We think there was some compensation paid out but father probably used it for alcohol.
5. FBS was my half-sister. When she was about three years old my father sexually abused her. I did not find out about this until I was much older. FBV told us he witnessed some of the abuse. I remember one time mum visited me at my house while FBS was there. Mum started singing a song, it might have been "Bridge Over Troubled Water" or something like that. FBS started getting upset saying she hated that song because when dad sang it meant she was to go to the bedroom to be abused.

6. I was about two and a half when we came back to Scotland and stayed first in Stirling then moved to [REDACTED] Dundee. This was a two bedroomed house and although there was a kitchen the cooking was done on a coal fire. We even drank out of 'jeelie' or jam jars.
7. We were happy at the house but there was not a lot of money coming in. What money we did have my dad was drinking it away. We did not have a lot and just took life as it came. At that time we had never stolen anything or caused any bother.
8. My mother left us and part of the reason was that dad was always making her pregnant. When my mum left, an aunt would come from Stirling, to try to help dad out. My sister [REDACTED] went to stay with my aunt as she could not have any children and later she adopted her. When [REDACTED] was leaving my dad actually sold her for a fiver to my aunt. He was later charged by the police for that.
9. My mother did write to social work explaining she had left and that my dad's three sisters were trying to help the family but that did not last long. When the social work became involved, the three youngest children were taken to a children's shelter first. The other six of us stayed for a while with dad until I ended up in hospital with impetigo. When I was better we were also moved to the shelter. We were only there for a short time before being fostered by the BGC family.

The BGC family foster care, [REDACTED], [REDACTED]

10. It was in 1959 that we were placed with the BGC family at [REDACTED], [REDACTED]. [REDACTED] The social work took the six oldest children to the house in a car. This was a four bedroomed mid terraced house. The bathroom was upstairs along with four bedrooms. We used those rooms with girls in one and the boys in the other. Downstairs was the living room, kitchen and two other bedrooms. Those bedrooms were used by Mrs BGC and her sons LAR and FCC. Mrs BGC had three children FCC, LAR and FJP. I never knew Mrs BGC first name as she wanted us just to call her aunty BGC.

11. FJP did not stay at the house as she had her own one bedroom flat nearby. We stayed there one day and when she was watching television we had to sit with our backs to it. If we moved our head to see what was on she would slap us.

Routine at BGC

12. Mrs BGC had three children. FCC and FJP were the really cruel ones. They carried out the abuse. There was another son LAR but he never hit us.
13. For the first month or so we stayed in one of the bedrooms upstairs. We were then moved to a room, like an old maids room, which was just off the rear of the kitchen. I called it a room but really it was a big cupboard as there was not much more room than a double bed. The boys slept at one end of the bed and us girls at the other.
14. At night Mrs BGC would send us all to bed early and lock us in this room. She would leave a pail with us to use if we needed the toilet. After getting up in the morning we were allowed to use the outside toilet. I don't know why we were locked in the room as there was nowhere for us to go without being seen.
15. To start with we shared a bed in that small room but over time it got broken and it was just a mattress left. Near the end, when it was just FCZ and I, we only had camp beds to sleep on but no blankets. During the winter we had to use some of the coats to keep us warm as there was no heating.
16. FDB had problems with bed wetting and it happened a lot. Whenever he wet the bed Mrs BGC would put him in a cold bath and then she would have to wash the sheets herself. FCC and FJP would walk us to the beach and make us push FDB into the sea. This was their way to try to get him to stop wetting the bed. If we did not push him into the sea they would batter us.
17. We were not usually allowed to watch much television but when Mrs BGC was out, LAR her youngest son, would let us watch it. We had to get to the room before she

was due home so we would not get caught. LAR would have been about eighteen at that time.

18. The main reason we were moved out of the upstairs bedrooms was Mrs BGC began taking in lodgers. This was around the time when the Tay Bridge was being built and they worked on it. Two of them stayed in one room and the other stayed in the second room. One was an older guy and he used to give us sweets. I think he knew what was going on because apart from giving us the sweets he would also invent and tell us stories.
19. Any time any of us had to have the doctors come in for a check-up or get some treatment we were taken to one of the upstairs room and pretend this was ours.
20. One time when I was unwell the doctor came and I was given syrup of figs and ended up being sick all over the bed. FJP battered me for that, even as she made me strip and make the bed again she was hitting me.

Food

21. In the morning we were woken about six o'clock. We would be sent to the bakers to get some rolls for the lodgers. Sometimes she had asked for Corn Flakes. We were so hungry and when he went to the rear we tried to sneak some rolls into our pockets. We would take them to the room and eat them there. The lodgers would get a cooked breakfast which we would have to serve to them each day. If there was any food left on the plate we would eat it on the way back to the kitchen.
22. We were only given toast and porridge in the morning and I would put salt in it. I got slapped for putting the salt in. If we did not eat the porridge we were given a slap by Mrs BGC For lunch we were given some sandwiches at the house. At tea time we had the main meal but there was never enough to eat, or to keep the hunger away. At night we were asked to make the lodgers toast. We would cut the toast up but always take some slices off the bread for ourselves.

23. She would give us money for milk but we would steal some from doorsteps and keep the money and share it among ourselves. Sometimes when we were at church, instead of putting money in, FDB would take money out from the collection bowl. Any money we got we would hide at a garden near the play park. When we were allowed to play by ourselves we would get the money and treat ourselves to something.
24. One day FDB came home with some cakes. He told us the baker was putting out all the unsold cakes for the pigs and FDB was taking them. We were so hungry we did not care.

Schooling

25. About eight o'clock we would go to school, initially we still went to Dundee and had to get the bus to school. This lasted for a short time before we transferred to the local primary at [REDACTED]
26. There was a time when Mrs BGC was washing some pillow cases and as we were getting ready to go to school she hit us over the head with the wet linen. In the afternoon we were only back in the house about five or ten minutes after school and we would have to set the tables ready for the lodgers tea. It did not leave us much time after this before being locked in the room.
27. Some of the other chores in the afternoon were to make the lodgers beds in the house and clean the toilets. After tea and all the dishes were done we were sent to bed. When you were given any chores you never argued. If you tried to refuse you were given a slap by either FJP or FCC Other than making the meals Mrs BGC never did any of the household chores, it was always us.
28. At the weekends we did the same chores. Sometimes the lodgers might be staying while others would go home. Mrs BGC would let us out to play afterwards and sometimes we were allowed to go down to the beach.

Visits/inspections

29. In the beginning mum would come and visit us about twice a year. She then reduced them to once a year and then she stopped visiting altogether. She would tell us she was trying to get a place where we could go back with her. I told her about what was happening but she said there was nothing she could do. My dad never visited us and I never saw him after I went into care. He died when I was about nineteen or twenty.
30. We didn't see the social work much after we went into the foster home. When they did come Mrs BGC would show them up to the bedroom upstairs, telling them that was where we stayed. When they visited we were too scared to say anything was wrong. We never saw the social workers on our own, she was always there.

Birthdays/Christmas

31. For Christmas we were given a colouring in book and a sweetie from Mrs BGC I remember we were given a watch from mum but Mrs BGC took it off us and I never saw it again. When we went to the Sunday School we would be given some sweets. On the way home we ate some of them but again Mrs BGC took them off us and we never got the rest. If the lodgers were there we would have a Christmas dinner, otherwise it was just another day.
32. The only thing that happened at birthdays was we would get a card from my mum.

Holidays

33. There were two holidays whilst I was with the BGC both were organised by the social work. One of them I can't remember where we went, but the other we went to Arbroath. We stayed with another foster family for two weeks. They were really good to us. We did not tell them anything, just in case it got back to the BGC

Abuse at BGC

34. One day FJP said she would batter me on my return from school. She said it was because I had stolen a pen for school. I said we were not going home to get a beating and I ran away.
35. This was the first time of me running away. When the incident with the wet pillow cases took place FCZ and I ran away. We ended up walking to Dundee and went to the social work. FJP had been on a bus and saw us. She got off the bus and walked us back. She battered us on the way back and continued until we got home.
36. When we were moved downstairs there was only one time we had a bath again upstairs, the rest of the time it was the old fashioned deep sink in the kitchen. One time when we were using the proper bath FJP washed my hair and she held my head under the water. She grabbed me by the hair, pulled me up and then held my head under the water again.
37. FJP was not the only one who hit us. FCC would use a belt or a stick to beat us, and he usually did this in his room. There was one time when FCC put a pillow over FBV's face and he kept it there until he passed out. He did this in his room as he never wanted anyone seeing him hitting us with anything.
38. FJP was really bad with FBS. She got more beatings than the rest of us. While hitting FBS she would be calling her names like slut.
39. Sometimes Mrs BGC, FCC and FJP would put soap powder on the chocolate biscuits. She did this just to make us ill. FCZ was made to eat one of the biscuits. It was common for FCC and FJP just to give you a slap as they walked passed by. You did not have to do anything they just liked hitting us.
40. It was always FCC and FJP that did the beatings. Mrs BGC was cruel but nothing as bad as her two children. FJP would also use a wooden spoon to hit us. LAR probably did not know how much abuse we were getting as he was either at his girlfriends or away playing his guitar. I am not sure but he might have been in a band.

41. Sometimes we would steal some biscuits or other food just to survive. I remember when one of the big supermarkets opened and I got caught. I had to give them my name and phone number. When they tried the number there was no answer and they let me off.

Leaving foster care

42. **FBS** was the first to leave the foster home, but we were never told why or where she went. Later **FDB** and **FBV** left in the same manner, no reason just there one day and gone the next. The last to leave was **FCZ** and I and we were together for about two years before we moved on. We never knew where the older ones went. During those two years the chores still had to be done and that meant it was divided between **FCZ** and I.
43. One time I ran away on my own and I went up a hill. My pal would be at her window of her house nearby and I got her to throw a sandwich. Her mum would shout when it was time to go home but I slept in a shed overnight. I still went to school the next day. When I got into the classroom I was told the head teacher wanted to see me in his room. When I went to his room the police were there. I was told they had been looking for me all night.
44. While they were speaking to me they saw the old bruises under the skin. I was too scared to say anything. When the social work arrived they got **FCZ** from the school and we were taken out to their car. We were still scared to say anything in case they left us at the house and we would be battered again. We went to the house and then we were all taken away and moved to the children's shelter again.
45. Mrs **BGC** just seemed to be in it for the money. She was getting all the money from the social work for looking after us and more from taking in lodgers as well. She just wanted us as skivvies to look after her and her family. She certainly never gave us any pocket money.

Life after being at **BGC**

46. After being in the children's shelter we were sent to Mrs [REDACTED] at [REDACTED] [REDACTED]. She had a three bedroomed house and all her kids were grown up and away from the family house. She had fostered many kids before we arrived. Her husband was there for about a year maybe two before he passed away.
47. I was probably about twelve when we arrived. We asked what we were to call her and she said whatever we liked. It could be mum, granny or whatever we wanted. I started with Mrs [REDACTED] as I was still scared. At the beginning I would still sneak some dried bread and hide it under the pillows. We thought she would only be nice for a little while then turn out to be the same as Mrs BGC [REDACTED] FCZ [REDACTED] and I shared one of the bedrooms. Mrs [REDACTED] later took on her nephew and fostered him as well. It took a while to settle in, but when we did it was really good there.
48. Whenever the social work sent money to get us some clothes Mrs [REDACTED] took us to the Co-op and made sure we got what we liked. We were allowed plenty of time to play and watch television when we wanted.
49. We did chores at Mrs [REDACTED] but it was not the same. We were not forced to help. We did it because we wanted to. We did some while she went out to work at a toy factory.
50. I stayed in the primary school until the summer break and then FCZ [REDACTED] and I went to the high school. We had a great time staying there. Even when I got married I would visit her and help with some of the housework. She never asked for that I just wanted to do it and pay her back in a small way. Before she passed away she even asked if I would come back and help look after her son [REDACTED] who still stayed there. I did that as well.
51. I started work when I was about fifteen years old, as a machinist at a factory at Dunfermline. After a short time I left there for another factory with better wages. I married in 1971 and have three children, [REDACTED], [REDACTED] and [REDACTED] along with three grandchildren. I did have another grandchild, [REDACTED] but she died when she was three years old.

52. Our first marital home was in Kelty, before we moved back to [REDACTED]. We got a bigger house there when [REDACTED] was born. When my kids were growing up I got job as a school cleaner. For many years my husband suffered from depression and we split after thirty eight years together.

Reporting of abuse at BGC [REDACTED] [REDACTED]

53. [REDACTED] tried to report some of the abuse. He had been to the police and the social work department but no one was listening to him. He had been running away and was looking for someone to do something, but nobody did.
54. I am sure the neighbours knew what was going on. They must have heard us crying when we were being battered. The woman at the corner shop who we called Auntie Anne knew something was going on as well, but like the neighbours nobody said anything.
55. When I was at Mrs [REDACTED] I did tell her some of the things that happened at the BGC [REDACTED]. After the social work and police saw the bruises on FCZ [REDACTED] and I, I am not sure what, if any, action was taken by them.

Impact

56. Because of FJP [REDACTED] pushing me under the water I still can't go swimming without being scared. For a long time I couldn't even have showers without the same effect.
57. I tried not to allow my life in care affect me. I was married and that was my life. My time with Mrs [REDACTED] had a very positive effect on my life. Where I tried not to dwell on it my sister FCZ [REDACTED] had a big chip on her shoulder about her time in care.
58. When the six of us were ever together some of the stories of our time in care would come out and they were all horrendous.

59. Years ago FCZ and I found out where LAR was staying. We were going to visit him but we did not get round to it, as he said he would let his brother and sister know. We later phoned his house and saw LAR wife as he had passed away. told us when she and LAR went to see his mother in Aberdeen their kids were treated horribly and the kids asked not to go back. At that time FCC and FJP had also moved to Aberdeen. About three or four years ago FCC and FJP both died, one after the other.

Records

60. I did get some of my records a few years ago but there is not much to them. The social work said our records were destroyed in a fire, but they did have some of the other family. The ones I have are only copies of what FCZ received.

Other information

61. We saw a film or something about the abuse in Ireland and that led us to contacting this Inquiry. We heard that people were at last being listened to and that was why we came forward. It is giving us some closure for what happened.
62. I hope the Inquiry can get help for the kids now and in the future. There should be an avenue available for neighbours to report things even if it is anonymous to the police
63. People involved in child care should not be in it for the money. Any money that is given should be used for the benefit of the kids. Where kids are placed in care with a family they should be treated as the same as the natural kids. I have seen a family near to where we were and the foster kids were dressed different and poorer than the family children.
64. There has to be things put in place for people to report to authorities much easier than it is today. Authorities should also carry out spot checks on the foster care premises and the families so it will be easier to find out about abuse. They should take kids out

for the day and maybe they will relax enough to trust they can tell what is happening to them.

- 65. Play therapy should be compulsory in a certain age bracket. This would provide an environment for them to speak freely. This should be independent from the social work department. They need a "Who Cares" worker. This allows for trust to be built up between the kids and carers.
- 66. When kids are being looked after properly the social work needs to stop concentrating on them and start concentrating on families with kids not being looked after. They might be more difficult to care for but they are the ones needing it more.
- 67. 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.... FDA

Dated..... 10/8/2018