

**Scottish Child Abuse Inquiry**

Witness Statement of

**MND**

Support person present: No

1. My full name is **MND**. My preferred name is **MND**. My date of birth is **1959**. My contact details are known to the Inquiry.

**Life before attending St Joseph's College**

2. I was born and brought up in Glasgow. I lived with my parents and four siblings. My mother was a teacher of modern languages at Notre Dame High School in Glasgow. My father was a musician and had a job on BBC Radio Orchestra. He was from America and met my mother during the war.
3. I had three older sisters and a brother. My sisters were **10**, who was ten years older than me, **6**, who was about six years older than me, and **4** who was about four years older than me. My brother, **2**, was two years older than me.
4. I went to St Peter's Roman Catholic Primary School in Partick, Glasgow. My brother was at the same school as me, but my sisters went to Notre Dame School, where my mum worked. School was comfortable for me and went smoothly.
5. My mother had an uncle, and before he died, he told my mother that he had money behind a mirror in his house. He told my mum to take it and give my brother and I a good education. I think this was as a result of my mum voicing her concern about the secondary school we were due to go to, where a boy had gotten his eye poked out during a fight.

6. My mother decided that St Joseph's College in Dumfries was a good option for us. My mum was active with the church so I think that influenced her decision to send us there. It was also the second cheapest of the private fee paying schools. The school had a connection with the Celtic Football Club. The marketing of the school was really good and it had a good profile, which I think influenced her decision to send us there.

### **St Joseph's College, Dumfries – visit and preparation**

7. My parents took my brother and I to St Joseph's College for a visit before we started. This was when I was ten years old.
8. When we drove up to the school, there was a magnificent roundabout with flowers as you came in through the gates, and it led up to a really fancy doorway. This was their shop window and it was impressive.
9. We would have met with a couple of staff members when we went. We would have met the SNR [REDACTED] and a couple of others, but I can't remember the details.
10. I remember my mum later asking if we wanted to go there and making sure that we were ok with it. I was just young, so I said that I was.
11. There was a lot of preparation to be done before we started. The school allocated you a number; it was a bit like prison. They then sent a line of cloth for both my brother and me, with our numbers printed on it. My mum had to cut them up and sew our numbers into each item of our clothing. My number was [REDACTED] and [REDACTED] was [REDACTED].
12. My parents were sent a list of things to buy for us before we started. They had to get us our uniforms from a specific shop, and I remember going there to get measured. There were also things like stationary and pencil cases, and maybe even books that they had to buy.

13. I can't remember if there was an assessment done before we went in, to see where we were academically.

### **St Joseph's College, Dumfries**

#### *First day*

14. My brother, [REDACTED], and I started the boarding school on [REDACTED] 1969. I was ten years old and [REDACTED] was twelve.
15. My dad drove us to the college in his blue van. My mum and two of my sisters came to say farewell too. They were told to drive to the back door to drop us off with our things. We didn't go through the fancy front door that we had gone through on the initial visit. It was like they had us in now and so there would be no more fancy stuff.
16. During my time as St Joseph's, the boys were told not to go to the front of the school. That was their shop window and they didn't want the kids there. Maybe it was because of the horticulture. Ironically, a few years later, when I was in the front garden with a few boys, we saw hypodermic needles under a bush. There had also been an incident around the time when I started when some of the senior pupils were dabbling with hard drugs.
17. When we arrived, a member of staff met us at the back door but I can't remember who it was. It may have been the SNR [REDACTED].
18. Going to boarding school felt a bit disempowering. It was like I was being marched to a cliff end, and let go. I was polite about saying goodbye to my parents and gave them cuddles, but I didn't know what was going to be on the other side of the door after they left. I didn't know what was happening.
19. After my parents left us there, what started was a horrific fortnight of homesickness. It was a strange place with strange smells. I was shown to my dormitory, which was an

open dormitory. I had a bed with a metal bed frame and a wooden locker. That was my world. It was horrendous.

20. I met Brother MFU who was called my "rec master," which meant he was in charge of the junior dormitory. He was a shouty man with an Irish accent. He set out the rules and it was like meeting your sergeant major. He was terrifying, and everything you would expect in a nightmare master. He had a [REDACTED], he was a drinker and he was incapable of talking quietly.
21. I think there was a point where it became apparent that I was homesick and in pain. I think there was a moment when someone put their hand on my shoulder and said it would be ok. The transition between being really homesick, and then being ok was quite quick. Maybe survival instincts kicked in.

*Structure and layout*

22. The place was ran by the Marist Brothers. The SNR was Brother MYZ. There were about twenty to thirty brothers who worked there.
23. The ages of boys ranged from ten years old to sixteen years old. The classes started from primary six and seven, then onto first year and right through to sixth year. It was strange the way they named the classes. Primary 6 was called "control 2" and primary 7 was called "control 1."
24. I think there were about 300 boys in the school, but maybe more. There were some day pupils, but not many. Girls started to get introduced into classes, and they definitely weren't boarding. There were also some boys from around the Dumfries area who only boarded Monday to Friday, but went home at the weekends.
25. I became friendly with a boy called [REDACTED] whose number was [REDACTED], and [REDACTED] who was [REDACTED]. The [REDACTED] family boys also went to the school. Their dad owned a [REDACTED] company. One of the boys had the number [REDACTED]

26. The main building was like a stately home. It was about four stories high. When you walked into the building, there was a big picture of the queen on one side and the founder of the school on the other.
27. There were four divisions in the school. There were the juniors, the intermediates, the mids and the seniors. I think the juniors were the primary 6 and 7 classes, and also first years. Then the inters were either first and second years, or just the second years. The mids were third and fourth years and the seniors were fifth and sixth years.
28. Kids moved dormitories as you got older and went into different divisions.
29. There were four levels in the building. The fourth level, which was at the top, is where the juniors' and inters' dormitories were. If you were to face the front of the building, the juniors were on the left side of the building, and the inters were on the right. Then the mids were on the third level, on the right hand side, directly below the inters. On the left hand side of the third level, below the juniors, there were cubicles, showers and the matron's room.
30. There was an open dormitory for the juniors, which had about twelve beds in it. It also had about six smaller rooms, just off the dorm, on each side. There were about four beds in each of the rooms. The room in the top right corner, just off the dormitory, belonged to Brother MFU, who was in charge of the juniors. The rest of the rooms were occupied by the kids.
31. There was a new building on the end of the existing building, which I think had a spill over of the juniors in it too.
32. The inters also had an open dormitory, and that had only two rooms going off it. Brother AKV was in one of those rooms, and I think he was their rec master. Brother Damian was in the other room, and he was succeeded by another brother who looked like a biker.

33. There was a rec master for the mids, and I think his room was in close proximity to the dormitory. I think Brother **MLX** was their rec master for a while. When I was in the mids, Brother **MFT** was the rec master.
34. The fifth and sixth years were in a separate building, called "the mount," which was behind the main building. It was a substantial sandstone building. The senior dormitories were on the top two floors. The dormitory had rooms off it, and the prefects got the rooms. I don't think the seniors' rec master was next to the dormitory.
35. The classrooms for control one and control two were in the mount building, and there was an eating area for the brothers there too.
36. There was a recreation hall for the juniors, which was behind the mount. There was a red, lead painted corrugated church building, which was used as the rec room for the mids.
37. I was in the junior section when I first went in and was in the open dormitory on the 4<sup>th</sup> floor of the main building. As you walked into the dorm, my bed was on the left. I can't remember if **█** was in the same dorm as me.
38. While I was still in first year, I was moved to the new building, which was an extension that had been added on to the end of the main building. I remember watching the 1970 European football cup final in the new part of the building.

### **Routine at St Joseph's College**

#### *Daily routine*

39. In the junior dormitory, Brother **MFU** came out of his room in the morning to wake us up. He would bang on the lights and then walk to the middle of the dormitory and bang his hands together as loudly as he could, and shout in a booming voice "get up now, get up now." I think that was about 7:30 am.

40. We would get up and clean our teeth. There was a washroom at the end of the dormitory. It had sinks and bidet type things for washing your feet. We would wash our face and clean our teeth there in the morning. There was a row of toilets on the landing, just along from the dormitory that we used. Then we would get dressed and go downstairs to the refectory for breakfast.
41. We had classes after breakfast. We stayed in class until lunch time. I think lunch time was at about 12 noon.
42. We had a two hour lunch break, during which we would have our lunch then go to our dorms and get changed into our sports gear. Then we would walk the best part of a mile to the playing fields, which was called Murrayfield. It used to be an airfield used by the RAF, and I don't know if it now belonged to St Joseph's.
43. We would play organised football, cricket or rugby, and then walk back again. We would get washed, cleaned and dressed, before going back to class. We used to sometimes get taken swimming to a pool by the River Nith during the two hour lunch break.
44. Afternoon classes were from 2 pm until 5 pm. Then there was a break of an hour to have our dinner.
45. As a junior, we went back to class from 6 pm until 7.30 pm. This was study period, supervised by the Marist Brother teachers, as the lay teachers had left for the day. It was done in silence.
46. After the study period, there was some recreation time, in the rec hall. Then we got ready for bed. There was some time in bed with the lights on so we could have a natter, and lights out were at 9 pm for the junior division. I think it was about 9:30 pm for the inters and 10 pm for the mids. The seniors maybe got to stay up until 10:30 pm, but I'm not sure.

47. In hindsight, I've often thought the structure of the day was deliberately packed to prevent us from causing any hassle for the staff.

*Mealtimes and food*

48. At mealtimes, we sat in our divisions in different canteens, which were open areas. We sat six people to a table. The brother who was in charge of that division would sit at a table on an elevated platform, overlooking everyone. I don't know if they ate the same food as us, but it would have been stupid for them not to.
49. Mealtimes were a whole ritual. We would say grace before eating. Punishments also got meted out at mealtimes in front of everybody.
50. The food would be brought in on trollies. Breakfast was alright. You got a bowl of cereal or porridge, which was fine. You also got a roll and butter, with tea.
51. The food at lunch was the worst. You got overcooked vegetables, and what felt like sub-standard meats. The stews that were served made you want to be sick.
52. The staple at every dinner time was chips in a porcelain bowl. It was as if they had been left in huge quantities to cook slowly in the oven. When they got to us, the top layer was crispy, and underneath, they were just congealed and leathery. We would get that every day with a slice of pork luncheon meat with egg in the middle, or something similar.
53. It was outside staff who did the cooking. There was a lack of variety of food, and the food was really terrible. That was one of the major traumas for me when I started there.
54. There was a lot of food that was left uneaten at mealtimes because it was just so bad. We didn't have to eat the food if we didn't want to. In hindsight, I can see it is because they didn't care. They just put the food out for us and didn't care if we ate it or not.



55. I remember seeing a lorry parked at the back of the school. One of the boys told me to look inside and there was a dead horse in the back of it. It was a bit creepy and like something out of a Hitchcock film. I don't understand how they couldn't see that it was inappropriate to leave that there. This happened on more than one occasion and was something the boys spoke about. You wondered what the stew we were eating was made from.
56. There was an eating area for the brothers in the mount. We would get taken there when my parents came to visit, and suddenly all the good food would come out.

*Washing and bathing*

57. The juniors had a washing area just off the dormitory, where you could wash your face and brush your teeth in the morning, or get cleaned up after sports.
58. The showers were on the third floor. There were also some showers in the new building, where some of the juniors slept. I don't remember a lot about shower times. I don't have any bad memories of shower times.

*Clothing and uniform*

59. We all had our own clothes with our numbers stitched into them. My number was [REDACTED] and I kept that number for the whole time I was there.
60. We wore a uniform and the school colours were blue and gold. The blazers were blue with gold piping.
61. My mother bought me short trousers to take to school. Most of the other boys at the school had long trousers, so that was a bit of a sore point. I eventually got long trousers later on.

62. There was a laundry bag that also had your number on it. You put your clothes to be washed in that, and they were taken away each week to be laundered, and brought back to you in the bag.

*School*

63. I started in the control 2 class, which was primary 6, and [REDACTED] started in first year. The classrooms for control one and control two were in the mount building. I stayed at the school until fifth year.
64. There were lay teachers that came in from outside to teach. The brothers also taught some of the classes. It was a roughly fifty-fifty split between lay teachers and Marist Brothers.
65. The main teacher I had in control 2 was an older guy who had had a stroke. He tended to just narrate anecdotes. He was an interesting guy. I think his name was either Brother Magnus or Brother George. In control 1, I had mainly Brother **AK**, who was into chess. I ended up joining the chess club.
66. As I went into first year, I was getting a mix of teachers, as the school was now serving a curriculum. This is where the lay teachers came in.
67. I remember the maths teacher, Margaret, who we called Meg. I think her surname was Grierson. There was a scary guy called **MNE** who taught [REDACTED], and was a sadistic bully. Mr Rinaldi was the history teacher. I quite liked him, and he liked me because I was good at drawing, and my book was full of good drawings. I was rubbish at history and managed to fail two history O levels in one year.
68. There was a music teacher called Jeffrey Davidson. Mr Fyfe, who I quite liked, taught English. There were also the art teachers who were all lay teachers. I came into contact with three art teachers, Mrs Thompson who was fine, and two male teachers whose names I can't remember. One of them was quite old and frail, but likeable. The other, younger one was fine too.

69. There were also the brothers who taught. There was Brother MFI who taught [REDACTED]. He was a heavy drinker and was a bit fond of using the tawse. He was very doddery and frail; I think he was drink damaged. He would always wear sandals. Brother Damian taught French.
70. We would sometimes get corporal punishment in class.
71. The education was probably as good as any other school. I don't really have any complaint about the teaching. Kids seemed to do well enough. Some kids would get a talking to if they weren't doing too well.
72. I did two sets of O levels, which were SCE and GCE exams. I got an A and three Bs for my Higher exams, which I was quite happy about. I got an A for my Higher Art, as did a girl from Dumfries Academy. I remember this turned heads because it was the first time anybody had gotten an A for art in the region, since the [REDACTED].
73. The brothers tried to steer you away from the arts and more towards traditional subjects. I was a source of frustration for them because I gravitated towards art and as I got older, spent as much time as I could in the art room.
74. I have some of the school annuals. I have one for 1971, which I appear in, from when I am in first year. I also have a couple that are from before I was there. They must have been given to my parents before I started.

*Leisure time and weekends*

75. We had some leisure time in the evening. You could play chess or table tennis in the rec hall for your division. Some kids had radios and cassette players they had brought with them, that they could listen to, or kids could read their comics.
76. There was also a go karting thing that had been set up by some of the boys. There was a rowing club, a running club, and probably other clubs that you could take part

in. I joined the chess club and the rowing club. I enjoyed the rowing; it was a beautiful experience to get out and on the river.

77. When we were older, there was some smoking and recreational drinking that went on. My favourite prank was to put red wine in a Vimto bottle. Then you could drink it as a brother was passing and they wouldn't have a clue.
78. We did a half day of school on a Saturday. You would then have time to loll about the dormitory or outside. The staff weren't keen on us going out of the building. Going into town was monitored quite heavily, but they let you go if you had a good reason.
79. I was quite a prolific reader, so I used to go into town to the library. We had to wear our school uniform if we went into town. I thought that was nuts, because the local boys in Dumfries would sometimes seek trouble when they saw your uniform.
80. There were boys from the local Dumfries area who went home at the weekends. They boarded Monday to Friday and they became mates. Sometimes, you could get permission to go and stay with them at their house at the weekends.
81. I made friends with a very interesting girl called [REDACTED] from a convent school in Dumfries, when I was in fifth year. I think I met her through rowing because the convent also had a rowing team. I got into a habit of visiting her and her mother at their home in Dumfries at the weekends. She would play the guitar and I would draw, so it was a little oasis for me to get through the year. I would disappear for most of Sunday to see them. The Marist Brothers hated this.
82. Brother **MFT** made a plan to micro manage me and stop me going out on Sundays. He had these playing cards with the silhouettes of fighter jets on them, which had been left by the RAF on a recruitment drive at the school. He gave me a pack of the cards, and on each card he had written a time. The times were fifteen minutes apart, and he told me I had to go to him at the time written on each card and hand the card to him. Basically, he wanted to keep an eye on me and I couldn't go very far if I had to go and give him these cards every fifteen minutes.

83. I eventually just thought, sod this, and stopped doing it. I was in fifth year and I was nearing the time that I was leaving so I was de-mob happy. They had less power over me then.

*Sporting activities*

84. I did play sport, but I felt like it was never managed properly. I remember being driven to Annan as a member of the Thirds Rugby team, to play against another team, on a miserable day. I was playing scrum half and we were playing with a very heavy leather ball, against a team that were about twice as heavy as us. The ball was like a slippery eel and it squirted out of my hands as I was giving a pass, and it broke my pal, [REDACTED] arm, in three places.
85. The sporting teams that were picked, got to go on jollies and it always stuck in my craw that I never got picked for sporting activities. It was a bit like the mafia, only certain kids would get picked. On the annual Whitsun sports day, the Presidents and Vice Presidents of the Parents' Association, and other officials, would attend. They would then get the sports teams to stand on the steps and get a photo taken. The son of the President was always in it.
86. I never felt like anybody was coming to see how good we were at the actual sports. They never saw us play or asked what we were good at, and I was good at football. It felt like nobody was managing us, or thinking about what was right for us. It felt a bit like they were just trying to keep a lid on us, on a day to day basis, with a full routine, instead of helping us grow.

*Day trips*

87. I remember a brother, who was tall and gawky, who used to take it upon himself to get the kids in the van and take them somewhere interesting. He came across as quite a trustworthy character, and I think he was genuinely just an outdoorsy type. I think his

name was Brother Francis. It could also have been Brother **AK** as both of them were tall and geeky, and took us out.

88. We were once taken to the Solway, where we went for a trek into the caves in between tides. It was scary because if the tide came in, you would be toast.
89. We were also taken to the extinct Criffel volcano one day, to have a paddle about in the water. The days out were quite good.
90. We weren't taken on any holidays because we went home to our parents for the holidays.

*Religious instruction*

91. There must have been prayers or something every day but I don't remember much about it. I don't remember them spending too much time telling us about the bible bumper book of fun. There was definitely a recital of the rosary by Brother **MFU** every night before bedtime, when I was in the juniors.
92. Mass was held every day, which we were welcome to attend. I did that for a while but then became disinterested and stopped. It wasn't compulsory. We had to go to mass every Sunday and that was compulsory. The church was within the grounds. We never went to any outside church.
93. There was a priest who lived within the grounds. He was a very unfortunate character who we called **ZMM**. He had been a tall, athletic character when he was younger, but he had **██████████** that **██████████** It continues to paint the tableau of a Polanski film. He was actually quite a nice man.

*Birthdays and Christmas*

94. My mother would bring food parcels for my birthday. You would get cards sent to you and you'd be able to put them on your locker. The school didn't make any real effort to acknowledge birthdays. It was a bit of a non-event.

95. We would go home for Christmas holidays, and have Christmas there.

*Visits and family contact*

96. I didn't see much of my brother [REDACTED]. It was quite compartmentalised, and other than the first year, we were always in different divisions. I probably would have liked to have seen more of him, but it was probably the classic big brother thing that he didn't want me hanging around him. He was running with his own pack.

97. There was quite a bit of contact with my parents at the beginning. They used to come to visit [REDACTED] and I at the weekends. They would take us out into town for dinner. They also used to bring us home for the odd weekend. I think after a while, they thought we were ok, and then they just left us to it. It might be that the school encouraged them to back off to help us settle, but I can't be sure.

98. We used to get home for the holidays, which were Christmas, Easter, and the summer break. We also may have got the October break but I am not sure. Apart from a little while at the beginning, we would only get home on holidays.

99. I would look forward to going home the whole of term time. Holidays at home with my family were great, but there was always this cloud hanging over me, knowing that I had to go back to St Joseph's. This oscillation of looking forward to going home, and then dreading going back to school happened every holiday.

*Healthcare*

100. There was a matron in the school. She was an older woman. I don't remember her name. There was talk amongst the boys that she watched you through a mirror when you changed, but that may just have been tittle tattle.
101. Boys got medicals from time to time, which involved having your testicles held and being asked to cough. I think that was done by a brother.
102. I got a viral infection, like the flu, from time to time. If you were ill, you would go to the sick bay or lie in your bed. If you were running a temperature or feeling weak, that aggravated the Brothers because it was something else for them to think about, and they had to keep tabs on where you were. There was a reluctance from them towards allowing you to be ill.
103. When something was more serious than needing the sick bay, you would be taken to hospital. One boy got an ingrowing toe nail and had to have his big toe removed, which was serious. When I started the school, there was a boy who had his head and shoulders in plaster from a rugby accident. He still came to school and did recover.
104. I was getting orthodontic treatment in Glasgow while I was at St Joseph's. My parents would pick me up and drive me to appointments so I would get a night away from the school. When I got older, I would get the train to appointments myself.

*Bed wetting*

105. I didn't wet the bed. There was an instance where a kid did wet the bed and I really felt sorry for him. This was when I was in the junior division. I don't think it was handled badly. I didn't really know what happened to him and there was no fuss. I think he was taken away to get counselling.



### Abuse at St Joseph's College

106. Some brothers were more trigger happy than others with the tawse. There were two types that I remember. One of them had two straps and one had three, and it was the one with two straps that did the most damage.
107. I got the belt quite a lot. There were periods when I was getting belted at least once a week. The belting varied depending on who your rec master was. Brothers **MFU**, **MFT**, **MYZ** and even **MFI** on occasion would all give the belt.
108. There was a lay teacher called **MNE** who was quite sadistic. He used to do a hideous thing where he would lift boys up off the floor by pulling their cheeks. There was also a female maths teacher who fancied herself and she would give the belt, but she wasn't as bad as the brothers. I can't recall if a lay teacher ever belted me.
109. There was a brother who was like a hairy biker. He was weird. I remember him holding an aerial as if it were a gun, and pretending to shoot people. I think his name was Brother Arthur but I can't be sure.
110. **MFU** and **MFI** smelled of drink all the time. They were always reeking of whisky.
111. Punishments would be meted out at mealtimes. Sometimes it was for something that had happened earlier in the day. I can't remember what kind of things would attract punishments.
112. Brother **MLX** party piece was to punish boys by hitting them on the top of the head with a golf ball or a set of keys. He would ask you to come forward during mealtimes, and then he would hit you on top of your head with the golf ball or keys. I saw him do that to a boy once, and as he walked back to the table to sit down, I saw that he had blood pouring down his face. I don't know what it was for or the boy's name.
113. Brother **MFU** was a hideously angry man who was always shouting and stank of whisky. I only knew him as the junior rec master, and he would give the belt for all

kinds of reasons. Sometimes it was if kids were fighting. It would be things that there probably should be some kind of retribution for, but not the tawse. When MFU was in a bad mood, he would give the belt just for raising your voice.

114. The worst instance that I saw was in the recreation hall. This wee kid was just absentmindedly hitting the table tennis table with his bat. This obviously angered MFU and he just swung his tawse and hit the back of the boy's neck. He had very visible red wheels immediately appear on the back of his neck. I still remember that and there will be other boys who remember it. I don't remember the boy's name.
115. On one Sunday, during letter writing, I left the class to go to the toilet. When I came back, the big rickety old door swung and hit my foot. MFU thought I'd kicked the door and went into Mr Angry mode. He must have been hungover. He frogmarched me to the dormitory. I must have still been in first year because it was the top dormitory.
116. It was in the afternoon, but MFU told me to put my pyjamas on. He then frogmarched me, quite aggressively, to the new building that was attached to the building. He took me to a room there, and shoved me in and shut the door. He didn't say anything to me at all, or how long I would be there. This was a cold, windy and wet day and the window of the room was broken, and the curtains were blowing in the wind.
117. I lay curled up on the bed. I don't think there was even a blanket. I didn't know how long I was going to be there or what was going to happen to me. It got to the stage where night fell, and I was wondering if he had forgotten about me or if he was just good at being a sadist. It is entirely plausible that he did forget about me because he was hungover. I had lay there all day, not knowing what was going to happen and with no food or water. It was psychological abuse.
118. When it got dark, I just left the room and went back to my dormitory. He never said anything about it to me again. It was calculated cruelty.

119. MFU must have been at least about fifty years old at the time. He was clearly older than Damian. I would be surprised if he was still alive.
120. Brother MFU showed another face to my parents. He would tell them that I was full of life in his jolly Irish accent. He could turn it on for parents, but when they left, it was a different story. He was just bad tempered.
121. It was not as common to be belted in class, but it did happen. Usually, they would tell you to see them after class or do it at mealtimes. It depended on the individual. Kids did sometimes get belted in front of each other. That would happen in the dormitory and in class, but not that often.
122. The worst belting I ever got was because some kid had a trashy, Penny Dreadful type magazine. It had an address in it for pen pals. Me and my pals had a laugh about it and I wrote a smutty letter full of innuendos and sent it. A letter had come back to the college, using my nickname, MN. The SNR MYZ saw it and thought he should be punishing someone for it. He asked around and found out the nickname belonged to me. He came and asked me if I knew anything about it. He told me he could expel me for it, but instead he was going to give me the belt.
123. I expected to get the belt for writing that letter, because I was getting the belt quite a lot, especially from MFU. What I wasn't expecting was the ferocity with which I got it. MYZ called me to his office and I was in my jammies. He told me to take my night gown off, and I got six of the belt on my backside, and I only had nylon pyjamas on. The level of pain was like a siren going off; it was excruciating. I probably should have been punished, but I don't think anything justified that. I was about twelve or thirteen years old at the time.
124. Brother MYZ liked to pretend to be a nice guy to the parents. He must have known how the other staff punished the kids, so he was culpable. There was clearly no policy on who could hit and what for. You got a feeling that these guys were just shooting from the hip, or not, as they liked. There was no consistency on the rules and how they were applied to punishments.

*Sexual abuse*

125. I wonder how some of the brothers became men of the cloth. I think the church was being used by them for other ulterior motives.
126. My abuse happened when I was in first year, in 1971 or 1972, so I would have been twelve or thirteen years old. Brother MFU was away and Brother Damian had been told to look after the Juniors in his absence.
127. I had left the dormitory and gone to the toilet on the fourth floor, and when I came out, Damian was on the landing. He called me over, and when I went over, he gripped me very tightly and put his hand inside my pyjamas and very forcibly pushed his hand between my buttocks and tried to insert his finger into my anus. He was being very alpha male about it, trying to put a finger where it shouldn't be and trying to get me into a position that I couldn't escape. I instinctively clenched my buttocks. I felt sheer terror.
128. Another boy walked out onto the landing, and Damian released his grip a bit. I think he realised it was going to be obvious to the boy what was happening. I managed to break away from him and said I was going back to the dormitory. He made it plain that he wanted me to come back. I was scared.
129. I went back into the junior dormitory. My bed was in the main dormitory, and I remember one of the rooms off the dormitory was empty. I think it must have been the weekend. I went into the empty room and hid under a bed.
130. Damian would have been on the landing, waiting for me to come back. I peeked out from under the bed a few times to see what was happening, but there was no way I was coming out. Some of the boys were aware I was hiding in the room. There was a genuine awareness amongst the boys that Damian wasn't quite right.

131. I don't know how long I lay under the bed. It could have been half an hour, an hour or two hours. I then eventually got out from under the bed, and went back to my bed in the dormitory. I do recall a head was popped around the door, so he must have been checking to see that I was back in bed.
132. Brother Damian used to wear a habit, a white collar thing called a rabbi, and a crucifix. There was a cord that went around the waist and came down in two strings with curtain tassel type things at the end. One of the strings has three knots on it to symbolise the vows that the Brothers make when they get ordained, which I think are chastity, poverty and devotion. They wore trousers under the habit, and the habit had slits at the sides so you could get things in and out of your pockets.
133. Damian's chords went twice around his waist and disappeared into his pocket, and then came out again. He had basically wrapped these tassels around his genitalia, and then he would pull the chords so that he was constantly stimulating himself. He was a conspicuous pervert. Boys used to talk about this.
134. There were instances when he would be standing at the desk at the front and his hands would disappear into his habit and he was playing with himself by pulling these chords. Other times he would walk down the classroom, in between the desks. On one occasion, two boys in class pulled the chords from either side, and he had to do what he could to conceal that he was in pain, because he had just had his penis garrotted. I don't remember the names of the boys who did that.
135. There was a time when someone poked his pocket and you could see his penis. I caught a glimpse of it. It was bizarre. Kids talked about this at the time, and it was well known that Damian played with his penis in class.
136. There were apologist stories flitting around to justify Damian's behaviour, saying that he had a skin condition or something.
137. I think Brother Damian, whose real name was Thomas McCann, was maybe in his late twenties or early thirties. I can't be sure.

138. Brother Damian had been off in Africa quite a lot. When he would get annoyed with any one of the boys, he would refer to them as “sambos,” even though they were all white. I found it bizarre, and he shouldn’t have been doing it.
139. One of the things that haunts me on behalf of my fellow human beings in Africa is that the orphans there wouldn’t have had the protection of social workers, and goodness only knows what Damian could have been doing to them.
140. The inters area of the building was a hotspot for paedophilia. There was a sexual awakening among the boys of that age, and I can see now that the predators had a field day with the boys who were coming of age. Anybody that joined the Marist brothers with a motive to satisfy their paedophilic desires, would have a field day there.
141. There was an instance when two young boys were caught, by another boy, giving oral sex to each other. The boy who saw it came out the room and told everyone else what he had seen in a revolted way. Then other boys zoomed up to the door to see. I didn’t see it. The two boys who were doing it had the attitude of don’t knock it until you’ve tried it.
142. I look back and wonder what was happening to the two boys. The million dollar question is whether it was learned behaviour.
143. It got back to the Brothers. It was handled, on the face of it, quite discreetly and compassionately by the Brothers who were usually quite distant. Brother **MYZ** got involved. The boys were pulled aside and spoken to, and other pupils were told not to talk about it and not to bully the two boys.
144. The two boys playing with each other was handled compassionately, but when I was caught snogging a lassie from the town, the sword of Damascus came down on me.
145. On one occasion, two boys called **██████████** and **██████████** were both sick and had permission to stay in their bed to recover. Brother **AKV** was milling

about, and he sat on [REDACTED] bed, which is what we called [REDACTED] as a nickname. AKV [REDACTED] started talking to him and then said: "it's dark and there's no witnesses." At hearing this, [REDACTED] spoke up and let it be known that he was in the room and told him that there were witnesses. This is something I've heard from the boys so I don't know the details of the conversation.

146. The word got around about this incident. A few days later, AKV [REDACTED] was sitting in the canteen during mealtime, overseeing the boys, and the whole division said out together: "It's dark and there's no witnesses." It had been orchestrated by the boys and was quite a remarkable moment. I have never seen a man go a more scarlet shade of red as AKV [REDACTED] did at that moment.

147. There was a boy called Stephen Behan, who was from a [REDACTED] family. [REDACTED] [REDACTED] had written a book called [REDACTED]" and they had become [REDACTED] family. Stephen was a troubled kid and was prone to tantrums, and he got picked on by other kids who called him "freako Behan." I think he was maybe bipolar. He could be funny, and I liked him. I learned from someone years later that he was abused by the brothers at St Joseph's.

### **Reporting of abuse at St Joseph's College**

148. I never told anybody about the abuse that was happening at St Joseph's while I was there. I was quite a defenceless, and frightened boy. I didn't feel like I could tell anybody.

149. I didn't speak to [REDACTED] about it, and he never said anything to me either.

### **Leaving St Joseph's College**

150. I set my timetable up in a way that I didn't have a lot of classes, so that I could spend a lot of time in the art room. I enjoyed drawing.

151. I made sure I got accepted into art school, and used that as a way to get out of St Joseph's. I left after fifth year. It was an escape for me.
152. I was seventeen years old when I left St Joseph's College.

### **Life after St Joseph's College**

153. I went to art school in Glasgow and got a degree in fine art and print making. I got a job straight away in the Glasgow Print Studio. I did that for five years, then I was self-employed for a while, before drifting into teaching.
154. I got married during my last year at art college. That didn't work out and I got divorced. I later had a nine to ten year relationship, which also fell apart, although my partner at the time convinced me to get counselling as my experiences at St Joseph were starting to manifest themselves in an unhealthy way. I realised the problem was with me and got therapy.
155. There was an occasion in the early 1990s when I mentioned to my parents that St Joseph's College wasn't all that they thought it was. I told them that one of the Brothers had tried it on with me. You could have heard a pin drop.
156. My dad later mentioned that he wasn't in favour of sending my brother and I to St Joseph's College. My mum never spoke about it. I am forgiving of my parents for sending me to St Joseph's and have no bitterness against them for it. My mum had a strong Catholic faith and she put her trust in those people.
157. My parents have now passed away, and police proceedings kicked off after they had died.



158. It was during the time I was getting my therapy, that Dumfries police contacted me about abuse at St Joseph's. Other boys had made complaints, and it seemed that this was the time that we were now all kicking back.
159. I met my current wife in the early to mid-1990s. She already had two daughters who were aged three and four. That was when I moved to teaching full time, because I needed a stable job. My wife and I are still together and the girls are older and we have done a good job with them.
160. I am now semi-retired. My intention is to produce more art work. I also have an interest in music, which I spend my time doing.

### **Impact**

161. By the time I left school, I had stopped going to church or practising Catholicism. Being at St Joseph's undoubtedly affected my faith. I saw Damian abusing himself with a chord that had three knots, which were supposed to symbolise his faith.
162. When I think about the sexual abuse at the hands of Damian, the physical abuse from **MYZ** and the psychological from **MFU** and **MFT**, it is hard to imagine that it hasn't affected me. It has obviously had an effect on me.
163. In situations where young kids are being abused and are disempowered, it is like planting a bad seed. The tendency in the first instance is for the child to clam up, and that code of fear is what abusers rely on.
164. The classic pattern is that you then carry that without processing it, and you begin to have relationships that breakdown. Aspects of the damage that has been done to you make it difficult, and sometimes impossible, to operate a good relationship. That happened to me.

165. I had a few dysfunctional relationships. My second, nine to ten year relationship, fell apart around the time when the slow burn of the impact of St Joseph's kicked in. My internalised and unchanneled anger was manifesting itself. I recognised that the problem was me. I decided to get some help and had therapy.
166. I got counselling in the 1990s. I saw somebody that a friend had recommended, and I had counselling for two or three years. A lot of energy and money was invested into it. I found it to be hugely beneficial. I am now able to talk about my experiences at St Joseph's College without feeling angry.
167. I have felt feelings of disempowerment as an adult. I feel that I don't go on my front foot enough. I don't think you can go through experiences of being locked in a room, and not have it effect you.
168. I do sometimes sit and think that it was a shit childhood because of what happened at St Joseph's. I spent my time looking forward to going home for the holidays, and then dreading going back to school after the holidays. While I was at school, I was just trying to dodge bullets from the clowns that ran the place. My life would have been better without that.
169. I used to have a recurring nightmare that I was being made to go back to St Joseph's College in the present time to do the final sixth year, which I didn't do. I used to have this dream about once every three years.
170. I had the same dream after my mother died, and she put her hand on my shoulder, and told me it was ok and I didn't have to go. I felt a sense of relief, and as if I was being given permission to let it go. That was obviously some of the broken furniture in my mind.
171. My brother died due to solvent abuse when he was 24 years old. He had been the [REDACTED] champion of Scotland. I wonder if something happened to him in the school because he wasn't from the typical demographic to have gotten into solvent abuse.

172. It is beyond question that there were predators at the school. [REDACTED]  
[REDACTED]  
[REDACTED]

### **Police reporting and prosecution**

173. Dumfries Constabulary got in touch with me in the late 1990s because Steven Behan, who had been in my year at school, had reported his abuse at St Joseph's and he had mentioned my name to the police. I was happy to talk to the police and shared my abuse with them.
174. There were many other complainers from St Joseph's who accused Brother Damian, whose name was Thomas McCann, of sexual abuse. Brother Damian had tried to molest me, and while I had managed to get away, he had been successful in molesting other kids.
175. Damian was charged in 1997 and I have newspaper cuttings about the charges. There were eight complainers against him and I was one of them. The other complainers I know of are Stephen Behan and MGE [REDACTED], and maybe [REDACTED]. I knew them all at St Joseph's.
176. Damian's lawyers did a really good job defending him. They played ping pong with letters to the Procurator Fiscal to prolong the trial.
177. One of my friends from St Joseph's College, MGE [REDACTED], who was also a complainer in the case, was contacted by the Procurator Fiscal, stating that the Marist Brothers were willing to pay £10,000 to make the case go away. We thought that was mental. That is not how it should work, or what the Fiscal's job is.
178. MG [REDACTED] and I talked about it and said it would be a good idea to say that he would take the £10,000 and then when they paid it, you had proof that they were guilty and paying money to make it go away.

179. Unfortunately, around the same time, Damian’s lawyers started arguing that he was too sick to stand trial, and it worked. The case was deserted in October 1997 due to “insoluble difficulties in bringing the accused to trial.” It didn’t state what those difficulties were, but only that Crown Counsel had decided there should be no further proceedings. The lawyers defending Damian did a right good job.
180. My lawyer contacted the Procurator Fiscal asking about this figure of £10,000 and what that was about. The Fiscal he spoke to said that there may have been a figure mentioned but no details were known. It was all just very shady.
181. I have a letter from a Procurator Fiscal Depute called Jennifer McGill, dated 25 June 1998, saying that there was never any formal mention of money, except a brief mention on the court stairs by the accused’s solicitor saying that Marist Brothers might be willing to make an offer to the complainers if the case was to be dropped. The fiscal goes on to say that she was taken aback by that offer and can’t remember the amount offered, but thought that it was maybe £10,000. The letter then states that the Fiscal doesn’t think it was coming from the Marist brothers or the accused and that she got the impression that the lawyer was trying to gauge the reaction.
182. I find the letter from the Fiscal ridiculous. It sounds to me like hush money was being offered, which should have been used against them. Furthermore, how can the Fiscal guess that the offer didn’t come from the accused or the Marist Brothers?

183.

AKV AKV

184.

AKV

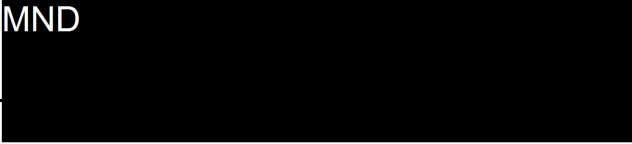
**Other action taken**

185. I made an application for criminal injuries compensation on the advice of my lawyer after the trial against Damian collapsed.
186. I have a letter from Dumfries and Galloway Council, dated 1997, stating that St Joseph's College was in the charge of the Marist Brothers during my time there. I have a letter dated 11 March 1998 from lawyers Garden and Smythe, who acted for Marist Brothers. It states that they repudiate any liability.
187. I was eventually awarded Criminal Injury Compensation for what Damian did to me in 1999. It was only about £1600. I used it to settle my legal fees, and bought my step daughters a swing set.

**Final thoughts**

188. Paedophiles were able to get away with abusing kids back then in a boarding school environment. They managed to keep the kids quiet through bullying. That is why they were able to get away with it.
189. There was a structure set up for the staff at the boarding school to get away with abuse. Even the ones who weren't abusing, but knew about it, are to blame.
190. People who work with kids need to be screened. The things that happened at St Joseph's, like the drinking, or carrying about belts or golf balls to hit kids, just shouldn't have happened.
191. There need to be procedures put in place to govern punishments so that it is the same for everybody, and kids know what to expect. That could be to take away kids' pocket money or something similar.

- 192. There also needs to be openness of dialogue with children in care. That can be in the form of student counsellors or the like.
- 193. I think that young people now are better tooled up to deal with abuse. They have mobile phones and can send a text and let someone know if something happens.
- 194. 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... 23 MAY 2019 .....