

## Scottish Child Abuse Inquiry

Witness Statement of

HBE

Support person present: No.

1. My full name is HBE. My date of birth is 1974. My contact details are known to the Inquiry.

### Life before going into care

2. I lived with my mum and dad and my three older sisters. My mum was and my dad was. My sisters are and is seven years older than me, is four years older and is two years older.
3. My mum and dad both worked for Edinburgh Council but they worked all over, they spent time as publicans as well, so we lived all over as well. I remember we did get passed about between family and really good friends of my mum and dads. We were a big family and in those day everybody just looked out for everybody.
4. We've lived all over Edinburgh, we stayed in Broomhouse, Westerhailes, Pilton, Leith, Lochend and Clermiston, and I went to loads of schools.
5. I was born with extreme asthma and eczema and needed a lot of medical attention when I was a child. I actually spent my first six months in hospital, in an oxygen tent. My mum put me into normal primary schools but I was always getting picked on, because of my eczema. It looked like I was a burns victim and that started from when I was about five.

6. From what I remember and from what my mum has told me, it was actually more the parents that were causing the problems. They would get their kids away from me, because they thought they would catch what I had, so that was very difficult for me.
7. My mum then arranged for me to go to what my mum called a 'special school.' It was for kids that have different health problems. Some kids could bleed or bruise really easily and some were disfigured or physically disabled. There were all sorts of disablements there. The school was called [REDACTED] and was in the Gorgie area of Edinburgh.
8. When I left [REDACTED], I went to so many high schools, I was at Westerhailes, Broughton, Leith Academy, Ainslie Park, Cairnpark and lastly I went to St. Joseph's.
9. According to my mother and father I was a troubled child, and they actually called me the 'devils child'. My mum said I was like my dad's brother who ended up in a psychiatric hospital, where he died. My parents used to call me a psycho, and this that and the next thing.
10. I don't know if I felt I had to live up to that name but I was rebellious. My dad did like a drink and although he wouldn't admit it, he was an alcoholic. When I look back on it now, his drinking pattern was just the same as mine is now, as I am an alcoholic.
11. My dad would spend all his money on drink and my mum would have to take on two or sometimes three jobs to try and keep the house running and put clothes on our backs. She did fight a lot with my dad, I remember she would batter him and throw things at him.
12. I remember that, and it was terrible, I would hide under my covers. I hated them fighting. The thing is, my dad was a very bubbly cheery character though, and he did everything for me. He always took me to my football and I felt I bonded with him, whereas I didn't bond with my mum.

13. When I was about nine or ten, I was bandaged from head to toe for a long time because of the eczema. I couldn't get out the house and I remember that was terrible but I do remember the bandages coming off and how great that was. I still had to go back to the specialist skin department at the old Edinburgh Royal Infirmary every two or three days to get bandaged, but at least I could get out after that.
14. I remember the social work being involved with me from about the age of thirteen. I was running away a lot from school, I was misbehaving and I was rebellious. The last school I was at before I was sent to St. Joseph's was Cairn Park High School. There was a teacher there that would poke me in the back with a pencil. I can't remember her name. One day I lost it with her and I picked up this computer screen and flung it at her.
15. As a result of that there was a Children's Panel type meeting and I was told I would be going to St. Joseph's residential school. **HBD**, who was **SNR** **SNR** at St. Joseph's, was at that meeting, along with my mum and social workers, and I remember him telling me that I would be a day person, as a trial, but if my behaviour got any worse, I would have to stay there as a resident.
16. I was told I would get picked up by a bus, in the morning, and brought back home every day. I don't remember being asked anything at that meeting, my mum probably just told me to keep my mouth shut and behave. I can't actually think of anyone ever asking me anything, at any meeting like that. I just sat there and let it all go on, around about me.
17. I do remember being told, at the meeting, that there were no more schools for me to go to and that I had to go to St. Joseph's. I was also told that would be me until I finished school. I don't remember who the social worker was, that was at that meeting. I know it was a woman, and she was always at those kind of meetings, with my mum. I think she was the family social worker, but I'm not sure. I think she was from Leith Social Work Office.

18. I went to Wellington Farm School for about a week before I went to St. Joseph's. I was a day person there and I was taken back and forward from home. That was just to get me used to that kind of school environment.
19. Something that often makes me wonder, about what might have been, is to do with my football. When I was thirteen I went to [REDACTED] to play in a football competition for Scotland. While I was there, because of some football law, I was actually signed up to play for [REDACTED] in the competition, and we came third.
20. Then I was badly injured in a game, which ended up stopping me playing football at that level, but the [REDACTED] team still wanted to sign me up for a scholarship. They were going to move me to [REDACTED], sort my injured knee, get me an education and everything but I was just too young to leave my mum. In the end that never happened, but it does make me wonder.

### **St. Joseph's School, Tranent**

#### *General*

21. I would have been about thirteen or maybe fourteen when I arrived at St. Josephs'. I was there two or three years and I'm fairly sure I left in [REDACTED] 1990, just before I was sixteen.
22. I was there as a day pupil for about six or seven months before I started staying there permanently through the week. I was never told that might happen, I was just told one day that it was happening and that was that.
23. I then stayed there until I left, but sometimes I stayed over weekends as well, as a punishment. Sometimes I didn't get home for about three weeks.

24. If I was being bad at home, if I wasn't doing things mum asked me to do, or if I was running away or fighting with my sisters, my mum would ask Brother Benedict if they would keep me in at St. Joseph's at weekends.
25. It seemed to be that that she would make this request when she couldn't handle me. Sometimes I didn't know if I was staying at St. Joseph's or going home at the weekend. Brother Benedict would phone my mum every week and tell her what I'd done wrong, or what work I had or hadn't done, or if I'd been giving anyone cheek.
26. They would discuss me and then decide whether or not I was staying at St. Joseph's for the weekend. I suppose it was like a punishment as I wasn't getting time with my family and I was having to stay at St. Joseph's for the whole weekend.
27. That felt horrible, it made me feel like my family didn't care about me, that they didn't want me and I was just getting shoved away.
28. A lot of the kids had nicknames in St. Joseph's, I was **HBE**, because of my surname and I remember , he was an arsonist and was in there because he was always setting fires.
29. There were about thirty children at St. Joseph's and I remember a lot of them. There were , ,  and . I've just rekindled my friendship with  and we're discovering now that we both went through quite a lot of the same at St. Joseph's. She doesn't want to go public about it though. She's dealt with it in her own way and doesn't want to re-visit it.
30. I was very quiet and kept to myself at St. Joseph's but I did kick off with the teachers. I felt worthless and none of us were spoken to in a very nice manner.

### **Routine at St. Joseph's School**

#### *First day*

31. I remember it was really scary on the first day I visited St. Joseph's. I was with my mum and dad and a social worker. I remember when we first drove in and we all got dropped off just inside the gates. There was a big path that went off up to the girls annexe and we walked up that. The annexe wasn't attached to the main building which looked like a big cube with one side open.
32. There were about ten rooms upstairs in the annexe. There was also a dining area and a living room. All the girls stayed in the annexe and all the boys stayed in the main building. The main building also had the school and classrooms, a gym, the main dining room and kitchens, but we really only went over there for school.
33. I was shown round the place, I met some of the girls and I was introduced to staff. We met **HBD** who was **SNR**, I'm not 100% sure if that was his last name but it was similar to that, we met Brother Benedict and another Brother with ginger hair. We all had lunch and we sat around the table with the rest of the school.
34. Brother Benedict and **HBD** also went over the rules. They told me to always stand in line and abide by the rules and then everything would be fine. They also explained that if children didn't abide by the rules they would be punished. They said children could get detention or be told to sit in a room and face a wall. They said that to me and to my mum and dad.
35. I remember being so scared as I didn't know the place and I didn't know anyone who was there either. I knew I'd done wrong, or been bad, but I didn't know what anyone else was thinking of me.
36. I remember the playground and the grass fields and I remember meeting people. I met other girls and was shown around the girls annexe. My mum said it was nice and the rooms were nice. I remember thinking that was strange as I wasn't meant to be staying there overnight. I did see mum and dad looking at one another, so I'm not sure if they had already arranged something for me to be staying there.

37. Looking back now, I think mum and dad knew I was going to be staying there from day one and had arranged for me to stay there. I think there was an understanding that was to be the case when I was being shown around. I think I was just being broken in easily.
38. I remember Brother Benedict telling my mum he'd get me playing football for the school team and he was showing her all these newspapers clippings he'd kept of me. I had played for Scotland when I was thirteen, so I assume that was what he was talking about. He said he'd been watching me for months so I ended up playing for St. Joseph's a lot.
39. On my actual first day at the school, I was terrified. I was picked up by a bus and I remember thinking I just wanted to jump out. I was a day pupil and was taken to the school and back home in a bus every day. I remember the driver, he was called Alec, and was a nice man. He got me to sit behind him and he talked to me as I didn't talk to anyone else.

*Mornings and bedtime*

40. I had my own individual room in the girls annexe. Not all the rooms were full so it was just whatever rooms were available. We mostly stayed downstairs, although I was once taken upstairs and restrained. I think that was so nobody downstairs could see what was happening.
41. I had a bath and shower in my room and I had some clothes, a wee radio and TV, bedding and other stuff I brought in from home.
42. There was an alarm that went off in the mornings about half past seven in the annexe, it was like a lunch school bell. We would all get up, get washed and ready and go for breakfast. After breakfast we all walked down to the school.
43. We would all line up, boys on one side, girls on the other, and Brother Benedict would walk up and down the lines checking you to see that you were clean, neat and tidy.

44. After school, we went back to the girls annexe, did our chores or our homework and then we just sat about in our joggers or had a shower or whatever, until tea, which was at six o'clock.
45. Bed time was about nine o'clock and you could watch a bit of television in your room but then it all got switched off and your door got locked. That was to stop anyone wandering about through the night and running away.
46. The staff locked the door from the outside and if you needed anything you had to push a button that set off an alarm for the staff in their office. I was on medication when I was there so I did have to press the alarm once or twice when I needed my medication.
47. I'm not aware of anything dangerous happening when I was at St. Joseph's but if you needed to get out your room quickly you would either have to wait for staff to open the door or just climb out the window. There were always three staff on through the night and one had to be female.

#### *Mealtimes/Food*

48. The dining room in the annexe was where we ate breakfast and tea. We had our dinner or lunch in the big building with the boys. The annexe dining room had a big table, all the girls would sit round and after our breakfast we could go through to the TV room and watch a bit of TV before we went to school.
49. From what I remember the food was alright. We had fresh orange or apple juice, cereal with milk and toast for breakfast and our tea was just something that was already made and it just got dished out to us. As far as I can remember the food was fine.
50. The main building had a couple of different tables and it was all the boys and girls, it was kind of like Harry Potter. We just took what food was going as there was no choice. We stood in a queue and whatever we were having was served on your plate.



51. If you couldn't eat it you would get detention, there was no physical punishment that I was aware of. The staff weren't too bad and if you were hungry you could always grab a piece of toast or something, so there was never a problem with food.

*Washing/bathing*

52. I had my own bathroom in my room. I had a toilet, bath and shower and I could have a shower whenever I liked, so that was fine.

*Leisure time*

53. I played a lot of football. I was right into my football and everyone knew that at St. Josephs. If they gave me a football and told me to play with it all day, it wouldn't have bothered me at all. If I ever wanted anything to do with football, I would get it. If I said to Brother Benedict that I needed new football boots, I would get them.
54. We would play games in the annexe as well. There was a video recorder and we watched the film 'Dirty Dancing' over and over. We probably had books for reading but I wasn't one for that. I had dyslexia and wasn't very good at reading or talking in front of the class or that sort of thing.
55. We also had outdoor education so we sometimes went outside and built things or played in the playground. If we were taken out it would be with a teacher and maybe they would take us out into the woods for some survival type things. I suppose what they taught us was quite handy as the children would often run away and the teachers taught us how to keep warm and safe and things like that.

*Trips and holidays*

56. We didn't go on very many organised trips. The only trips I ever got were to other residential schools when I was playing football. We played matches almost every week and every two or three weeks we would play against schools in Fife or Stirling.

57. We occasionally travelled to bigger competitions or had away matches which would be for three or four days, in places like Liverpool. Football trips were the only trips I ever had.

#### *School*

58. Most of the teachers were brought in to St. Joseph's and most of them were great. The art teacher, Mrs Wood, was brilliant, she used to say I used drawing and art as an escape. The PE teacher was a tall tanned Swedish man but I don't have many memories of the teachers at the school. I didn't really get to know them.
59. Some of them were abusive and if I was having a bit of a laugh, they would take my books away from me, poke me in the back with a pencil and just shove me into the corner. I would get angry with them and it just made me worse and made me rebel. I failed maths and English because of the way the teachers treated me.

#### *Healthcare*

60. I think there was a wee nurse at St. Joseph's. She would treat kids who had minor cuts and scrapes if they had a fall in the playground. I think there was a wee medical room next to the headmaster's room.
61. It wasn't a constant thing and I think she just came in on set days. I saw her after Brother Benedict hit me on the back of the legs one day. My kneecap actually popped out because I jerked myself with fright. I had to go and see the nurse and she got me to bite down on a bit of wood and then pushed my kneecap back in. That was painful.
62. I don't remember having any health checks, or seeing a doctor or a dentist, we had nothing like that. I had asthma and eczema from birth and I always had an inhaler. I wasn't allowed to keep that on me at St. Joseph's as I had to give it to Brother Benedict or one of the other members of staff. That could have been a member of staff up at the girls annexe.

63. It was prescribed medication and I took it into school with me but it wasn't always available to me. I took asthma attacks when I was in St. Joseph's and I think it really gave the staff a fright. I get quite panicky as it cuts off my airwaves and I tend to pull at my throat as my air pipes are closing.
64. The asthma attacks could happen at any time as I have bad hay fever and a lot of allergies. One time they had to call an ambulance and use a nebuliser. I was okay and didn't need to go to hospital but that was a real shock to everyone.

#### *Religious instruction*

65. There was no chapel or mass or anything like that but I do remember we had to go down on our knees to pray every Friday at midday. If you didn't you would get hit on the back of the head with beads or a book or something. That would be by whichever brother was there at the time.
66. It was all foreign to me as I wasn't at all religious so it meant nothing to me. We stopped and prayed every Friday though whether we were in class, in the gym, just wherever we were. We stopped and prayed for about ten or fifteen minutes.

#### *Work*

67. If you did all your chores and kept yourself clean and tidy then you got £5 pocket money every week. There wasn't any tuck shop or anywhere to spend it but you did get pocket money for doing your chores.
68. You would have to clean your room, clean the toilets, Hoover the place, do dishes and all that kind of thing. It was on a set rota and we did it right after school along with any homework we had.
69. It was just staff at the annexe that would supervise the chores and if they weren't done properly you would have to do it again. If you didn't then you could be locked in your room all weekend.

### *Birthdays and Christmas*

70. I always spent Christmas at my mum and dads. I was never at St. Joseph's and I remember all the family would gather for Christmas. That all changed after my dad died. I think he was the glue that held everyone together.
71. I spent one birthday in St. Joseph's and I remember I got a wee cake and cards from the girls, so that was a laugh.

### *Family contact*

72. When I was kept from going home for the three week periods, I didn't get any visits from my family. They probably could have but I never got any visits during those periods.
73. What I did find very strange was that my dad stopped coming to watch me play football. He used to go to all my games, he was always at my side, when I was playing football yet when I was playing for St. Joseph's he never came to any games.

### *Running away*

74. I did run away quite a lot at St. Joseph's. There was a group of five or six of us, including [REDACTED] and we would get to Uphall train station somehow and meet up with folk from the Uphall homes. We would all hang about at the train station and get drunk. We would just do the silly things kids do.
75. I just couldn't handle the school and having to deal with Brother Benedict. If I'd done something wrong or hadn't done my homework to the required standard, he dealt with every disciplinary thing.
76. If we didn't get picked up by the school we would get on a train to Uphall. We would maybe be away a couple of hours, but we always got caught. It was great just getting

away and doing your own thing for that space of time with your pals and not having to be in for a certain time. We were just being normal and having some freedom.

77. The police would usually find us and take us back and then we'd be locked in our rooms for a couple of days as punishment. The police would ask why we were running away, and I would just say to them 'would you stay in a school like that?' I never thought to say to the police that I was getting abused. I just thought it was all my fault because I got put to that school. I thought because I was being bad I deserved it.

#### *Bed Wetting*

78. I didn't ever wet the bed but I did hear a few girls shouting and screaming and kicking off through the night. I would speak to them in the morning and they would say they had wet the bed and had then been told they weren't getting home for the weekend. They would kick off at that and have to get restrained and that's what I'd be hearing.
79. I could hear them shouting and swearing at the staff and things getting flung about, so that was scary. I didn't know anyone and I didn't know the ins and outs about all the other girls so it was difficult.
80. I know some boys also wet the bed. ██████ said to me he would get battered and his face rubbed in his wet bed sheets. He told me he would be made to clean his sheets and that he was paraded about in front of all the other boys. He said staff would call him a bed wetter and then he would get the cane.
81. I remember something like that happened once to ██████ and he was taken away by Brother Benedict. After that, ██████ went missing for about three weeks. I think he ran away but we never ever spoke about that.

#### *Discipline*

82. Brother Benedict would give you the cane as a punishment for some things. If you got detention or just didn't do anything he wanted you to do, he would tell you to be in his office for a set time and it was in there that you would receive your punishment.
83. When he caned you in his room he would hit you rapidly about five times on your bum or the backs of your legs. Sometimes you couldn't sit down. It was so painful and it would leave welt marks on your skin.
84. My mum did see the marks on me and she would say to me that I didn't get the marks from falling over. I would just tell her that I'd been fighting or arguing and didn't know exactly what had happened. She would just treat them with cream or TCP.
85. I don't know if Brother Benedict kept any records of any punishments. I never saw him writing anything down in a book when you were punished, so to my knowledge there were never any records kept about that.
86. Sometimes girls would get sent back to the annexe and locked in their room for misbehaving. They might be cheeky in class or might not be doing their work. Then they wouldn't be allowed to join in any activities or they might have their music taken off them. That would usually end up with the girls kicking off and having to be restrained. The girls didn't like getting locked in their rooms but that didn't actually happen to me. That happened as often as two or three times a week.

### **Abuse at St. Joseph's School**

#### *Brother Benedict*

87. Brother Benedict was the main Brother at St. Joseph's. He told me, and certainly led me to believe, that he was the one in charge of the whole school. It was run by maybe four or five monks but he did seem to run things.

88. Brother Benedict loved his football and running the school team at St. Joseph's. I was his little angel and he told me I was at St. Joseph's because of my football. He told me I was sent to that school to get their football team out of trouble.
89. Brother Benedict would tell me the school was in the Guinness Book of Records because of me because I was the only girl that had done this and that, and it was all to do with the football side of thing.
90. What I found strange was that he had all these clippings and newspaper articles about me and my football successes cut out and stuck on his wall. It was all about me, when it came to football and that's where I got my abuse.
91. Every time we had a football game at home on the grounds at St. Joseph's, I was sexually abused. We had games that were away as well and when we had to stay away, but Brother Benedict never came with us on those games.
92. At all the home games I had to get changed in the same changing room as all the boys. I was [REDACTED] in the team and I just had to get changed in the same area as the boys. I was sent to the opposite side of the changing rooms and they hung a towel up but that was the only privacy. Then we all went out on to the pitch as a team.
93. After games the boys would all shower in open shower areas and I would be told to shower as well, but I would be sent to the furthest away corner in the same area. There was no privacy at all, I would just be in an area where the view might be a bit more restricted. Nothing ever happened with any of the boys but it could have and they could easily see me. Staff were around but not in the actual dressing rooms.
94. When we finished a game, especially when we'd won, Brother Benedict would come up behind me as we were walking back to the changing rooms and try to give me a cuddle. He would put his hands over my shoulders from behind and cross his hands over on top of my breasts.

95. Then we would go and sit in the changing rooms and he would sit and stroke my leg while I was sitting in my shorts. He would move his hand to the inside of my thigh and then he would stroke me with his thumb getting closer and closer until he was touching my private parts.
96. I remember we played another residential school in Liverpool once, I don't remember the name of it, but they then came up to St. Joseph's for a rematch and stayed over. After the game we went to the changing rooms and Brother Benedict did his usual to me, just the same as he did after every game. There was a lad there, who played for them, I'm sure he was called [REDACTED] and he saw what Brother Benedict was doing and turned to him and said something like 'what the fuck do you think you're doing you fucking pervert'.
97. Brother Benedict started saying I knew what he was doing and that I was fine with it and he kind of turned us away from the boys view with an arm around my shoulder. He just guided me away and started telling me not to listen to the boys and not to let them tell me what to do. I was so naïve and I just said yes to him and told him I would make sure I stayed good.
98. I did ask Brother Benedict on one or two occasions why he was touching me and he just said it was because I was a good girl and I was good at football and won them trophies.
99. That time, when the Liverpool school team came to play us, was the only time any boy said anything. None of the boys in the St. Joseph's team ever said anything to Brother Benedict and a couple of them definitely saw me and saw what he was doing to me. They were watching and looking at me. They could see I wasn't comfortable with what Brother Benedict was doing. I think they were just scared because they had to stay there as well.
100. He also used to lock me in his broom cupboard in his room. It always felt like I was in there for hours but it was maybe only twenty minutes to half an hour, and then he would come back. I had this cocky attitude and would be cheeky, so he would lock me



in the cupboard and just leave me there. That happened quite a lot, as much as twice a week, more than he sexually assaulted me.

101. He also spat on me, he spat on everybody. He would poke me with the sharp end of a pencil in the middle of my back and he would slap me across the side of my head. Sometimes I was being cheeky but he often did that to me, and other kids, for no reason at all. He was just an evil vulgar man. I don't know why anyone would want to behave like that towards anyone, let alone children.
102. He would just appear out of nowhere when you were running along the corridors and trip you up. I remember one day I was walking along a corridor with [REDACTED], who I've mentioned, and Brother Benedict appeared out of nowhere and punched [REDACTED] right in the face. That was for no reason at all.
103. Every morning Brother Benedict would get all the boys and girls to walk out in a line. He would get you to put your hands out and he would check them to see if your nails and hands were clean. If they weren't he smacked you with a wee wooden ruler across your knuckles.
104. He did that to me and told me to put my hands on his desk. He would hit me with the edge of the ruler right on my knuckles. That was extremely sore and was another injury my mum would see. I would tell her I had fallen over or had been fighting and she would treat my fingers and tape them up for me. I just didn't want my mum and dad to feel bad about where I had ended up after all the arrangements they had made with Brother Benedict. I didn't want to put that on them.
105. I've had broken knuckles and I have marks on my knuckles to this day from that. He would then tell you to go away and wash your hands. If you weren't dressed neatly he would give you detention.
106. That's the abuse that happened to me, I got hit a lot by Brother Benedict and he touched my private parts and breasts. I didn't get anything near what some of the

laddies got though. I'm not religious but you don't think that someone who is into God and monkhood could do some of the things Brother Benedict did to other people.

107. I know from speaking to some of the lads, that they were shocked in the shower, like an electric shock, it was with a machine or something. That was by Brother Benedict and it was on their private parts. That was going on when I was there.
108. [REDACTED], or something like that, was an Italian boy who was at St. Joseph's about ten years before me and he was once hit over the elbow with a hammer. He told me that long since, as we have become friends over the last few years. I'm sure it was the woodwork and outdoor education teacher that did that to him.

*Other abuse*

109. There was a female teacher who taught computers and she used to poke me in the back with a pen or a pencil. I can't remember her name, but she had short black hair and she was really strict. She would just come up and poke me right in the back, like a right jab, and tell me to shut up. She was making you realise you were doing something wrong. She did that to anyone in her class that wasn't paying attention.
110. The maths teacher was the same, he used the pointy end of his pencil and he jabbed you in the back with it. I can't remember his name either.
111. I once saw a boy get hit on the elbow by a hammer that was thrown by a teacher in the woodwork class. That was a separate incident to the one I've already mentioned, and it was [REDACTED] who was hit that time. I think he had to go to the doctor for that, as it was bleeding and he was taken out the class. I did see him a couple of days later with a bandage over it. That was another teacher, not Brother Benedict, I can't remember his name.
112. I saw boys getting hit a lot as well. Brother Benedict would just appear and he would punch me or other boys, sometimes in the face, sometimes to the body. He would also

give you a kick to the leg and trip you up as well. He would be hiding in the corridors and just pop out and hit you. He did that all the time, it was an everyday thing for him.

113. SNR [REDACTED], HBD [REDACTED], would slap kids across the head sometimes if they were running late. He did that to me and to others.
114. There was also a woman who was the head of the girls annexe who was a bit fiery and quick tempered. I saw her trying to restrain one of the girls one day and she ended up smashing the girls face off the bedroom door. I don't remember that woman's name but she had long black hair that she put in a ponytail. She always came with the football team when we had away games, I think that was because I was [REDACTED] in the team.
115. I was only physically restrained on two occasions. Once was that woman with the long ponytail and the other was by a member of staff, he might have been called HBC [REDACTED]. I stuck the head on him because he grabbed me too tight and then the pony tail woman and him really restrained me.
116. The guy I'm calling HBC [REDACTED], was something to do with the female annexe. He might have been someone's key worker or was maybe assigned to someone. That name sticks with me. He had short brown black hair, but his name might not have been HBC [REDACTED] I'm just not sure.
117. Some of the boys were also taken to the 'Friday Club'. The Friday Club wasn't just Brother Benedict, there were other Brothers as well, but I don't know who they were. I was told that by other girls and from what I know and I've been told, it was more the boys that were being abused, not the girls.
118. It was mainly the boys that got invited along to this private special Friday Club that was run by Brother Benedict. I heard they used to get drink there and that Brothers from other school were there, I don't what went on in the Friday Club. There were other Brothers that would go along to that. I never went along to that as I would be playing football or be with other girls locked in the girls annexe.

119. There was a girl I knew, [REDACTED], who was a really bubbly friendly cheery girl, when I first met her. She went to the Friday Club and after that she changed. After that she was like a mouse, she was very quiet and wouldn't talk. I saw bruises on her arms and I don't know if that was from fighting with other girls or from being restrained, but I know she wanted to take her own life quite a few times when she was in St. Joseph's. I don't know what happened to her at the Friday Club but it definitely changed her.
120. [REDACTED] was also grabbed one night and had her face smashed against the floor. The staff pinned her down and she was kicking off and going absolutely crazy. I could hear her shouting and screaming but you can't really do much.
121. There was a Brother, not Brother Benedict, who once told us about magic mushrooms. We were out on a walk and he pointed them out and we picked them. When we got back to the school, he showed us how to make a tea with them and we then did that quite a lot. I don't remember his name.

### **Reporting of abuse at St. Joseph's School**

122. My mum noticed my hand was all swollen one day and she asked me what had happened. I just told her I'd hurt it while playing football.
123. Mum would also notice injuries to my hands and to my knuckles when Brother Benedict had hit them with his ruler, but I just used to tell her I'd punched a wall or been in a fight. I couldn't tell my mum or my dad because they put me there. I have only started telling my sisters now, I just couldn't tell my family at the time.
124. I never got any medical treatment for my knuckles. My mum would just get a plastic thing, for a staved finger, and put that on my finger with a bit of tape.
125. I think my dad perhaps felt something was wrong. Then when he would ask me, I'd start crying and saying I was just getting into trouble. He never really pushed to try and

find out why I was getting into trouble or why I was doing these things at the school. He thought I was getting picked on by other kids but it was me that was picking on the other kids and behaving badly.

126. I did try to tell my dad once about Brother Benedict and the touching he was doing after the football games. It didn't go very well and basically my dad didn't believe it.
127. I also told my older sister, who I was quite close to, that I was getting grief at school. I didn't go into detail about it or say who it was or what it was. She's now in a guilty situation and thinks it's her fault but it's nothing to do with her.
128. I did try to tell my PE teacher once as well. He was a huge big Swedish man with blond hair and blue eyes. I told him Brother Benedict was abusing me and I told him everything he was doing to me.
129. The PE teacher told me I was being silly and that a man of Brother Benedict's calibre had everything to lose so why would he behave like that. He said the Brothers had a responsibility and wouldn't behave like that. So he basically accused me of making it all up. I don't think I did PE very much after that.
130. That made me feel like a bit of dirt on my shoe. I had built up the courage to go and speak to a teacher about something like that and he just brushed it off like nothing happened.
131. That was the time I actually did speak to someone about the abuse and I wasn't believed. It was like I was being shushed up and it was all being put on the back burner. To my knowledge he did nothing about it and he didn't record anything or speak to anyone else. I tried to report the abuse and it didn't work so I didn't say anything more to anyone at that time.
132. You don't want to turn round and say what's happening in the school, it's embarrassing and who's going to believe a young bairn over monks and Brothers. Everybody looks

up to them as nice people, because of who they are. I also thought I deserved it and it was my fault because I was being bad.

133. I never had a one to one with anybody, not any social work or anyone like that, without my mum or dad being present. I always just spoke to my keyworker at the annexe, the one with the long dark hair, who I could speak to sometimes, but not always.
134. Sometimes I felt like she was only on my side to try and get information. I would tell her something that I hadn't told anybody else and then another teacher would come out with it, so I couldn't trust her. I couldn't really trust anyone 100%.

### **Leaving St. Joseph's School**

135. I left St. Joseph's a couple of months before my sixteenth birthday. I had been told by my mum and dad that I could leave when I reached sixteen. They wanted me to stay on for another year, but I was out, just as soon as I was old enough.

### **Life after being in care**

136. I got work experience right away at [REDACTED] mechanical garage in Leith and I enjoyed that. Then I got in with the wrong crowd who were always older than me. I saw it as me being approved by the gang but looking back now I was just their guinea pig and I just did everything they asked me to do.
137. I got a tattoo, I stole cars and went joy riding in them. I was drinking and I was running away from my mum and dad's house and the police were having to bring me back.
138. Then there was [REDACTED], a guy I knew from before I went to St. Joseph's. He was my mum's neighbour's friend and was a lot older than me, he was a fifty two year old man, but I was just friends with him. He was known as [REDACTED] because he looked

like [REDACTED] and I only got to know him because I was into cars and was a right tomboy and he had cars and let me work on them.

139. He would take me out in the cars and he gave me odd jobs to do as well, that kind of thing. I got quite drawn into him and his activities, I found it quite exciting at the time which was just so stupid. I didn't know, but he was involved in drug dealing and he was a serial rapist. He went to jail for rape and sexual assault and he ended up dying in prison.
140. One day he tried to have sex with me in his car when we were in Jedburgh. I ended up hitting him and getting out the car. He was a very violent man and threatened to kill me. He even came to our door with a knife after that incident and my dad had to chase him off.
141. So there was all that going on and our family ended up moving to Leith to get away from the neighbours who were in contact with him and to try and sort out my behaviour. I did kind of go off the rails in my life at that time.
142. I fell pregnant when I was just turning seventeen. I'd been at a party and I got really drunk. When I woke up in the morning, one of my male pals was lying next to me. They all knew I was gay, and I can't think I would have said aye but I fell pregnant. I wanted an abortion but my mum and dad were against that so I had a wee boy.
143. I could not bond with him at all and I was even trying to give him away to pals once he was born. I started drinking and I took to drugs.
144. I ended up getting to a point in my life that if I wanted to stop drinking I had to go to a country that didn't allow drink. That was my way of detoxing and recuperating myself. I was self-employed as a mechanic and I worked for TXM Recruit in Milton Keynes. They sent us over to Afghanistan to work for several months at a time, so that was my solution. I did stop then for about nine years and I felt great. Things then started to go bad again in my life and I started drinking again in 2012.

## Impact

145. I do my ironing and washing in a certain way and it all comes from how I did things in St. Joseph's. I'm so picky about how I do things, I'm so regimental. When I'm hanging out my washing I need to use the same colour of pegs for different items and I'll stand and iron a top for half an hour if I don't think it's right.
146. A pal of mine was watching me doing all my washing one day and she told me she couldn't believe how much I was like one of her other pals. A couple of weeks later, she introduced me to that pal and I couldn't believe it when I saw that it was [REDACTED]. She had been my friend in St. Joseph's.
147. [REDACTED] actually had trouble sleeping after that and had nightmares for weeks, as seeing me brought everything back. We have been able to talk about things though so I feel meeting her again did me some good.
148. I remember there was a group of about eight of us girls that were quite friendly at St. Joseph's and we had these two favourite songs when we were there. I don't know, but I think the two songs helped push us through our time there. One was Pink Floyd, Brick in the Wall and the other was Beds are Burning by Midnight Oil.
149. We played them constantly and I do think they helped get us through. I still have them on my phone and I listen to them when I'm maybe a bit lost and in my own wee world.
150. I was Protestant in a Catholic school and I do feel that's impacted on my religious beliefs. My dad was a very proud Protestant man and I could have been religious but not after all that's happened to me at St. Joseph's. Not when I think about what Brother Benedict did to me. He took advantage of me and that's not right.
151. I'm not greatly connected with my family. My siblings and I went our own separate ways after my dad died in 1986. I've never really bonded with my mum so I never felt she was like a mother to me. She gave me away at a very young age and I've always



had this kind of hatred towards her and towards my sisters, because I was the only one in care.

152. I have since learnt that my mum was put in a home. My gran had caught tuberculosis and my mum got taken off her and put in a home. I did fall out with my mum, before she passed away because I had to ask her 'why me?'. I told her it was her fault I ended up the way I am and then we never spoke. Then she died in 2018 and I never got a chance to say cheerio to her or to say I was sorry.
153. I look back now and I think that she never put me there on purpose and she did what she could at the time. I put all that on her and I've still got all that to deal with. I did ask her why though and she just kept saying it was because I was crazy. That's why I asked my psychologist if it was hereditary because it had been drilled into my head that much by my mum.
154. I'm beginning to understand now that all the hurt, pain, torture and emotion has been from my school days. All my life I've taken drugs to escape from how I'm feeling. I never had my son for twenty eight years because I couldn't be a mum, I couldn't be emotional. Only now am I beginning to understand and learn about my son. I'm glad he's here and I wouldn't change him for the world and I've got four wonderful grandchildren.
155. I sometimes struggle with relationships, I have fights with partners and sometimes can't be intimate with them or show them love or affection.
156. I have brain damage now as a result of all the drink and drugs. I feel like it's getting worse and I'm forgetting more and more and over this last year, what with everything that's been coming to the surface, I've started drinking buckets.
157. I've been so nervous about seeing Brother Benedict again. I don't want to see him and the thought of going to court scares me. I don't want to see him or have to speak to him or even be in the same room as that man again.

158. He took so much away from me, all my confidence, everything. I've never been able to connect with my family since I left that school. I've not had any family relationship and I put all that down to him.
159. I've lost out on a lot of my sons life. I've ended up in relationships where there have been children and he then hates me. I just wish I could have been a better mum for him as I couldn't be there for him.
160. There has definitely been an impact on my mental health. I haven't been able to trust anybody or talk to anybody and I have difficulty having close relationships. I was married but we've split up now. My wife had mental health issues as well and I kind of saw me in her. I think I tried to save her rather than be in a relationship with her.
161. I don't sleep well and I get diazepam to help me relax. I'm lucky to sleep for twenty minutes to an hour before I wake up and it can be forty eight hours or so before I sleep again. My doctors know that but they just think I'm after drugs so it's like fighting a battle and they just think 'drugs or alcohol', they don't consider my brain damage, my arthritis or all my other conditions. I get so frustrated with my doctor because he won't give me what I need and that makes me feel like a liar.
162. I do think about St. Joseph's and there are some triggers. The songs I mentioned and sometimes when I'm watching football on the television and you see the manager having a wee chat with the team in the dressing room, that brings things back to me.
163. I have flashbacks as well, they have been really bad recently. I've been waking up in the middle of the night screaming. It's all dark and I feel like I'm locked in the dark in the cupboard at school. My son tells me he has heard me screaming and shouting things like 'get away, get away'.
164. That's something I've discussed with my therapist, Pam Doig, when I wasn't having as many, but they are getting a bit more frequent now. That might just be because I'm bringing stuff up a lot just now though.

165. SNR [REDACTED], HBD [REDACTED], stays in [REDACTED] and I sometimes see him in the street. He only gave me the odd clout across the top of the head but when I see him, it's still so difficult. I go back to being a kid, I feel like I'm just shrinking. He once passed me and said HBE [REDACTED] and I said 'yes sir', just like at school. I have no idea why I did that, it was so weird.
166. He'll also stand and just stare at me. He will be with his wife and he just stares non-stop, that's weird too. I just stare him out as I'm not going to let him try and intimidate me. I feel like speaking to his wife, and telling her what he was like, but I wouldn't as that's just my inner child wanting to lash out at everybody.
167. I've been to St. Josephs since I have left and that brought back memories. It's been knocked down, but if it was there, I don't think I could walk in. I stood where the playground was and I just stared and went into a world of my own. I had all these thoughts and memories and I wondered how many other kids did Brother Benedict do things to. I don't understand how someone with his authority and his name, could do that to children. He was so nasty.
168. I just want to better my life. I maybe didn't pass some of my exams at school but I'm a brainy wee person. I just never had all the right tools and never got treated right. I had a better bond with my dad than my mum and I feel I just rebelled against her.
169. Out of the four girls [REDACTED] was the only one born without anything wrong with her and my mum made that clear to us. She would tell us she preferred [REDACTED] over the rest of us because she got to take her home and got to bond with her.
170. I was in the oxygen tent for my first six months, so was [REDACTED]. [REDACTED] was born with spina bifida and had a hole in her back. She was in hospital for the first two years of her life. So my mum didn't get to have that same bond with the three of us, as she did with [REDACTED]. She was the golden child.

### Reporting of Abuse

171. At the beginning of last year I was watching the Michael Jackson programme 'Leaving Neverland', and things in the programme made me start crying. It was like my story getting told to a certain extent and I felt the need to speak out.
172. Right after that programme something came on about the abuse of children in residential care and I decided to do something about it. I phoned the Scottish Child Abuse Inquiry, started the process of giving evidence and was given details of Future Pathways as well.
173. I was contacted by the police from Dalkeith later on in the year and I gave them a statement. They showed me twelve photographs and asked if I could pick out Brother Benedict. I picked him out immediately. I was told by the police that they would be charging Brother Benedict with a physical and a sexual assault on me but I've heard nothing about that since then.
174. I do have a lawyer called Natalie Donald who is helping me with things, like messages and mediation. She works with Thompson's Lawyers, who are dealing with the historical case against Brother Benedict. I actually think that's the civil side of things but I've not heard anything about what stage that's at either.

### **Records**

175. I've never seen any records. I've not asked for any and I actually didn't know I could. I would be very interested in seeing any records about me.

### **Counselling / support**

176. It wasn't until a couple of years ago, when I sat and spoke with my Alcoholics Anonymous sponsor for about three hours, that I realised it wasn't all my fault. My

doctor now knows about my childhood and he totally understands the situations I got myself into and the trouble I got into. He now understand why I've done what I've done.

177. I've started going to Reconnect and when I'm ready I will receive cognitive behavioural therapy for my emotional borderline personality disorder. I've also had contact with Future Pathways who have been helping me.
178. At the moment I have a trauma counsellor, Joanna, who phones me every Thursday at 10 o'clock. I am on a lot of medication, but nothing for trauma. I only told my local doctor, Dr Young, about the abuse earlier this year. He actually thinks I could be a bit bi-polar and have a split personality. He also believes I have PTSD and he is now referring me for a reassessment with the West Team at Huntleyburn Mental Health Hospice in Galashiels.

#### **Lessons to be Learned**

179. I do think people involved in the care of children need a lifetime background check. Not just ten or fifteen years as people can try and turn their life around and no one who has any history of abusing children should ever be allowed to work with them again.
180. Anyone working with children, whether it's teachers or people that had the power brother Benedict had at that school, all need to be thoroughly checked.
181. I think people need to be aware of the signs that indicate children might be getting abused. It could be that they're withdrawn or holding things in, just whatever the signs are. I used to walk about that school with a frown. My dad told me that I never smiled.
182. People need to be more open to learning about someone that's been abused. To be able to recognise movements or sudden quietness or whatever in a child and to speak to the child and reassure them and make sure they are alright. Maybe someone like a

counsellor at school that children can speak to or go to. I hate the thought of any child having to go through what I did, to go through that kind of thing. ..

**Hopes for the Inquiry**

183. I certainly hope that Brother Benedict never gets back out of prison, if that's where he is. I would like an apology from him and for him to tell me what he did was wrong and that he took advantage of me and my childhood. It was like I was incarcerated for being human just because I was a problem child.

184. I doubt I will ever get that apology and even if I did, it probably wouldn't mean anything but maybe then I could finally put things to rest and try and have a life with my son and grandkids.

**Other information**

185. 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.

HBE  


Signed.....

Dated... 18/9/2020 .....