

Scottish Child Abuse Inquiry

Witness Statement of

GHY

Support person present: No

1. My full name is GHY. This has been my name since birth. My date of birth is 1955. My contact details are known to the Inquiry.

Life before care

2. I was born in Glasgow and lived with my parents and older sister, who was three years older than me. My mum, was a nurse and my dad, was a labouring engineer who worked on the M6 motorway and then with Hydro Electrics. My dad had to travel a lot for work so my mum would be left at home with me and . I had a younger brother, who came along much later but I wasn't living at home when he was born.
3. I grew up in the north of Glasgow in Springburn, where the were. When the shut down, us kids had a huge area to play in so I had a very adventurous childhood. We did a lot of climbing, jumping and making dens. Working class weans don't get the same chance with sports as other kids do so we played outside and developed the hearts of lions. Some of the things we did when we were out playing would have put Batman to shame. I had a good time when I was wee.
4. I went to Hyde Park school in Springburn. It was a great wee school, I loved it. I was clever and took everything in.

5. I was hanging about with twelve and thirteen year old high school boys when I was still in primary school. That's when things went wrong for me, but I don't blame them.
6. There was a launderette at the back of our house, which had a big funnel coming out of it that used to give out all the hot air from the dryers. One day, I managed to squeeze through the bars to get in to it and climbed in the funnel to get warm, but I wasn't able to get out again. My sister and her pal saw me in there and were laughing because I couldn't get out. She had to eventually tell my mum, who phoned the police who had to get me out.
7. I ended up having to go to the juvenile court in Glasgow, which was on Ingram Street. I was charged with breaking in to the launderette, even though that was not what had happened. I was ten years old at the time and was terrified. The judge sentenced me to go to an approved school, but first I had to go for an assessment so they could decide where to send me. This was a complete surprise to me. I had no idea this was something that could happen to me.
8. I was taken to Larchgrove Assessment Centre straight from court.

Larchgrove Assessment Centre, Glasgow

9. I was ten years old when I was taken to Larchgrove. I ended up staying in there for two months.
10. I arrived with just the clothes I was wearing and was given their uniform to wear, which was short corduroy trousers. They weren't new and had letters nipped into the front of them from people who had worn them before.
11. I wasn't keen on the place and the atmosphere when I got there. It was crazy because all the boys there belonged to Glasgow gangs. They all wore these short corduroy trousers and would nip the cords and make their gang name on the shorts, whether

they were from Pollock, Easterhouse, Maryhill, Springburn or elsewhere. Glasgow was very violent in the 1960s.

12. Boys would automatically just sort themselves out depending on what area you were from. I did the same and gravitated towards certain older boys who were from the same area as me. That was the way it worked. I made pals with wee [REDACTED].
13. There were about one hundred boys in the home. We slept in dormitories that held about ten to twelve boys.
14. The boys would all smoke in there and the fifteen year olds were given fags by the staff. They would leave me a wee draw of their fags. The older boys were moved to Longriggend just before their sixteenth birthdays.

Staff

15. All the staff wore these wee grey jackets, except for one or two who wore suits. Mr [REDACTED] LGX was [REDACTED] SNR, but it was the staff on the ground who ran the show, a bit like in prison. Mr [REDACTED] GIA was the unofficial governor, if you like, and he wore a suit. Mr [REDACTED] MKI was a supervisory teacher and had ginger hair, wore glasses and had wee piggy eyes.

Daily routine

16. There was no structure to the day. We were just in our dormitories or sitting about in the big yard most of the day. It was summer when I was there so we could sit outside.
17. Some older boys got picked to do some gardening. I did a wee bit gardening as well while I was there. We also played football with the boys from St John's next door.
18. There was no schooling, which I resented, because I was quite sharp.

Visits and family contact

19. I was meant to be there to be assessed but I don't remember anybody coming to talk to me about anything so I don't know what assessment they did.
20. My mum came to visit me while I was in there. My dad didn't because he was away working. I met my mum in the visitor's room, which was an open room with tables and chairs, and staff standing about. I sat at a table with her but I couldn't tell her anything because the staff would hear it. If anybody did say anything then the staff would just butt in and say it wasn't as bad as we were making out.
21. My mum knew it was rough in there. She didn't know how long I would be in there for. All she knew was that I was going to be sent to an approved school but was waiting for someone to let her know where and when.

Running away

22. I saw a few boys going over the wall. I never did though because I knew it would just make problems for my mum and she had enough on our plate with me being in there already.

Abuse in Larchgrove

23. The place was really regimented, but in a bad way. I think some of the staff had army service.
24. I found the attitude of the staff overpowering. There was just free use of violence, which started as soon as I went in there. If you were standing in a line and other boys were talking, Mr LGX would come over and accuse you for talking. If you said you hadn't been, he would call you a liar and whack you with his hand over the side of your

head. He did that to me and to other boys. He was also mad for giving boys the belt, which he carried over his left shoulder.

25. Mr **LGX** reminded me of an SS general. He had a horrible face, stone grey hair, dark eyes and stood really straight and upright, which was intimidating.
26. **GIA** wasn't shy about giving boys a whack. Mr **MKI** didn't mind giving boys whacks and kicks. He wore leather shoes and would tell you they were for dragging down your shins and he would look you in the eye with his wee piggy eyes as he did it. He did that to me and to other boys.

Leaving Larchgrove

27. After two months of being in Larchgrove, someone came to tell me a vacancy had come up in Dr Guthrie's in Edinburgh and I would be leaving the next day.
28. I didn't have any possessions to pack. I just gave them their uniform back, got my own clothes back to wear, and was driven away in a car. I can't remember who drove me but it was just one person who took me.
29. I never even got to see my mum before I went. I don't think she was even told I was going. She only found out when I sent her a letter from Dr Guthrie's.

Dr Guthrie's Approved School, 10 Lasswade Road, Edinburgh

30. I was ten years old when I went to Dr Guthrie's. The building was beautiful from the outside. There was a big square with lots of greenery and massive playing fields around it.
31. We weren't locked up in there so you could get out the front door and walk out the building. We were split into four houses called Argyle, Belhaven, Jeffrey and Stair,

which all had a dormitory each. They were all on one landing with Jeffrey and Stair on the east side of the building, and Argyle and Belhaven on the other side of the corridor.

32. There were about twenty boys or so in each house and dormitory. I was in Jeffrey. Each house had a captain, a vice captain and two monitors.
33. There were more boys in there than Larchgrove. The boys in there aged from ten to thirteen years old. There were twins from Aberdeen in there, [REDACTED] and [REDACTED]. There were boys from Dundee, including a boy called [REDACTED]. There was a wee boy there called [REDACTED], who was from Wick. There was a wee coloured boy called [REDACTED] who was in there for battering his dad. I had a wee pal called [REDACTED] who was from Possilpark who was in because his parents were alcoholics. He was a beautiful wee boy with blonde hair. He was a great wee guy. There were boys in there from all over.
34. There was a girls' school at Dr Guthrie's, but they were in a different building. They were up in Liberton and we never had anything to do with them.

Staff

35. Mr ^{GZP}[REDACTED] was ^{SNR}[REDACTED] of the place for a while. He died of a heart attack a year or fifteen months after I went there. Mr ^{GFC}[REDACTED] was ^{SNR}[REDACTED]
36. There were educational teachers in the school and then there were staff who looked after us after school and some who did both. Mr ^{GII}[REDACTED] was a teacher and took [REDACTED] [REDACTED], known as [REDACTED]. He was also one of ^{SNR}[REDACTED] and would sometimes [REDACTED] as ^{SNR}[REDACTED]. Miss Jack was an educational teacher who taught the boys who weren't very good at reading or writing. She would also come away to summer camps with us. Mr ^{GFG}[REDACTED] was also educational but would come away to summer camps.
37. Mr Herron was the carpentry teacher who came in from outside to teach us during school hours. He didn't have access to our dormitories or anything. There was Mr

HCM, the science teacher, who passed away and was replaced with Mr LXT who had fought in the war in Burma.

38. GHZ taught us wrestling. There was a painter and decorator called Mr LYI who was nicknamed LYI, who also taught us judo. I am unsure what exactly his role in the place was meant to be. He was a big guy.
39. There was GIC who was the physical training guy. We called him "GIC GIC" because he had been shot in the bum in the war. Mr GBE was the gardener. His name was GBE.
40. There was a night watchman, Mr GUH.

Routine at Dr Guthrie's

41. We got up in the morning about 7 am. We were woken up by the night watchman, Mr GUH. He would put the lights on to get everyone up and then go off his shift.
42. We would get up, strip the bed down, get our shoes on, run downstairs and run around the football pitch once, still in our jammies. We then went straight to the swimming pool, took our shoes and pyjamas off and got into the pool to swim a length of the pool, naked. I was ok because I could swim before I got there, but some boys struggled.
43. We got out of the pool, put our pyjamas and shoes back on, went back upstairs to the dormitory and made our beds. Then we got dressed and went down to the dining room for breakfast.
44. We all lined up in the square in our school classes and went to our classrooms. We got back into the square for break, then back to classes. We got out at lunch time, had our lunch in the dining room then played in the square before going back to classes for the afternoon. We got out for a bit after school again.

45. During the winter we could do indoor activities after school, like singing classes or making table lamps, which Mr Heron came in to do with us. He was great.
46. We all lined up in our houses in the square at lunch time and after school. Each house name would be called out in turn. The Captain from each would step forward and announce how many boys were present, how many were on home leave or elsewhere. It was like checking in at the army and we were like wee mini soldiers.

Weekends

47. We used to play football at 11 am on Saturdays against other outside teams.
48. We went to Liberton Kirk every Sunday which was the church near the home. We would see normal people and we wanted to talk to them but we weren't allowed to. It was horrible having to go back to the home after that.
49. Boys like me, who were sentenced by the courts, could get home leave some weekends to go home and see their families. Other boys, who were in their because they didn't have families who could look after them didn't have that option.
50. I got to go home and see my family about once a month.

Mealtimes / food

51. We had all our meals in the dining room, which was a big room with long tables like in a boarding school. It smelled really good. I loved the food and there was plenty of it. We got three courses.

Washing / bathing

52. There were showers and toilets on each landing. There was a shower room with seven shower heads in it. We lined up outside with our toothpaste and went in seven at a time to get showered. The soap was in the showers so we used that.

Clothing / uniform

53. We had a uniform and all wore shorts and a shirt during the day. It wasn't anything fancy. We wore the same things for a week, including our underwear and socks before they went away to get washed.
54. Mrs McCorkindale was the seamstress. We went to her if we needed anything mended or replaced. She also did the washing every week.

School and teaching

55. We had the usual classes like English, maths and science. The classes were good and I felt like my education was good in there. The teachers came in from outside to teach in classes.
56. Mr GII [REDACTED] was a wee bit belt happy. If he thought you'd done something wrong, he would get you into his office to belt you.
57. I really liked Mr Herron, the carpentry teacher. He was a wee guy with glasses. He was really good. I was good at techy drawing and making stuff. I made my mum a wee fold up coffee table in his class. I also made elephant book cases for her. Some of these were in after school classes in the winter. I was really proud of the things I made.
58. We also learned other things, like map reading and orienteering. This was when we went out on camping trips so we learned things out side of the classroom as well.
59. GIC [REDACTED] was supposed to be the physical training guy but he just got us to play murder ball, which was quite violent. He would just make the teams and stand back and watch us. He was also in charge of the swimming and pool area at all times. Not all the boys who came to Dr Guthries could swim and GIC [REDACTED] was supposed to teach them how to but I never saw him teaching anyone. Some boys would be holding

on to the edge for dear life. GIC was in charge and he would be shouting at them to get into the shallow end. It was about six feet at the deep end so it was quite deep.

60. There were adult men that would come into the pool area who I never recognised. They would be dressed in tennis whites and the gym was next to the pool so maybe they were going to play badminton after. They would come into the pool area and talk to GIC as boys were running about naked. It was weird.
61. Mr GHZ taught us wrestling and Mr LYI taught us Judo. LYI had a big, proper judo suit and so did the boys.

Leisure time

62. We could play in the square during school breaks and after school. There were playing fields nearby where we could go and throw flying discs or play football, but we could only go there when staff took us. We weren't allowed to go ourselves.
63. We were also taken to the gym by the staff. They built a new gym in there while I was there.

Trips / Holidays

64. Mr LXT, the science teacher, took me and my pal, to his caravan a couple of times. It was at River Esk in Dalkeith. It was a lovely setting. He had a wee cigarette holder, which he used to keep his Woodbine cigarettes dry, which he had from when he was in the war in Burma. He would give us some cigarettes too. He was alright and felt like a grandad. I don't know if he took other boys to the caravan. He would drive us there and we would just be there for a couple of hours, then he would drive us back.
65. We were taken on the bus to Edinburgh to see The Sound of Music when it came out in cinema. That was good.

66. I learned map reading and orienteering with Mr Keddie. He was a good teacher. We started learning at Pentlands. We then moved up a level and did Lammermuir Hills and the Cairngorms, which were proper camping trips. That was good.
67. During the summer holidays, all the boys would go to North Berwick for summer camp for about six weeks. We would sleep in tents and huts. The houses mixed with each other more during this time. There was the usual fighting between boys but they were happy trips because we had a bit more freedom. We did things like canoeing.

Chores and work

68. We had to clean our own dormitories every day and they would get inspected by a senior member of staff, like Mr ^{GFC} [REDACTED], to make sure they were clean enough. If it wasn't, then we would have to clean the whole room again. It was mostly always clean though because it was cleaned every day so never had time to get dirty.
69. ^{GFC} [REDACTED] would take a few boys out during the school day to clean out horses stables. I don't know where they were or who they belonged to. He took me a couple of times a month. I would be with a few other boys. He took different boys as well so maybe he took boys daily or a few times a week to clean these stables.
70. When I was about ten or eleven years old, Mr ^{GBE} [REDACTED] got me and a few other boys to pick potatoes in some farmer's fields. We did this for about three weeks, and it was during our school day so we did this instead of going to school.
71. The farmer would come in his tractor and me and a few boys would jump on the back, and he would drive us down to his fields at Liberton Braes. He would be ploughing the potatoes up with his tractor and we had to go after him and pick the tatties and bag them. The farmer would be shouting at us for not going fast enough. We were just wee boys! It was good to get out of the home but it was proper labour. We stopped for a cup of tea and our dinner and were made to get right back at it. We got money for it which staff would keep for you.

72. Me and another five boys were taken up to Glenfeshie for a few days to paint a hostel there.

Family contact

73. I got paper to write home to my mum. It was rubber stamped at the top with Dr Guthrie's address, the way you get in the prisons. I think my mum only found out I had been moved there because I wrote to her and told her.
74. I started to get home at the weekends to see my family after I had been there for about nine months. I would play football on the Saturday morning and leave just after 1 pm in the afternoon. I would be given bus fares and sent out the door. I would get the bus from the Braes to Waverley Train Station and then get the train to Glasgow Queen Street Station then get the bus home to Springburn. My wee mum would be delighted to see me.
75. I would need to be back at Guthrie's by 5 pm on Sunday so I wasn't home for long. After a while, I hurt my knee and couldn't play football so I would get to leave at 9 am on a Saturday.
76. I would get some money to take home with me. This was the money I made from the tattie picking.

Birthdays and Christmas

77. Birthdays weren't celebrated because most of the staff saw the boys as sub-human.
78. We went to Liberton Kirk, which was the church next to the home. It was really nicely decorated at Christmas and we would go there. Some boys would sing Christmas carols. I remember my wee pal, [REDACTED], singing Little Donkey. He had the voice of an angel.

79. Seeing ordinary people from the community at the church gave your heart a wee lift and you wanted to talk to them. Your heart soon dropped again when you realised you had to go back to the home.

Visits / Inspections

80. I only got one visit at Dr Guthrie's because I was getting home leave. My mum and dad came once because my dad was home from England and I hadn't seen him for a long time. They just turned up and the staff came and found me and told me to go for a walk around the football field with them. Then we came back to the home and got a cup of tea, before they left.
81. I don't recall anybody from outside ever coming into the home. I don't recall anybody ever asking how we were getting treated. It felt like we were isolated.
82. One time, footballers came to open our new gym when it was finished. Peter Marinello, who moved from Hibs football team to Aston Villa, came to the home. He must have been about 21 years old at the time. I knew things weren't right in the home and we never saw anybody from outside so I wanted to say something to them but I couldn't.

Healthcare

83. There was a matron who wore a nurse's outfit and she had her own surgical area. I don't remember her name because I never had a lot to do with her.
84. I had to go and see her a few times after my knee was hurt and she gave me jags in my knee. She wasn't very caring.
85. I was complaining to staff about a pain in my side for ages and nobody listened to me. It was a long time before a staff member took me to hospital, where I got my appendix out. After the operation, I had a big wound that was stitched up and it had puss coming out of it. I had to keep telling the staff and going to the matron to get it cleaned. I didn't

get any further treatment until I was taken back to the hospital to have my stitches removed.

86. My throat was all swollen and I had to get my tonsils out. I had to go and catch the bus myself to Sick Kids Hospital because nobody was able to take me.

Running away

87. The place wasn't locked up so you could just walk out and run away. You would probably even get a couple of hours grace before you were caught by the police and brought back. I never ran away, though, because it would just cause grief for your family. The boys who ran away were sent to Rossie Farm in Montrose, which was like a secure unit. I knew it would be worse for me there and that I would never get to see my family.

Bed Wetting

88. The night watchman, Mr GUH [REDACTED], got the bed wetters up in the middle of the night to make them go to the toilet so they wouldn't wet themselves. If they already had wet the bed, he would make them get up and go have a shower.
89. Mr GUH [REDACTED] was a creepy, big guy with a red, pockmarked face who always wore a cardigan. He got called 'GUH [REDACTED]' by the boys behind his back. The band, [REDACTED], had brought out a record at the time called '[REDACTED]' which is about [REDACTED]. I don't know how he got that nickname, whether it was from the time I was there or from before my time there, but he never did anything to me or anybody else that I knew about.

Abuse at Dr Guthrie's

90. There wasn't really any kind of set discipline where you got punished this way for doing a certain thing. Boys who wanted to go home got threatened with their home leave

being taken away, and they did stop boys from going home. Other boys who didn't want to go home didn't get the same punishment.

91. Most of the staff treated us like we were sub-human. They thought we were just bad boys and called the boys from Glasgow, "The Weegies" and the rest were called "The Teuchters."
92. Mr ^{GI} would take you to his office to belt you if he thought you did something wrong. He would make you stand on a chair with your hand out and belt you three or six times on the hand, but he would catch you on the wrist. It was one of those belts that had the tongues at the end. If he thought you'd done something really bad, he would tell you to bend over and touch your toes and belt you six times on the bum over your clothes. Nobody else would be in the office. If he took more than one boy, for fighting or something, we would wait outside his office and go in one at a time to get belted. He belted me about six times and I would have marks on my wrist or welts on my bum or tops of my thighs afterwards. This happened during the early months of me being there because I soon wised up and learned how to behave.
93. I didn't like ^{LYI} at all. He was a big guy and would give you a whack with a big bunch of keys. I hated him. He was called ^{LYI} because he was a big, lumbering guy with big, fat sausage fingers. We only saw him when he was painting or decorating or when taking judo. He wasn't involved in the care of the boys.
94. ^{LYI} would come out of his painting and decorating place and he used to sit in the yard. Boys used to go for a sly smoke in the toilets and if anyone saw ^{LYI} coming they'd warn you because we weren't allowed to smoke. ^{LYI} would sometimes come into the toilets, line us up and smell our fingers to see if we had been smoking.
95. This one day me and some of the boys were in the toilets and ^{LYI} came in, lined us up and smelled our fingers. I hadn't been smoking but he said I had been. I said I hadn't and maybe swore. He hit me, bang with his hand, and I shot right through the yellow bat wing doors of a cubicle. I went like a bullet into the cubicle and whacked my

knee against the toilet pan. I think I was physically sick with the pain. I was about eleven years old at the time and he was huge.

96. LYI ██████ took me to the matron and told me under no circumstances was I to tell her what happened in the toilets. He said "you will never mention what happened in the ablutions, GHY ██████." The matron wasn't that caring. She didn't ask me what happened to my knee but gave me jags in the knee, which might have been painkillers but I don't know.
97. My knee was swollen and huge after that so I had to go back and see her a few times. She kept giving me jags even when it was really swollen. Years later, I found out from an orthopaedic surgeon that you're not supposed to do anything to a swollen knee until the swelling goes down.
98. I wasn't the only one. I saw boys get the side of their heads burst open by LYI ██████. It was like a ritual. He would just crack you willy nilly. I knew boys who got their head bust from him. He would carry a big bunch of keys attached to his trousers on a chain, like a jailor, and he'd whip it off the chain and whack boys with them for small reasons, like if he thought you were being boisterous. He'd usually hit you on the back of the hand. He'd be standing with his big painter overalls on with his big round head. He wasn't a nice man at all.
99. LYI ██████ would use his Judo classes as an excuse to throw boys around. Some boys got it more than others. He would do it to me and rag doll me about, even after hurting my knee. He would pull a move on you and have you on the floor and he'd be lying on top of you with his whole body weight. Then he would explain to the other boys how he had done it and that they should pay attention as they would be doing it next, but the whole time he was talking, he would still be lying on top of you as you struggled. He did that to some boys, including me, like he was trying to dominate you. He would let other boys get up straight away.
100. Mr LXT ██████ knew LYI ██████ hit boys. Nobody did anything about it. Other staff would also hit boys with the back of the hand as well.

101. There was a wee boy called [REDACTED] in the home, who was the only coloured boy in the school. He was the same age as me. He had a terrible time there and got battered and bullied by the staff and the other boys, and I know it was because of his colour. He was a cracking wee guy and I really liked him. He knew how to stick up for himself and I would weigh in and help him too, but there was only so much I could do.
102. Staff would threaten boys by saying they would be sent to "The Farm" which was a closed block on Rossie Farm where we would be locked up. It was like a secure unit. Boys were threatened with this all the time if the staff thought you were lying about something or being unruly.
103. There were things that went on at summer camp that you just knew didn't feel right. You would see a staff member walking along the beach with a boy at 11 pm at night when everyone should have been in bed in their tents. We would see Mr LXT [REDACTED] walking along the beach at night with a boy or two. Mr LXT [REDACTED] was nice to me but anybody can put on a veneer and appear decent, so you don't know what was going on. I also saw GHZ [REDACTED], who took wrestling, on the beach at night with boys.

Peer abuse

104. Some boys there were on a care order and some had been sent there by the court so there were two different kinds of boys there. We were all mixed together and you could see the strong from the weak being separated. The boys did that themselves. There was a wee boy, [REDACTED], who we called "[REDACTED]". You could see right away that he was a victim. He shouldn't have been in there.
105. We were made to play really violent games like murder ball. It was ok for us rough tough Glasgow boys but the wee soft ones got hurt.
106. There were older boys hitting on younger boys, physically and sexually. Older boys had gone through puberty and looked like young men. Then you had wee boys running around.

107. Certain teachers also took stock of what was happening and they could then pick out who the victims were to abuse themselves.
108. It was a strange phenomenon in the swimming pool. We were all in there naked in the mornings and some boys would be running around with erections. Some younger boys would be holding on to the side of the pool while older boys would be pressed up against them. GIC would be watching and seemed to think it was alright because he never stopped it. He would be standing at a distance watching some boys getting almost drowned by other boys and just let it happen.
109. I had to intervene a few times to help my wee pal [REDACTED], who was from Possilpark. He was in Stair House. I thought I saved him in the pool but I didn't. He was raped by the [REDACTED] and [REDACTED] in Stair house. The [REDACTED] was a boy called [REDACTED] who came from Bellshill, and the [REDACTED] was called [REDACTED] who was from the same part of Glasgow as me. [REDACTED] told me this happened to him and that things weren't right in his dorm. I think this all stemmed from the messing about in the swimming pool.

Reporting of Abuse at Dr Guthrie's

110. I told Bill Gladstone, who ran the football team what LYI did to me. I had told him I couldn't play football after hurting my knee. He said I had been fine days before and asked why I couldn't play. I told him what LYI did. I don't think he did anything about it or told Mr GZP. I know that LYI's behaviour didn't get better.
111. Me and [REDACTED] told Mr LXT that things were happening in Stair House. I think we thought we could confide in him because he was the newest member of staff and took me and [REDACTED] down to his caravan where he gave us Woodbine cigarettes. He felt a bit like a grandad.

112. [REDACTED] and [REDACTED] were sent away from Dr Guthrie's. I think they were sent away to Rossie Farm. That made the threat from the staff about sending us to Rossie Farm if we were bad feel even more real. I wasn't going to complain about the staff at Dr Guthrie's to anybody in case they sent me to Rossie Farm too and then I'd be locked up with boys like [REDACTED] and [REDACTED].

Leaving Dr Guthrie's

113. I was in Dr Guthrie's for two and a half years. I left because I was coming up for thirteen years old. That was the age boys left so I knew I would be going. I think I was told that I would be leaving in a few weeks and my family had been notified.
114. None of the boys had any belongings so we didn't take anything with us when we left.

Life back at home

115. I was about twelve years old when I went back home. It was brilliant being back home with the family. I went back to Colston High School. I did engineering there and I liked it. It was a good school.
116. I was home for about a year when I got into a fight at school. A couple of older boys at school started shouting at my sister and her pal so I got into a fight with them. I got in trouble and was sent back to court, and they decided I was going back to Larchgrove for assessment and then to an approved school when a vacancy became available.

Larchgrove Assessment Centre

117. I was thirteen and a half years old when I went to Larchgrove this time and it was exactly the same as the last time I had been in there. I was bigger this time though

and I knew the ropes. I got a big massive black eye from a boy called [REDACTED], but that was my fault. It was whacky in there.

118. I was there for six to eight weeks then Mr Kyle, a social worker from Geilsland, came to get me and drove me to Geilsland.

Geilsland Residential School, Beith, Ayrshire

119. I was about thirteen and a half when I went into Geilsland. It was a Church of Scotland place. It must have been an approved school because that was what the court had sentenced me to. It was a big, old, red sandstone Villa with lovely grounds, which were a wee bit away from the nearest town of Beith. It was quite impressive the first time I saw it. It had a big, football pitch outside.
120. Inside, it had a lovely, big old fashioned staircase. I was taken by Mr Kyle, the social worker, to an office to meet ^{SNR} [REDACTED], Mr ^{EZD} [REDACTED]. He told me about the place and what to expect.
121. An older boy was called to show me around. The building had a couple of dormitories in it. There was a bit added on to the old building, which was called the New Vic and you went there when you were a bit older, about fifteen years old. They also had a nice new gym there which was built while I was there.
122. There were about fifty boys in there aged from thirteen to sixteen, and they were from all over Scotland.
123. I remember a wee boy called [REDACTED], who was a lovely boy from Kilmarnock who had just gone a bit off the rails like me. He had a stutter. I had a black pal in there, called [REDACTED] from Springburn. He was a big boy and he was brilliant. He had been put in the place for fighting and was called unruly because he'd fought back after being attacked by some boys in a park. The police were called and [REDACTED] ended up

being the one who got in trouble. I remember [REDACTED] who was nicknamed '[REDACTED]' and he was from Auchinairn in Glasgow.

Staff

124. [REDACTED] SNR [REDACTED] was a man called [REDACTED] EZD [REDACTED] who lived in a nice, big house [REDACTED] SNR [REDACTED] was a man called [REDACTED] HFA [REDACTED] and he also lived on the grounds. [REDACTED] SNR [REDACTED] was a man called Mr [REDACTED] GIJ [REDACTED]
125. There was [REDACTED] GIK [REDACTED], who we called [REDACTED] GIK [REDACTED]. He was the brickie and he taught us brick laying. He would also sometimes watch the boys at night. Staff took turns to watch the boys at night. There was no designated night watchman.
126. Mrs Huscroft was the seamstress and her husband, Mr Huscroft, was the gardener.
127. [REDACTED] EZD [REDACTED] was an ex-navy man and he treated the boys like we were in the navy as well. It was a really hard place. There was no empathy or love being distributed.

Daily routine

128. There was no schooling in there. We did manual labour all day. The days were spent doing things like digging holes and trenches for cables, painting, gathering leaves, cutting the grass. We helped build a new gym for the place. We were up twenty, thirty foot towers using just single ladders to get up so that we could paint. We had no safety equipment.
129. We were using heavy duty toxic paint and paint strippers with no masks or any safety clothing. There was no workplace compliance with health and safety.
130. We were made to play murder ball and a game called pirate tig in the gym. In pirate tig, every person that gets tigger joins forces to get the rest so one person grows to two then three etc, and they all catch everyone else.

131. We grafted all day so they had to feed us well. The food was good in there.
132. There was some leisure time in evenings. We could play snooker, billiards, table tennis, or listen to music. There was a television but we could only watch that at certain times.
133. The rest of the time was spent making sure your clothes and kit were properly maintained. They were really strict about that.
134. They didn't really encourage family visits in Geilsland. My family didn't come to visit me when I was there and I didn't see many other boys getting visits. I got home for Christmas and for a couple of weeks in summer. I don't remember any trips or holidays while in Geilsland.

Weekends

135. We had a kit inspection on a Saturday, where our clothes would be checked. I got home visits at weekends after the kit inspection. The staff preferred to get the boys out at the weekends. I would leave Saturday, get the bus from Beith to Anderson Cross Bus Station, and then come back on Sunday.
136. On the weekends that I didn't get home, we could also play football outside in the fields but just amongst ourselves. It wasn't organised. We were also taken swimming at Glengarnoch sometimes.
137. We didn't have to pray through the week, but we were made to go to church every Sunday. We had to wear our Sunday best with our shirts and ties and were marched to church. We went to the church in Beith and the one in Dalry on alternate weeks.
138. **EZD** used to get us to wash the cars of the church goers or just punters in the street to make money for Geilsland. He would have us doing that in the winter and it was freezing. We never got the money.

Chores and discipline

139. We got given our clothes and kits, which included our uniform, small clothes, tie, boots and oil skins.
140. Mrs Huschroft would write your name on your shirts, trousers, jacket, and you would have to sew over it. She wrote "GHY [REDACTED]" on mine, which was quite long, and I had to sew it perfectly. Your smaller clothes like socks, underpants and tie would have your initials that you had to sew. It would be checked afterwards and if it wasn't considered to be perfect, the thread would be pulled out and you'd have to do it again. Some boy's names, like [REDACTED]'s, was harder to sew. Sometimes it would take boys weeks to do.
141. We were responsible for our own things, and had to sew and mend them if they needed it. It was like being in the army.
142. We had to wash our clothes every day. We had to scrub our baseball boots, buff our oil skins, and have all of our clothes neatly packed away in our lockers. Everything had to be perfect.
143. We got a kit inspection on a Saturday morning by a senior member of staff. This happened every week so you would spend all Friday soaking, washing, ironing your things. Then you would lay it out on your bed on a Saturday for inspection. It had to be laid out in a precise way. There was a template for it. If one person had one item even a tiny bit out, everyone's kit would be thrown on the floor to do again.
144. [REDACTED] would inspect our dorm and our lockers any time he wanted to. If he came in and found something wrong with even one person's locker, he shouted "eviction." Eviction meant we were being evicted. Then everything came out the lockers onto the floor, the blinds off the windows were stripped and the boys had to scrub the entire place, dust it again and move everything back where it belonged.

145. There were times he came into the room at 2 am in the morning when we were sleeping and shout "eviction" and we all had to bolt out of bed, clean, dust and put everything back. He would say it was because he found a bit of dust in one person's locker during an inspection that afternoon.
146. My stuff was always perfectly clean and neat but everyone had to be responsible if even one boy's things weren't perfect. He called it collective responsibility. Some boys just couldn't get the hang of it so everyone suffered. This meant the boys would turn against the boy who had messed up.
147. We washed our own beds so if a boy wet the bed, which some did, they had to wash their own sheets. They never really got a hard time for it.

Medical attention

148. There was a matron there but she never really did anything. If we got injured or anything, you were just expected to get on with it. I bumped my head in the gym and had a huge lump but I didn't go see the matron and got no assistance. Nobody cared.
149. I don't remember anyone going out to the doctor or dentist.

Abuse in Geilsland

150. **EZD** was **SNR** of everything in there. If he told you to do something, you had to do it with no questions asked. Total submission was expected. He would back hand you for little things. He would hit you anywhere on your body, but usually your ribs. He would do this if he thought you were lippy. If you tried to show any resilience, it would get worse. They were trying to break you.
151. **EZD** made you run around the football pitch with your hands above your head if he thought you had done something wrong. Sometimes you could be running for ages and you could only stop when he shouted at you to come in. He got us to play murder

ball as well. He said it was to toughen us up but it was just a bullying session where tougher boys could do what they wanted to weaker boys.

152. There were these big cargo nets in the gym that were about thirty foot high and tied with eyelets at the bottom. It was quite daunting if you climbed up it. There weren't even any mats at the bottom, so if you fell, you would just fall on concrete. I climbed up it one day when **EZD** was making us play pirate tig, and I banged my head on the concrete beam at the top. I thought I was going to fall and die. I was only fourteen years old but was up there hanging on for about twenty minutes. It felt like a long time. **EZD** never came and got me. I ended up with a really big lump that then turned into a dent in my head. I got no medical attention for it.
153. You weren't allowed to smoke in Geilsland. One night, a couple of the boys were smoking in the dormitory. The night watchman, Mr **GIK**, came in and said he could smell smoke. He said he would leave the room and when he came back he wanted to see the smokers standing next to their beds. He left and came back but nobody was standing so nobody was owning up. A couple of the older boys said to me and another boy called **[REDACTED]** that we needed to stand up and take the blame for smoking because we were the newest recruits in the place.
154. At first I said no to taking the blame but then me and **[REDACTED]** got up and took the blame because we were pressured into it. Mr **GIK** came in and saw me and **[REDACTED]** standing, so he took us downstairs. This was about 3 am. He told us to wait and went away to get Mr **EZD** out of his bed. **[REDACTED]** started stuttering, saying he wasn't staying to wait for Mr **EZD**. He pulled his wellies on, put a hat and rain mac on and ran away in the middle of the night in the Ayrshire country side in winter. That was how terrified **EZD** had us.
155. **EZD** came out and wasn't happy because he'd been woken. He asked me where **[REDACTED]** was and I said I didn't know. He got even angrier because he now had to phone the police and get them involved. He was angry at me as if it was my fault he had ran away.

156. [EZD] got me into his office and I told him I hadn't been smoking and the older boys made us own up to it. He didn't believe me. He got me to bend over and told me to grab my shoe laces then he gave me six of the belt really hard on the bum. He was really strong with big hairy arms and he hit me hard. I nearly went flying out the window it was so hard and he never missed once. I couldn't sit for days. I had welts and was black and blue for weeks afterwards.
157. [REDACTED] was caught on the road to Kilmarnock and brought back. He got six of the belt for smoking from [EZD]. Then he was left to heal for two days before being brought back into [EZD] office to get another six for running away.
158. I was made to clear up the leaves at autumn time with some other boys. It was windy and the leaves were blowing but we could still see how much we were getting cleared. [EZD] came down after a while and said we hadn't done anything and had been carrying on. I swore or something and [EZD] cracked me in the ribs and sent me flying. Luckily I landed on the leaves or I would have really hurt myself.
159. There was a boy called [REDACTED] in Geilsland who had been in there a year before me. He had ran away from Geilsland and while he was out, he had been accused of raping a girl in [REDACTED]. [REDACTED] was found guilty in the High Court in Glasgow and it had been appealed. [EZD] spent a lot of time on that case trying to prove the boy was innocent, saying that he couldn't have raped the girl because he had been in Geilsland. He was obsessed with it. [REDACTED] lost the appeal. I think [EZD] took a lot of his frustration about that case out on us. I remember making a comment about the case and [EZD] got angry and whacked me for that as well.
160. I think [EZD] saw me as the horse that he couldn't break so he spent a lot of time trying to break me. His nickname in the school was "[EZD]." That was what the boys all called him behind his back. Everything was about him in that place. He would go out to church and act like a big, decent, community man, speaking all posh to the lovely church folk, getting us to wash their cars and making us do plays for the community, and behind closed doors he was battering the fuck out of us.

161. GIK [REDACTED] wasn't shy of giving you a kick up the bum when he wanted to. I think he thought we could take it, but he was a big guy and he was sending us flying across the yard with these whacks.
162. Mr GIJ SNR [REDACTED], used the belt on boys as well. His nickname was 'GIJ GIJ'."

The Geilsland Minstrels

163. One of the big things for me that happened in Geilsland was when staff made us black up. I had just turned fourteen years old at the time and EZD [REDACTED] got this idea to put on a show called the "Geilsland Minstrels" which he wanted to take on tour around Ayrshire.
164. I was only fourteen but even at that age I knew it wasn't right and was against doing it. [REDACTED] was my pal and he was black, but they were going to make us all black up and go about singing on stage. Other boys, like [REDACTED] and [REDACTED] were against doing it as well. We might have been young but we knew right from wrong. We argued with EZD [REDACTED] about it but we were all made to do it, including [REDACTED], who also had his face painted black.
165. There was a big build up to it with lots of rehearsals to get the singing and dancing right. We were made to sing "Dry Bones" with our faces blacked up and painted on with UV paint while doing stupid dances. We also had to sing the Rolf Harris song, "Two little boys." It was bonkers. We got lots of beatings during the rehearsals for not singing right.
166. We were taken to do the show around churches and village halls in Ayrshire for people to see. We were meant to be making them happy by putting on a show but we were unhappy. There were pictures taken of us at that time. I tried as an adult to locate some pictures but I couldn't find any.

Leaving Geilsland

167. I left Geilsland just as I was coming up for sixteen years old. I moved back home after leaving care and my first job was in the [REDACTED] in the Industrial Estate. I just went down and applied and got the job, working with all the mums. I was fixing the big woollen bobbins on the machines. I enjoyed that job, working with all the mums and having a laugh with them.
168. I then started hanging out with older boys and left my job. I ended up getting in trouble in Dundee and had to appear in court just a couple of weeks before my sixteenth birthday.

HMP Perth, Perthshire

169. I appeared before the judge in Dundee and he ordered borstal reports for me, and sent me to Perth Prison for three weeks while he waited for reports.
170. Perth Prison was an adult prison. There were a couple of guys in there from Springburn who had just been jailed for murdering a guy by throwing him off high rise flats and throwing slabs on him. Luckily, I made myself known to them so I didn't get any bother. Even they were surprised that I was in there because of my age. I shouldn't have been in there. There was a young offender's institution just outside Perth called Friarton and I should have been put there instead.
171. After my reports came back, I was sentenced to go to Polmont Borstal. I was given my own clothes to put on again and then the screws put me in a van to take me to Polmont. On the way, they stopped at Friarton and picked up some boys from there to drive us all to Polmont.

Polmont Young Offenders Institution, Falkirk

172. I was sixteen when I went to Polmont. The screws drove me and five other boys there, took us inside then left. There were a couple of boys from Dundee, a couple from Aberdeen and I was the only one from Glasgow. We lined up outside a door. A wee screw in civilian gear came out, shouted each of our names with a four digit number. He was snarling at us and the other boys were terrified.
173. Then, when they called you in, you were supposed to shout your name and your number. I think because of my experiences, I took the information in straight away because I knew I would be in trouble otherwise, so I marched in and shouted my name and number. I still remember that mine was number [REDACTED]. The other boys couldn't remember their numbers, which was fair enough because they had just come in, had a number shouted at them and they were scared.
174. I was told to get in this box, which they called a dog box, and to get changed. I got into this box that had the borstal clothes in it, which was a red suit, and got changed into it. I was all changed while the other boys were still trying to remember their numbers. They got whacked for not remembering. I could hear the whacks and their screams from inside the dog box.
175. We got through into the main hall and waited there to be allocated a cell. There were all these floors. This big guy came out who was beautifully dressed with a checked jacket, lovely slacks and beautiful leather shoes. He was called GIL [REDACTED]. The place was dead and he shouted "Outside. Face your doors!" and all these wee guys came flying out their cells at the one time, did an about turn and faced their doors. It was dead funny to me and looked like something out of Oliver Twist with him being Fagan, so I burst out laughing. GIL [REDACTED] cracked me with his fist on my back. That was him setting the standard of what to expect in there. You would get hit even for laughing.
176. I found out later that when GIL [REDACTED] came and shouted that, everyone jumped out their rooms and faced the doors so that he could go in and inspect everyone's cells.

177. I was allocated a wee cell to myself.
178. You had to strip your bed sheets and fold them into perfect squares to make bed blocks in the morning. A wee screw called GIB would come into the cells in the morning and would put his stick against the bed block to measure it, and if it was even a wee bit out, he'd use his stick to throw the bed block in the air and give you a lot of verbal abuse, and you had to do it again.

Leisure time

179. You were allowed down into the big room to watch the telly. We were also allowed to go swimming in the pool within Polmont. The teacher, Mr GH was a nasty piece of work. We weren't allowed to play football or anything.
180. There were books available in a cabinet if you wanted to read them, but not a library. They were just stupid wee books that wouldn't do much for you.

Vocational skills and work

181. The first six weeks were spent doing what they called allocation, where they assessed everybody's education levels. Boys who couldn't read, write or do sums were put into one section and then the ones like me who could were put in another section. In my section, we were then tested to see if we could measure, multiply and then made to do tests. They basically wanted to find out if they could give us a job.
182. Boys who they thought could do jobs, were offered vocational courses like bricklaying and plastering. I was offered the bricklaying and I said yes.
183. I did the vocational course in bricklaying with Mr Henderson and did well in it. The reason for this was so that they could send boys up to build the new woman's prison, Cornton Vale, that was being built in Stirling in 1971.

184. After my course, they decided to send some of us up to work on Cornton Vale. I got a blue suit to wear then. That gave you a bit more status because it showed you had some promise.
185. I was at Cornton Vale for six months doing plastering and brick work and helping to build that prison. We got paid about thirty bob a week or something, which was like £1.50 or £1.60, which we could buy ten fags with.

Abuse in Polmont

186. Life was hard in there and very regimented. The staff were nasty. **GIL** hit me on the back with his fist on my first day for laughing. I knew then what to expect from that place.
187. I then got whacked across the chest with a stick by **GIB** when the measurements of my bed block were a bit out. He hit me with the measuring stick he used to measure the bed blocks.
188. Mr **GIH** the teacher, would line the boys up to inspect their toe nails. He would be carrying a big scoop that he used to get water out of the pool, which was a long stick with a scoop on the end. If a boy had dirty toe nails, he would put the stick end of the scoop on the offending dirty toe nail and say "thy toe nail offends thee" and put his whole weight on the stick. He would do that to make sure that when boys came to pool, their feet were clean.
189. Mr **GIH** was another ex-army guy. He was a wee stocky, power house of a man with short, hair.

Leaving Polmont

190. After the initial six weeks in Polmont, I spent six months at Cornton Vale. My sentence was reduced because I had been working to help build Cornton Vale Prison.
191. I was still sixteen when I left Polmont.

Life after care

192. I went back home and it was nice to spend some time with family again. A friend of my dad's got me a job in the construction industry when I came out of care. I travelled around doing plastering work and bricklaying. I was a big, strong boy for my age so I was good at labouring.
193. I then went down to London and worked with a German construction company there for a while. I got into a bit of bother by chasing the easy dollar instead of slogging away on construction sites every day, and I ended up in jail in Brixton. That was an experience.
194. I came out of jail and started working in construction again. I was bouncing between England and Scotland for a while. I wasn't getting anywhere without qualifications so it was hard work. I started chasing the easy money again, and ended up in jail again for a while.
195. I then met [REDACTED] when I was in London, through a pal of mine. He was a world renowned artist. After knowing him for a while, he asked me if I wanted to move back to Scotland and be his [REDACTED] and I said yes, so I moved back and did that job for nearly eight years. I had a great life working with him between Glasgow, Ayrshire and London. He was a member of all these elite gentleman's clubs that I had access to with him. The job involved collecting money for his art work and it was sometimes quite dangerous work. I was also just like a glorified babysitter for him, driving him around and doing everything for him. He had a big villa in Beith and I

remember being out picking fresh grass for his hamster, while trying to con myself by telling myself that it was making me a better man, as I was cutting grass with these big scissors at the side of the bypass at 7.30 am.

196. I stopped working with [REDACTED] after eight years, in 2014. I took a break for a while after that. I never bothered working after that. I had a total knee replacement operation and have a thoracic aneurysm in my stomach.
197. I now spend my time taking the dog for walks on the beach. I also keep on top of what is going on in the world.

Impact

198. I resent not getting any schooling when I went into Larchgrove because I was clever and good at school. I was raging when I got no secondary education in care. I was made to do manual work in Geilsland instead. Who knows what I could have achieved if I had gotten an education.
199. I did a lot of manual work in care and learned a lot of skills, but it wasn't done officially so I never got any qualifications for anything. This held me back as an adult because so many opportunities depended on what qualifications you had and even though I had the experience, I didn't have the piece of paper to show it, so I could get some manual jobs but not proper ones. I could also never start up my own business.
200. I saw an orthopaedic surgeon to get my knee checked as an adult and he asked if I had any bad impact accidents as a child on my knee because I had a hairline fracture the full length of my knee. I told him about what had happened with LYI [REDACTED] and the toilet pan because that was the only thing I could think of.

202. My pal from Dr Guthrie's, [REDACTED], got a job on the oil rigs. He thought it was ok for the first six months and was making good money, but then he had to give it up after a while because he felt it was weird being in a closed space with all these other men. He told me it felt like being at Dr Guthrie's again and so he had to leave.
203. I was a wee bit distanced from my siblings from being in care because it broke the bond of growing up in the same house together. I am close to them now but not as close as I should have been and would have been if I hadn't gone into care.
204. After working as a [REDACTED] to [REDACTED] for nearly eight years, he moved into a lovely big villa in Beith down from Geilsland. I told him that I was in Geilsland and [REDACTED] said he had heard that they looked after boys really well as a Church of Scotland place. That was like a red rag to a bull for me so I opened right up and told him how bad it was. I told him about how we were made to black up and put on a show, about getting constantly tested and belted, about the assaults that happened to boys at night. [REDACTED] wouldn't believe that a Church of Scotland place would do these things. I ended up losing my job over that, even after working for him for so long and saving his life. I thought I knew him so it really hurt me how he dropped me like that because he thought I was lying about the abuse and wanted to believe a church organisation over me. Geilsland still impacted my life forty years after leaving the place and ended my career. I tried to find pictures of the Geilsland Minstrels but I couldn't find any.
205. All of what happened to me, happened because I climbed into a funnel to get some heat from the dry cleaners as a child.
206. As a parent, I put a lot of emphasis on education to make sure my son got the opportunities I didn't get. I feel I could have been more connected as a father but maybe my own experiences as a child in care have impacted the way that I was as a father. Unfortunately, I am now estranged from my son and haven't spoken to him in

years, but I am glad that I managed to keep him out of trouble growing up. He has grown to be a valuable member of society with a successful business and a family of his own.

Records

207. I never got my records or even tried to. I didn't see the point.

Lessons to be Learned

208. It is imperative that secondary education is made available for young lads and lasses. Instead, it is just assumed that all they are good for is manual labour. If these children in care institutions are provided with the right tools, like education, they can get themselves out of the quagmire they are in. It can change so many young lives. Everyone can flower if they are shown light, but they can't if darkness is always poured onto them.
209. Children in care need to be shaped for the life ahead instead of just being contained. Some kids will want it and others won't, but they should at least get the chance. They need hope and would benefit from people who have lived through the care system to go in and speak to them and show them what life could look like, the good and the bad, so they can think about how they want their life to turn out. Children are clever and they need to believe the people who talk to them, which is why someone with actual experience of being in the care system would be better talking to them.
210. I would like to see proper registration of staff who care for children, civilian teaching staff and people who are allowed to enter the children's care homes. Their roles need to be clearly registered and also who they are employed by so that there is accountability and everyone knows who is responsible.

- 211. People with predatory thoughts in their heads about kids are attracted to jobs working with kids. There should be a trouble shooting body set up to do proper checks on people and then monitor them.

- 212. A proper structure needs to be put in place to inspect the places that look after children. People need to go into children’s care homes and ask the kids how they are getting on and ask them about their education, the food and the staff. They need to do this about four times a year and stay in the place to get a feel for it.

- 213. 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.... GHY

Dated..... 11.7.2022