

Scottish Child Abuse Inquiry

Witness Statement of

HQM

Support person present: No

1. My full name is HQM. My date of birth is 1952. I am 64 years old. My contact details are known to the Inquiry.

Life before going into care

2. I know from my records that in 1952, when I was a baby, that my mother attended at Woodend Hospital in Aberdeen with me in her arms. She asked the staff there for me to be taken into care and they refused. While she was standing and having a conversation with them, she haemorrhaged. I was then taken to Linn Moor Children's Home in Peterculter, near Aberdeen. I obviously have no memory of this. This is covered by two short sentences in my records. I don't know how long I was in the children's home. I must have been returned back to my mother at some point.
3. The circumstances at home with my mother were dreadful. She had a lot of problems and kept getting evicted from houses because she was an anti-social person, and so were the people in her circle. I managed to get records from Inverclyde Council and also from Aberdeen Council which show that we lived in about a dozen different houses at one point. I recall living with my mother in in Aberdeen and that would have been in 1960 or 1961.
4. I was the second child. I had an older brother called . I had three younger siblings called , and . I think was born in 1960 and I only saw

him fleetingly. I don't remember them, but [REDACTED] told me about them a few years ago. As far as I'm aware, [REDACTED] is a full sister to me, and I'm told that the others are half siblings. [REDACTED] remembers more than I do and he has told me that my mother had a few abortions as well.

5. [REDACTED], [REDACTED] and [REDACTED] were taken into care on a permanent basis. I think they were fostered and then adopted. The paperwork I have shows that they weren't adopted together.
6. I remember going to two schools in my life. The first one was Causewayend School, which I went to when we lived on [REDACTED] in Aberdeen. I had to be sent home from school once because I nearly poisoned myself. They gave me glue and I thought it was icing so I decided to eat it. I was violently sick and had to be sent home.
7. I also remember going to Victoria Primary School. One day a boy I played with asked me to go to his house at lunchtime. I remember walking in and seeing carpet on the floor. They had a kitchen with food in it and a living room with a suite in it. They even had a television. That's when the penny dropped that not everybody lived the way [REDACTED] and I lived.
8. I know from my records that I also went to Rosemount School, Ferryhill School and Walker Road School, which are all on Aberdeen. This was all still as a youngster at primary school level. It has to be impossible to teach anybody like that. They would make children stand up in class with a reading book and tell you to read, and if you couldn't then they would be threatening with their voice. If I tried to say anything, I was told I was insolent. At that time, if you were disruptive, or 'backward' as they called it, you were just left alone. They would just give you paper and colouring pencils and tell you that it was fine if you didn't want to learn, but that the others did want to learn. Nobody ever asked me if I had difficulties.
9. According to my records, recommendations were made for me to be taken into care permanently, but the powers that be decided against it. I was put into care. I always

thought that my mother held onto [REDACTED], but he later told me that wasn't the case. He said he was dropped off at a house and didn't see our mother again for years. That must have been because of the type of relationship she had at the time. It's a sad statement to make but I think my mother fell in love with everybody she met.

10. I was put into Linn Moor Children's Home.

Linn Moor Children's Home, Peterculter

11. Linn Moor was in Peterculter, near Aberdeen. I am not sure how old I was when I was put in there, or if I was in there a couple of times. I have read that I was nine when I went in there, but I remember being younger than that so I think I must have been in twice. [REDACTED]

Secondary Institutions - to be published later

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Secondary Institutions - to be published later

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18. I don't have a timescale for how long I was in there. I can't say if it was a week or months. I don't remember leaving or why I left. I think I was returned home to stay with my mother for a while, wherever that may have been. I don't recall living with my mother.

Craigielea Children's Home, Aberdeen

19. Craigielea was in quite an affluent part of Aberdeen. It was beside Great Western Road. I would guess that I was about seven or eight years old when I was there. I think I know that from my records.

Secondary Institutions - to be published later

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25. I think I was about ten years old when I left there. I must have gone back to live with my mother.

Life back at home

26. I don't know why things escalated in terms of my bad behaviour. My records say that I stole things from cars. I don't know what those things could have been. I remember walking up the street as a child and pulling car handles up. They were the old handles that faced down. I don't remember stealing things, but maybe I did, or maybe I just sat in the seat.
27. I had a fascination for bicycles. If I saw one propped up against the wall, I'd take a shot of it. I wouldn't steal it. I would just have a ride. I recall my mother saying that the police were looking for me. Then as the police were giving her a lift home to where we were sub-letting a house, they got stuck behind a bus. According to my records, the bus in front of the police car was travelling very slow, and the records say that: "HQM was in front of the bus riding the stolen bicycle." My mum pointed out that it was her son in front of the bus, holding up the traffic. Looking back, it is quite funny.
28. I also stole a fishing rod from somebody's shed, and I remember doing that. There was paint in the shed so I took that too and painted the fishing rod. I went fishing with it about a week later. I caught a fish, which bent the rod and cracked the paint off. A man right in front of me swore and said it was his fishing rod. I threw it down and ran away.
29. I apparently also broke into a toy shop but I don't remember this and I don't know why I would have done that. They called it housebreaking or something. This, together with the stealing of the bike and fishing rod, were on the charge sheet against me.
30. All of these things were due to a lack of parental control. To be honest, my brother and I were quite feral. We had no father or even a father figure. My mother had a group of friends who were ladies of the night. In my records my mother is accused of being one of them too, although it said that they couldn't prove it. I found it strange

that they should be allowed to write that. It wouldn't surprise me now, as an adult, and reflecting back on my life, sadly.

31. When you found yourself in juvenile court, if you weren't released to your parents, you were put into a remand home until you were sentenced, which is why I was sent to Kaimhill Remand Home in Aberdeen.

Kaimhill Remand Home, Aberdeen

32. In my records, there was a recommendation that I should be put into foster care. It even states what kind of family I should be placed with. Somebody decided otherwise at my sentencing. I was considered a high risk of absconding because I kept running away, so it was decided that I would be sent to Balrossie List D School in Kilmacolm, Inverclyde. That way I would have no idea where I was and would be less likely to run away. Balrossie School were due to come to Aberdeen on an annual camping trip a week later, so I was kept in Kaimhill until then.

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Secondary Institutions - to be published later

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35. Secondary Institutions - to be published later

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39. I was handed over to Balrossie School when they came to holiday in Cloverfield School in Bucksburn, Aberdeen on an annual trip.

Balrossie List D School, Inverclyde

40. I think I was handed over to Balrossie in [REDACTED], just before my eleventh birthday. Balrossie school had taken over Cloverfield School in Bucksburn, in Aberdeen, for a week or two during [REDACTED]. I was either deposited there and handed over to a man called Mr ^{GKF} [REDACTED] who was ^{SNR} [REDACTED], or he may have picked me up from

Kaimhill. I don't remember. I stayed there with them for the two weeks of their holiday there.

41. I remember being taken to a room somewhere, and there were boys with these strange accents. They had Glaswegian or Edinburgh accents and I had a Doric, Aberdonian accent. I was ridiculed and then picked upon for being the odd ball. There were no tears from me. I just got on with it. I don't remember doing anything with them for the two weeks I was there. I don't even remember the trip back to Kilmacolm in Inverclyde which is where the school was.
42. The school was in a big open area just outside the village of Kilmacolm. It had its own grounds. Apparently, it was an orphanage before it was a List D School. It was quite a large school. I think it held about sixty to eighty boys. I was there for two years.
43. There were different rooms dotted all over the school. The room I was put in was upstairs. It held about six boys I think, and it had a television outside. I don't remember moving out of that room during the time I was there.
44. Life in Balrossie was mixed and varied. There was a regime of fear. It was stable but it was not a nice place to be. Even if you were physically or sexually abused, it was still stable.

Staff

45. Mr ^{GKF} [REDACTED] was ^{SNR} [REDACTED] and his wife, Mrs [REDACTED], was the matron. Mr ^{GJF} [REDACTED] was the physical education teacher. The cooks in the kitchen were day staff who came from the village. My dormitory was looked after by 3 or 4 members of staff. ^{HPQ} [REDACTED] was one of them. Mr ^{GKF} [REDACTED].
46. There was no real affection from anyone. You weren't encouraged to talk to the staff. If we had spoken to them, we would have been told how to address them and I would have remembered their names.

Routine at Balrossie

47. We got up in the morning. I am sure somebody must have come round to get us up. There was an ablutions area opposite the bedroom, which had sinks and two or three cubicles. There were no doors on the cubicles. We went in there to wash, and then got dressed.
48. The uniforms were provided by the school, which I think included grey shorts. The shoes were basically one size fits all. We wore these clothes all the time and they were changed once a week. After getting dressed, we went downstairs to the dining room.
49. There was a hatch in the dining room, where your food was passed through. We lined up at the hatch to get our food then sat down. I think each dormitory had their own table to sit at.
50. After breakfast, you went to the classroom, which was inside the main building. Then there was recreation time. I would play on the football pitch within the grounds. There were boundaries. If you overstepped the boundaries, you were considered to have absconded and the punishment for that was severe.
51. There was an area next to the tennis court where everybody would line up. On reflection, they were probably doing a head count. Then you'd be taken into the dining room for lunch. I tried to keep my head down and tried not to have eye contact with people. That included making eye contact with other boys in case the staff accused you of something. Where there is pain involved, you learn very fast where that pain comes from and how to avoid it.
52. After lunch, there was woodwork class. Then it was out to play again before the evening meal.
53. I don't know if we all had chores, but I remember being tasked to work in the kitchen. Maybe that was my chore. I don't remember doing any other chores. I had been

tasked to wash potatoes which were in a giant bowl. I remember having a huge potato masher. I think the cooks would take pity on you and give you an extra biscuit or something for helping. I think they were different from the approved staff at the home. They came from the village and didn't stay at the home. They were ok. There was no real friendliness from anyone though.

Leisure time and activities

54. There was a television outside of the dormitory. I had never had a television before so it was fantastic. We used to get to watch Top of the Pops. That's where I got my love for the Beatles, Dave Clark Five and people like that.
55. There was a tennis court we were allowed on occasionally. It was near to the headmaster's home, which was close to the main building. Everything was still within the school grounds. I think you were allowed to go on the tennis court if you were privileged. I don't know how you became privileged. I think it was if he visited you at night time.
56. There was an outbuilding beside the tennis court, which housed bicycles and I liked bicycles. You had to be very, very privileged to be allowed to take a bicycle and ride down to the village. I was never ever allowed to do that.
57. There was an outdoor swimming pool at the bottom end of the football pitch, on the left hand side. It may have been for boats. There was muddy water in there. There was another field that we used to go to, to play rounders. That was quite good.
58. One of the teachers used to run a camera club in the tower at the school. I remember going a couple of times and really enjoyed it, but I didn't really get to explore it there.
59. They had Boy Scouts, which I asked to join but the school refused. I was very hurt about that. There was physical education, which I think I was quite good at.

Trips and visits

60. We got some pocket money. I am not sure if that was associated with the chores you did in the home. I think there may be something in my records about a tuppence or a penny. I can't tell if it is being added or deducted for bad behaviour. Any pocket money we got was kept by the school. You would be given it if you were allowed out somewhere.
61. I remember being allowed to go to Glasgow. I don't know if it was with another boy or if an adult was with us. I used my pocket money to buy drumsticks, because I liked Dave Clark Five who was a brilliant drummer. I don't know what happened to them, but I don't think I had them for long. Maybe another boy took them.
62. My mother visited once with my brother, [REDACTED], and another time by herself. She was a stranger to me. I may as well have been visiting a stranger in the village.
63. The school followed a term time so we had holidays. We once got taken on a ferry from Stranrear to Larne for a day trip. I'd never been on a boat before. When we returned to Stranrear, we stayed in an old army camp type building. We definitely stayed for more than one night but I couldn't say for how long. I don't remember if I enjoyed myself because nothing in there was enjoyable. The place was run by fear and we just did what we were told.
64. I don't remember any visits from any social workers, or anybody inspecting Balrossie from outside. I think the staff had a free hand to do whatever they wanted to do. They had nobody to answer to.

Birthdays and Christmas

65. Most boys were allowed home for Christmas, but my circumstances meant I had to stay at the school. There was a handful of other boys who also stayed. I spent Christmas there twice.

66. One Christmas we were given a treat and taken for a visit to the Holy Loch, on the Firth of Clyde, in an American Polaris submarine. It was wonderful. We had a Christmas party there and I got a present. I think it was from the school. It was a little projector thing with Flintstones slides. I remember I was wearing a navy coat and shorts. I looked quite smart. They must have been trying to put on a show about how good they were to us. The one and only picture I ever had of me as a child was taken there, but I have lost it now.

Schooling

67. There was a classroom. I sat there for about two years, copying the same letter that a teacher had written on the blackboard. I remember it read:

"Dear Mum and Dad, The weather here is fine. I hope the weather where you are is fine."

I didn't have a dad. The letter was for everybody sitting in that room, whether you had a mum and a dad, or not. I had kept all of these letters up until the late 1970s before I threw them away. I wish I hadn't because they were the same letter over and over. That was the extent of my education.

68. There were no books to read in the school. There was no reading and no writing. I couldn't even write anyway. I would just copy the shapes of the letters from the blackboard. I learned to spell the word "weather", but that was about it.
69. There were other classrooms as well. I don't know whether each dormitory went to different classrooms. I was in a class with people from my dormitory.
70. There was a woodwork class and they had a wood shop. I enjoyed that because it didn't involve reading or writing. I remember making a rifle, which was strange. I must have been small because I remember having to lift my hands up to the sink. I think I was in woodwork class more often than the other class.

Discipline and punishment

71. Staff would walk about between the tables during mealtime. You knew you could be assaulted at any time for anything. You could be smacked for putting your elbows on the table or for talking. They could do what they wanted to you.
72. If you were caught absconding, you would be punished by being hit on the backside with a leather belt. This happened to me. I don't recall absconding, but I used to play at the boundary. It would have been easy for any teacher to say that I was out of bounds. There were two or three staff involved. I was dragged into the first available room. I don't remember having any clothes on, but they said I was allowed to keep my underpants on. I was held down by a few members of staff, as many as it took to hold me down. I don't know what happened after that or if I blacked out.
73. I remember looking in the mirrors in the toilet the next morning. I thought I was looking at somebody else's bottom, but it was mine. It was bruised, had welt marks and was bleeding. I didn't get any medical attention for my injuries. I didn't tell anyone or go to anybody for help. I would probably have got hit for complaining if I had. I don't think the matron cared. I think I still have small scars on my bottom from that incident.

Healthcare

74. I remember being in the sick bay for a couple of days with an infection or something. I spent 2 days in there. It was a strange environment to be in.
75. We weren't examined on a regular basis. I think the matron's role was to attend to the boys if they were sick or injured. She certainly wasn't motherly. I never got any medical attention when I had been hit on the bottom and was bleeding, after I'd been accused of absconding.
76. I don't recall any doctors being called to the home or anybody going to hospital. I never got examined by a doctor or saw a dentist in the two years I was in the school.

Being sent to work

77. I was then sent somewhere else to live, which looked like a real house and not an institution. It was still a home of some sort though. I am not sure where it was or what it was called, but it was definitely in the area of Kilmacolm.
78. There were a few boys in there and I think there were girls too. At least two of the boys were seventeen or eighteen years old and of working age. One of them worked at a lemonade factory and another worked at the steel works. I remember the guy speaking about how much money he earned at the steel works. The house must have been near a steel works. The other boys were younger, like me, and not of working age.
79. I must have been younger than fourteen because I was back with my mother by the time I was fourteen. This meant that I wasn't old enough to work, but I was sent to a farm to work. I remember walking from the house, over the fields and across a burn to get to the farm, but I don't remember where it was. My memory has blanks. I remember it would be pitch black when I left in the morning and it would take a while for my eyes to adjust to the dark. It would also be dark when I finished work in the evening, so it must have been in the winter time.
80. I would do whatever the farmer asked me to do on the farm. I would muck out the cattle, collect the milk when the truck came and also stack bales of hay. I was a young boy and had never seen animals. I would play with the feral cats who would scratch me.
81. My meals would be served outside by the farmer's wife who would come out with a plate of something. You would just grab a seat wherever you could and eat. I was obviously a lower form of life to them as well. I never received any money, but I got meals on the farm and back at the house. I think the money must have been paid straight to the house I was staying at, or at least a percentage of it.

82. I don't know how long I was in this place for, but I must have been there for a while because I remember going to a youth club place and attended a dance there. I also went for an interview at a painter and decorators, which the people in this house set up.
83. There is no mention of this place in my records, which is strange. It must have been linked to Balrossie because Balrossie had the power to keep me until I was eighteen years old. I also went back to Balrossie after staying at this house and working on the farm.

Abuse at Balrossie

84. There was no affection. Nobody would speak to you or hold your hand. Nobody would pick you up if you fell. I don't know how they thought that was acceptable.
85. There was a spiral staircase going up to one of the towers. I was sexually abused up there by a teacher. I remember him telling me there were toys up there. I don't recall who did it, but it was not Mr GKF. I probably knew it wasn't right at the time, but I didn't know what the alternative was. That was the only time I was taken up to the tower.
86. I remember GKF, SNR because he had started to befriend me when I went into the school. He would sit on my bed and talk to me. I now know that is called 'grooming'. Boys like me would have befriended Jack the Ripper because we knew no better.
87. Mr GKF used to come to your bed at night. He would tell you to look at his face and into his eyes. He would go around and do that to other boys. It was the same routine all the time and I don't know if it was weeks or months before he started touching your legs over the blanket. It progressed from there to hands under the blanket. This was a frequent occurrence. I had no feelings by this point. You used to hear somebody walking along in the dark and hope that he wasn't coming to you.

Sometimes he would pass you and go to another bed. Maybe when someone new came in, or when he got bored of someone.

88. Life was focused on the abuse, whether it was during the day or hearing screams at night. It is difficult to explain to people the fear you felt in there. I was not able to be a ten year old boy. I was frightened to go to bed every night, frightened to sleep and frightened of the noises. I am surprised I didn't wet the bed every night. He might not have come near me at night if I had.
89. The sexual abuse became less frequent. I don't know if it's because I objected to it. I like to think that I would have objected to it. Maybe that is when the violence started, because the abuse became more about violence after that. If you looked at a member of staff and they thought it was insolent or whatever, you'd get a clip around the ear. They'd also punch you on the back of your head, in your stomach, or wherever they wanted to punch you.
90. I was so terrified by the physical aspect of the abuse. If they said 'boo' to me I probably would have fallen over. I only remember the names of Mr ^{HPQ} and Mr ^{GKF}, but other teachers would physically abuse you too. If they asked you a question and you didn't know the answer, you could be assaulted for that. I wouldn't call that discipline. We were youngsters and didn't have a hope in hell of defending ourselves.
91. They just did what they wanted. I had no feelings by this point. I didn't get upset then. I didn't care. There was nobody to tell anyway.
92. There was a teacher who loved his golf. He liked human targets. I saw first-hand, a boy next to me being hit in the head with a ball. It had been deliberate. I was right next to the boy and I heard it hit him. The lump came up under his head instantly. It was like the ball was under his skin. I didn't know the teacher then, but I found out later that his name was Mr ^{GJF}. I think he was the physical education teacher.

Leaving Balrossie

93. I must have gone back to Balrossie after this other house and working on the farm. I know this was the case because it was from Balrossie that I was released back to the care of my mother.
94. I had been ordered to stay at the school until I was eighteen, but I left when I was fourteen. My records say that my mother sent money for my train fare home, but that the matron was going to Aberdeen and was willing to drop me off. My records mention that I would have the money for my train fare to return to my mother. I was released back to the care of my mother at the age of fourteen.

Life back at home

95. I think I had a wee bit of stable time back at home. I went to school. One of the stipulations of my release was that I had to go to Frederick Street School, which was a ten or fifteen minute walk from my house in [REDACTED] Aberdeen. It was a secondary school, which I went to for about a year or so. It was lovely. They had an annex for people like me who were either disruptive or couldn't do the work. I know I wasn't disruptive, but I fell into that category because I had no education. There was a separate queue for children going into the annex in the morning, so you were segregated in the playground. This meant that you were stigmatised straight away.
96. There was a place called Castle Gate where traders went on a Friday morning, and I helped a man sell curtains and materials there for a few months. I would go back after I finished school and him help load his van up. He'd give me two shillings for it, which was a decent amount of money. When the circus would come to town, I'd go down and get a job with them.
97. I used to steal food from the bakers in the morning because I wasn't getting fed at home. I was still feral. I had no respect for myself or anybody else. It was a downward spiral for me. Bringing someone up in the care system in the way that I

was, made it inevitable that I wouldn't have any respect for anything. Whenever somebody was nice to me, I wondered why and thought that they had an ulterior motive.

Polmont Borstal

98. I ended up in Polmont Borstal when I was seventeen and a half or eighteen years old. Nobody wanted to go there. When you first go into a borstal, you are sent to an allocation centre to be assessed as to what type of person you are, which determines where you will be placed. They decided me to put me in a dormitory. I asked them not to because I knew it would be trouble.
99. When you first went in to the borstal, you were given a red striped shirt. When you were given a liberation date, you got a blue striped shirt. That could be taken off you if you stepped out of line and you'd be back in the red top.
100. All of your clothes would be taken off you at night and left outside the dormitory, and they'd lock the door from the outside. I decided to escape one night and managed to keep some clothes back. I got caught and was physically thrown into a room in front of the man who ran the allocation centre. I was physically thrown about three or four times, which they thought was acceptable because I was their property. I was given fourteen days of solitary confinement in the north wing as punishment. This was not a wing you wanted to go to. The cells for solitary confinement were down the back stairs and at the end of a hall.
101. There was no communication in solitary confinement. During the day, they had us around a table breaking up telephones. We were not allowed to speak to anyone. Meals were sent down and you had to eat those in silence and then wash your dishes in silence. You would be told when to go back to your cell.
102. When you got back to your cell, your clothes would be taken off you for the night and you'd be given a blanket. There was no bed. I think there was maybe a thin mattress

on the ground. I was told that I had to stand to attention if anybody came to the door. For the first five to seven days, somebody would come to the door early in the morning. As soon as I heard the key in the door, I'd stand to attention, then two guards would come in and beat me up while I was naked. They used their hands and the blows were to my body. The beatings were horrible, but they were worse because I was naked. I don't recall their names, but one of them looked Mexican with jet black hair and a long moustache.

103. On the last few days in solitary, somebody came to the door and put the key in the door so I would stand to attention. Then nobody would come in. I think they were playing mind games with me.
104. When I got out of solitary confinement, I was put into a cell in the north wing. You had to make bed locks every day. Things were very regimented and had to be done in a particular way. Your room would be checked and inspected every day. If you didn't meet their standard, they reduced the value of money you could spend in the canteen. You might even end up with no money at all. It was a horror story in the north wing with inmates fighting with each other.
105. Meals were served on the wing. They came around to us with food in heated containers. It was like being in hospital. They would serve the food through a hatch from a small kitchen. The food was lovely to me because I don't think I ever got a hot meal from my mother. Getting anything to eat was a bonus to me, so I never thought about whether the food was good, bad or indifferent.
106. I was sent to work in the textiles department and learned how to operate a sewing machine. I would make clothing for other prisoners. It kept me busy during the day. I tried to keep my head down and do as I was told because I wanted my liberation date. It was hard not knowing how long you would be kept in for.
107. The staff would make you come into their staff room and make you wriggle on the ground like a snake. I think that was for their entertainment. They would have a good laugh about it. Then they would give you a cigarette or a biscuit because you never

got anything like that. If you were willing to perform for them, it made life a bit easier for you. They were the ones who drafted the report about whether you were ready to leave the borstal and if you would get a liberation date. It was easier to do what they asked you to if you wanted to get out.

108. When you are sent to borstal, you are sent in for borstal training and they decide how long you will stay in there. When I first went in there, people were being released after eight or nine months. I spent eighteen months in there because I attempted to abscond once. I was also kept in the building itself for the rest of my time there as a punishment. I wasn't let out, while other people were being sent to open borstals. This was on top of the fourteen days of solitary confinement that I got as a punishment for absconding.
109. There was a man in the gymnasium who would make us all hang from the wall bars. He would then walk along and punch whoever he wanted to punch while they hung from the bars. I never experienced it but I saw it happening. He would punch people in the stomach area. I was lucky that I didn't get punched.
110. I was nineteen years old, I think, when I left the borstal.

Life After Care

111. I continued to offend after leaving Polmont Borstal. I wanted to join the army when I left school. I even went to the Royal Marines, but I had no education so couldn't sit a test. They told me to come back when I was a bit older.
112. I met my wife [REDACTED] when I was about nineteen years old. My brother had married [REDACTED] sister, and I thought that sounded like a good idea so I married [REDACTED]. I couldn't do much, but I could get married. I became a dad soon after. I knew nothing about being a parent. [REDACTED] had lost her parents when she was quite young, and she had helped bring up her two younger brothers, so she had skills to look after the children. I was still offending after I had children.

113. My last stint of offending involved being a professional poacher. I was poaching salmon, which I thought was an honourable crime, but the courts didn't take that view. There were four or five guys who would poach together, called a 'school.' Each school had different number. Each school doesn't know where the other is poaching.
114. I had been doing it for a couple of years, before I eventually got caught in my late twenties. On the night I was caught, we had gone poaching near the old Bridge of Dee in Aberdeen. We could see another school already poaching so we decided to wait until they were done. While we were waiting, the police came and the four of us ran to a nearby campsite. My friend was caught by a police man, and the police dog had my friend by the neck. I was watching from a nearby tent and thought I was going to wet myself it was so funny.
115. I decided to try and climb under a tent without realising it had a sewn-in groundsheet, and two people were in the tent. I was trying to lift the tent and people inside were shouting. The police looked and saw me. The police dog was running for me so I raised my arm for it to get that but it bit my leg. I was kneeling on the ground and was never more pleased to see a police car. We were taken to hospital to get injections and nine people appeared in court for poaching the next day. They had caught four of us and the other five who were actually poaching. We were all handcuffed together and put on indictment.
116. The policeman said he saw me swimming in the river at night, which I hadn't been. I was given a six month prison sentence. I went to Craiginches Prison in Aberdeen. I appealed and accepted a six months sentence. I then went to Saughton Prison and then on to Perth Prison.
117. I refused to allow my wife to bring the children to visit me in prison because I didn't want that to be etched in their minds for the rest of their lives. The children were told I was in the army. They know the truth now. When I went back home to Aberdeen, I thought that if I could get wrongly convicted for poaching then it could also happen on a more serious charge. That stopped my offending. I think if it hadn't been for [REDACTED] I would have been a repeat offender and in and out of prison.

118. I had three daughters and I did everything with them. I would take them on holidays in our motorhome, and they have wonderful memories of camping. They got the things that I never got. I have never once lifted my hand to them. I am proud of that.
119. When I was about 24 years old, I joined the parachute regiment through the Territorial Army and I spent time there. There were no written tests involved to do that. I became a [REDACTED] with them, which was good. I was quite proud of that. Secondary Institutions - to be published later
Secondary Institutions - to be published later
120. I even got an invite to the Buckingham Palace garden party on the one hundredth anniversary. I couldn't keep doing the job in the Territorial Army because I hated authority. I got into a bit of bother and left. I later went back and joined the Special Air Service. I had to train in Invergowrie near Perth. I was drinking a bit too much at that time and decided to stop my training.
121. [REDACTED] would do all the paperwork for us. When she died in 1998, I decided to educate myself. I went to college and did an HNC in television, operations and production. That was a big thing for me.
122. My oldest daughter works as a support worker and she and her family are heavily involved with the church. My middle daughter became a heroin addict, but she also got involved with the same church as her sister. She then spent some time in Wales with the church and has sorted her life out. She is now at university and studying a degree, which is something to do with social work. She goes to Peterhead Prison and does group work with the young offenders there. My youngest daughter was originally training to be a chef, but she developed epilepsy so she had to stop doing that. She can't work now and is a full time mum. I have a lovely family, and it's nice to have a family when you have grown up without one.

123. I moved somewhere quite remote about five or six years ago because I was having a bad time mentally. All of my childhood memories were coming back. I ended up having nightmare neighbours who I suffered for about two and a half years. I eventually lost the plot with them and the police were called. I received community service for it. The sheriff pointed out that I was no stranger to court. It didn't matter that I had been out of trouble for nearly thirty years. I found it quite unfair, but it was my fault because I shouldn't have lifted my hand. That broke my no offending record for over twenty years, and I have no intention of offending again.
124. I went back to visit Linn Moor, Craigielea and Balrossie as an adult. I spoke to a member of staff in Balrossie. He said he didn't participate in any of the abuse. I asked how he could have had knowledge of what was going on and continued to work there. I spoke to a lady in the village who worked in the kitchen at Balrossie. She didn't work there when I was there. I told her about the treatment we got there with the belt and the regime. She reacted by saying: "At least it was done behind closed doors". I bit my tongue and walked away. I was totally gobsmacked that an adult could turn around and say that.
125. I made a [REDACTED] video when I came back, and many people who went to Balrossie school have commented on it. Somebody commented with a link to a statement made by [REDACTED] on a teachers' forum. On the forum, [REDACTED] talks about the use of the belt being enjoyed by the children and that they needed it. He wrote about how one of the children messed themselves as the belt was being administered and ran away. [REDACTED] then writes that he and the other people holding the boy down found it amusing. This was on the actual site. I had a print-out of it and gave it to the National Confidential Forum. I couldn't find it when I looked for it again, so it must have been taken down. It was a blatant admission of assault from [REDACTED].
126. I have done and achieved things in my life despite the abuse. I have saved three peoples' lives. I saved one person from a house fire and someone else from drowning. Another time, I was driving a taxi and I saw a guy collapse and his wife

was panicking. His heart had stopped so I administered the care he needed until somebody came, and he survived.

127. I have made a couple of videos for people. I am now interested in photography and have a drone. I try to keep myself busy. It is important for me to share the good things that I have done. If you think about where I started and where I am now, you can see I have achieved something. I have a wonderful family with three children and six grandchildren. I have a new partner now called [REDACTED]. I am not all bad.

Impact

128. I have had quite a lot of trauma in my life. Some people have said that I have shut doors in my memory. I have only been told this in the last five years. I was at Balrossie for two years and sadly I can't remember one boy's name, so I know bad things happened there. I have heard of people using regression therapy but I have been told not to do it because it could be really bad. If the door is opened on something really bad, then I won't ever get it closed again. I don't think I want to find out at the age of 64.
129. My experiences in institutional care have wrecked my life. I had no respect for authority and I had no respect for myself. I had no parenting skills. When I met my wife [REDACTED] and had a family, I didn't know anything about being a dad.
130. I didn't know what was right or wrong because nobody ever sat me down and explained what I had done wrong. If I wanted something, I'd take it. I would take a bike or fishing rod to have a shot. I wasn't going to keep it, but nobody would explain that it was wrong and why it was wrong. I feel this behaviour was due to lack of parental control, no regular schooling and being in and out of institutions. I often think that at the beginning the authorities were given a blank sheet of paper with me, and they created what they created. I have been in every type of institution possible within the system. Then they released me into society with no skills at all. I have no social skills.

131. When I left school, I couldn't even write my name. I wanted to join the army, but I couldn't because I had no education. I ended up offending instead, which landed me in prison for six months. This also impacted my wife, [REDACTED] at the time. Neither of us had any parents or family to run to, so we had to work things out, which we did. It was tough in the early days. There would even be fisticuffs between us, which I'm ashamed to say, but I didn't know anything about being a husband.
132. The one thing I wish I had in my life was an education. I didn't realise until I was about forty years old that I actually had a brain.
133. I speak to my brother now, but I don't have a brotherly bond with him because I never had regular contact with him whilst I was in care.
134. I was having a tough time after [REDACTED] died and all my childhood memories were also coming back to me. I was living alone and my mind was not occupied with work. I couldn't bother the kids with my problems. I started to self-harm [REDACTED]. It just took away some of the pain and took me away from what was in my head. I didn't tell the doctor.
135. I have a good relationship with my doctor now. My partner, [REDACTED], was receiving treatment at hospital because of a problematic relationship she had before me. In the last couple of years, her doctor picked up on aspects of my behaviour too, and suggested that I talk to my GP. That started the ball rolling with me talking to people. I am now waiting to maybe see a psychologist. I hope it will make me understand things a bit better.
136. If I hear a noise at night, that is me awake and I can't get back to sleep. The fear is still there. I think I still have small scars on my bottom from when I was held down by three members of staff in Balrossie and assaulted. The abuse in care wasn't just physical, it was sexual and also mental. They had a control over you. If I hear a noise outside or behind me, I feel fear. It didn't just go away when I left care. It has stayed with me.

137. I have a phobia of using public toilets because of what happened to me sexually whilst in care. I steer away from them. If I have to go into one, I can only go if nobody is there. As soon as somebody walks in, that's me. I have to stop and get out of there. I am 64 years old and this is still the case.

Treatment and Support

138. I have a good relationship with my GP, and I am due to see a psychologist soon.
139. [REDACTED] and I were away on holiday in the caravan a few years ago. We decided to stop overnight in Inverness and my heart started racing. This had happened to me before, but would usually stop after fifteen minutes. This time it lasted for two hours so I went to hospital, and was kept in overnight. The specialist changed my tablets from aspirin to Apixiban and we carried on with our holiday. [REDACTED] then pointed out that I was bleeding heavily from my mouth. I ended up going into hospital again. They explained that the medication had thinned my blood. It settled down.
140. Later, when I was back home in Aberdeen, I had a blinding headache and that was the start of a stroke. I spent fourteen days in hospital, and they found that I had cancerous cells in my blood and cancer in my kidney. They also discovered that there was a thickening of the muscle around my heart, which caused the fibrillation of the heart. There is nothing they can do about that and one day when my heart goes into gallop mode, it will finish me off.
141. A part of my kidney was removed. I have type two diabetes and they want my kidney to function as best it can. I had a scan to see if the cancer was gone and I'm waiting for the results.

Records

142. I obtained my records from my time in care. Half of the paperwork came from Inverclyde Council. When I first got my records, I couldn't read them for tears. I went

to the National Confidential Forum without reading them. I just read my records again a couple of days before meeting with the Inquiry. I wish I hadn't because it has confused dates in my memory.

143. In my mind, if I was four years old when I was somewhere or when something happened, my records tell me I was older. It has changed timings for me in my mind. It is possible that there are errors in the records. There is no mention at all of the house I stayed in during my time at Balrossie, and being sent to work on the farm.

Final Thoughts

144. I spoke to two people at the National Confidential Forum and now I have spoken to the Inquiry. These are the only people I have ever told about my experiences and it is a really hard thing to do. I will hopefully live long enough to learn that some good has come out of me giving my statement to the Inquiry. I would like to learn that some law has been changed somewhere to make things better. Unannounced checks would be an ideal way to check on these institutions. The children also need somebody they can trust who they can talk to.
145. I have various illnesses and inevitably the fibrillation in my heart will be what finishes me off. That is why I wanted to talk to the Inquiry. I want to leave something that my children can read after I have gone. It is easy to try and pigeon-hole people without knowing their full story. I want people to walk a mile in my shoes before they start looking down their nose at me. I have done and achieved things. I am not all bad.
146. 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.

HQM

Sign

Dated

12/6/17