

## Scottish Child Abuse Inquiry

Witness Statement of

GJC

Support person present: Yes

1. My full name is GJC. My date of birth is 1970. My contact details are known to the Inquiry.

### Life before going into care

2. I was born in Greenock. My mum's name was before she married and then she became. She died around 2000. My dad's name was. He passed away in about 2015. I come from a family of six. was my oldest brother and he was about nine years older than me. was about seven years older than me. I was the third. was about two years younger than me. and had a different dad and their surname was. was about ten years younger than me and was about twelve years younger.
3. My dad worked away and travelled all over the world. He was a rock excavator, and he blew things up. My mum worked on the ship when I was younger and she caught pleural plaques from the asbestos. The boat was being refurbished but I don't know what she was doing on the ship. I can't remember any of that. I don't even know if I was born when that happened.
4. I was born in Gibshill in Greenock. I remember leaving Gibshill and moving to Larkfield, which is another area in Greenock, because the houses were being pulled down. Going into the removal van is one of my earliest childhood memories.

5. As far back as I can remember my mum was an alcoholic. There was never a day went by when there wasn't a can of Carlsberg lager at her foot. It was like part of the furniture. I can't remember my mum sober. I think it was down to a heavy beating that she took when I was a child in the pram. She was never right after that. I was a baby so this is just what I have picked up over the years.
6. I remember a lot of fighting and screaming at home. My dad worked away but he was there at weekends and there were always arguments. They ended up splitting up.
7. My father was supposed to pay the rent because he was working but he didn't. My mum was in rent arrears and she ended up losing the house. We moved in with my granny around the time when [REDACTED] was more or less just born. My granny had a wee one bedroom house and there were four of us at the time. We slept in a set of bunkbeds. [REDACTED] and I were in the bottom bunk and [REDACTED] and [REDACTED] were in the top bunk. My granny and grandad had a bed in the same room and my mum kipped on the couch. It was tight living conditions and there was always fighting because of my mum's drinking. My granny couldn't put up with it. My mum would always start a fight with a drink in her.
8. Social work ended up intervening and [REDACTED] and I were taken away to Nazareth House. We were the two youngest at the time and I think we were the most vulnerable. [REDACTED] and [REDACTED] stayed at home. IPeter Griffin was the social worker and he was my social worker all through my years in care, more or less. He was from Greenock social work office. Their office was in Rankin Park at the time and then it moved to Greenock town centre.
9. When we went to Nazareth House I remember my mum saying, "If anyone hits your wee sister, you better knock fuck out them." Those were her parting words to me. It was a hell of a lot of weight and responsibility to be placed on my shoulders, but I did look after [REDACTED].
10. Social work just came and got us one morning. I think we were told that we were going to a Children's Panel. I kind of remember going to Children's Panels but I didn't know

what they were at the time. My mum came with us. I must have been about four or five years old

### **Nazareth House, Cardonald**

11. Nazareth House was on Paisley Road West in Cardonald. When we went there my little sister, [REDACTED] would have been about three or four years old. I think I was still in primary one so I would have been around five years old. I don't know how many children were there. There were babies in prams and kids up to sixteen years old.
12. There were different units and we were on the top floor. The units might have been divided by age. The nuns were in charge there. Sister GJI [REDACTED] looked after our wee unit. She was young and she wore a black and white habit. There was one nun to every unit and there would be civilian staff as well. I don't know who the head nun was and I don't remember the names of any of the other nuns who worked there.

#### *First day*

13. I remember driving through the gates and looking at the size of the building, it was humongous. I think there were three floors to it. Above the door was a statue of Our Lady. I always remember her because a crow had made its nest on her head. I felt scared but I stuck my chest out. I felt responsible for my sister. I can't really remember the whole thing. I don't remember meeting anyone but I remember being put right up on the top floor, in the big dormitory.

### **Routine at Nazareth House**

#### *Mornings and bedtime*

14. Sister GJI [REDACTED] stayed in our dormitory in her own wee cell in the middle of the room. She had her own door and it was partitioned off. If there was any noise in the night then

she would come out with the slipper. We would launch things over the partition at night. We did kids' stuff and then she would come out. I used to always get the blame for it. I got the slipper a lot of times.

15. There must have been ten or twelve of us in my dormitory. There were beds going up in a row and they were on both sides. The boys were all round about my age. It was just boys in my dormitory and girls were in another dormitory through the doors. Each one had a door that led to the next dormitory and then the next after that. [REDACTED] was away at one end through about two dormitories. There were some nights I could hear her crying and shouting on me and I would sneak through to see her.
16. I can't remember what time bedtime was but if you did something wrong then you were sent to bed early. You said prayers beside your bed.

#### *Mealtimes/Food*

17. We ate in a dining room. You went in and sat at your table, then they would pick someone to stand up and say Grace. Generally the food was edible. They brought your plate over to you. It came from the kitchen on a hot plate. I can't remember what we had for breakfast. We had lunch at school and the school dinners were ok.
18. I didn't like boiled fish or powdered potatoes and I can't eat anything like that. Being in a Catholic place, every Friday was fish and the mashed potatoes. Some of the time the fish was boiled. I could eat it if it was breaded, it was just the smell of boiled fish and milk with carrots and potatoes that I didn't like. My taste buds couldn't take that. I told them that I couldn't eat that but they said that I had to be grateful because there were other weans in the world starving. A member of staff called GJG [REDACTED] would try and force feed me. She wasn't a nun and she wore civilian clothes. She emigrated to Australia.
19. The force feeding went on for quite a bit and then it stopped. I can't remember how long it went on for. I don't know if it stopped because of intervention by my mum.

20. Fridays were bad days. Sometimes I wouldn't even appear at dinner time and I would try and stay away for as long as possible, until four o'clock. I would even skip school in the afternoon. They would have to come looking for me at dinner time and everyone would be annoyed at me because they couldn't get dinner until I was found. There was a hunting party out for me and I would be beaten when they caught me.

*Washing/bathing*

21. We would get up and have a wash in the morning.
22. We had our own cups with toothpaste and a toothbrush. It was a wee red Colgate cup with your name on it.

*Clothing/uniform*

23. I went into Nazareth House with my own clothes but we had to wear what everyone else wore in case there was any jealousy.
24. You had a school uniform that was given to you to try on. It was all handed down. It was short trousers all of the time. We wore the same as everyone else at school, a grey uniform. After school we changed into clothes that they gave us.
25. On a Friday we had clothes that we changed into to go home for the weekend. We came back in them on a Sunday and they were washed and put away for us until the next weekend.

*Work*

26. We did our chores after breakfast. It was all on a rota. I remember doing dusting but I can't really remember anything else.

## *School*

27. We walked to school. I went to Our Lady of the Rosary, which was just around the corner. I started in primary one and I came out in primary four. There were a few of us who went from Nazareth House to that school but I think they let us out at different times.
28. It was up to the staff in each unit to take their weans to school. Someone usually walked us to school, but not always. The first couple of days they took us to show us where it was. It was out the gate and then you turned left onto Lourdes Avenue and it was right there.
29. I was always fighting in school. If someone tried to lift their hand to me, or tried to bully me, then I would get into a fight. I got involved when someone else was being bullied, I hated bullying. People tried to bully me because I was from Nazareth House and that gave me a lot of problems. I was always up at <sup>SNR</sup> Mrs <sup>LJG</sup> I was told to put my hands out for the belt but I wouldn't. No one belted me. My mum had said that if anyone belted her weans then it would be her. I never took the belt from Mrs <sup>LJG</sup> or anyone. I don't know how many times I stole the belts. I snuck in at break time and went in the drawer. When I wouldn't take the belt, the school would send for the nuns. Sister <sup>GJI</sup> would come for me. She would hit me with the slipper when I got back to the home .
30. Sometimes I didn't go to school. I always headed back to Greenock. They usually anticipated that so I had to be a step ahead of them and hide. While I was waiting at the train station I would hide and I would look for them, looking for me. I would run away any time I thought I was going to get a hiding and after I got one.
31. After a while, there was always someone sent to the school gate to wait for me, just to make sure that I didn't run away.



32. When I went back to the home, they checked to see if I had homework. If I did, I was told to do it. They didn't help with it but they checked that I had done it. I had to do it before I could get any play time.

#### *Leisure time*

33. After I had finished my homework I could play football outside. There was a big grassy bit and right next to that was Lourdes High School football pitches. There was a hole in the fence so we would get through and play on the pitch.
34. I would go out in the rain. I loved the rain, but if you stayed inside there were toys to play with. There were toys there that everyone could play with but I was happy with a ball. There was table tennis, books and comics. I wasn't much of a reader when I was there. We could watch television before bedtime.
35. I used to bring my toys from home for the other kids to play with, but the kids would fight amongst themselves to play with them. The nuns then told my mum that I couldn't bring my own toys because it wasn't fair on the other children.

#### *Trips and holidays*

36. We went to Girvan a couple of years in a row. I can't remember how long we went for, either a weekend or a week. We stayed in a big house. Sister <sup>GJI</sup> and a couple of civilian staff came with us. We enjoyed it. There was a big beach there as well.

#### *Healthcare*

37. We went out to the dentist in Cardonald. I remember being strapped down in the dentist a couple of times. I have since been terrified of the dentist.
38. I had accidents all the time because I would climb up walls and fall off, and try to walk up slides instead of going down. I didn't bother if I was injured and I dealt with it myself. If I went and said I'd hurt myself to the nuns then I'd probably have been hit.

39. I had all of the usual diseases that were going about. I think I caught chicken pox when I was in there. A doctor from outside the home would come and see you.

#### *Religious instruction*

40. We said prayers before bed and said grace before a meal. We had to go to church a couple of times a week. We went to Our Lady of the Rosary, right beside the school. I made my first communion there as well. They wanted us to be in the choir but I wasn't much of a singer. They tried to make us all altar boys but I was given one shot at it and I got in about the priest's wine. I was a bit sick that night.
41. I made my first confession there around 1975 or 1976. You had to go to confession once a week. The priest was sick of seeing me. If I did something the nuns thought was badly wrong then I was told to go down and see the priest for confession. The priest never came to Nazareth House at all. We had to go to the church to see him.

#### *Birthdays and Christmas*

42. I was at home for Christmas with my family. I would have been in Nazareth House on my birthdays but I can't remember them. I remember being given a bike one year. I only had it for a couple of weeks until it was the next person's birthday, then they got it. I was then told that I had had my shot and it was time to pass it on.
43. My family would come up on birthdays and when I made my first communion. They came up for things like that.

#### *Visits/Inspections*

44. My mum came and got us on Friday and took us back on Sunday. She never came up during the week. I didn't have any visitors because I was seeing my family at the weekend anyway.



45. There would be reviews every so often. I remember meetings but we were never in them. I would find out my mum had been up when I was at school, but by then she was away again. We would be told there had been a meeting and that was probably a review. No one had told us how long we were going to be there.

*Family contact*

46. I could see [REDACTED] when I wanted to see her. She went to nursery school. I don't think she started school while we were in Nazareth House. She was crying all of the time.
47. We got home for the weekends so we were lucky. We were better off than the other weans. We went home to my grannies at the weekend. My mum came up and got us on a Friday and we went back on a Sunday. We had to wait until 4:00 pm for her to pick us up. She had met my youngest brother and sister's dad by that time. His name was [REDACTED] After she met him, she got another house. That was the start of our transition home.
48. I don't know why we were put into Nazareth House because it was an orphanage. We got a hard time of it because we went home at the weekends. Ninety or ninety five percent of the weans had nowhere to go to and they stayed in the orphanage.

*Personal possessions*

49. Sometimes I would come back from a weekend at home with a toy. I remember getting a wind-up Evel Knievel toy. I brought my toy back and shared it with the other kids, but some of the other kids wanted to know why I had a toy. The older kids would abuse it. I brought it up for them to play with because they had never seen anything like it before. They didn't see the goodness in it. They thought I was getting preferential treatment and they were annoyed that I had a mum to take me home at the weekends. A boy started smashing it up and it led to more fighting so all of that was stopped.

### *Running away*

50. I don't know how many times I ran away, but I ran away a few times. I was on my toes all of the time. I ran away from school because I was going to get the belt. I wouldn't take the belt from anyone.
51. When they took me to school I would sneak out and try and run away again. Sister GJI would be waiting at the bottom of the school gates for me. It was as if she was reading my mind. She was like a ghost and she would be waiting at the gates at playtime. I would be thinking that I was going to run away now and they wouldn't be able to catch me.
52. I did a runner right out of the institution. I think that time they just missed me getting on the train. The police or the train inspector were waiting for me at Bogston train station and Gibshill. I was taken back and they kind of poo-pooed it and sent me to bed. There were social workers there so I was just told to put my pyjamas on and go to bed.

### *Bed Wetting*

53. I started wetting the bed after I arrived at Nazareth House. They made me strip the bed in the morning. I had to put my wet sheets outside the dormitory. I was just told to clean down the bed. I was given a rubber sheet and that was a protective layer over the bed.
54. I tried to get away without telling them because I thought I would get an arse whipping for it. I ended up getting an arse whipping for not telling them. Sister GJI hit me with the slipper. That happened to me once. She told me that if I did something wrong then I had to own up to it.
55. The more I think about it, I was living on my toes. I knew that I would probably be in for a hiding if [REDACTED] was greeting and she told my mum that I hadn't done anything

about it. I think that's why I started wetting the bed. If my mum found out that I had let my little sister be hit by someone, without doing anything about it, I thought that my mum would kill me. I think there was a fear of my mum and of what would happen to me when I did get a hold of whoever had hit [REDACTED] I wasn't scared of fighting anyone, it livened it up.

### **Abuse at Nazareth House**

56. When we were given boiled fish for dinner, GJG [REDACTED] would take me off the chair and sit me on her knee. She would mix the food together and try and get it in my mouth. She would force it in. I was stubborn and tried not to let her get it in my mouth. I would be sick at the smell and the taste of it and she made me eat my sick. I was spewing up onto the plate and she was still trying to force it into my mouth. She held the fork and she was forcing my own vomit into my mouth. She told me that I would eat it. I would get up, swipe the table and then I would run off again. I would always try and use my speed and it would always end in a chasing match. I would tell them that my mum would be up at four o'clock and I would tell her.
57. I was always in fights and I was always getting my arse leathered. I was getting battered badly by the nuns. Sister GJI [REDACTED] would hit me until I was screaming and greeting my eyes out. It was always short trousers down, bare arse and over the knee with the slipper. That was the punishment back then. There would be a lot of kicking. She would be grabbing me by the hair to hold me down. By the time she got me over I would be kicking. There would be a big struggle. It was more or less a fight. There was no way my bare arse was being shown in front of everyone.
58. I would be crying and then I would endure more punishment for swearing. She would do it until she had enough. She was such an angry woman. I think she was brought up in care herself. I don't remember the first time that happened but it happened a lot. I've still got scars.



59. I have a scar on my lower back from where Sister <sup>GJI</sup> leathered into me. She used a leather harness that you put on a wean when they learn how to walk.
60. I was over her knee and she was hitting me with the slipper. I managed to get off her knee. She had been leathering into me that hard with slipper that I shouted "fuck off". The swearing just came out. I bounced off her knee and I tried to run away from her. She picked up a leather harness. She was chasing me and hitting me with it. She was swinging the harness like a maniac. I was trying to run with a pair of short trousers round my ankles so it was a bit awkward. The harness had little metal buckles on it that hit me on my lower back and left me with a scar. I was five or six when that happened. That was just one time that I can remember.
61. If my sister, [REDACTED] was greeting then someone would come and get me. I would ask her who had hit her and then I would hit them. Sister <sup>GJI</sup> would hit me for that whenever she caught me. Sometimes it would be a long chase, lasting days. By the time they did catch me I was off out of the convent because I knew what was coming. It wasn't far to the train station and I would look for the Gourock train and go to my Uncle [REDACTED]'s house.
62. Even though my mum made sure we were bathed and cleaned before we went back, every Sunday we were given a bath when we got back to the home. Sister <sup>GJI</sup> would dry us. One Sunday, I was standing up in the bath and Sister <sup>GJI</sup> was drying me. She spent a bit long around my lower regions. I was laughing because I had an erection and she went ballistic. I would have been round about five or six and I didn't know what an erection was at that age. She hit me and the next thing she grabbed my penis and pulled my foreskin back. She was shouting and calling me the spawn of the devil. She was swearing. I just remember the pain and the blood going everywhere. I still have a scar. It was sore for days and it was never the same. I never received any medical attention. I never told anyone about that because I didn't know how to.
63. I saw Sister <sup>GJI</sup> hitting other children. [REDACTED] was one, he ran away with me. There was [REDACTED] and [REDACTED] and they were round about the same age as me and there was the [REDACTED] family. Everyone was hit. That was how you were

punished back then. Every time I did something wrong she hit me which was almost on a daily basis.

64. As soon as a slipper was mentioned I was off out of there. I wouldn't wait to see another wean get the slipper, I couldn't handle that. It was usually me that got it because I got the blame for everything. I don't remember seeing other children get the slipper. Usually if a slipper was involved then I was getting it.
65. No one recorded punishments like being hit with the slipper and to me it was second nature. If you did something wrong back then you were punished for it. You were usually whacked with something. No one sat down and told me what the rules were, you learned as you went along.
66. Sister **GJI** ended up leaving Nazareth House. She got married and had her own children. I got her back a cracker before she left. I had heard that she was leaving and they took us to Eastwood swimming pool. It had a theatre and they used to take us to the pantomimes there around Christmas. They gave us use of their pool on a Friday. Sister **GJI** would always be hovering and watching in case we did anything wrong in the pool. I was in the deep end and I asked her to give me a hand out. I pulled her into the water and shouted, "Have you ever seen a penguin that couldn't swim?"
67. I ran away but the van driver caught me before I got anywhere. I was caught outside the place. Once I came back to Nazareth House I was battered but it was worth it. When I got back there was a cloud of doom over me but everyone got a right good laugh, even the civilian members of staff. I think I got a couple of hits for it but I can't remember who hit me. I think that happened around the time that were ready to leave there, when I would have been about eight.
68. There was a guy called **LHM** that stayed in a caravan on the premises. I think I had run away during the week and I had been kept in that weekend. **LHM** gave me and **[REDACTED]** drink and he gave me a can of Tennents. There was a wee tent out the back of his caravan for camping out. He said we could camp out. Nothing else happened because **[REDACTED]** made sure I went out into the tent. **[REDACTED]**

was a lot older and his family came from Greenock. There was [REDACTED], [REDACTED] and another one that I can't remember in that family. [REDACTED] looked out for us because we came from the same scheme. Gibshill is one of those schemes where everyone looks out for everyone. I think LHM realised that he couldn't do anything to me because I had somewhere to go to. I think [REDACTED] knew because he was about fourteen or fifteen and he was a good guy. I can't remember how old I was at the time.

### **Reporting of abuse at Nazareth House**

69. When I ran away, I used to go and tell my Uncle [REDACTED] about what was happening at Nazareth House. He stayed near to my mum and he was her sister's husband. He would phone Nazareth House and say that he knew what was going on but they would always deny it. He knew himself that I wasn't running away for nothing. My uncle [REDACTED] asked me why I was running away and I said it was because they were leathering me.
70. I didn't tell my mum because she was in that much of a drunk stupor. Me and my mum didn't really get on, she was too far gone with the drink. My older brother was a bully so I was glad to get away from him.
71. My uncle eventually took me to my mum or phoned Nazareth House. Nazareth House would say phone the police and the emergency social worker would go to the police station and take me back.

### **Leaving Nazareth House**

72. We were given another social worker called Margaret-Ann McLean for about four months. In those four months, my mum got a new house in Gibshill and we were back at home and in school. I remember my bother [REDACTED] being born. Margaret-Ann McLean got my mum a new house and got her rent arrears cleared. Margaret-Ann McLean told us that we were going to have a wee brother and we were going back



home. She did more in those months than Peter Griffin had done in years. He had done nothing.

73. [REDACTED] went home on the same day as me. It was round about the middle of the [REDACTED] when we went home for good. On our last day at Nazareth House, Margaret Ann McLean came on her own and got us and she took us for a meal. I even remember where we went, it was Arlecchino. We left everything behind at Nazareth House. I didn't want anything and I couldn't get out of there fast enough.
74. Margaret-Ann McLean went back to Dundee so she wasn't our social worker for long.

### **Life back at home**

75. We got out during the summer holidays when I was eight years old. I then started back at St Mungo's Primary School, which was on the main road in Greenock as you come out of Port Glasgow. It has been knocked down now.
76. When I went to school it was a nun, Sister [REDACTED] who was my teacher again. She didn't run about with a slipper but she had a metre stick. The first time she went to hit me with it, I grabbed it from her and smashed it. She tried to send me to the headmaster who told me to put my hands out. I told him that she had tried to hit me with a metre stick. He said that because I had broken it I would be getting 'six of the best'. I wouldn't put my hands out and I ran away. He said that I was the worst pupil that they had ever had and that I couldn't come back. I had only been there for a couple of months.
77. Someone sent me to the ice-cream van with a bottle. The man in the ice-cream van said that he didn't take bottles and someone had been playing a joke on me. I turned round and smashed the bottle and a bit of glass went into my eye. I was in the hospital for about a month. When I was allowed out I went to a tutorial centre. A taxi took me there. It was for wayward boys. I was still staying with my mum at the time. I was there

for a couple of months but they said that I was out of control and they couldn't keep me.

78. Everything was alright at home. I was always fighting with my big brother. I spent more time at my Aunt [REDACTED]'s house with my cousins than I spent at my mum's house. When I got out of Nazareth House, I was never the same. I couldn't settle back into life. The damage was already done. I started experimenting and sniffing petrol. I saw other people doing it. I had seen people doing it at Nazareth House.
79. I wouldn't let anyone pick on me and I was always fighting. There was a big guy who was bullying me at the tutorial centre and I ended up climbing up onto the rafters and sitting with a big coffee jar of pencils. I was waiting on him coming in and then I dropped it on his head. The police were involved and I went to a Children's Panel. He got a couple of stitches in his head and I got the jail. The police had already been involved with me for all different things. There was a lot of shoplifting. I went to Newfield to be assessed and I was there for about six weeks. I was still in primary school and I would have been about nine or ten years old.

#### **Newfield Assessment Centre, Johnstone**

80. Newfield Assessment Centre is near Johnstone. There were four different units called Gleniffer, Campsie, Kilpatrick and short-stay. I was in all of them at some point, but the first time I was there I went into the Campsie Unit. The ages varied from my age to about sixteen. It was boys and girls in Newfield and the units were mixed. Each unit was separate and I think you went where there was space. <sup>HPI</sup> [REDACTED] was the head of my unit and there were lots of staff. Most of them were alright. There were loads of children. My social worker, Peter Griffin, took me to Newfield.

## **Routine at Newfield Assessment Centre**

### *Mornings and bedtime*

81. We got washed and dressed and went down to get our breakfast.
82. I slept in a dormitory and there were about six beds. We were sent to bed too early and we would carry on and have pillow fights. It was only boys in my dormitory. A member of staff came in and told us it was time to get up. We would tell them to fuck off. Everything was mayhem and we caused as much mayhem for them as possible. Everyone was bonkers and they knew where they were going so they weren't going quietly.

### *Mealtimes/Food*

83. The food was nice in Newfield. If there was something that I didn't like, I would tell the staff and I would get something else. There were never any problems. The staff were always alright.

### *School*

84. There was a school in the place and there was an art teacher and a woodwork teacher. I think the teachers came from outside. It was the same teachers that were there for years. You did what you wanted at school. They tried their best but it was just whether you did it or not. I could read and write but I was more interested in what was going on in the streets. I grew up too quick and too much responsibility was put onto my shoulders at an early age.

### *Visits*

85. I didn't see my social worker when I was in Newfield and I didn't want to see him. I just saw him at panels and I was always at a panel for something.

### *Family contact*

86. They couldn't do anything to me because, if I wasn't allowed out at the weekends, then my mum would come up at the weekends to take me out for the day. They would always drive up and my stepfather would be with her.

### *Smoking*

87. We could smoke at Newfield if we had our parents' permission. We were allowed seven cigarettes a day. My mum gave me permission to smoke.

### *Running away*

88. Newfield wasn't very secure and I ran away a few times. I managed to get out all different ways like through the fire escapes. I wanted to get away. I wanted to get into Johnstone to get some glue to bring back and sniff at night. If you got caught for running away, you weren't punished but a heavy eye was kept on you.
89. HPI ran the unit. He was barrel-chested and he had ex-army written all over him. He thought he was a sergeant-major. He would also have us running around the gym at night time. I used to think that if he wanted us to run, I'd run but he'd have to run as well. He would have to chase me. As soon as I got to the fire exit, I'd be off through the door in my pyjamas.

### *Bed Wetting*

90. I was a bed wetter. Every time I went into institutions I had bed wetting problems. They were alright with it in Newfield but I was more embarrassed about it because I was a bit older then. I think it was a psychological thing. They were more used to it in Newfield and the beds already had special mattresses on them. They let you get up in the morning and go for a shower. They were more humane about it in there. You got the odd slap here and there but it was par for the course. That was normal back then. You did something wrong, you got belted for it.

### **Abuse at Newfield Assessment Centre**

91. It was a not bad place but there were a couple of creepy staff. As an adult, I remember reading in the paper that LRE [REDACTED] was convicted of sexual offences. He was one of the members of staff in Newfield. I read that he was taking a boy to a panel and pulled into factories at Port Glasgow. He was accused of tampering with the boy.
92. I always knew he was a wrong one, even when I was in Newfield, but he didn't do anything to me. He was in another unit but I was told to look out for him by a couple of the older boys. They told me that he got too close to people. When I was an adult, I was in the jail when LRE [REDACTED] came in. I was remanded at Gateside in the Young Offenders'. He was placed on protection promptly, but I saw him a few times.
93. It was more like mental abuse in there. When I went to Newfield I bumped into another couple of boys who were right up my street, they were hell for leather. When we were carrying on at night the staff would make us stand up for hours in the corner. You would get pins and needles and be more or less begging to go to bed. They had us in the gym running in circles at night. We were just doing things that kids do, like having pillow fights. That happened a few times when HPI [REDACTED] was on but he wasn't really a night watchmen so it was just a couple of times when he had to do night duty. I didn't see anything happen to anyone else but I heard about it over the years.

### **Leaving Newfield Assessment Centre**

94. When I went in I was told that I would be back in so many weeks and then I would be assessed. They knew there was no school that would take me. The social worker and my mum went to the Panels. My mum didn't have any say in what happened. She thought that I was at least safe in there. [REDACTED] stayed at home after Nazareth House. They never asked me where I wanted to go at the panels. I was told where I was going and that was it. They made the decision and nobody ever asked me why I was doing things. I never heard any words like hyperactive or ADHD, but looking back



on it I would say that I was very hyperactive. They never got a psychologist to see me while I was in there. I saw a psychologist in St Mungo's and then never again.

95. I went back before a Panel and was told that I would be sent to St Ninian's. I had to stay at Newfield for another two weeks until a place became available. I was told by a couple of boys what to watch out for at St Ninian's.
96. While I was waiting for the space at St. Ninian's, a van load went up to Gartmore. There were a few boys from Gibbshill who had been in St. Ninian's. There were older people from the scheme. My Aunt [REDACTED] and old [REDACTED] took them up. [REDACTED] was a respected member of the community. [REDACTED] He did a lot for the scheme. [REDACTED] spoke to SNR [REDACTED] St. Ninian's, Brother HJS [REDACTED] He said that there had been boys who had been there before. He said they'd spoken about practices that went on at St. Ninian's, whether he knew about it or not.
97. My Aunt [REDACTED] said her nephew was coming up to St. Ninian's soon. She told Brother HJS [REDACTED] that my name was GJC [REDACTED]. She said that if I came back to her and told her that anything untoward had happened to me, he should look out of the window. She said that he might notice a couple of boys because they'd been in St. Ninian's before. Brother HJS [REDACTED] looked out of the window and all the boys were lined up outside the minibus, looking up at him. I wasn't aware that this happened until I grew up a bit and my Aunt [REDACTED] told me about it.

### **St Ninian's, Gartmore**

98. I was nine or ten when I went into St Ninian's in 1979. St Ninian's was in Gartmore and the building is now called Gartmore House. The building was in its own grounds and there was a school, a gym, a field for horses and a couple of football pitches. There was a big yard for exercise in break times.



99. There were four different houses named after different Saints. The house I was in was St Andrew's. The others were St Patrick's, St George's and De La Salle. The houses were all in one big building that was like a big country manor.
100. De La Salle monks ran St Ninian's and Brother <sup>HFU</sup> and Brother <sup>HJS</sup> were <sup>SNR</sup> <sup>SNR</sup> of the whole place. There were other monks about but you hardly ever saw them. The only other monk who was about was Brother <sup>MJO</sup> who was called <sup>MJO</sup> <sup>MJO</sup>. He looked after the horses.

### **Routine at St Ninian's**

#### *First day*

101. I was taken up to my house by the housemaster, <sup>HIG</sup> I knew right away from the way that the boys were going about in single-file that it was strict. I could sense something. He showed me where I would be sleeping. I was shown round and then he took me to the school block. He introduced me to the headmaster of the school, Greg Dougal.

#### *Mornings and bedtime*

102. There were four or five different sized dormitories. There were four or five boys in my dormitory. The staff got us up in the morning and then we did our chores. We lined up in our house for assembly every morning. We lined up from biggest down to smallest and I was always right at the back.
103. We were in bed for about nine o'clock. There was one night watchman on duty. Lights went out and there was the usual carry on like pillow fights. We made sure that we didn't get caught.

104. I wet the bed because I was scared to go to sleep. I would pee out of windows. I actually wet the bed on purpose because I was so scared to get up and go to the toilet. I was scared because of the screams I heard at night.

*Mealtimes/Food*

105. There was a big hall, sectioned off into houses. The staff sat with us and matron served the food. There were a couple of cooks there as well. The food was okay and there were no issues with the food. If we didn't eat it then they didn't force us. We could tell them that we didn't like something and get something else.

*Clothing/uniform*

106. The uniform was all ex-army issued. There were boots, overalls and leather gators. We changed back into our house clothes after school.

*Leisure time*

107. We went out for an hour of exercise every day. We could play a game of football. If we wanted to walk about the yard then we could do that. It was up to us what we did with our exercise.
108. We could play pool or table tennis straight after school. After dinner there was recreation which involved all different things put on by the staff. We could play football or do horse riding.

*Trips and holidays*

109. We went hillwalking with rucksacks that were bigger than me. They were really heavy. I've been up a lot of Bens. We had walking boots and gators. I would get big blisters from the boots, even by the time we reached the bottom of the hill. The blisters would burst and the boots would rub into my skin. I remember going up Ben Lomond. I made

a comment at the top about who might be the first person to see the Loch Ness Monster. It was just a joke, but Greg Dougal gave me a slap for that.

110. Greg Dougal would take us canoeing on a loch somewhere. We had to do everything he said. I was wary of water at the time. They made sure that we learned how to capsize and get out. We had to capsize three times in water that we could stand up in. Then we had to do it three times in six feet of water. We then had to do it with a spray-deck on the canoe. You put the spray-deck round where you were sitting so no water could get into the canoe. If you capsized, you had to pull it, roll forward and roll out of the canoe. We had life jackets on, but the water was deep and murky and they forced us to do it. I was afraid I wouldn't be able to get out of the canoe. I panicked a bit when the spray-deck was on it.

111. After we'd capsized on the loch, Greg Dougal took us white-water canoeing. We went down fast water. I don't know whether he had any training to do that. There were usually about six kids canoeing and only one member of staff.

#### *School*

112. The school was in a different building and there were about seven classrooms. It was basic schooling and it was easy enough.

#### *Work*

113. We got up in the morning and did chores. There was a rota and we would do a chore for a week and then it would change. Everyone had something to do and then we went for our breakfast. We had to polish the banister, dust, clean windows. If we were cleaning the stairs then we took the wax off the stairs, laid new wax and then stood with a big bumper to polish the stairs. We had to stand and do it. The staff made us do that, whoever was on.

### *Family contact*

114. I went home nearly every weekend, unless I had done something wrong. If I got caught shoplifting, came back stinking of glue or something like that then I would lose my weekend leave. We would be told, in the school, on a Thursday if we had lost our weekend leave. Greg Dougal would shout the boy's names out in assembly and tell us.
115. When I was home at the weekend my mum always told me that I had to be in for 9:00 pm. That was when the door would be locked. She told me that if I was later then I could go into my sister's house next door, but that she would phone St Ninian's. I would then be kept in the next weekend. I made sure I was there for 9:00 pm sharp. I would bring her a Carlsberg that I had found on the way home. By 10:00 pm she would be asleep and I would go back out, down the drainpipe. She would think that I was in my bed.
116. After weekend leave, we picked people up in the minibus and we stopped at places along the way like Govan and Drumchapel. If there were another two people being picked up at the same pick up point as you and one of them didn't turn up then that could cause all three boys to be kept in the next weekend. It didn't always happen, they would just threaten us. That gave the boys an incentive to be there at pick up time because they knew that they would get a hard time if other boys were kept in at the weekend because they weren't there in time.

### *Running away*

117. St Ninian's was right out in the country and it sat up on a hill. They were able to see if we ran away from there, but it didn't stop me.

## **Abuse at St Ninian's**

*Greg Dougal*

118. The headmaster, Greg Dougal, was good at throwing his weight about and bullying people. He bullied me. On one occasion I went back to St Ninian's after having been home for the weekend. I had taken the train to Paisley Gilmore Street and the school minibus picked me up there.
119. That Sunday, one boy didn't turn up at my pickup point and I didn't know that he had been in jail and was already back at the school. By the time the minibus came, I was thinking there was no danger I was being kept in for him. I came back and was showered and deloused and then we went straight to chapel. The boy who had been missing at the pickup point was there. He was making faces at me through the service and I got the giggles and was laughing.
120. Greg Dougal stayed in Gartmore and he used to come to chapel with his wife and his boys. He was there that day and he took my laughter as me trying to embarrass him in front of his family. I went into assembly on Monday morning and we were lined up while he was walking up and down us all. He said that some of us thought we were at church for a laugh or a joke. I knew that he was talking about me. He came up my line and stopped in front of me. He told me to lift my head up and then he punched me full-force in the face. He hit me with a clenched fist in the eye. He lifted me right off my feet.
121. I have a scar going up my eyebrow now because he burst my eye right open. I was kept in two weekends in a row for that. Greg Dougal took me to matron and said I had been fighting. She held a cotton bud against it.

### *Physical abuse*

122. There were a few incidents with Greg Dougal and he was always throwing his weight about. If two boys were fighting without asking then we would be punished for it. If we



asked the staff if it was ok to fight then they would say that we could. If we told them we had something to sort out with a punch-up then they said that was ok. <sup>HIG</sup> the housemaster, would take the whole house over to the gym and get the boxing gloves out. If we were punished for fighting without asking them then we were leathered and that was by any member of staff.

123. Mrs <sup>GJD</sup> was the house mother. She had been Miss <sup>GJD</sup> but she went home one weekend and came back as Mrs <sup>GJD</sup>. She might have married the  Mr  but if there had been a wedding then it was a quick one. If she smelled smoke off any of the boys, she would give you a right good slap. She did that to me on more than one occasion and I saw her do it to others too.

*Brother Paddy*

124. Brother <sup>MJO</sup> was one for pornographic magazines and certain boys would steal them for him at the weekend. We came back from weekends on the minibus. The minibus would go through the gates and then there was a big long drive as you came up. It was half a mile up the grounds. We passed the stables before we reached the house. We would be driving past the stables in the minibus and the magazines would be thrown out the back window. He would be standing outside waiting for the bus to go past because he could hear the bus coming. The bus would slow down because the horses were there.
125. Different boys would steal them. He told boys to steal magazines and he would bribe boys with cigarettes. He asked me and I stole them for him a few times. When we came back on the minibus, we would pass the magazine back to whoever was on the back seat. There was a window at the back seat and whoever was there could chuck it out the back.
126. Brother <sup>MJO</sup> was good for a smoke but I don't know if he was involved in abuse of boys or if it was just the magazines. I was always at the front of the bus because I was picked up first. One of the members of staff would be driving the bus but he didn't know about the magazine. It was put back on the sly, with a Beano or something.



*Sexual Abuse by men dressed as monks*

127. Boys that went home at the weekends were never touched, it was boys that had nowhere to go to at weekends. Sexual abuse was rife. Boys that didn't wet the bed, wet the bed in there because they were too scared to go to the toilet. St Ninian's was that rife with sexual abuse and boys weren't taking a chance. I had two encounters.
128. A murder had happened and I had witnessed it when I was on home leave. I said I was in my bed because otherwise it would have meant saying that I had snuck out my bed at home. After that, I was kept in St Ninian's for about six weekends in a row and the CID were coming up. I was kept in because there was trouble in the scheme. They said that I had witnessed a murder. I was kept in because it was all over the news at the time and there were headlines about gang fights in Greenock. They said they were keeping me in for my own safety. One of those weekends, I heard screaming.
129. The boys had pillow fights but the boots went into the pillows as well. I heard this screaming and I thought this isn't someone getting a kicking. I said to the other boys to come with me because there was only one night watchman. I ran into this other bedroom, thinking a couple of boys were behind me. There were four monks round a boy and they were about to abuse him. The boy was lying there and there were three of them holding him. If you were a bed wetter then you had to wear a nightie, like Wee Willy Winkie. They had that pulled up over his back. One of them was standing behind him. From the scream that I heard through the wall, I think he was having sex with him.
130. I just ran in and said, "Fucking leave him alone!" I was carrying steel-toe capped boots in a bag and I ran in with that. I ran over shouting at them to get off him. They got me down and the next thing they were putting the boot into me. They were shouting "fucking wee bastard" and "get him out". I rolled up in a ball, in a defensive position, to take the boots. They dragged me out and shouted, "You're fucking lucky, it's not fucking you." They dragged me out by the hair and back to my own dorm. They told me to get in my bed and stay there. I don't know where they went after that and I didn't

go back out to find out. The next day I asked the guy if they had gone back in and he said that they hadn't. He asked me not to say anything. I don't want to name the boy.

131. I think this happened when I had been in St Ninian's for about six or seven months. I had been in for a while and I was confident. They were in big brown clothes with a rope tied at the waist and a hood. They were spooky looking. I didn't see their faces. I think it was an organised paedophile ring because there was only one watchman. I was given a right good kicking into my face. I thought that the monks all wore sandals. It was proper shoes that were going into me so I now think that they were people dressed as monks. I don't think they were monks at all because the monks wore sandals without socks on and these were leather shoes. I know that because I saw and felt them booting into me.

132. I have a good idea who two of the men were. I think that one was woodwork teacher, Charlie McKenna. There was a case going on against him. One of them is dead, Jim McKinstry

*Jim McKinstry and Charles McKenna*

133. It was winter and I was clearing snow with a big snow plough outside the woodwork shop. Up above the woodwork shop there were staff quarters. Jim McKinstry was one of the workers and he had a wee black dog called Sweep. The dog was out and Jim McKinstry asked me to bring his dog up for him. I went and caught the dog and took it upstairs. The next thing I was whacked on the back of the head.

134. It ended up that McKinstry was trying to get his penis in my mouth. I told him that he might get it in but it wouldn't come back out again, so it didn't happen. I told him, "I'll fucking bite it off you." I got a beating and I didn't know that the other one, McKenna, was masturbating behind me. Next thing I felt something sticky and then I got another couple of kicks. After they felt gratified it stopped.

135. They told me that if I opened my mouth about what had happened then I would be kept in at the weekend and 'I would know all about it'. Both of them stayed in staff

quarters and both of them were there. That was the worst harm that I ever came to. The boys that had nowhere to go to at the weekends were the ones who suffered. No one talked about that but I ran in and witnessed it and I took a hiding for it. Over the years it has been the same boys that I have seen in the approved schools and then in jail.

### **Leaving St Ninian's**

136. Around 1981 or 1982, Greg Dougal came and told us it was our last week. He said that St Ninian's was being shut down on Friday. I was primary seven age, so about eleven or twelve. He said that some of us would go home and some of us would go to another institution. I got out. We all had emergency reviews and I got back home again. I went into primary seven at St John's Primary School. Peter Griffin came to my reviews, but he ended up becoming head of the social work department.
137. I wasn't at home for very long. I lasted out primary seven, but I was sniffing glue and wetting the bed. I found it hard to settle at home. I did okay in primary seven. The teacher tolerated me. I knew everything that was being taught. I wasn't daft. They didn't really need to teach me. Somehow, I just knew it all.
138. I went to St. Stephen's High School in Port Glasgow. I bumped into a couple of older guys that I'd been in Newfield with. They had shown me the ropes there. They had left school and they knew that I could be trusted. They would come and get me from school and I decided to just go off with the boys. I started missing school and ended up being suspended.
139. When I was suspended, my mum wouldn't have me under her feet. She sent me to work with my step-father. He worked with Culdaff Construction in Glasgow. It was an Irish company and I got on great with all the Irish folk. I was interested in Irish politics and that men would give up their lives for things. I would wash the big trucks in the yard. I enjoyed it. I was in the JCVs and I could start them with any key. I taught the Irish folk how to do it. When you're in approved school, everybody is in for different

things. You learn how to do things. I could take out alarm systems and things like that. I wasn't going to tell anybody about it. I kept my money by. I wasn't daft enough to go out and start splashing the cash.

140. I couldn't settle at home. St. Stephen's ended up having enough of me. My social worker, Peter Griffin, was still involved with me. The police knew I was involved in things. Because I was young, they would try and pull me in. They thought that I would stick the rest of my pals in. I always made 'no comment'. A club was done over and we got caught. Because my friends were over sixteen, I took the blame for it. They would have got the jail. I plead guilty to it and told the police what had happened. My plea of guilty was accepted and my friends got out. The courts just referred it back to the Children's Panel.

#### **Newfield Assessment Centre (second time)**

141. The Children's Panel sent me back to Newfield to be reviewed again. I think I was there for eight or nine weeks for the courts to decide what was happening. Newfield hadn't changed since my first stay there. The headmaster of the school was a former police officer, McCallum. He thought he was still a police officer. None of the teachers would take me in their classes. I ended up in a room by myself all day, playing on the computer. I would play on the ZX Spectrum, which had just come out around that time.
142. It was alright when I was at Newfield the second time, but I was starting to get a bit more out of control. I was sniffing glue. The windows only opened a tiny bit, but I knew how to get them open all the way. I took two brass pins out of the woodwork store and put them in the tiny wooden holes. The window would open in full. I had a girlfriend in Newfield and I told her how to open her window as well. She would open her window and I'd sneak into her room at night.
143. One weekend, one of the boys came back with a pint of glue. I ended up doing a rooftop protest. The night staff had been treating us badly so we decided to give them something to act about. This time, we didn't run away. We took the pins out of the

window and shut them. We went onto the roof with our bags of glue and our big jackets. We were sniffing the glue on the roof. The staff couldn't get up to catch us. They were wondering how we got up there. They had to get the police and the fire brigade.

144. By the time the glue was finished, we started shouting for fish suppers. They told us that they couldn't get us fish suppers through the night so we told them that we'd stay there till morning. We did get our fish suppers. They passed them through the windows and we sat on the roof and had our lunch. We decided to go down after that. We were getting cold and the pot of glue was done so we thought we may as well go down. When we got down, the staff couldn't really do anything about it. We were just put to our beds. There was nothing else they could do.
145. Newfield was a funny place. The staff were basically alright, but there were some weirdos. LRE [REDACTED] wanted to take me out in his sailing boat. I had the sense that there was something about him and I said no. I had a feeling about him, especially after what had happened at St. Ninian's. When I was getting held down for fighting with other boys, if LRE [REDACTED] was holding me down I would get more frightened. It was because of what I'd already experienced at St. Ninian's. The more they held me down, the more frightened I got that something was going to happen. It really triggered me. If I kicked off, I'd be put into a locked room until I calmed down.
146. HPI [REDACTED] was still there and still behaving like a Sergeant Major. Jimmy Holland was in Newfield with me. He ended up writing a book called *Lost in Care*. [REDACTED]  
[REDACTED]
147. After I'd been at Newfield for eight or nine weeks, they made their assessment. They said that I wasn't daft at school, but that I couldn't settle. That was when I was sent to Bosco House in Glasgow.



## **Bosco House, Hamilton Road, Glasgow**

148. I was in second year at school when I went to Bosco House. I think I was twelve years old. There weren't many boys in Bosco House. It was a bit like a children's home and half-way house for older boys. Most of the boys were sixteen or seventeen years old, so I was one of the youngest in there. They were boys who had been in the system all their lives. It was a place for them to stay until they got their own houses.
149. Two priests and a woman worked at Bosco House. The priests were Father Dennis Higgins and Father Hill Father Higgins was in charge. The housemother was called Bridie. She was a nice woman. I was there for about a year. It was alright there.

## **Routine at Bosco House**

### *Mornings and bedtime*

150. We slept in dormitories at Bosco House. There were four or five boys in a dorm. I was still wetting the bed at Bosco House, but they didn't make a big deal out of it.

### *Food*

151. The food was brilliant in Bosco House. There was a cook who made the food. Her husband was called Tony Hatchett, who was an Irish guy. He would come to pick up his wife and sometimes hang around with us. He was really cool.

### *School*

152. I went out to school when I was in Bosco House. I was in second year at St. Andrew's Secondary School on the Edinburgh Road. The staff would run us up to school in the morning and we made our own way back. There was a boy in Bosco House called [redacted] I had been in Nazareth House with him. We were the only boys who

went out to St. Andrew's School. There was one other boy who went to St. Gregory's School. We were the only three boys who went to school from Bosco House. The rest of the boys were older and had left school.

153. I was still sniffing glue. I knew a lot of boys in Tollcross. I'd been in St. Ninian's and other places with them. I'd hang about with them and I'd be on the glue. If somebody told me that they had a pot of glue, I'd just walk off from school so I missed school quite a lot. The headmaster at the school was called Brother John. He'd phone the home and tell them if I'd been there in the morning and gone off in the afternoon. I would get into trouble when I got back.

#### *Leisure time*

154. There were no strict rules at Bosco House. I got home for weekends and would come back on the Sunday. I was allowed to bring my pals down to the house. There was a wee recreation hall with pool tables and table tennis tables. It was quite a relaxed regime. I got pocket money every weekend and I had my stash of money at home. There was an old railway line near where my mum stayed. There was a bridge that had been blown up during the War. I would walk there and along the river a bit to a tree. I had a wee tin hidden under a bird's nest up that tree. It's still there to this day.

#### **Abuse at Bosco House**

155. Father <sup>HII</sup> was a bad old bastard. If we got into trouble, he wasn't shy about calling us names. For a priest, he had a bad tongue in him. I got a few punches and slaps from him as well. For an old guy, he was fast on his feet and quick with his hands as well. It was a bit sad for a man of the cloth to lift his hands to people. Punishment in Bosco House was a slap in the face and a bawling out from Father <sup>HII</sup>

### **Leaving Bosco House**

156. All in all, Bosco House was a good place. I was there for about a year before getting another chance at home. I didn't see my social worker in Bosco House and I can't remember going to any Panels, but St. Stephen's School was willing to give me another chance.
157. Once again, I didn't settle down again when I went back to my scheme. I went back to my old ways, going out and breaking into places. I was only at home for a few months before I was put into Crosshill Children's Home in Port Glasgow.

### **Crosshill Children's Home, Port Glasgow**

158. The Children's Panel sent me to Crosshill because I couldn't settle. I was still in second year at school so I was twelve, thirteen years old. It was a children's home for boys and girls of all ages. Secondary Institutions - to be published later  
I was there for seven or eight months.

159. Secondary Institutions - to be published later
160. Secondary Institutions - to be published later

161.

162.

163.

### **Leaving Crosshill**

164. I ended up getting charged along with two guys over the age of sixteen. It went to court because it was a serious assault and my co-accused were over the age of sixteen. I was held in Newfield until the case went to court. I was there for about six months. Newfield had to put up with me for another six months.
165. The case ended up getting dropped so I got out of Newfield and went back home. I was hanging out with a guy who stayed a couple of closes away from me. We came across a tin of petrol in the close down from us. We decided to try and make petrol

bombs. We filled a bottle of Merrydown cider right up to the top. We didn't realise that we were only meant to put a little bit of petrol in it. I was holding one end in my hand.

166. My friend picked up a cigarette end in the close and lit it with a match. He threw the match on the coal bunker, which caught fire. I panicked. We were inside the close and it smashed off the wall beside a guy's door. The guy's door went on fire and it was his wedding night. I ended up with my hair burnt right back up my scalp. I bolted up the hill and I could hear all the fire engines. I could hear my mum shouting out the window, "GJC [REDACTED]!" I knew I was in trouble. I decided not to go home. I wasn't injured, but I had a singed hairline and no eyebrows.
167. I was charged with wilful fire-raising. I was already on bail for a housebreaking so I went back to court and I was fully committed. I went back to Newfield again and was there for another six months. I took the blame for the housebreaking and I was then given three years residential training. They kept deferring sentence on the wilful fire-raising. They knew that it wasn't intentional. It was a stupid mistake. I had put my hand up to it and I told them the truth. It was accidental.
168. While I was waiting to be sentenced, LWH [REDACTED] came up to Newfield. He was SNR [REDACTED] of Balrossie. He asked me if I'd like to come to Balrossie. I'd heard good stories about it from boys who were already there so I said that I would. I knew the hills there like the back of my hand. I knew I had to go somewhere anyway. I had to wait until sentence was passed on me. After I was sentenced to three years residential training, I was taken to Balrossie.

### **Balrossie School, Kilmacolm**

169. I went into Balrossie when I was about thirteen. I was there for almost three years. Balrossie was in its own ground and had a school in it. It was a List D school for boys from about ten to sixteen years old. There were four different units, Bute and Comrie in the main building and Lomond and Arran in the other building. I think there were about twenty boys in each unit. I was in Bute. In each unit, there was a television room,



dining room and dormitories. When you went out of the unit, there was a big hall with snooker and pool tables. That was for two units.

170. LWH [redacted] was SNR [redacted] of Balrossie. I also remember QFX [redacted] who was SNR [redacted], GJF [redacted], known as GJF [redacted], was the PE teacher. zGVW [redacted], known as zGVW [redacted], was SNR [redacted] of the school. He had some size of nose on him. There were female members of staff as well. They were all alright. [redacted] was a good friend of my mum's. She was the head woman in my unit and she came from Greenock. She was brilliant. I got on well with most of the staff at Balrossie.

### **Routine at Balrossie**

#### *First Day*

171. I was taken from court to Balrossie. I remember arriving there. I thought it looked alright. I saw a couple of boys that I knew. It was the same faces all the way through the system, from Nazareth House right through to the jails.

#### *Mornings and bedtime*

172. We got up in the morning, had our breakfast and made our beds. We would do a couple of chores around the unit. We would Hoover up the dorms, do a bit of dusting and things like that. We did that for about half an hour and then we went to school.
173. I wet the bed until I was thirteen, fourteen. I would have dreams and wake up screaming. I just told the staff that it had happened. I had a special mattress. They never made a big deal out of it. I changed the bedding myself. Nobody ever spoke to me about it.

### *Mealtimes/food*

174. The food was good at Balrossie. I didn't have any problems with food when I was growing up, apart from at Nazareth House. We ate our meals in our units. The food came out of the kitchen, which was at the back of the big main hall. The kitchen staff came in from the local area. Whatever was served, we could either take it or leave it but it was always good food.

### *Clothing*

175. We wore casual clothes. The staff would take us out and get us clothes. We didn't have a uniform. It wasn't regimental like that. We had clothes for wearing in there and clothes for going home at the weekend.

### *School/work*

176. I went to different classes in the school. There were art classes and woodwork classes. We also got English and maths, but it was all stuff that I'd already done. The teachers came in to teach. They didn't work in the units. The teachers were alright, but **zGVW** **zGVW** and **GJF** were hard. I didn't sit any exams. We didn't get a chance to back then.
177. I stopped going to classes when I was about fifteen because they knew that I was educated enough. They had me working out in the gardens. I would look after the goats. I built a big chicken coup and raised chickens from the eggs. I used lamps until they were wee chicks. It was an added side-line for me because I would sell the eggs to the kitchen staff.
178. I was the only boy working in the garden. **GJF**'s son, **█**, started working as a groundsman. He was in his thirties. I got on well with him.

### *Washing/bathing*

179. I had to go for a shower every day after work because I'd been in the chicken coop. The showers were in the units. They were in cubicles with doors so we had privacy.

### *Leisure time*

180. After school, we had recreation. We would go to the swimming pool, go out on bikes or go fishing. There were plenty of things to do.

### *Trips/holidays*

181. We went skiing a few times. We went to Aviemore and Glenshee. Members of staff took us. We went to outdoor centres like Faskally. We did canoeing, gorge walking and orienteering. We went to really good places. Every summer, we went on a holiday. We went to Arran and we did the West Highland Way for charity. We walked the Cairngorms, from Glencoe to Aviemore over the hills. That was good. A number of boys from the units would go on these trips. Some went to one place and the other boys went elsewhere. We had a few trips every year. I got to do a lot more things in Balrossie than most weans brought up outside the system get to do. I got to go to lots of places and do different things, but it's what I had to go through before then get to do those things.

### *Birthdays and Christmas*

182. We would get a few bob for our birthday. They would take us out and get us new clothes. We did alright in that sense. I would go home for Christmas. There were boys who had nowhere to go for Christmas. I told my mum and she asked Balrossie if it was okay for her to take them. She did that for two boys, [REDACTED] and [REDACTED]. [REDACTED] didn't like going home because every time he went home, his father was bad to him. He didn't want to go home at Christmas time. My mum had presents under the tree for [REDACTED] and [REDACTED]. It was like that on our scheme. We might not have had much but what we did have we shared.

### *Healthcare*

183. If we needed to see a dentist, we'd be taken to the dentist. We were taken for haircuts as well. I didn't need to see a doctor at Balrossie.

### *Visits/family contact*

184. I went home for weekends. I would be dropped off at Port Glasgow and I'd walk up the road from there. I would often stay at my Auntie [REDACTED]'s. I had to go back to Balrossie on the Sunday. I was finished with glue but I was drinking a lot and smoking cannabis. That was when I started taking drugs, when I was on home leave at the age of fifteen. I could usually take a bit of cannabis back to Balrossie, but I kept it to myself. I would make sure it lasted all week. We weren't allowed to smoke, but they knew we all did it.
185. My mum didn't really need to visit because I was going home at the weekend. There was a parents' night, but not many parents showed up. My mum was one of the ones who did show up. My social worker didn't visit me, apart from review meetings.

### *Discipline*

186. If I got into trouble, I'd be kept in the next weekend. That happened to me a few times when I was drunk. The police wouldn't charge me, but they'd phone Balrossie and tell them I was at the police station. One of the night watchmen at Balrossie was married to one of my aunts. If he came to collect me from the police station, he just took me back up the road to my mum's instead of taking me back to the school. If he wasn't on duty and I got taken back to Balrossie from the police station, I was usually kept in for the following weekend as a punishment.



## Abuse at Balrossie

187. GJF [REDACTED], known as GJF [REDACTED], had been there since the place opened. He was fair, but he wasn't shy of lifting his hands if you got into trouble. He took my tobacco off me and I knew it would be in his office. At break time, I put my arse to his door. I was going to go through his door to try and get my tobacco back. GJF [REDACTED] was in his office. He dragged me in and gave me a tanking. He punched me all over my body.
188. GJF [REDACTED] then took me down to LWH [REDACTED]'s office and told him what had happened. He punched me as well. He knocked me onto my arse. He wasn't shy of lifting his hands either. He was a former [REDACTED] rugby player so he was some size. He said that I was lucky they didn't get the police involved because I was on a good behaviour order from the court.
189. GJF [REDACTED] never gave me such a severe beating again, but he was good for giving you a knee to the leg for daft wee things. He did that to other boys as well. I also saw LWH [REDACTED] being violent towards other boys. The only way he knew how to deal with boys was by lifting his hands. He did that to me so many times that I can't remember them all.
190. QFX [REDACTED] took me to court for one of my deferred sentences. He was known as QFX [REDACTED]. My case was deferred for another six months. When we were leaving the court, he told me we were going somewhere else but I had to keep it to myself. We went into the West End of Greenock, to the house of wee [REDACTED] who used to work in the school. QFX [REDACTED] told her to show me what the dog could do. She put a video tape of snooker on the TV. Every time someone took a shot, the dog thought he was chasing the ball.
191. QFX [REDACTED] told me that he and [REDACTED] were going into the kitchen for a talk. He told me to sit with the dog. I sat watching the TV, but then I needed the toilet. I got up and walked into the kitchen. QFX [REDACTED] had [REDACTED] all over the table and they certainly weren't speaking. I made sure he knew that I had seen them. I said, "Excuse me, can you tell me where the toilet is?" It didn't stop him much. He told me to keep it to myself.



192. I did keep it to myself. I knew what to keep to myself and what not to. They didn't call him QFX for nothing. QFX wasn't the only member of staff he was running about with. He had a reputation. She had been a member of staff. She had left and it was probably because of what was happening with QFX
193. On one occasion, I was sent to see QFX I think it was for swearing at one of the staff. I went into his office and he asked me why I had been sent to see him. I told him and he said, "You did what?" He slapped me and I fell back the way. I cracked the back of my head off the safe. It gave him a hell of a fright. He came over and started shaking me. He asked me if I was alright. He was saying that he was sorry and that he hadn't meant it. That was the only time that he lifted his hands to me. He knew that what I'd seen with wee QFX could have cost him his job, if I'd wanted it to. I could have told them where wee QFX stayed.
194. We played Ballikinrain at football when I was about fifteen. By that time, Greg Dougal was the headmaster of the Ballikinrain school department. What he did to me was still very sharp in my head. I asked a couple of Ballikinrain boys if he was still beating up the young boys. They said that he was and asked me how I knew. I told them it was a long story and that they should watch at half-time.
195. Greg Dougal was standing with a video recorder. I approached him and asked him how he was doing. I said, "Do you not remember me?" He said that my face was familiar. I told him I was GJC and that I'd been in St. Ninian's. I said, "Do you not remember? You hit me one right fucking awful punch for laughing in church. Do you not remember it?" He said that he didn't remember it. I said, "If you don't, I certainly do. Do you want to fucking try it now, you prick?" I gave him a push. QFX came over and asked what was going on. I said that Greg Dougal had knocked me out when I was a ten year old boy. QFX told me to get away. All other boys were telling me to go on. QFX didn't speak to me any further about what happened.
196. zGVW was good for lifting his hands. He tried to do it to me once. I told him not to expect it to be one way. I said that if he hit me I'd knock him straight out. He said he

didn't want to fight me. I'd seen him beat up younger boys. He was an old bully. I ended up stealing his pigeons from his pigeon coup at the school.

### **Leaving Balrossie**

197. I started going home at night and just going to Balrossie during the day. I had to go back to court every six months for my wilful fire-raising case. They kept it hanging over me for about three years, until I was almost sixteen. They ended up admonishing me because I had done my time at approved school. I had nine months of my three years remaining and I was released on parole. It was fifteen.
198. One of the conditions of parole is not to get into any trouble. I didn't realise that if I got a jail sentence, I would have to serve the nine months of parole. I just had to deal with life at home. I never got on with my older brother. He was a thorn in my side and he still is. I started running around with the boys again. My mum wanted me to get a job, but my reputation preceded me. Nobody wanted to take me. I tripped over my shoe laces as usual and got the jail.

### **St. Mary's Kenmure, Bishopbriggs**

199. I was taken to the closed unit at St. Mary's, but I never even got shown a bed. The police told me to sit down and they went into the office. A group was going out to swimming and I held the door open for them. I went right out at the back of the group. I hid under a Land Rover. There were motors out looking for me. I stayed under the Land Rover for a couple of hours and then it got dark. I was on the run for about four months. I had a tent up the hill from the scheme and the scheme looked after me. I'd done a lot of people a lot of favours and favours get returned. I was never short of money. I was caught before I turned sixteen. I was taken straight up to Longriggend school from the court.

### **Longriggend Remand Centre, North Lanarkshire**

200. Longriggend was a remand unit. I was there until the courts decided what to do with me. Longriggend felt like any other adult jail. I was locked up and given a piss pot in the corner. I had to slop out. I would wake up, slop out and have breakfast. At 9:00 am, they would try and take me to school but I wouldn't go. I asked them to leave me in my bed. I was locked in my cell and would stay in my bed all day. I did a lot of reading at Longriggend. I got books from the library and from other boys.
201. Meals were brought to our cells in steel trays with compartments. The food was horrendous. I couldn't describe it, but there was no choice.
202. I was never disciplined or restrained at Longriggend. I was there for about two weeks before going back to court. I was then recalled on my parole. I didn't go back to approved school, but was sent straight to Glenochil.

### **Glenochil Young Offenders' Institute, Clackmannanshire**

203. I was still only fifteen when I went to Glenochil. I was a couple of months away from my sixteenth birthday. I was in Glenochil for six months as a CYP (convicted young prisoner). It was for prisoners up to the age of 21. There were about 24 boys in each section, 12 cells up each side. I can't remember the names of any prison officers there.

### **Routine at Glenochil**

#### *Cells*

204. The cell had a bed, a wee table, a chair and a sink in it. We were allowed to have a radio in our cells. I didn't have to slop out at Glenochil. When the section was shut, you pressed a buzzer. Your door would open and you could go out to use the toilet. Only one person was allowed out at a time. We had to make our beds and keep our

cells clean, but it wasn't very strict. We got locked up in our cells at night time. I would read in my cell. After the lights went out, I would talk to other boys out the window. We would torment the sex offenders and howl at them.

#### *Mealtimes/food*

205. I got up in the morning and had my breakfast. We went down to the dining hall for our meals. We were locked up in our cells less than I had been in Longriggend. The food was alright. After breakfast, I went to work in the sheds.

#### *Clothing*

206. We wore denims and a red and white shirt. We were allowed to wear our own trainers.

#### *Work*

207. I worked in textiles. Because I had escaped from St. Mary's, I was classed as a category A prisoner. I didn't have a choice in where I worked because textiles was in the security shed. I would do the brushing up because I couldn't use a sewing machine. I was just a pest. We'd go back for our dinner and then we got outside for our exercise. We then went back to the sheds.

#### *Leisure time*

208. We got out for recreation at night. We could play pool, table tennis or watch the telly. Weekends were much the same, but we didn't go to work and we were locked up in our cells earlier. The screws would go home earlier at the weekend, just like in adult prisons.

### *Visits*

209. My family would come up and visit me at Glenochil. After I turned sixteen, I didn't get any visits from social workers. I wasn't given any kind of support when I was sentenced.

### *Discipline*

210. The screws couldn't do anything worse to me than what had already been done. I just took it all in my stride. There was a gang of boys called the Glenochil Wolves. As part of your initiation, you had to do something to one of the sex offenders. There was no such thing as protection for the sex offenders. They were put into the textile workshop with the general population. When the screws backs were turned, I put an industrial sewing machine right over one of the sex offender's heads.
211. If you did anything wrong, you'd be restrained and carted off in locks. That happened to me when I assaulted the sex offender. They would bend your wrists right back to cause maximum pain. The pain was terrible. When I was being restrained there would be one screw at each arm, one at each leg and one at my head. Considering what I'd done, they weren't too hard on me.
212. I was taken into the digger, which was a punishment cell. It was a lot smaller than the normal cells. It had a cardboard table and a cardboard chair in it. There was a concrete floor with a mattress on it. I was there for fourteen days. My meals were brought to me in the cell. I only got out for an hour exercise every day. I pressed the buzzer whenever I needed the toilet during the day and had a piss pot in my cell if I needed to go to the toilet at night.

### *Glenochil Detention Centre*

213. After I was released from my first sentence at Glenochil, I got another three months detention for something stupid. It was the first sentence I got after I turned sixteen.



Glenochil Detention Centre was in a different part of the building than I had been in the first time. It was the same staff.

214. The detention centre was part of Maggie Thatcher's short, sharp shock treatment. It was all based on training for army recruits. They called it square bashing. We were supposed to make bed blocks, bull our boots, bull the floors and march. It was all heavy and strict. We wore black jaggy trousers, a similar jacket and a red and white shirt. We had shoes and boots that we were supposed to bull up, but I never learned how to do that.
215. We were supposed to march everywhere we went. When they told me to march, I told them to jog on. If I'd wanted to march, I would have joined the army. When I didn't march, they told me that I had to have my shoes in order. If I didn't do that, they said I'd have to go to my cell. I told them I'd be in my cell until I got out, which I was.
216. For every day I refused to march, I lost a day's remission of my sentence. I was only doing three months. At that time, you had to serve at least two thirds of your sentence. I had to do two months so they could only keep me in for another month if I refused to comply. I was kept in the punishment cells for my whole sentence and got an hour's exercise every day. I spent a lot of my time reading. They brought a trolley round with books on it and I could pick from it. I didn't get restrained when I was in the detention centre. I was already in the punishment cells so they couldn't take me anywhere else.
217. The short, sharp shock treatment didn't work for me. I don't think it worked for anybody. At that time, I don't know what would have helped me. I just had to get out. I didn't realise at the time how things had affected me and where it was all coming from. It might have helped if I'd had some kind of counsellor or someone had asked me why I was wetting the bed or sniffing glue, but I don't think anybody cared.

## **Leaving Glenochil**

218. I was still sixteen when I finished my three month sentence. When I was released from Glenochil, they ran me down to Stirling Train Station. You got a liberation grant, which was a week's brew money. Back then, it was about £24. They gave you a train ticket to wherever you came from as well. I went back to my mum's in Greenock, but I got a house of my own as soon as possible. I ended up staying with my older sister, [REDACTED]. I also stayed at my Aunt [REDACTED]'s a lot.
219. After I left Glenochil, I was taking a lot of drugs. At that time, I started to take a lot of tablets. It wasn't long after that I started taking heroin. I got into trouble with the police again, but I never went back to Glenochil because the detention centre wouldn't have me.

## **Polmont**

220. When I was seventeen, I was sent to Polmont for the first time. I was in and out of Polmont quite a lot until I turned twenty. It was there that I was first introduced to heroin. Polmont was just another jail. I've been in prison a lot as an adult and it was just the same. I was definitely institutionalised, there was no doubt about it.

## *Discipline*

221. You could be put on report for 101 different things, like being abusive to the screws, fighting or something else. If you were on report for something and you got put on report again, you'd be removed to the cells. That happened to me quite a lot.
222. The way they took you to the cells and the locks they put on you should only have been done in extreme circumstances. They could just as easily have a screw on each side of you and walk you down to the cell. Instead, they got you on the ground and put you in a lock. Every ten steps they would stop and put you down to check all the locks. When they checked whether their lock holds were secure, they bent your wrists back

and you screamed in pain. They caused maximum pain and made sure everyone in the halls heard you scream.

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

223. I was in and out of Polmont quite a few times between the ages of 18 and 20. You were supposed to be 21 before you went into an adult prison but I was 20. I was taken from Polmont to Barlinnie. Up until four years ago, I was in and out of prison regularly. There has been a lot of drug abuse in my life. I'm surprised I've survived. I think it's being in the jails that has kept me alive. I have been in for the nourishment, not the punishment. That is how casually I used to view it. I haven't been in prison now for four years and I think that is me now. I am done with getting in trouble with the law.
224. I've got a daughter who is in her thirties. She was born when I was nineteen and I have a ten year old granddaughter. I met my current partner, [REDACTED] when she was 22. She fell pregnant with our daughter, [REDACTED] but we didn't become a couple until later on. We also have a son together.
225. I've never worked. I've never been out of prison long enough to get a job. My life after leaving care was chaos. It was crime and drugs. There were times when I knew that I needed to get a sentence before something crazy happened. I would feel things building up inside me.

### **Impact**

226. I started taking heroin when I was seventeen and in Polmont. That went on for years and years. My life was crime and drugs. I wasn't able to get a job because I was never out of prison long enough. This is the longest I've been out of any institution in my life. I haven't been in prison for four years.

227. The abuse in care is all planted in my head. It's been with me for the last forty odd years. Since I've uploaded it and spoken about it, I feel totally different. Years ago, I didn't see it as abuse. If I did something wrong, I got a whack. The way I see it now is that if I went out on the street and punched a ten year old boy full force on the face, it wouldn't be acceptable. I try not to dwell on what happened when I was in care. It's happened and no matter what I say or do, nothing is going to change it.
228. I always used to have bad dreams. I would wake up at night, screaming. It was because of the time when I ran in and caught them raping a boy at St. Ninian's. It was an animalistic scream. It is a sound that has stayed with me and I hope to God I never hear it again. It still disturbs my sleep. I wake up with a bolt, screaming and with sweat pouring out of me.
229. I have a kind of sixth sense about people, especially after what happened at St. Ninian's. When I was in Barlinnie, I would go into a hall and tell my pals to stay back. I would tell them there was something going down. They would ask me what was going down and I would ask them why they couldn't feel it. It would feel electric to me, like something was going to happen. Before I knew it, the riot bell would go off and the hall would be locked up. I would turn to my friends and say that I'd told them. My wee cousin used to say that I was a witch. He would ask me how I did it and I would tell him that it was years of practice. I choose my friends very wisely. I'm intuitive when it comes to people. I can tell when people are bullshitting me.
230. I know a guy who was in a home in Ireland. The abuse that went on there was terrible. He would tell me about it. He's doing a life sentence now. He's a good guy, but he went through so much in his past. I think my only salvation is that I knew my temper built up over time. Many times, I would say to my partner that I needed a sentence. I would go into Greenock town and pick something up and steal it. I'd just walk towards the door with it. I knew that if I didn't get the jail for something stupid, I'd end up going out and doing something really serious. A lot of people see it in me. My face goes pure black and my features change. I would get myself the jail before my kids noticed it. I've got more than one hundred previous convictions so that shows how many times I've done it.

231. My health isn't too bad, considering I've abused my body with drugs. I'm on a methadone programme and I'm on painkillers. I'm prescribed medication for blood clots on my legs.
232. I'm a product of the seventies care system. They basically stole not just my childhood but my whole life. Luckily I'm still here and I survived. A lot of people that I was in care with are no longer here. I was diagnosed with post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) a couple of years ago. I don't know whether counselling would work for me. My partner, [REDACTED], is my counsellor. She's my support system. I've also told my drugs worker what happened to me. She's a psychiatric nurse and she diagnosed me with PTSD. She's been great. The man that runs my chemist has been a big help to me as well.

### **Reporting of Abuse**

233. Nobody ever asked me why I was wetting the bed or why I was glue sniffing. I don't think I would have been able to come out with it and talk about the abuse. I didn't see the beatings as abuse. When I was in care, I didn't tell my social worker or the Children's Panels about any of the abuse. I didn't tell the police either. I didn't see the point. I just saw them all as the same. Who were they going to believe, them or me? I still don't have any trust in the system.
234. It's a shame it's taken forty years to get to this point. When the police came to take a statement from me in 2020, the first thing I said to them is that they were only forty years too late. They came to see me about Nazareth House. When I finished speaking about Nazareth House, I asked them if that was the only place they wanted to know about. They asked if I was in any other institutions and I started to list them. I then told the police the same things that I've spoken to the Inquiry about.
235. There is a police inquiry going on into [LHM] who lived in the caravan at Nazareth House. I think they are investigating him for taking children over at the weekends, children that didn't have anything. The police came to see me about him in April 2020,



but they never got back to me about that. The police told me they had managed to track down Sister GJI but I don't know whether she's been charged with any offences.

236. I also gave a statement to the police in 2020 about the incident when Greg Dougal punched me. He's been charged with that and he's out on bail with that at the moment. I think he's been charged with offences relating to other boys as well. I thought he was just a bully but the police told me that he has already served five years for sexually abusing boys. I don't know whether that abuse happened in St. Ninian's or Ballikinrain.
237. The police looked into it the abuse by McKinstry and McKenna. They told me McKenna was dead but McKinstry was charged and let out on bail. I then got a letter to say the case wasn't going to go to court because McKinstry had died.
238. I hadn't planned to claim compensation. I was worried that people would think I'd just done it all for the money. It was [REDACTED] who works in our chemist, who told me not to worry about what other people thought. He said that it might not change what's happened, but it could help me and it could help my future. I've contacted Digby Brown solicitors. I filled in a form and sent it back to them.

## **Records**

239. I've never seen any of my records. The police traced my records through the Children's Panel. When they went to get them, they were expecting to get a box or records. There was a room full of boxes of files and they were all about me.

## Lessons to be learned

240. The staff should have been vetted. I know that gets done now, but they should have been thoroughly vetted. I don't think nuns and people who aren't maternal should be allowed to look after children. They didn't have a clue about children. They had made a vow not to have any. I can't remember any inspections of any of the places that I was in.
241. The pain of having your wrists bent back in restraints was terrible. They're still doing it now in approved schools. Secondary Institutions - to be published later It's horrendous. I don't think children should be sent to places like prison. Looking back now, I don't know how they got away with it.
242. They need to try and get out of children why they're in care in the first place. If children are there for causing trouble, I don't think they're doing it for no reason. It's a cry for help. They need someone to talk to. Children might be scared to come out with what the catalyst is. Everybody's case is different.
243. 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 GJC .....

Dated 15/11/21 .....