

**Scottish Child Abuse Inquiry**

Witness Statement of

BCN [REDACTED]

Support person present: No

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1. My name is BCN [REDACTED] My birth name was BCN [REDACTED] My date of birth is [REDACTED] 1960. My contact details are known to the Inquiry.
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**Life before going into care**

2. I was born in a little place called [REDACTED] near Falkirk. My mother and dad were alcoholics. I had six brothers and sisters. I was number four. There was [REDACTED] [REDACTED] who I call [REDACTED] me, [REDACTED] [REDACTED] and [REDACTED] We were a scruffy, dirty, smelly, little family, from what I can remember. I was always hungry.
3. In the house, there might have been three bedrooms. I remember there was a lot of us in one bedroom and we all shared one bed. I went to [REDACTED] Primary School. The school often put me in the sink for a wash, so I must've been smelly or something. I can't remember ever having a bath or shower at home. I'd be first into the dinner hall at school. I think social work was involved with our family but I was too young to understand.
4. Before going into care, things happened with the family. Not good things. I was abused before I went into care. Grandads, uncles and brothers were all abusive when I was at home, as a youngster. I'd be below nine years old when all of that was taking place. I remember being in bed with my brother, [REDACTED] behind me. [REDACTED] was doing stuff to my back. I can't remember stuff past that. My sister, [REDACTED] says there is stuff past that. My grandad, my mam's dad, raped his own kids. He was just
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appalling. My poppa's dad, I called him old grandad, I was scared to walk past him. I was tiny and he'd be in your skirt. He was really filthy. I know I told social workers what had been done to me when I went into care.

5. I know I was fostered out a lot before I went into care. Every time my mam had a baby, we were fostered out. I was too young to remember any of that. It was short term, while mam had the baby and recovered. [REDACTED] told me I was fostered out to a couple who used a belt on me. [REDACTED] got into trouble because the man was using a belt on me and [REDACTED] was sticking up for me.
6. My mam ran away with her alcoholic boyfriend, leaving us behind with my dad. I remember being in a phone box with my dad when he was ringing up social work. My dad was saying, "I can't cope, I can't cope, you're going to have to come and get them". My dad was a frail old man with lung disease, and he worked fulltime. We were picked up a few days later from school.
7. Being picked up from school was absolutely horrible. I didn't know it was going to happen. You were put in a car and that was it, gone. There was me, [REDACTED], [REDACTED] and [REDACTED] all in the same car. The social work took us to Weedingshall Children's Home at Polmont. [REDACTED] was sent to a place in Edinburgh, like a borstal type place. [REDACTED] was left with my dad because she was fifteen and [REDACTED] was left with my dad because he was seventeen. I was nine, nearly ten when I went to Weedingshall.

#### **Weedingshall Children's Home, Polmont, Near Falkirk**

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Secondary Institutions - to be published later

Secondary Institutions - to be published later

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Secondary Institutions - to be published later

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### **Leaving Weedingshall Children's Home**

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17. Me and my brothers and sisters were at Weedingshall just short term. I'd say we were there for a matter of months, maybe a year. Then me, [REDACTED] [REDACTED] and [REDACTED] went to Aberlour. We must've been waiting at Weedingshall for a long term placement.

### **Aberlour Children's Home, Dunfermline**

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18. There was a man and a woman that run Aberlour, who were called BGO/BGP [REDACTED]  
[REDACTED] It was horrendous in Aberlour. BGO [REDACTED] was really, really bad. That man

was absolutely horrific. BGO/BGP were in their forties. I was abused mentally, physically and emotionally. There were other helpers there to do the linen and stuff. I don't remember any wrong from the other helpers or them having a lot to do with the kids.

19. I went into Aberlour aged ten, going on to my eleventh birthday. I was there for a two year period. I went to Queen Anne High School. I started fresh at eleven years old and had a uniform. At school, everyone took me under their wing. They knew I was a children's home child. I remember the bigger ones looking after me. That school scared me because when I started school, there was a stabbing. Two boys had been fighting and one had stabbed the other and killed him. I thought it was a bit rough.

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#### **Routine at Aberlour Children's Home**

20. There was a bedtime routine. Some things were normal, some things weren't. There were a lot of bad things in Aberlour.
21. I think Aberlour was the only place I was in that did trips and holidays. That was one good thing about Aberlour. We got taken out to Eyemouth, Spittle, Berwick upon Tweed. A mini bus took you. The BGO/BGP drove the mini bus. We'd all be handed boxes of chocolate and stuff. That was a rare treat in a children's home. We'd stay weekends and more. Nothing bad happened on holiday. While we were on holiday, we'd all be in a big house. I remember one time we were all playing in the water and it was sunny. At night the BGO/BGP lined us up to get the blisters with needles because we were all sunburnt.
22. I don't remember birthdays but I remember at Christmas getting a "Sooty and Sweep" sponge. I remember being happy at Christmas so we must've got nice presents.
23. I went to church every week, on my own choice. I went to get away from the abuse at the home. I quite enjoyed it. I'd sit singing.



24. I ran away from Aberlour four or five times. I was running away from the abuse by BGO I'd never be away for long, I was only a kid. I'd get as far as the motorway then the police would get me.
25. I had started my periods when I was in Aberlour. I remember BGP doing the pep talk, telling me what they were. I went to the dentist at Aberlour. He pulled some of my teeth out to make some spaces.

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### Abuse at Aberlour Children's Home

26. When me and my brothers and sisters went into Aberlour, all the other children were already established. There was a big table. You'd sit there and you'd be given these meals. If you didn't eat your meal, it was then presented at every meal until you ate it. I don't like cod roe, I still don't like cod roe to this day. I'd sit there and starve.
27. I was the oldest sibling taken in there. My sister [REDACTED] she was younger, she'd be a couple of seats up from me. I remember BGO/BGP saying, "Eat your peas and carrots". [REDACTED] was crying, she couldn't eat the peas and carrots. BGO got the peas and carrots and was putting them in [REDACTED]'s mouth, shovelling them in. There was tears and snot and everything from [REDACTED] I could see the peas and carrots coming down my sisters nose. I stood up and had a go at BGO I thought, I'm not having that. They could do what they want with me, starve me and put my dinner in front of me day after day, but they're not doing that to my young kid sister.
28. BGO took me upstairs, put me over his knee and pulled my pants down. BGO pulled my bum right up and he was slapping my private bits with his slipper. That was the first of the sexual abuse. I remember thinking, why is he doing that? Why is he going there? Haven't I had enough of that? I've come away from that. I remember thinking, the pain, the pain.
29. I was abused by BGO I was abused sexually, physically and emotionally. He found me an easy target. The abuse at Aberlour happened when I was eleven. I was

continually abused. I remember kicking out and trying to fight back. I remember trying to scratch BGO. Some things happened to my sister, [REDACTED] at Aberlour. I think the same things. I think it happened to other kids too. The girls spoke about it. BGO threatened me not to tell anyone or something would happen to my brothers and sister or to me. There were all different threats.

30. Each child would go up on their own for their own bath. BGO would walk into the bathroom when you were having your bath. He'd touch my breasts and say, "Oh, you look like you'll be needing a bra soon, looks like you're going through puberty". He was a gross, dirty old man. The way he spoke just makes me shiver. The weekends were bad, you either got abused or you went out. I went to church every week. I joined the Brownies and then the Guides to get away some nights
31. One day we were all standing in line waiting for school and BGO comes out like Hitler. He was a total control freak. He would examine each child to see if the child was ok to go to school. BGO came up to me. He said, "You haven't brushed your teeth". I told him I had, but he said, "You haven't brushed your teeth, get up and brush your teeth". All the kids went off to school. BGO came up to the bathroom. I was brushing my teeth. He said, "You're not doing your teeth properly". BGO got the brush and he was nearly choking me. He had my mouth open and he was ramming this brush in my mouth. BGO got a pleasure out of doing things like that to you.
32. BGP sat back and she knew everything that was going on. She was downstairs, listening. You could hear the abuse happening. BGP had long, black hair. She'd make me brush her hair most nights, until your arm ached. You'd be going to watch telly and you'd have to brush this hair. It was only me that she made do that. BGP was like Cruella, in the film, 101 Dalmatians, she was evil. BGP would bark orders at BGO and he would jump.
33. It was always BGO who battered you. BGP would come up and do a couple of things to me. She would slap me on the bed. BGP would be laying into me on the bed. I'd

kick back, punch and retaliate. At that age, I thought, I'm not having this, getting beaten and battered for protecting my sister and my brothers.

34. The children in Aberlour were told not to go to the park and one time we all went to the park. We all came back. BGO/BGP lined us up and said, "Have you been in the park?" Everybody, including my sister, nodded. I shook my head. I was taken upstairs and battered again. I was put to bed for lying. Later, my sister came up and said, "We all had Easter eggs". BGO/BGP had waited until I was put to bed and then provided an Easter egg to all the other children. Chocolate and sweets were a rarity back then, a real treat. said, "It's alright, I sneaked you some in my pyjamas". had saved half her egg for me. She knew I'd be heartbroken.
35. BGO/BGP hated me. told me we saved stamps and one time we stole some from the shop. says, "You got hammered. You absolutely got hammered". I don't remember it.
36. BGP wrote down each day what happened with a child. It's written in my records from Aberlour, BCN was bad today and out of control, so had a short, sharp, slap". You can times that by ten and put sexual abuse in between it. That's what they failed to write. I was petrified at Aberlour. I used to run out and hide behind the trees and in the garden at the back.

#### *Peer abuse*

37. There was abuse from other children in Aberlour. There was an older boy, his name was and he had a little brother called . As a young child, I looked on him as a great big man. He would be one of the older children in the home, maybe fourteen or fifteen years old. I was about eleven and I wasn't long in the home He took me into the toilet and pulled out his thing. would get me behind the tree out the front. He took me many times behind that tree and tried "kiss, chase". He would put his tongue in my mouth. I experienced things with that were vulgar, absolutely vulgar.



38. [REDACTED] and [REDACTED] were the two children in Aberlour that BGP [REDACTED] had raised from when they were young kids. [REDACTED] and [REDACTED] were BGP [REDACTED] favourites. There was obvious favouritism. [REDACTED] didn't like cream. He didn't have to eat his cream at mealtimes. I said, "Why doesn't [REDACTED] have to eat his cream when I've got to sit and eat this cod roe?". [REDACTED] was like BGP [REDACTED] son. He went with her when the BGO/BGP [REDACTED] left Aberlour.

39. There was loads of incidents. When we all moved to Aberlour, there was this girl in our dormitory of four. I always remember her name, [REDACTED]. My sister, [REDACTED] was screaming. When I went up, [REDACTED] was hitting [REDACTED] with a coat-hanger. When I look back now, [REDACTED] was just making her mark probably. I opened a coat hanger, put it round [REDACTED]'s neck and strangled her. I pulled her through the hall. It's not that I was being naughty, I was protecting my siblings.

#### *Healthcare*

40. According to my records, I was sent to see psychologists when I was younger and in Aberlour. I have a two page psychologist letter in my records that says, "BCN [REDACTED] is a bright, normal, healthy child". It says I didn't know anything about sex, I was not at all sexually interested in anything. The people who did those things to me actually sent me to a therapist.

41. I remember a time where, every day, I was waking up in Aberlour and crying and crying. My ear would be stuck to the pillow. I'd go down to BGP [REDACTED] and say, "Oh, my ear, my ear". BGP [REDACTED] would say, "Stop attention seeking, off to school". BGP [REDACTED] must have seen the gunk on the pillow. I was picking it off my face in the morning. It went on for a long time. Eventually she took me to the doctors. The doctor said, "This child should have been brought in a long time ago". Both my eardrums were perforated. I was rushed straight into hospital to get my adenoids and tonsils out. I was pronounced 50% deaf.

### Reporting of abuse at Aberlour Children's Home

42. After the first incident with [REDACTED], I remember running to BGP [REDACTED] and telling her what happened. BGP [REDACTED] wrote in my notes that I was attention seeking and that I was sexually promiscuous. What I said about [REDACTED] was ignored. You just learned in the end to shut up and say nothing because you weren't believed. You were not believed by social workers, you were not believed by the staff.
43. I had a social worker, Mr William Crearer. He was the most crap social worker. I don't remember social work visits at Aberlour. I was trying to tell Mr Crearer, about the abuse. I was a little child, about eleven years old. I remember writing all these letters which clearly state, "I need to speak to you, something's happening to me, come and see me, come and see me". I'm begging him to come and see me. I have the letters in my social work file, so he received them, they are stamped. There's loads and loads of letters.
44. They put me down to being a difficult child and, because of that, I was removed from Aberlour and split up from my own family. It was at that point I told my social worker, Mr Crearer, about the abuse in Aberlour. BGO/BGP [REDACTED] disappeared three weeks later.

### Leaving Aberlour Children's Home

45. I remember Mr Crearer coming to take me out of the home. I was about eleven or twelve. The day I left, BGO [REDACTED] was shouting in my face, "You're a sex maniac, you're a nuisance, you keep running away. We can't watch over you". Mr Crearer was stood there. I couldn't say anything. The person who was shouting all of this, BGO [REDACTED] was actually doing it to me. I sat there, sobbing. Looking back, BGO [REDACTED] was shouting to cover his own tracks.

46. That was it, I never saw my brothers and sister again until I was an adult. I kept in touch by letter and phone. I was put back to Weedingshall just for a few weeks until they found me something else. Then social work sent me to a place in Glasgow, I think it was called Cardross. That's when, somehow, my mam found out I was nearby her. I ended up going to live with my mam. She lived in Glasgow.

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#### **Institution in Cardross**

47. I was about twelve or thirteen when I was put into Cardross. I wasn't there long, only a few weeks. I remember being in Cardross and it being institutional, like a lock-up. I can't remember any abuse taking place there. If any abuse had happened, I would remember because I was older. I didn't go to school when I was in Cardross.
48. All of a sudden, I was getting these visits from my mam, who I've never seen since I was nine years old. My mam started to visit weekly, which I got quite excited about, as you do. My mam wanted to start taking me at the weekends to see if things would work out. She stated to social workers that she would like me back. I've got letters about that.

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#### **Being returned to mother's home**

49. I would be about twelve or thirteen years old when the social work gave my mam a chance to take me at weekends to see how we got on. I know from my records that it was on the assumption that my mam would get back to them about how I was getting on. From then, I went from Cardross to stay with my mam, in Priesthill in Glasgow. How that happened is all a blur to me.
50. I was at my mam's for a short spell, for about six months. I was raped at Priesthill, by her man, [REDACTED]. All of this abuse was going on and I never told anybody. I was only tiny. Again I was unfed and unkempt. My mam was still an alcoholic, with an alcoholic boyfriend, who turned out to be a rapist. No-one from the social work
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department came to visit me while I was there. I wish they had because I was starving. My mam and [REDACTED] chose drink over food. If you got food, you were lucky.

51. My mam and [REDACTED] disappeared overnight. They went back to [REDACTED] because [REDACTED] comes from [REDACTED]. My mam and [REDACTED] abandoned me. There's a letter in my file that says I rang social work. I was going to school most days and I'd come back to a boarded up house. The neighbour was giving me food.

### **Reporting of abuse at mother's home**

52. I told my social worker, William Crearer, that I had been raped by [REDACTED] at my mam's home. Nothing was done about it, to my knowledge. I think I would know if something was done because someone would have wanted a statement from me. Nobody official spoke to me about the rape.

### **Weedingshall Children's Home, Polmont, Near Falkirk**

53. Social services picked me back up and I went back to Weedingshall again. I remember going back to Weedingshall because I was starving. [REDACTED] Secondary Institutions - to be published later [REDACTED] I went to Weedingshall for a short time until they found me something else. That's when they found me a place at St Euphrasia's Convent, Bishopton. I was in there between fourteen and sixteen years old.

### **St Euphrasia's Residential Approved School, Bishopton, Renfrewshire**

54. I went to St Euphrasia's when I was fourteen years old. It was run by loads of nuns. St Euphrasia's was a locked up place. You couldn't get out. There was no way of



getting out. You didn't get outside, even for a walk in the grounds. In my eyes, it was a borstal. It was like a prison.

55. It was all girls in St Euphrasia's. The girls were ages with me, eleven to sixteen. I don't have anything against Catholics but I was born a Protestant and that's the way I was brought up. That's what I knew. I went to church as a Protestant on a Sunday during all the time I had been in children's homes. I'm now this little girl, thrown into a convent, where there was about 200 nuns going around bowing, with crosses around their necks. It was alien, absolutely alien.
56. I couldn't understand why I was in St Euphrasia's. I thought, what am I doing in here? Every girl that was in there was in for a really bad reason. They'd be running away from home, wouldn't be attending school or they'd be getting into trouble with boys and their parents couldn't control them. There were a hundred girls and a hundred reasons why they were all in there. I said to Mr Crearer, my social worker, "Why am I in here?" I was an alien. I wasn't hard or a fighter. I was this little girl in with this group of thugs. He said, "Oh, we can't find another home, we'll keep looking". I was in there until I was sixteen.
57. I would call Sister BGR SNR there. She was little. I think she was English. Sister BGR reminded me of a baby Hitler. She'd walk around, stern-faced. There was an older nun at the top, above Sister BGR. The older nun was the sweetest nun. She was Irish. I think her name was Theresa.
58. There was a funny nun, Sister FSH who lived in the nun bit. Sister FSH would sneak me off for a fag. I got on with her great. There were also the school nuns. Every classroom was run by a nun. I liked the one that was in the baking class. She must have taken a soft spot to me, she paid a lot of attention to me.

### **Routine at St Euphrasia's Residential Approved School**

59. You were in dormitories. There was loads of different dormitories. I was in Sister G XO house group. There was a woman, who I think was called Helen or Margaret, who was employed to look after us in the house, as well as Sister G XO. This woman was always there at night when we came in from school. I was taken in and I was introduced to this house group.
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60. Your house group was in a big room, with a little kitchen attached to it. You'd go through a door and up a big stair, that's where your sleeping dorms were.
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61. The routine was that you got up and got dressed. You then got in line and went to the classroom, then to your next class, and back to the dormitory. You were allowed a lolly or a fag. Then bedtime, line, upstairs, dormitory. Everything was robotic. There were no nice things about St Euphrasia's. You were a number. There was never a little cuddle or a bit of praise.
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62. All of a sudden, it gets to Sunday. You'd get taken in lines to the chapel. There, you're introduced to mass, benediction and rosary, three times a day on a Sunday. In these houses, if you went to mass, benediction and rosary, you were awarded points. You'd get treats, like cake or a sweet at night, if you didn't smoke. I sat through the first lot and I thought, this is alien. The girls were all sitting there with crosses or beads. They were singing all these different songs. I sat there and I thought, this ain't me. On the second week, I put my foot down and I said, "I'm not walking inside that place".
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63. The school was in the grounds. There was a lot of nuns that taught you in different groups. You'd go in your lines. It was robotic. Each dormitory would have a different lesson at a different time. One would go to cooking, one would go to English. You'd get gym in the physical education hall. That was your exercise. That was once a week or something, depending on what lessons you were getting that week. I used to try and "bunk off" school if I could.
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64. Every child would do baking in the baking class, scones or cakes. On a Sunday, when there was no catering staff, all our cakes were presented with sandwiches for your dinner. Thinking back now, there was a use for everything the nuns did. If a hundred girls made a cake each, that was their cake for dinner. Looking back, the nuns seemed to know what they were doing.
65. Breakfast, dinner and tea were very prompt. I was a greedy kid and I ate everything, except for cod roe. The meals were good. Sunday was my favourite day because you'd get a banana and two boiled eggs for breakfast. You'd get some bread and butter. I loved making sandwiches. My mates would say, "I hate boiled eggs". I would say, "Pass". I'd be there with ten boiled eggs or something.
66. We were given a talk about periods at St Euphrasia's and then we were given sanitary towels. Once a month, you'd go up to your dormitory and your pack of sanitary towels was on your bed. You put them in your locker. The nuns explained, when you moved in, that that facility was there.
67. Everybody had their own chores to do. I don't have anything against the chores we were made to do. A certain group would take the pots to the sink, a certain group would wash the pots, another group would dry the pots, that group would put the pots away. We'd to sweep and clean the dormitory. We'd tidy in the living-room and clean up after ourselves in the kitchen. It was all things that are normal to me.
68. At night, you got things you could do. You could watch TV. I watched "Top of the Pops." I knew every song. I learned to crochet, not through choice though. I used to crochet blankets for charity. I'd crochet squares then crochet them together. There were always clothes to wear. You just wore your own clothes.
69. There was good times in St Euphrasia's but there were a lot of bad times. The good times were singing, baking, sometimes on a Saturday night we had a disco and just the amount of friends you make. It became like a home after a little while. You were in your dormitory with the same people. I settled in eventually.

*Trips and visits*

70. On a Saturday and Sunday there was no school. Every six weeks the nuns let you go home on leave. I didn't have parents, so I think I went to my Auntie [REDACTED] in [REDACTED]. You'd get put on a bus or a train to go to your place and you'd come back on a bus or a train. I'd be going from Glasgow to Falkirk and then to [REDACTED]
71. This is the danger I put myself in back then. There was this man. He said, "I'm going to Glasgow, you could come in my car". I thought, I'll save the train fare, because you want a bit of money in your pocket as a young child. I got in that man's car. I remember the man pulling up not far from the convent and looking at me, menacingly. I thought, what have I put myself up to? I got out of the car, making excuses. I went back to the convent. I put myself in a lot of danger back then.
72. We'd go to places like a dance, for a treat. You knew your birthday but there was never birthday parties or anything like that. The older nun, Sister Teresa, who was at the top, taught me to sing. She took me up on the stage and took me to singing competitions. I spent a lot of time with that nun. Sister Teresa taught me all the Irish music, all the Irish songs that I know.
73. Every Saturday was called "Visiting Day". I didn't have any family so I didn't have any visitors. One day they were doing all the visiting rooms up, so they had Visiting Day in the dormitory where we were living. All the visitors went into the kitchen for their visit. I put my head through the door, to see the girls with their visitors. I had struck a really good friendship with [REDACTED] I call her [REDACTED]. [REDACTED] had her mum and her auntie visiting. [REDACTED] auntie had asked [REDACTED] mum who I was. A nun came up and said, "That's <sup>BCN</sup> [REDACTED] she doesn't have any visitors".
74. [REDACTED] auntie visited me every Saturday after that. That's why me and [REDACTED] are so close. [REDACTED] auntie started to take me away on my leaves. I went to her practically every leave after that until I left St Euphrasia's. [REDACTED] auntie and uncle would pick me up from St Euphrasia's and bring me back. [REDACTED] auntie and uncle couldn't



have children. She took me under her wing as one of hers. [REDACTED] auntie was like a mum to me. I had my own room. I had cuddles. My first cuddle, I thought, what! what are they doing? I learned to relax and love them back. I went to [REDACTED] auntie and uncle at Christmas.

### **Abuse at St Euphrasia's Residential Approved School**

75. In the early days, the nuns would say you had a choice about attending chapel. You could sit outside on the bench. There was two Protestants in this Catholic place. Me and another girl. The other Protestant used to go to chapel. She was a little quiet girl who toed the line. I was the naughty kid. Well, I wasn't naughty, I stood my ground. I wasn't a Catholic. The other Protestant never had the same stick as I had. All the girls in my house group turned against me because all the points that they accumulated for treats were docked, because of me not going to mass.
76. I was punished because I refused to go into mass. I was sent to clean out the bit where the priest sits and someone else sits, and there's a window in-between. A girl from another house group was punished for something. She did one side and I did the other. They left you to it. We were just having a bit of fun and the girl was pretending to be the priest and I was the other person. We were talking, shoving brushes through and getting each other. We were having a right good laugh. We got caught. It's a big sin and a big mockery if the nuns catch you doing stuff like this.
77. My first experience of detention came after me and the girl from the other house group were caught. A nun, or the woman who worked in our house group took you through the chapel, up loads of stairs. At the top of the convent there's two rooms back to back, facing different ways. There's a cell, or a dungeon, as I would call it. You were put in the dungeon. It is a cold room with a metal bed. There's a gym cushion on the bed and a blanket. There's a bucket in the corner for going to the toilet. Food was brought up. You could see through the top of the window if you climbed up. There were bars on the window. It was always the woman who worked in our house group, Sister <sup>BGR</sup> [REDACTED] or Sister <sup>GXO</sup> [REDACTED] who put me in.

78. Each day the woman, who worked in our house group, would come up with food. She came up three times a day. Then she'd take your tray away. It was her job to see to the bucket and to make sure I had a wash. The woman would bring in a pail for washing. You were locked in. You were on your own. I was in the cell hundreds and hundreds of times between the ages of fourteen and sixteen. I was always in there. I nearly lived my life in there.
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79. I was put in the cell every Sunday without fail because I still wouldn't go to mass. I didn't care, the nuns could have locked me up all my life, but I wasn't going to mass. You'd be in for at least a day. You'd get back out the next day. The convent is in the middle of a big wood. You'd look through the top of the bars that were on the window. Through the bars I could see the dormitories, and I'd shout on all my pals. When you looked the other way, it was trees and owls. It would get dark and my pals would go to sleep. It was absolutely scary. It was the most scary thing. This is where my nightmares are, in this black room.
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80. To me, I was being punished for not being a Catholic. When the woman or Sister **GXO** were walking me to the cell, I'd be saying, "You're only putting me in because you're a ..." I can't remember the word. If it was Sister **BGR**, I'd be hit all the way up the stairs. I can't remember Sister **GXO** being really bad.
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81. I started it all when I went into St Euphrasia's. Sometimes you've got to sit back and think, well, you were a little bugger. I'm not saying I was a good girl back then. I was a little bit naughty, regarding the things I did to the nuns. I'd never seen a nun. I always wondered what was under that hat. I could never imagine a nun going for a pee.
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82. I remember once walking in lines with your class and I said to my pal, **[REDACTED]** "I wonder what's under that hat?" Sister **BGR** was walking by and I just pulled the black thing that was over her head. Off it came. There was a little white thing on her head and I didn't even get to see what was under there. I never did see because my feet never touched the floor for ten minutes after that. That was my first experience

of getting absolutely battered by Sister BGR. I was on the floor. She was slapping me and beating me. Sister BGR was a horrible little nun.

83. I didn't retaliate. I remember taking the beating because it was fair. In my brain back then, I thought, well, you've done wrong, you got to see what was under the hat. You were aged fourteen to sixteen and you think, I got what I deserved, it's not what you do to a nun, but it was curiosity. I just wanted to see if they had hair. I didn't know back then that it was quite offensive.

84. That was the first of many beatings I got off Sister BGR. I don't know how often but it was a lot of times. Some of the beatings were deserved but some of them were because I refused to be one of them. There was another incident when we were all in assembly and one of the nuns said to another nun, "Excuse me, I've just got to go to the toilet." I just cracked up because I couldn't imagine a nun sitting on a toilet. I could go on and on, and on with examples of beatings. Half the times the beatings were deserved and half the time they weren't. I would often get a short, sharp slap on the face and marched up to the dungeon.

85. Sister BGR would often take her turn to take me upstairs to the dungeon. Sister BGR would be the one to give me the hammerings all the way up there. I was not going to shift. I kept saying, "I'm not a Catholic, I'm not sitting in the chapel, I'm not going." Maybe I offended them by, what would you call it nowadays, blasphemy?

86. You had to be back from your leave by a certain time on Sunday night. I'd be punished because I was always late. Maybe I didn't work out bus times properly. The punishment would be, being put in the dungeon. Honestly, all that I remember of St Euphrasia's was being locked in the dungeon ninety per cent of the time.

87. Sister BGR never liked me. I spent a lot of time with the nun at the top, Theresa. I think Sister BGR was jealous. There'd be times a group of girls would run away down the fire escape. They'd all be caught, it was just a kids thing. I remember Sister BGR reading through all the different house groups at assembly. She'd get to my



name and she would look, expecting me to be one of those that had run. I think Sister BGR hated me. In the nuns eyes, I was just a naughty kid.

88. Sister BGR would often slap other girls across the face. I think back in the fifties and sixties, it was acceptable to the nuns. I never questioned half of the beatings I got because, back then, that was just the norm. Every home you went into, you were kicked up the backside or slapped on the face. Other girls were taken up to the dungeon and locked in overnight. Looking back now, it was illegal, half the stuff the nuns did.

89. We were all in a singing group. We were learning to sing a song that ends, "when my cup overflows." I'm singing at the top of my voice, "my bra overflows." This is a young girl thing. This is me at fourteen. You're in a group, you're bored, you're sat there at choir, pretending you took a big interest in choir just to get off school. All the other girls cracked up laughing. I was taken straight off the stage by the nun who was the singing group teacher and punished.

90. The woman who worked in our house group, caused a lot of fights amongst the girls. She'd say, "What are you saying about that lassie?" and shout it out loud so that that girl would hear. The girl would come up and cause a fight. We'd be sitting having a discussion and saying, "That happened in class today, I don't think that was very fair, that shouldn't have happened". The woman would shout out, "Well, what's got to do with this?", making sure that would hear that. I remember no end of fights with that woman. There were other nuns who were nasty. They were more vocal.

### **Reporting of abuse at St Euphrasia's Residential Approved School**

91. I still had the same social worker, Mr Crearer. I was in Glasgow in St Euphrasia's and Mr Crearer was based in Falkirk. I was writing to him, begging him to come and see me. I have the letters in my social work file. One of the letters says, "Please try to tell me when I can get a Panel, I'd like to see you about something very



important". In another letter I said, "Where have all my letters and visits gone, I am very angry because I have so much to tell you".

92. Mr Crearer didn't visit very often but I do remember the occasional visit. He would say, "You'll be having your leave soon, you're going to your Auntie [REDACTED]." That was the kind of the things he'd talk about. It was that rare, you can remember what he talked about. I'd say to him, "This nun's hitting me, this nun's slapping me, this nun's punching me" but he always retaliated with, "You deserve it, you have to behave, you have to do this, you have to do that". Mr Crearer never took anything seriously. I told Mr Crearer about being locked up in the dungeon. He was told everything. Mr Crearer was the most useless social worker.

### **Leaving St Euphrasia's Residential Approved School**

93. I'm down as the only person who escaped St Euphrasia's successfully. I was fifteen years old. They were fitting new windows in the school. I asked to leave the schoolroom to go to the toilet. I was through the window and gone. I was away for five months. I ran away to Glasgow.
94. My mam had moved back from [REDACTED] to Glasgow with [REDACTED]. I found out where my mam was living. I slept at my mam's home but only when she was there. I told my mam that in those days, you could leave school at fifteen. I think you could leave school at fifteen back then.
95. I got a job, casual, in a carwash. I worked daily and I got a good amount of money to live. I'd sleep at my mam's and buy my food with what I earned. I got caught. The reason I got caught was because I phoned Mr Crearer and asked how my sister and two brothers were. The social work traced me through the telephone call or I would never have got caught.
96. I was taken back to St Euphrasia's. I spent ages in the dungeon because of that but it was worth it. I was in the dungeon for about a week. I wasn't allowed out of the

dungeon at all for that week. You were just on your own, that was it, there was nothing. You just looked through the bars at night and shouted to your pals. I didn't really care about that. I think in the end, I maybe got used to that place. I was in it that long, I could tell you every brick in it.

97. At sixteen, they chucked you out. You're on your own. The aftercare for kids leaving care is terrible. I was lucky I had Auntie [REDACTED]. I was lucky I could still fall back on [REDACTED] auntie. You just got your bus fare. The nuns knew where you were going. I can remember the day I left. God, it was good. I left with a wee bag with my clothes.

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

98. When I came out of St Euphrasia's, I was nearly sixteen. I went to stay at my Auntie [REDACTED] in [REDACTED]. I went on to Larbert High School to take my exams because I wanted to be a nurse. I was at Larbert High School for six months, then I sat my exams. I only just passed so I wasn't clever enough to be a nurse. I got a B in Maths and English, the rest were Ds.
99. I stayed at Auntie [REDACTED] until I was nearly seventeen. I did a bit of "Avon" selling. That was a disaster. Then [REDACTED], my brother, rang me and he said, "There's a job here in Leicester at the hotel, where you live in and you wash pots". I thought, well, I've left school, I can't be a nurse because I'm too thick, so I'll go and wash the pots and live in. I wanted an excuse to leave Scotland. That was my excuse and I got away. Then my life began down in England. I moved to the [REDACTED] Hotel. I stayed there about a year. I washed up and I lived in the accommodation. I got paid wages.
100. I married at 17 to a man who was 49 years old. I had two kids. We moved to Skegness. The marriage broke down after nine years. A year later, I met somebody else. That wasn't a bad marriage. I had two kids again. The marriage broke down after seven years.

101. I've always worked hard. I'm a mobile dog groomer. That's the main job I've always done. I was also a self-employed market trader. I've had to cut it all back because of my health.

### Impact

102. I got my social work records two years ago. That's what's kicked everything off. I'm reading through the files and it's brought back horrible memories. Everything I've got in my social work records is about BCN being naughty, BCN being this, BCN being that. BCN was just defending her family.
103. I have read in my records, from Aberlour, all these things like, BCN a misfit, BCN the ugly duckling of the family, BCN sexually active, BCN promiscuous, BCN attention seeking". The list goes on, and on, and on. The things I've read are awful. I mean, when you've been abused, you're certainly not going to be sexually active at nine years of age. I was seventeen before I even thought about that.
104. BGO/BGP wrote these things. Most of it was signed by BGP BGP wrote that, when I was eleven years old, I started to masturbate. I can't remember doing that, but even if I did, how the hell does she know? It freaks me out to this day that BGP made me brush her hair. I don't know why she did that.
105. When I read the psychologist's letter in my records, I was so relieved. I thought, someone believes me. It was just nice to have something in writing to say I'm normal, healthy, not sexually active, not the slightest bit interested in sex. I have kept that report in a special place.
106. Why didn't social workers read these reports? You can clearly see a kid who's really in distress, a kid that's being sexually abused. Why didn't social workers listen to me? BGO/BGP wrote the most degrading things. Why did nobody pick up on it? When I was running away from Aberlour, why did no-one sit me down and ask, "Why?" When I was running away, I was just trying to get away from BGO in

Aberlour. Social services were supposed to care for and protect me, not put me into the hands of abusers. I'm so angry. It's important to me to know that I'm not the only one who was abused at Aberlour.

107. I was a child abused before I went into care, [Secondary Institutions - to be published] abused in Aberlour. The social work department put me down to being a difficult child when, all along, I wasn't difficult or naughty. What no-one said was, "You came in here as an abused kid, you were a difficult kid, you needed specialist treatment." Social work should have looked at me as a case who needed help, not a case that needed taken away from my siblings. Social work looked on me as an out of control child from a dysfunctional family. I was very late in stopping bedwetting. [Secondary Institutions - to be published]  
[Secondary Institutions - to be published later]

108. My sister, [redacted] says, "I can't see why they never brought you back to us because [BGO] and [BGP] chose to leave." I wonder if questions were being asked by the police or somebody and [BGO/BGP] did a moonlight flit. When [BGO/BGP] left, new people came in and [redacted] still talks to those people.

109. When I lie down to go to sleep, the bedroom door's always open and the hall light is always on. Before I go to sleep I have to look into the hall three times to make sure nobody's there. I have to look at the door handle three times to make sure it doesn't turn. It's a form of Obsessive Compulsive Disorder, OCD.

110. As a child, sitting in that dungeon at St Euphrasia's, I would often wonder what it was in life that I'd done so wrong to receive such abuse and hostility. It was barbaric. I have a lot of nightmares about the dungeon. The biggest part of my nightmares come from that room. It's terrible. That's about the one thing I can't handle about St Euphrasia's, probably Sister [BGR] as well. The nightmares have been there all my life but they've got worse since I've started reading my records. I can cope with the things I know happened. The things that I don't know happened, I can't cope with.



111. I have nightmares where someone is chasing me to rape me. I climb a wall to get away from them. I get my hands on the wall and one leg up to climb over but the man chasing me gets the other leg. At this point the nightmare breaks. I've been getting up in the night and kicking things. It's not good, with my diabetes. I'd get up in the morning and the clothes-horse wouldn't be where I'd left it. The clothes would be all over the floor. To me, the clothes-horse, in my dream, must've been who was after me. The nightmares are "fight or flight nightmares." I wake up sweating, crying and gasping for breath. The only thing I can do is to get out of bed, make a cup of tea and sit at the computer for twenty minutes.
112. The nuns punished you and, looking back now, I call it abuse. If somebody's pulling your hair, or slapping and kicking you, or got you on the ground and punching you, it's abuse. It wasn't classed as abuse in those days. Looking back on the child I was back then, I wouldn't say the beatings were deserved. It was a little bit of cheek and a little bit of curiosity. It didn't deserve what I got.
113. There are good bits from St Euphrasia's where I look back and think, well I learned this and I learned that. I'm a really good baker. Everybody gets me to bake their cakes. I won no end of money, singing. The singing's been a good thing to learn. I don't think my education was badly affected. I am very clever. I know I can achieve what I want to achieve.
114. You get insecure when you get shifted about from place to place and you don't know where your family is. It's your background that affects people who've been in care. No-one ever tells you they love you or cuddles you. You can't trust anybody. You don't let anybody near. You're in your own bubble and there's a wall. If anyone tries to get by the wall, woe betide them. I wanted to work hard and bring my kids up. That's all I was interested in. Not the men. Relationships are disasters.
115. The disaster of being in care is that you meet someone who shows some interest and you marry them. When I got married at seventeen, I don't know whether I was looking for a father-figure or looking for someone just to care for me. Needless to say it was a disaster. When I started to grow up, I looked at him and thought, you've just

jumped straight into another predator. I thought, why did I do this? I said to him the age difference was too big and we got divorced.

116. When you have been abused as a child, you never have a proper life. Things like marriages failing, you can cope with. I wanted to be the best mum that anybody could be. I brought up four beautiful kids. They are all good kids. They all work. They're all respectful, good adults. I've got seven beautiful grandkids. My kids are all educationally good. They are all headstrong, they've all got opinions.

117. You'll never be a normal person. You're scarred and you're damaged for life. You can say your experience turns you into a better person in other ways. You're a more protective mother. You're stronger. You work harder. It works two ways. What happened to me in the past hasn't stopped me turning my life around and proving the system wrong. I've created a good life and a lovely family.

118. Between the ages of 19 and 22, I nearly killed myself with drink. I don't drink now. I was drinking a lot of vodka. I thought to myself, you're turning into your mother and your kids will have to go into care. It hit me like a brick and I just stopped. I haven't drunk vodka since. I have an easily addicted nature. It's in the past history of the family.

119. The abuse by men in the family, it seems to have run through the family. I don't know why that's happened. This is why I said, "This is stopping, I'm bringing up four wonderful kids." I watched them all the time. When my marriage failed, I worked, and I worked, and I worked, for the simple reason, somebody's got to break the chain. I wasn't going to bring my kids up with anything like that abuse at home. I wasn't ever going to let them go into care. [REDACTED] broke the chain, she had the same feeling as me. [REDACTED] and [REDACTED] didn't. [REDACTED] and [REDACTED] I don't know because I don't really know them.

120. When I moved to the [REDACTED] Hotel, the only things I struggled with was the simple day to day jobs, like I'd never been shown how to use a washing machine. Little things would aggravate the people I lived with. I didn't know I had to wash the

bath when I was finished. I had to quickly learn to keep the peace. I picked it up in the end.

121. I have diabetes and asthma. I can't hear too well because of the lack of medical care at Aberlour, which resulted in hearing loss. That's affected me big time. As a result of [REDACTED] raping me, I have a split. It's the most painful split to this day. I have to have a big operation because I have a tumour in my bowel. This is the ninth lump which will have been taken out. I can't have internals or tubes in my backside. I can't have anybody going near me there. I want to be put to sleep for the operation. My consultant doesn't want to because of the dangers with my asthma and diabetes. I managed to tell him why I wanted to be put to sleep the last time I was there. I asked if the lump could be to do with my abuse when I was younger. The consultant can't say "Yes" and he can't say "No" but it's a possibility. He says now that he knows about my childhood, that's something they can look into.

122. I never did get back in touch with [REDACTED] auntie. It's a shame. I should've done. When I left care, I saw the opportunity to flee. At the time you're a messed up kid. The thought of a new life, in another country, was brilliant. It was what I needed. When I got my social work records, they had written down that I used to go to [REDACTED] auntie and uncle. Social work had put [REDACTED] auntie and uncle's name and phone number there. I thought, I wonder? I rang the phone number and they answered. They are really, really old now. [REDACTED] uncle said, "I can't believe it." They put me back in touch with [REDACTED] who is in England. It was such a fluke, that they could be so old and still have the same phone number. I'll try and visit them sometime.

#### *Relationship with Siblings*

123. After I left Aberlour, I kept in touch with my brothers and sisters by phone and writing letters. I didn't see them. Being in care has affected my relationship with them because we were separated. At St Euphrasia's you weren't allowed to use a phone. Only [REDACTED] kept in touch with me. I didn't get to speak to [REDACTED] until we were adults and we'd left the homes.

124. I get on with [REDACTED] alright. [REDACTED] is too snobby. She has OCD. [REDACTED] came to my house and was going across the tops of the doors with her fingers. I said to her, "If you're coming to visit me, none of that sort of thing." My house is tidy enough, I don't need that. [REDACTED] nearly killed herself with drink but she's alright, she doesn't drink now.
125. [REDACTED] killed himself with an overdose. He was badly abused. I think [REDACTED] was in Barnado's or something in Edinburgh. One time, [REDACTED] was homeless and I took him in. I kept him for eighteen months when I was bringing up the kids. It wasn't until years later, my older daughter said, "Uncle [REDACTED] used to ask me to stand with no clothes on so he could take pictures." I phoned [REDACTED] and told him what [REDACTED] had said. I said, "If that's true, I'm reporting it to the police, what's your answer?" Next thing, he admitted himself into a psychiatric hospital. I never did get the answers.
126. Before my mam died, I phoned her up. I was in England and she was in Scotland. I had a big row with her. [REDACTED] had gone to stay with her for a few days before he went to the psychiatric hospital. I said to her, "Why is [REDACTED] living with you? How is it that you choose to believe the perpetrator rather than the innocent person? You chose not to believe me when [REDACTED] did what he did to me." My mam said, "I ken hen and I was wrong." That means a lot to me. [REDACTED] died and I'm glad of it.
127. My brothers, [REDACTED] and [REDACTED], keep trying to talk to me. They'll say, "Hello" and I'll say, "Hello" back. That's online. The connection's not there. [REDACTED] and [REDACTED] have got out of care and got married. They're probably the only two normal ones out of us. Maybe because they went in so tiny, that's all they ever knew. [REDACTED] and [REDACTED] didn't know abuse like what we got.
128. [REDACTED] I'm very close to. We've got a strong bond. I can't talk to her about what went on at Aberlour because I have a police case going on just now. She is in the process of coming forward to talk about it. [REDACTED] wants to see how my case goes before she decides what she is going to do. [REDACTED] can remember a lot more than me and she's a



year younger. [REDACTED] remembers a lot being done to me, so maybe I've blocked stuff out.

### *Treatment/Counselling*

129. I think my doctor has known about my experiences for a long time. I have had nightmares for a long time. The nightmares got worse after I got my records. I'd be waking up with bruises and injuries to my head. I had tablets to help me sleep for a while. I thought, you're going to have to get some help here.

130. I went to my doctor about the nightmares and she referred me to a counsellor. I've been seeing my counsellor for nearly a year. My counsellor has really helped me. I'm glad I've got him. My counsellor has been able to explain to me what predators do. BGO [REDACTED] was a really, really, bad predator. My counsellor has given me strategies to cope with the nightmares. He is starting EMDR therapy, Eye Movement Desensitization and Reprocessing therapy, with me soon.

131. When I read my records from Aberlour, I went into my counselling session feeling really upset, thinking, I'm the ugly duckling. My brothers and sisters are really pretty. How can they write that about kids? My counsellor has told me that that's what the perpetrators do. They are covering their tracks. They make out, this kid's bad, she's ugly, she's a misfit, she's a problem, she's misbehaved. The perpetrators do that so that if you ever report that they've abused you, they'll say, "There's BCN [REDACTED] record, what a horrible kid she was, she exaggerates." I came out of the session feeling much better.

### **Reporting of Abuse**

132. About two years ago I walked into Skegness Police Station and reported the abuse at Aberlour and St Euphrasia's and the rape by [REDACTED]. The Skegness police referred it to the police in Dunfermline. Dunfermline dealt with Aberlour and [REDACTED]. Glasgow dealt with St Euphrasia's. I took part in a recorded

interview in Skegness. The interview was sent to the police in Scotland. PC Warbie in Dunfermline got the ball rolling.

133. I gave the police the names of [BGO/BGP] who ran Aberlour. At first I gave them the wrong name. The police came back to me and said they'd found out who the couple were who ran Aberlour. The police said the couple's name was [BGO/BGP]. The police say they can't find where [BGO/BGP] are now. I can't understand why the police can't find them. [BGO/BGP] went on to have two children of their own. They took [ ] away from Aberlour with them. Even if they've changed names, they should be findable. I don't believe the Scottish police one bit. There's a lot of answers needed from Aberlour which no-one will ever get because the police can't find them. I want to see [BGO/BGP] in court.
134. I wanted to report [ ] a long, long time ago. Two reasons stopped me doing it. One, my mam was still alive. Why I protected my mam, don't ask me. My mam was dying of cancer. She had a long, drawn out death, many years. The other reason was that I had four beautiful kids. I thought, I'm not letting my kids know about this, I'm not letting them go through that.
135. The police in Glasgow are now involved with the rape by [ ]. When my mam died, I thought, right, the kids are grown up, they're married. My mam has died. That's my time now. Time to go. That was two years ago. [ ]'s been arrested just recently, about six months ago. He sat and said "no comment", so they have "red flagged" him. The police told me they'd never seen a man be so scared, he sat there shaking and he was in such a mess. I said, "Good, I'm glad he struggled, now he'll know how I felt all them years ago." I've got no sympathy for how he felt. [ ]'s not been punished for what he did to me but one day I'm going to go to his door and say, "Why?"
136. I reported Sister [BGR] to the police. The police rang me three months ago to say Sister [BGR] died in 2010. The police said there'd been a lot of complaints about her.

## Records

137. About two and half years ago, I found out that every child could ask for their records, by law. I rang up Falkirk District Council first. The woman I spoke to thought my records were archived. The woman phoned me back to say the council had the records but it would take her a few weeks to copy them and post them out recorded delivery. I now have those records. Some of my records are from Glasgow, some are from Grangemouth and some are from Stirling.

## Lessons to be Learned

138. There's always going to be paedophiles and predators. There's always going to be ways they'll get through loopholes. Anybody who works with kids in a children's home should be vetted. Social workers need vetting and checking. Social workers need updating and training. There has to much more regular contact between the child in care and their social worker. There should be more interaction from school. Kids might talk to their teachers. More attention has to be paid to troubled children and young offenders, who might be behaving the way they are because they are being abused.
139. Children in care should get one social worker who really is good. The social worker should take the child from the beginning. The top priority has to be trust. The social worker should get the child's trust, visit regularly and ask the child what they need or want. If I'd had someone like that, I would have told them straight away what was happening. You need a lot of time for that kind of relationship. The social worker has to listen to the child and believe the child.

**Other information**

140. The failings back then were absolutely terrible. I think back in those days, care was a paedophile attraction. I think BGO/BGP were covering up what they were doing by taking the children out on trips and holidays. They were making themselves look good. I want to see BGO, BGP and in court. I don't care how many times I have to stand in court. I'm going to have the lot of them.
141. I took part in the National Confidential Forum about two years ago. I was asked to go up to take part in a group and to go back to see the findings, from what everybody had contributed. They put on a video. My quotes were on there, I knew they were my words and they hadn't asked for my permission for that. There was loud music and the whole room exploded into tears. It was too much.
142. The police told me to get in touch with Thompson's, the solicitors, they have been quite helpful. I'm hoping their investigator can find BGO/BGP.
143. For me, this all started with getting my records, the paperwork, and making them into a book. My son, asked me, "Can I read your book when it's all over?" I said, "Nope, when it's all over, the only person getting the book is the fire."
144. 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..

BCN

Dated.....

16/5/2018