

Scottish Child Abuse Inquiry

Witness Statement of

LYP [REDACTED]

Support person present: No

1. My name is LYP [REDACTED]. I was born in Govanhill on [REDACTED] 1954. My contact details are known to the Inquiry.

Life before going into care

2. I was born in [REDACTED] in Govanhill but we moved to the Gorbals when I was a baby and that was where I was brought up. My father was [REDACTED] and my mother was [REDACTED], they're both deceased now, my mum died when I was seven. I have a sister called [REDACTED], who's eighteen months older than me. I also have a brother, [REDACTED], who's five years younger than me.
3. We lived right in the heart of the Gorbals when I was small and growing up. We lived in a tenement with an outside toilet. I never actually noticed the poverty there until later in life. Not until I had been away from there and came back when I was fifteen. This was after I'd left St. Mary's approved school.
4. I remember when I was about thirteen, there had been a fight between one of my pals and this guy and the guy's watch was stolen in the scuffle. We ended up getting arrested and I got done with assault and robbery. I had a real beef about that. I went to court and they got reports from my school and from my probation officer.

5. I must have been in trouble before then if I was on probation, but I can't remember being in any other trouble with the police. I remember having a probation officer, from Osbourne Street, but I only went to see him the once, then I didn't go back.
6. I attended St. Bonn Ventures school in Oatlands, next to the Gorbals. The school report said they didn't want me back but I can't even remember being in that much bother at school. I got the belt a few times but not for bad misbehaving. I remember the probation officer's report was read out in court and said my dad's house was very sparse with no furniture. That wasn't true, it was no different from everybody else's house. I think it was that probation report and the school report that got me.
7. I went to the central court in St. Andrew's Street, Glasgow to get sentenced. My co-accused were [REDACTED] and [REDACTED]. I tried to tell the judge that it had nothing to do with me. The judge said I was on probation and that I had only been to see my probation officer once and hadn't gone back.
8. I don't remember pleading guilty and I don't remember having any kind of legal representation. I got sentenced to five years at St. Mary's approved boy's school in Bishopbriggs. I was nearly fourteen, when I went in there and I got out when I was fifteen, so I was there about thirteen months. I don't remember what happened to the other two lads, but I don't think they went to St. Mary's with me.
9. I remember my sister was screaming and crying her eyes out in the court, when I was taken away. My dad was there as well, but I can't remember what his reaction was.

St, Mary's Kenmure, Bishopbriggs

General

10. The ages of the boys at St Marys were from about thirteen to fifteen or sixteen. That was the age they tried to get you a job and get you out. There would have been about 100 boys living there, all staying in dormitories.
11. The main building was a big stone building, with big double doors at the entrance. There were five dorms all upstairs and on the ground floor there was the dining hall, recreation room, showers and offices. There were out buildings as well, a bakers, a tailors, a laundry and a workshop.
12. I think it was the district council that ran it as it hadn't long changed from the church or monks or something like that.
13. There was SNR [REDACTED], we called him LNI [REDACTED] and SNR [REDACTED] was KDN [REDACTED] or maybe KDN [REDACTED]. I can't remember their second names. There weren't many staff considering the number of boys that were there. Only six or maybe eight at the most. There must have been kitchen staff as well, I remember the baker, the joiners and a laundry guy, but I don't remember much about that. I don't even remember much about the meals or dinner, I think the baker did that. I think the baker was called HPP [REDACTED], he was a good guy.
14. Overall it was a pretty strict regime, I don't remember much. Later in life I was working out on the oil rigs and there would always be laughing and joking and all that but it never seemed that way at St. Mary's.

First Day

15. I have no real memory of my first day at St. Mary's, just that I went in there with two or three other boys. We were taken into a big storeroom and given clothes, a jacket, boots and all that. I got changed into their uniform. It was the first time I had stayed away from my own house.
16. We called the officers 'screws', I don't know if they were civilians or what I can't remember what their official title was. We were told to undress completely by

LYT [REDACTED] the main screw. Me and the two or three other guys, who I'd never met in my life before, were just standing there naked. I wasn't comfortable with that, I wasn't used to that kind of thing. In those days we didn't go naked in front of anyone. I felt the screw guy was looking at me, looking at us.

Daily routine

17. We were in dorms, they were named St Patrick's, St. John's, St Andrew's and St De La Salle. I was in St. Andrew's.
18. I think we got up about 8:00 am, I don't remember if it was a bell or the lights just went on. Then we made the bed and went down the stairs to the shower room. There were a lot of sinks there and we got washed and ready, we didn't shower until after your work when you were dirty and muddy. We had breakfast and then we always went into the big rec hall. A bell or whatever then went and we went out into the yard and lined up in our dormitories. There would be four lines of boys each with about 25-30 boys.
19. LYT [REDACTED] was the main screw, I don't know if he was the senior man but he always stood up on the steps there and told us anything we needed to know or that he wanted to tell us. Then we went to our departments for the day. We stopped for lunch and then went back to the departments until about 4 o'clock.
20. Then we would go and have a shower and after that we gathered in the rec hall and went into the canteen for our dinner. After dinner we were back in the rec hall for the rest of the night. About nine o'clock we got a supper, a cup of tea and a cake, then it was away to bed. When you went up the stairs at night time there wasn't any noise, it was just up the stairs and into your bed. I remember lights out was pretty quick.
21. On a Saturday we didn't go to our departments and work you just spent all day in the rec hall. There was also a big gymnasium where some of the boys would go to play football. There was a television and we would watch the wrestling with Giant

Haystack. We played table tennis and there may have been a snooker table. The room had seats and an easy chair and there was books and magazines.

Food

22. I would say the food was okay, I don't remember anyone not liking anything or anything happening if you didn't like anything. I actually just learned to eat whatever was put in front of me. I've been like that throughout my life.

Clothing / uniform

23. We did all wear the same clothes. I only remember it was blue and white striped shirts, I don't remember much more than that. There must have been different clothes between work and recreation but I don't remember. I do remember the boys used to alter their clothes. They would alter the shirts so they fitted better and we'd stitch it ourselves so that you looked the business. Although you can only do so much with a blue and white striped shirt.

School / work / religion

24. There wasn't much education, my education was done from when I left my school and went into St. Mary's. I don't even remember seeing a classroom, it was just the workshop areas.
25. We just went to our departments, that's where we worked all day. Mine was joinery and the teacher was a guy called HQL. He taught the joinery and was great to me. I think that was beneficial to me. There was also farming, gardening, a bakers and a laundry, you could go to any of those different departments to learn.
26. I could have been a joiner but I didn't end up doing that. I think St. Mary's approved school was seen to have a lot going for it, as local boys from Bishopbriggs would also come in and use the facilities, the gymnasium anyway.

27. There was some work and chores, some boys cleaned and bumpered the floors but I was in the joinery department and only did other things when maybe our teacher, HQL, wasn't there. They would need to find things for the boys to do, so we would help with the farming and gardening and move boulders, clean up the bushes and stuff like that.
28. There was no pocket money but I can remember we did go tattie picking at Findlay's field in Kirkintilloch. We got £1 a week and I did it for about six weeks. I think I gave that £6 to my dad.
29. Religion wasn't a big thing, I don't remember going to church much but I think there was a church if you wanted to go. It had recently changed from the Catholic Church to the district council so it wasn't a Catholic school any more.

Holidays / trips / birthdays and Christmas

30. We went out to Springburn baths, on a Thursday night I think it was. They took us in a bus, that's about the only trip I can remember. I don't remember anyone ever having a birthday party and I don't remember celebrating Christmas in there either.
31. You got home for a weekend a few weeks before you were getting released. Some guys may have got out more than that, I don't know. I got home for a weekend about three or four weeks before my release. That's when I noticed the poverty in the Gorbals.

Visits / Inspections / Review of detention

32. I only got the one visit during my time there. It was my dad with my brother and sister. I do remember him saying I got myself into trouble so he wasn't coming every weekend. I didn't send out any passes to my family, I didn't want to bother my dad or my sister, I didn't want them coming all that way to see me.

33. You could get visitors though, you could get a visitor every week. You had to send out a visiting pass. If it had been my boy that was in there I would have visited him every week.
34. I don't remember any official visits or ever being spoken to about my performance. If any boys were in any difficulty there was people that you could go to. I could have spoken to my joiner, **HQL**, but there was no one official.

Healthcare

35. There must have been a nurse there at least, I do vaguely remember one. I don't remember getting any health checks even when I arrived there.

Abuse at St. Mary's Kenmure, Bishopbriggs

36. Discipline was the belt at St. Mary's, it was more severe than when I was at school. It could be for anything, for being cheeky, for fighting or something like that, but I only got it the once. It was more severe, more painful and you usually got three at a time.
37. I remember once I'd been on weekend leave and when I came back someone had taken my mattress. I looked around and saw that it was on bed. He was a bully from Edinburgh. We ended up fighting over it and some screws came in, split us up and dragged us away.
38. It was strange the way it happened as it wasn't until about two weeks later that I was taken into the offices late at night to be punished. I was in my jammies. **LNI** **SNR** **SNR** was there and **SNR** **KDN** was in charge. **LNI** was just sitting. It all seemed so odd, I was getting belted after lights out, in the office, two weeks later, that was unheard of.
39. **KDN** was behind me and he put his arms around me from behind to put my hands out to get the belt. I said to him that I didn't need him to do that. I could feel **KDN**

was aroused behind me. I think something was going to get done to me but because I said he didn't need to do that, nothing more happened. I don't know why they picked on me perhaps it was because I had no visitors and wouldn't have anyone I could tell.

40. When I went in to St. Mary's approved school I had never been out the house before so I wet the bed. My main beef at St. Mary's was wetting the bed.
41. The procedure was that in the mornings, when we all lined up in our dorms, out in the yard and anyone who had wet the bed had to bring down their bedding and take it to the laundry. Everyone was there, all the kids and all the staff.
42. LYT [REDACTED] stood up on the steps at the double doors and made you walk past everyone. Most of the boys would shout at you, things like 'damp down', 'pissy bastard' or whatever. That was, to my way of thinking, to either punish you or deter you from doing it again. It was always LYT [REDACTED] who made you do that but other staff were present. Everyone who wet their bed had to do it, no matter who was there.

I was a bed wetter and after we were paraded in front of the other boys. I wouldn't let them shout at me. I made a point of going and seeing anyone who shouted out at me. That got me in to all manner of fighting.

43. Once someone changed my dry sheets for wet ones and I got the blame and the abuse. Some boys couldn't take it and would break down and cry. I did it three or four times and then I would pick my time before having any fights with anyone who shouted abuse at me.
44. There wasn't really a great amount of bullying, I was quite able and I was fighting all the time. If anyone that was nasty or shouting at me then I would be fighting with them.

45. I could tell there was sexual abuse at St. Mary's but it was well hidden. I could just tell albeit I couldn't say. The showers were in a row about 25-30 of them, with no curtains and only the one main control. LYT [REDACTED] controlled it, he made himself out to be a big toughie sergeant major type guy.
46. You stripped off and left your clothes on the floor and lined up in front of the showers. LYT [REDACTED] would turn on the water and shout 'soap on'. Then he walked down the line inspecting all the boys washing. Then he would turn off the water and inspect us again before putting the water back on and shouting 'soap off'. Then he walked down the line again checking all the boys. There was definitely something gay going on, he was at it. He was getting sexually aroused by all that.
47. There was also a night-time rule that you had to take your underwear off and put your pyjamas on. I don't know what that was about, perhaps something to do with the bedwetting. There just seemed to be so much nakedness with so many young boys.
48. I went to the toilet one night, lights were out and it was dark. LYT [REDACTED] was standing there like a big mountain and said I had my underwear on. He told me to get it off there and then. I had no previous sexual experience and just took off my vest top. He told me to get my underpants off as well. I remember, because I was a wee toughie, that I told him I was going to tell my dad that he'd told me to take my clothes off, and that my dad would come and sort him out. He panicked and sent me to my dormitory. He was definitely up to something but bottled it. I wasn't sexually abused in St. Mary's, I stood up for myself and would just go fighting.
49. There was a mixed race guy, who was from up north. I heard that he was in there because he'd sexually assaulted his sister and I suspected he was being sexually abused. That's only my suspicions but he'd have been too scared to say anything.
50. If anything had happened to me I could probably have gone to HQL [REDACTED] but then he also once tried to spy on me in the showers.

51. I caught him looking into the showers when I was about to have a shower but I wasn't actually in the shower. I was a wee bit disappointed about him doing that but I pretended that I never saw him. HQL was in his mid-forties back then, he was average build with dark hair and he wore glasses. He did look after me and I saw him as a good guy.

Reporting of abuse at St. Mary's Kenmure, Bishopbriggs

52. I didn't report anything that happened to me or anything that I saw happen while I was at St. Mary's. No other boys ever said anything to me about being abused.

Leaving St. Mary's Kenmure, Bishopbriggs

53. I would say that overall I thought St. Mary's was a decent enough place and it suited my dad for me to be there. I was being fed, educated and looked after.
54. I always knew I was getting out when I was fifteen, that was common knowledge really. HQL, my joinery instructor got me a job in Milngavie but that ended up being too far for me to travel.
55. I don't actually remember leaving but I think I got the bus back to my dad's place and I didn't last long back there either.

Life after being in care

56. At first I went to live with my dad in Castlemilk, but I didn't do my joinery for long as it was too far to travel. Then I got a job as an apprentice plumber in Govanhill which I didn't stick and I ended up as a scaffolder. I also used to go to the snooker hall a lot with my pals. You could win yourself money doing that, it wasn't a bad earner at times.

57. It was during chat at the snooker halls that me and some mates decided to go to London to get jobs. I was about seventeen when four or five of us went to London and we did all get jobs. I don't remember much from around then but I know I ended up in a detention centre down there as well. That was for a car theft and I got about three months. I wasn't really a thief, that was a set up by the police, it was out of order. The police said I'd approached and tried to steal cars but it was a complete fabrication. I couldn't even drive, I'd only ever been in the motor I was in when they took me to St. Mary's. The police stopped me, saw I had previous convictions and that went against me, that was so wrong.
58. The detention centre was in Ashford in Kent. It was a very strict place, very tough with a very hard regime. When I got out of there I just headed back up to Glasgow and went back to the snooker halls for a bit.
59. I also went to Polmont borstal for a breach of the peace, which was unheard of. I was about nineteen when I got that and I was sentenced to thirteen months again. It was just for being a drunk teenager but I had been fined twice and not paid so I was sent to borstal. I got out of Polmont when I was 21 and since then I've had no convictions, nothing and I'm now 64.
60. I do remember this prison officer in the borstal who pulled me aside and told me not to meet up with some of the guys that were in my gang. He said a lot would end up back in custody, but next time it would be prison. He told me not to meet up and to go get a job, get married and forget all about that place. I was in with the wrong boys so I did as he said and got out of all that.
61. I then got myself a scaffolding job through my uncle and started working. Then I met my wife, got married and started a family. I was 22 when I got married. I have three children and three grandchildren.

Impact

62. I never got any schooling at St. Mary's and I was never taught to read and write. Even now I don't write, it's my wife that does all my writing. I can't work a computer. I do regret not having some kind of academic education.
63. All my mates, that I grew up with, have moved into management and supervisory positions, inspectors, but I couldn't do any of that. I was on the job right to the end when all my mates had moved up and through. My best mate ended up being the manager of a company and I couldn't write. It's affected me all my life.
64. In the approved school I learned not to go fighting at the drop of a hat because there were too many times I wouldn't win. There were some guys in there that I learned a lesson from, not to go fighting. I carried that all through my life and I don't remember fighting with anybody as an adult because of this.
65. I have also been lucky, my wife brought up the kids well and I kept a better eye on my kids. My daughter has an honours degree and she has her own business and my boy is an engineer. None of them have ever been in trouble with the law so everything is okay there.
66. I made sure my kids didn't go off the rails in any way and my wife wouldn't have allowed it. I can't put on the TV and watch an over 18 movie that might have swearing, or sex or violence in it. There's no swearing and it's just what I was needing myself. No drinking in the house, she's absolutely solid.
67. I have never had any counselling, it's not even something I've considered.

Records

68. I have never tried to access any records or reports from any of the establishments I have stayed in.

Lessons to be learned

69. It was a bit naughty me getting sent to that approved school at Kenmure in the first place. The school I was in was bursting at the seams so that should never have been done.
70. I have followed the Inquiry a wee bit on the news and I'd say if you find anything needing fixed then you should fix it. See that stuff about carrying the wet bed sheets, surely that can't be happening anywhere else.
71. I did think that it might help the Inquiry if LYT [REDACTED] name came up from anyone else you were speaking to. That's the main reason I'm speaking to you today.

Other information

72. I returned to St. Mary's about fifteen years ago, I was in the area and just drove up to see if it was still there. The main building was still there and it brought back memories. I think, on the whole, I feel that I was a wee bit lucky to have come through it all unscathed. It wasn't good and there was just too much nakedness in the place.
73. 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 LYP [REDACTED]

Dated 8-10-18