

Wednesday, 15 January 2025

(10.00 am)

LADY SMITH: Good morning, and welcome back to the final chapter in this phase of our case study hearings.

We move today to two witnesses in person, one will be here this morning and one will be connecting by Webex this afternoon.

I think the one this morning actually is ready, is that correct, Ms Forbes?

MS FORBES: That's correct, my Lady.

The first witness today is an applicant who has waived his right to anonymity. His name is Killian Steele.

LADY SMITH: Thank you.

Killian Steele (affirmed)

LADY SMITH: Killian, can I begin by saying welcome back.

A. Thank you.

LADY SMITH: I'm really grateful to you for agreeing to come and help us again, having given us so much assistance previously in relation to the part of our case studies when we were looking into Barnardo's. You'll know we're looking at somewhere else today that we also have help in your written statement about.

Your written statement's in the red folder. You may remember the system we used last time. It's there for

1 you if you want to use it. You don't have to. We'll
2 also bring parts of it up on screen, if that's okay with
3 you. If you don't want the screen, we can switch it
4 off.

5 Killian, I don't imagine for a moment, just because
6 you've done this before, what you're doing today is
7 easy. Coming into public to go back into your early
8 life, which was far from straightforward and in many
9 ways distressing. I appreciate that. Do remember if
10 you want a break at any time, that's not a problem.
11 Just ask. Or if you want us to explain things better
12 than we're explaining them, that's our fault not yours,
13 so speak up. All right?

14 A. Thank you.

15 LADY SMITH: If you're ready, I'll hand over to Ms Forbes
16 and she'll take it from there.

17 Thank you.

18 Questions from Ms Forbes

19 MS FORBES: Good morning, Killian.

20 A. Hi there.

21 Q. In front of you, as her Ladyship says, is your statement
22 and if I could get you to turn to the very last page of
23 your statement, which is page 66. You can see that
24 there is numbered paragraphs and the last one is
25 paragraph 189, and it says:

1 'I have no objection to my witness statement being
2 published as part of the evidence to the Inquiry.
3 I believe the facts stated in this witness statement are
4 true.'

5 You have signed that and it's dated 2 July 2018?

6 A. Yeah.

7 Q. Is that still the position?

8 A. That's still the case, yeah.

9 Q. Killian, as you might be aware, we give that statement
10 a reference number for our records and I'm just going to
11 read that out so it's in the transcript. It's
12 WIT.001.002.0001. That's nothing for you to be
13 concerned about. If you want to just go back to the
14 beginning of your statement or you can put it to one
15 side, it's a matter for you.

16 Killian, you gave evidence before in relation to
17 Barnardo's and just so we can tie up that evidence with
18 today, I'll just give the dates and the references for
19 that. That was 28 November 2018, which was Day 94 of
20 the Inquiry.

21 There are two separate transcript references for
22 your evidence. I think the first part has one
23 transcript reference and the second part another. It's
24 TRN.001.004.3217 and TRN.001.004.3325.

25 So we have that out of the way now and we can tie up

1 your evidence from before easily with the record of your
2 evidence you give today.

3 Thank you again, Killian, for coming back to talk to
4 us and you're aware today, although we will go through
5 your journey through care, really today we're here to
6 talk about Howdenhall.

7 You were in a number of places and I think you do
8 tell us about a place that we maybe don't see in our
9 records, but I think it was a children's home in Fife.
10 I think was it Martha Frew?

11 A. Yeah, I think it was ...

12 Q. That's a place you remember being I think probably very
13 early on; is that right?

14 A. Yeah.

15 Q. The places that you tell us about which we can see from
16 your records are St Michael's Children's Home in
17 Leuchars, Widowers' Home in Corstorphine, Calder Grove
18 Children's Home, Dean Bank, Howdenhall Assessment Centre
19 and then Glasclune with Barnardo's, yes.

20 Killian, you tell us that you are born in 1964, is
21 that right?

22 A. Yeah.

23 Q. I'm just going to start off talking to you about your
24 life before you went into care and to understand how you
25 ended up going into care. You tell us about that

1 between paragraphs 2 and 7 of your statement. You talk
2 about living with your parents first of all [REDACTED]
3 [REDACTED], is that right?
4 A. Yeah.
5 Q. That was in Clermiston in Edinburgh that you stayed at
6 that time.
7 You tell us, Killian, [REDACTED]
8 [REDACTED] was very abusive towards you; is
9 that right?
10 A. That's right.
11 Q. The way you describe it, it was emotional, physical and
12 sexual abuse [REDACTED]?
13 A. That's right.
14 Q. [REDACTED]
15 [REDACTED]; is that right?
16 A. Yes.
17 Q. You explain how eventually [REDACTED] also became
18 physically abusive towards you and I think the way
19 you've explained it is [REDACTED]
20 if [REDACTED] carried it out on you, then it might mean that
21 you wouldn't get it as bad [REDACTED]?
22 A. Yeah.
23 Q. Effectively, is that how you remember it?
24 A. Yeah, so [REDACTED] was able to better control the physical
25 abuse that [REDACTED] would normally give or hand out.

1 Q. You say that [REDACTED] was violent towards your mother as well,
2 which meant that she was hospitalised on many
3 occasions --
4 A. Yeah.
5 Q. -- as a result of that, is that right?
6 A. That's right.
7 Q. She, as a result, had a lot of emotional health
8 difficulties as well?
9 A. Yes.
10 Q. I think you say that the local authority became involved
11 and that really resulted in you being taken into care.
12 I think you explain that there would be periods in care
13 and then there would be periods back in the family home
14 as well so you were sort of back and forward at an early
15 age; is that right?
16 A. That's it.
17 Q. Just then looking at the sort of early years in care
18 that you tell us about, Killian, this is from
19 paragraph 8 of your statement. These different homes
20 that you were in resulted in you, you tell us, having to
21 go to different primary schools, so that was quite
22 disruptive as well, as I understand it, is that right?
23 A. Yes.
24 Q. You say that you really can't remember enjoying anything
25 throughout your primary years. Horrible memories

1 really?

2 A. In terms of schooling, yeah. I was very confused 'cause

3 every new establishment I went to there was a different

4 way of learning, different protocols that they had, so,

5 you know, I became quite uninterested, easily

6 uninterested --

7 LADY SMITH: I suppose it's not just how they teach you, you

8 have got to go to a new building, you have got new

9 people to cope with.

10 A. Personalities.

11 LADY SMITH: A new route to school?

12 A. Yes.

13 LADY SMITH: All change all the time.

14 A. And also, I think, in some places I was in the home

15 because of something that I had done, not because of

16 a breakdown in the relationship with my parents.

17 LADY SMITH: Thank you.

18 MS FORBES: Killian, you go on to tell us about the first

19 main place, which was the Widowers' Children's Home,

20 that you remember. I think we know from our records

21 that we have recovered that you were put there when you

22 were only 5 and that was on 20 March 1970 and you stayed

23 there until the end of October 1970, so just over

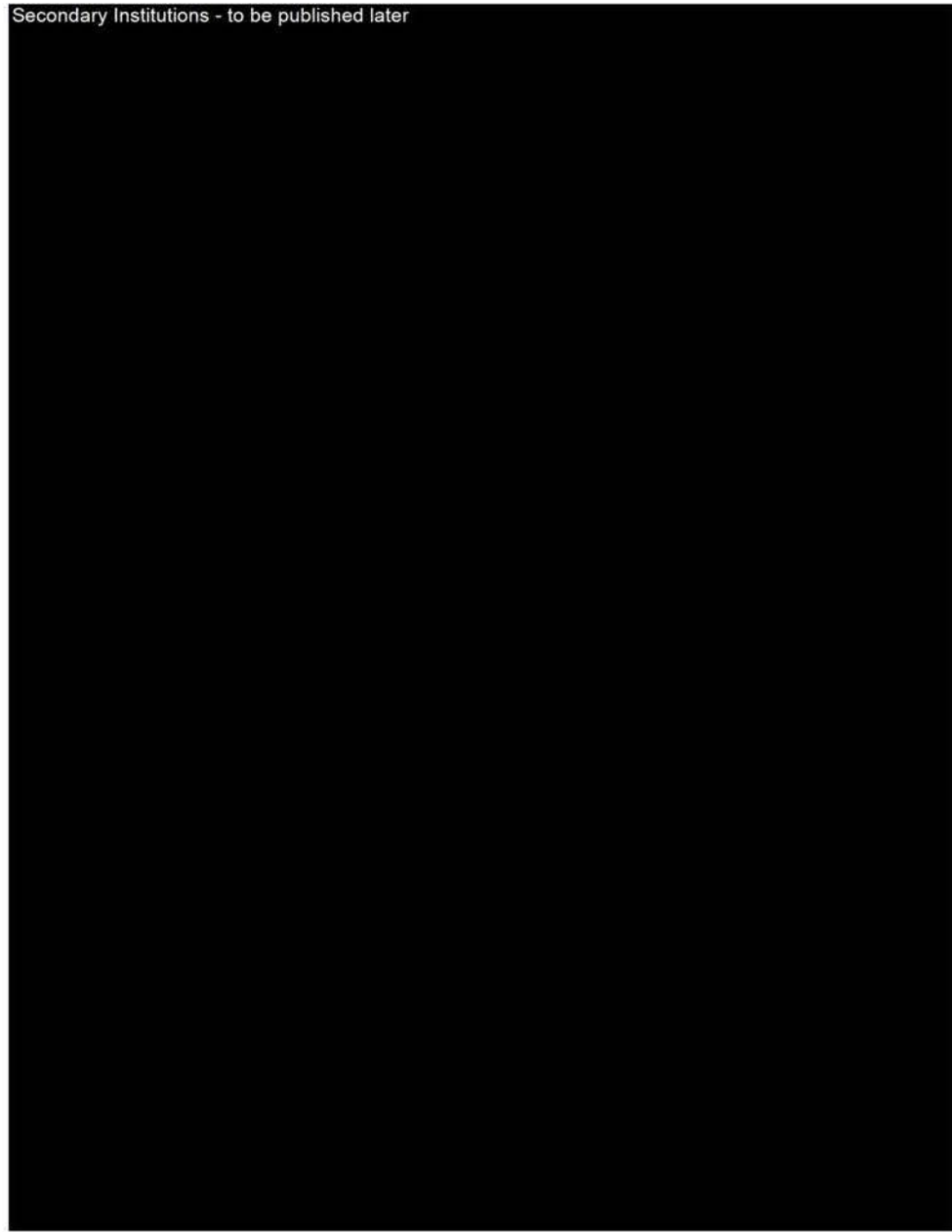
24 six months. That part of your statement will show up

25 redacted on the screen, because we're not looking into

1 that place in this part of the case study and I think
2 you're aware of that.

3 A. Yes.

4 Secondary Institutions - to be published later



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9 Then after you were in the Widowers' home, there
10 must have perhaps been a period of time when you were
11 back staying in the family home again, because I think
12 the records we have show that you were admitted to
13 Calder Grove in April 1972, when you were aged 7, so
14 there's a period of time that's lapsed in between the
15 two places. Do you recall there was a period of time of
16 you going back home again?

17 A. Er, I don't actually.

18 Q. That's fine.

19 I think you stayed there at Calder Grove until
20 May 1973, so you would have been 8 by the time you left,
21 and you were there for just over a year, so just so we
22 know the sort of time period.

23 A. Yeah.

24 Q. You don't say much about Calder Grove in your statement,
25 Killian,

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6 Q. But after your placement there, you went straight from
7 there in May 1973 to Dean Bank?

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20 Q. When you went to Dean Bank then, Killian, this was
21 May 1973 when you were about 8, and I think we know that
22 you stayed there until 3 October 1975, which means you
23 were there for two years and five months, so quite
24 a long period of time at this home. You didn't leave
25 there then until you were 11, when you were transferred

1 to the assessment centre and we'll come on to why that
2 seems to have happened.

3 I think you tell us about Dean Bank from
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6 Q. I think the way you put it, Killian, is that you were
7 then shipped off really to this assessment centre?

8 A. Yeah.

9 Q. You didn't know that you were going to be leaving the
10 home; is that right?

11 A. That's right.

12 Q. You weren't given any information in advance to prepare
13 you or any visits to the assessment centre; is that
14 right?

15 A. Yeah, that's it.

16 Q. There was no chance to say goodbye to anybody?

17 A. No.

18 Q. How did you feel about that at the time?

19 A. I mean, I'd like to say how I would feel looking back on
20 it, but at the time, you know, it was almost like
21 a dictatorship, you just did what you were told to do,
22 including all the abuse. You just, you know, had to
23 kind of bow down to whatever was happening at the time
24 by adults or older boys. It was just the way that you
25 accepted.

1 I mean, I don't even think that I, at that time,
2 would have had any intelligence to understand how to
3 challenge things anyway. So, you know, it was just like
4 a puppet and I was put in a position and that was just
5 the way it was.

6 Q. You tell us a little bit, Killian, as well, this is at
7 paragraph 23 of your statement, [REDACTED]
8 but this is where you explain your recollection of
9 Children's Panels that you went to and you describe
10 saying that you didn't feel involved in the process --

11 A. Yeah.

12 Q. -- of what was going on. Again, you've explained that
13 you felt like a puppet. Was it similar in relation to
14 that?

15 A. Yeah. I mean, from what I remember, I can't remember
16 any -- the assessment process or the Children's Panel
17 process internally within Dean Bank. Certainly at
18 Glasclune I do, if that's what you're referring to, the
19 Glasclune, 'cause that's when I remember being part of
20 a group where you would have, you know, 10, 12 adults
21 who would discuss your kinda living situation and then
22 you'd be invited in for a 10- or 15-minute part of it at
23 the end.

24 Q. Okay, so later on you do remember there were times when
25 you would get to be involved in discussions about your

1 future?

2 A. Yeah.

3 Q. I think at this point in your statement you recollect
4 discussions at panels about your future and whether you
5 would be going home to your mum and her new husband or
6 whether you would be staying in care.

7 So it might be that that relates to your time before
8 going to the assessment centre. It's not clear. But if
9 we can then move on, Killian, to talk about what you
10 tell us about the assessment centre and that is from
11 paragraph 24 of your statement.

12 It is said as 'Assessment Centre, Liberton', so it
13 was an assessment centre in the Liberton area of
14 Edinburgh, is that right?

15 A. Yeah, yeah.

16 Q. I think we know from the records that they called it
17 Howdenhall Assessment Centre at the time, but it doesn't
18 matter what the name is. We know it's the same place.

19 A. Yes.

20 Q. Again, as I've said, the records show it was
21 October 1975 when you were put there, when you were
22 shipped off there. At that time you would have been 11.

23 I think in your statement you think you might have
24 been 9 or 10, but we won't worry too much about that.
25 It might have seemed that you were a little bit younger

1 when you were giving your statement, but just so we have
2 it from the record, it was 11.

3 I think you stayed there until 4 August 1976, when
4 you were taken to Glasclune and you would have been 12
5 at that point. So in total you were there for about
6 ten months and I think you say in your statement you
7 thought you were there for about 10 or 11 months or so,
8 so it seems about right?

9 A. Yeah.

10 Q. Just to go through that part of your statement with you,
11 then, Killian. I think you tell us first of all that to
12 you, the assessment centre was basically a prison for
13 young boys?

14 A. Yeah.

15 Q. Is that how you saw it?

16 A. Absolutely. Horrific.

17 Q. You say it was a locked unit?

18 A. Yeah.

19 Q. So the unit itself would be locked and staff would have
20 keys to all the doors?

21 A. Yeah.

22 Q. You go on to tell us a little bit later that you had
23 a room or a cell-type room and that was also locked?

24 A. Yeah.

25 Q. You explain that when you would go through doors, they

1 would be opened with keys and closed behind you and
2 locked, it was like a prison?

3 A. That's right, yeah.

4 Q. You tell us a little bit about the number of boys that
5 you think were there at the time, at paragraph 25. We
6 have that, about 50 or 60 boys, you say.

7 You, though, were put into a wing for -- you have
8 described it as youngsters, because you were quite young
9 at the time, is that right?

10 A. Yes.

11 Q. There would have been boys there up to 18 years old; is
12 that right?

13 A. Yeah, probably.

14 Q. Okay, but in any event, you were in a wing with other
15 children your own age?

16 A. Yeah.

17 Q. You say that you know now that you were only supposed to
18 be in the assessment centre for two or three weeks to be
19 assessed, but obviously from your records and from what
20 you tell us in your statement, we know you were there
21 for ten months, so a lot longer than might be thought of
22 a period for assessment?

23 A. Yeah.

24 Q. When you went there, Killian, did you know at that time
25 how long you were supposed to be there for?

1 A. I have no recollection of any discussions about why
2 I had been placed there. Secondary Institutions - to be published later
3 Secondary Institutions - to be published later. But I had absolutely no idea that
4 I was going to be there for any length of time or in
5 fact where I was going to end up at some point in the
6 future.

7 Q. So it wasn't explained to you that you were supposed to
8 be being assessed and that this was a view to finding
9 a suitable other place for you or anything like that?

10 A. I don't believe it was explained to me. I always
11 believed that, you know, I'd done something bad, so
12 I deserved to be in a different place without the
13 freedom that I'd had before.

14 Q. I think you make the point, Killian, in your statement,
15 you say you don't think you should have been there,
16 because the way you have described it is you say:
17 'I wasn't a bad boy.'

18 A. Yeah, I don't think I was a bad boy.

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6 Q. Were you aware of why the other boys who were in there
7 with you, why they were there?

8 A. No, I hadn't a clue.

9 Q. Killian, you go on to tell us a little bit about the
10 staff and you mention SNR and his wife who
11 lived there and you say that they were both nice?

12 A. Yes.

13 Q. There was also SNR, who you say you called
14 MTM?

15 A. That was his name -- yeah, his nickname, MTM.

16 Q. You have described him as a beautiful man?

17 A. Yep, he was.

18 Q. You also remember another member of staff, a Mr BFM?

19 A. Yep.

20 Q. You describe him very differently in your statement?

21 A. Yep.

22 Q. The way you've put it is:

23 'He was a bald-headed abuser that no one liked.'

24 A. Yep.

25 Q. This is just going over the page into the next page at

1 paragraph 27.

2 He was someone who had authority in the place. He

3 wasn't at the same level obviously as the

4 superintendent, but you think he was probably a team

5 leader or something of that kind?

6 A. Yeah.

7 Q. You tell us about a young guy as well who worked there

8 with short, slick hair. You say that you got the

9 impression from him that he enjoyed the power trip of

10 looking after children and imposing a regime on them?

11 A. Yeah.

12 Q. I think you make the point you never saw him overstep

13 the mark and you think he was quite fair, but he was

14 quite black or white?

15 A. Yeah.

16 Q. You explain that there would be teaching staff as well

17 as residential staff and you tell us a little bit about

18 the shifts that they did.

19 Killian, you then go on to talk about the routine in

20 the assessment centre and this is from paragraph 29.

21 You say that the sort of introduction that you recall

22 was getting what you call -- this is a liquid called

23 'jungle juice' put on. This was for nits and this was

24 something that was poured over your head?

25 A. Yep.

1 Q. I think you say that it was done with other boys all
2 together; is that right?

3 A. Yeah, that's right.

4 Q. This was in a small medical room?

5 A. Yeah. We started off -- the 'jungle juice' was applied
6 in the medical room, but we were all lined up naked in
7 the corridor outside the medical room.

8 Q. You say you were all lined up naked. Did you know why
9 that was?

10 A. Just, I think, the whole health checks that they wanted
11 to give you, including, you know, if you had nits and
12 stuff.

13 Q. That wasn't done individually, it was done together?

14 A. In the corridor we all stood together, but in the
15 medical room you were on your own with, I think, female
16 medical staff and a male adult staff.

17 Q. So from what you're describing, Killian, you're lined up
18 naked in a corridor waiting to go into a medical room to
19 be examined?

20 A. Yeah.

21 Q. One by one?

22 A. Yeah.

23 Q. Were these all boys of a similar age to you?

24 A. Yes.

25 Q. You also say that this was an occasion when they touched

1 your private parts with their hand and asked you to
2 cough?

3 A. Yes.

4 Q. That's something that you say you had become accustomed
5 to?

6 A. Yep.

7 Q. That had happened to you before?

8 A. That had happened several times, yes.

9 Q. Both at school and in homes?

10 A. School and the children's homes.

11 Q. You then tell us a bit more about the routine, Killian,
12 and the regime. This is at paragraph 30. You make the
13 statement that the regime was horrific. This is
14 Howdenhall, the assessment centre, that you are talking
15 about?

16 A. Yeah.

17 Q. You liken it to documentaries that we might see on TV
18 about adult prisons. Is that how you remember it?

19 A. That's it, yeah.

20 Q. You describe being woken up and having to have communal
21 showers; is that right?

22 A. Yeah.

23 Q. Would that be with boys your own age or would there be
24 older boys as well?

25 A. I think it was boys on the overnight unit that I slept

1 at, so the majority of them would be of my age.

2 Q. You describe being given a sort of uniform, which was

3 a sort of overall and some plastic Croc-type shoes to

4 wear?

5 A. Yeah.

6 Q. You weren't allowed your own clothes?

7 A. I don't ever remember having my own clothes, actually.

8 Q. Older boys wore a different colour of overall, so the

9 different age groups were identifiable?

10 A. Yeah.

11 Q. I think you say yours were maybe orange or dark red for

12 your age group?

13 A. Yeah. I'm not 100 per cent sure about the colour, to be

14 honest, but I definitely identify with not being able to

15 have my own clothes. It was a uniform that we were all

16 given, so we all looked the same.

17 LADY SMITH: What did you wear underneath the overall?

18 A. Er, probably just pants. I mean, the environment was

19 very warm. It was obviously heated and, you know, all

20 the hard surfaces retained the heat, so there were no

21 carpets. It was all lino and vinyl and so it was very,

22 very warm, so it was just like an overall kind of

23 bottoms and top and underwear.

24 LADY SMITH: Thank you.

25 Ms Forbes.

1 MS FORBES: Thank you, my Lady.

2 I think you do recall there being different colours

3 for different age groups, is that something you

4 remember?

5 A. Yes, yeah.

6 Q. You tell us, Killian, about a sort of locker room where

7 you would get dressed and undressed and this was sort of

8 a massive wet room, you've described it as, where the

9 showers were?

10 A. Yeah, that's it.

11 Q. That's where your uniforms would be kept?

12 A. Yes.

13 Q. So you would have to get changed there?

14 A. Yeah.

15 Q. And not in your room?

16 A. Yeah.

17 Q. You describe after breakfast being locked in your room

18 again for half an hour and then being gathered up just

19 after 9.00 before being handed over to the teaching

20 staff for the day?

21 A. Yeah. It might have been half past 8, to be honest,

22 I'm not 100 per cent sure of the timeframe, but ...

23 Q. But there was a routine?

24 A. That was the routine, yeah.

25 Q. You then go on, Killian, to tell us about where you

1 slept and this is at paragraph 33. You describe it as
2 being a single cell with a window?

3 A. Yep.

4 Q. You say it's exactly like you see in prison?

5 A. Yep.

6 Q. So you don't describe it as a room?

7 A. No.

8 Q. Did you see it as a sort of cell?

9 A. Absolutely.

10 Q. You describe it having a big heavy duty door with a kind
11 of hatch?

12 A. Yep.

13 Q. Is that something --

14 A. Probably a window hatch, rather than a hatch that opens.
15 I can't remember a hatch that opened, but there was
16 definitely a viewing panel within the door and it was
17 a big heavy metal.

18 Q. This was a viewing panel that staff could look
19 through --

20 A. Yeah.

21 Q. -- into the room to see --

22 A. Yes.

23 Q. -- what you were doing?

24 A. Yes.

25 Q. What was in the room, or the cell, as you have described

1 it?

2 A. Me.

3 To be honest, I can't remember if there were
4 pictures on the wall or -- there were definitely
5 curtains on the window, but I cannot remember if there
6 were any personal effects of mine. A small table with
7 a lamp or -- I don't think there was a lamp there. The
8 lights were controlled externally to the cells or the
9 small rooms and I don't think there was any personal
10 items within the room.

11 Q. What about the bed and sleeping arrangements, was this
12 a bed that was fixed or was it moveable?

13 A. I think it was fixed in the corner. It was -- I don't
14 think it was metal. It was maybe a concrete slab type
15 with a mattress on it. But it was definitely integrated
16 into the cell rather than -- so I couldn't move the bed,
17 for instance, or pull it to the window to stand on it or
18 anything like that. It was definitely fixed.

19 Q. The window that you tell us about, was it something that
20 you could easily see out of?

21 A. Yeah, if I kinda -- yeah, I could probably see --
22 I remember it was looking into the yard, so there
23 wasn't, like, nice trees or anything to look at. It was
24 the exercise yard, which was directly below the window.

25 Q. What size was it? Was it a normal-size window for

1 a bedroom or would you describe it as being smaller?

2 A. Not in my experience of the other homes, definitely not,
3 so it would be much smaller, so possibly, you know, two
4 square feet or so, you know, small.

5 Q. I think you tell us, Killian, that there wasn't any en
6 suite toilet facilities or washing facilities in the
7 room?

8 A. No.

9 Q. So if you needed the toilet once you were inside the
10 room, you would have to alert a member of staff to that?

11 A. Yeah.

12 Q. Is that right? How did do you that?

13 A. So there was a bell, a metal bell on the inside, so you
14 would ring that if you needed to go to the toilet.

15 Q. Were the doors to the cells locked when you were inside
16 them?

17 A. Yes.

18 Q. Would that be any time you were inside them or just at
19 particular times of the day?

20 A. Oh, they were always locked when you were inside them.

21 Q. Okay, so when you went back to your cell, it was locked
22 until somebody came and unlocked it and let you out?

23 A. Yeah.

24 Q. I think you say when you would ring this bell,
25 particularly in the nighttime, if you needed the toilet,

1 that the member of staff wasn't quick to come to answer,
2 is that right?

3 A. Erm, well, they might have been dealing with other
4 children. I'm not sure, but the general -- my attitude
5 towards it was at any time, I wouldn't know who the
6 night staff were going to be, until you rang the bell
7 and the face appeared at the window of the door. If it
8 was MTM then you had a really peaceful sleep,
9 because, you know, you knew that you could ring the bell
10 and you weren't going to get into trouble or there
11 wasn't going to be any friction as a result. But some
12 of the other staff, erm, yeah, definitely were annoyed
13 that they were being disturbed.

14 I don't even think they were sleeping over. I think
15 they were staff that were supposed to be awake all the
16 time. I don't know what they got up to, you know, while
17 they were there, but I definitely ran into a lot of
18 issues and worried a lot about ringing the bell when
19 I needed the toilet through the night and I would often
20 just wet the bed.

21 Q. Okay, so that was a problem you had when you were at the
22 assessment centre?

23 A. Yeah. I hadn't ever wet the bed up until that. But
24 I knew I was deliberately wetting the bed, because it
25 was the lesser of the two evils.

1 Q. When you say that you encountered problems from staff
2 when you rang the bell during the night, what kind of
3 problems are you talking about? What would happen?
4 A. Oh, just their attitude and how angry they would be.
5 They would open the door and kinda almost throw you out
6 the door.
7 It's probably important also to highlight that, you
8 know, as a child, it was always adults. I always felt
9 adults hated me anyway, so to try and kinda define
10 a particular adult doing something bad is quite
11 difficult for me, because I had that impression that all
12 adults didn't like me. Most of the adults in my life
13 didn't treat me very well, so it was quite normal, but
14 I know I didn't like the physical interactions with some
15 of the adults when they would push you out the door and,
16 you know, 'Get in there' and, you know, just that kind
17 of attitude that they often had.
18 And it was more risky at night, because it was me
19 and them. There was no one else to witness anything,
20 so, you know, that added quite -- that was very
21 impactful in terms of your frame and someone else's
22 frame, you know, two or three times bigger and the fear
23 that, you know, something else might happen, so it was
24 much safer to be quiet and often not ring the bell.
25 Q. Just moving on from that then, Killian, I think you say

1 that before you went to bed at night, you would often be
2 in the TV room and you would get a biscuit, which would
3 come round on a trolley, but there was also a hot drink
4 that would be handed out.

5 Then you tell us about something you think was put
6 into the drink. What was that that you thought had been
7 put into the drink?

8 A. Yeah. Is it bromide or something that they kinda use?
9 I honestly cannot remember that there was a bottle that
10 said 'bromide' on it and it was put in the tea, but
11 there were rumours of things being added to prevent any
12 sexual impropriety that you might have on your own or
13 whatever. But there was lots of rumours of that.

14 Q. Is that the older boys that would be talking about that?

15 A. Older boys, yes.

16 Q. Your understanding was that something was being put into
17 the hot drink to stop the children having sexual urges?

18 A. Yes.

19 Q. Was that something you were aware of whilst you were in
20 the assessment centre, that you heard about whilst you
21 were in there?

22 A. I heard about it whilst -- not the overall detail that
23 we've gone into now, but I heard that they had added
24 something. I mean, I wasn't sexually aware as
25 an individual then anyway. It was, you know, I was more

1 sexually aware of other adults but not to myself, so
2 that wasn't a thing that, you know, I would have thought
3 or considered. So I've obviously heard that from other
4 boys that were there, and since then.

5 Q. But that's something that was discussed at the time?

6 A. Yeah.

7 Q. You go on, Killian, to talk about some of the other
8 things that happened and that you experienced. You tell
9 us about food and meal times from paragraph 36. I think
10 you mention always getting fish on a Friday and I think,
11 to be fair, you weren't overly impressed with the food
12 at Howdenhall Assessment Centre?

13 A. No.

14 Q. The rule was you had to eat all the food, you had to eat
15 it all, and there was no pudding if you didn't eat your
16 main course?

17 A. Yeah.

18 Q. That was the rule. You tell us that the staff had
19 truncheons and they would walk around the dining room as
20 you were eating?

21 A. Yeah, yep.

22 Q. Was this something that they had attached to their body
23 or uniforms or was this something they held?

24 A. It was like in a little buckle on the side. Some of
25 them actually would walk with it in their hand, but --

1 in fair -- I'm not going to say in fairness, but, you
2 know, when you look at the dining hall it was all the
3 children at the same time, so the older boys as well as
4 the younger boys all in a collective space. So, you
5 know, I think that was the way they felt safer.

6 LADY SMITH: Killian, can you tell me what you remember
7 about these truncheons?

8 A. So just -- my dad had a truncheon and it was exactly the
9 same as that. It was a wooden baton with a handle on it
10 and a kinda leather strap that went round the wrist.
11 And I'm not saying that they went around, you know,
12 hitting them on their hands as they walked around, but
13 I definitely remember them having a truncheon out of the
14 little holster in their hand as they kinda monitored the
15 food hall.

16 LADY SMITH: A weapon at the ready if necessary?

17 A. Yeah, yeah.

18 And actually, it wasn't a weapon that I had seen in
19 any other setting within the assessment centre, so they
20 didn't have that weapon on at nighttime or, you know,
21 when we were taken to breakfast or when we were taken --
22 it just seemed to be within the hall space, when all the
23 boys were there as a collective.

24 LADY SMITH: Thank you.

25 MS FORBES: Thank you.

1 Killian, you say it was wooden. Was it the colour
2 of wood or was it a different colour?

3 A. Dark wood, yeah, like rosewood, so a hard wood.

4 Q. It was only in the dining hall that you would see them
5 with it?

6 A. From what I remember, yeah, it was definitely the dining
7 hall.

8 Q. Did you ever see them using it?

9 A. No.

10 I would see boys being taken away who, you know --
11 you know, had what we would call a 'flakie', that was
12 the term we used when, you know, someone just lost the
13 plot, so you would see them all grabbing that individual
14 and I think there was a part in the assessment centre
15 which was a padded cell that they would be -- I never
16 ended up in the padded cell, but other people would be
17 taken there and they would talk about it.

18 Q. I think you mention that a little bit later in your
19 statement. You say you were aware there was this padded
20 cell, so this was a room different from the one that you
21 would stay in?

22 A. Yep.

23 Q. That's where boys could be taken --

24 A. Yep.

25 Q. -- if they'd misbehaved?

1 A. So, I heard that was the -- I didn't see it.

2 Q. It wasn't something that you experienced yourself?

3 A. No.

4 Q. You didn't see it?

5 A. No.

6 Q. You tell us about the schooling, Killian, from

7 paragraph 38 and you say that all the boys in the centre

8 mixed in the communal areas, but you were in little

9 classrooms during the day doing various activities. You

10 list them, like woodwork, crafts, arithmetic and

11 reading?

12 A. Yep.

13 Q. You were put into groups according to your age for that?

14 A. Yep.

15 Q. There would be classes in the morning, a break and then

16 there would be more classes and then some lunch and

17 again the same process in the afternoon. So there was

18 a sort of school day routine and classes?

19 A. Yes.

20 Q. Would you go to different classes like you would in, for

21 example, a high school or would this just be a class

22 that you sat in and then various different activities

23 went on in that class during the day?

24 A. Yeah. So essentially it would be a room. So that would

25 be your room for the entire day, no matter what the

1 lesson was.

2 Q. You say religious education was a big part of the

3 structure?

4 A. Yep.

5 Q. So you were taught a lot about religion, although

6 I think you make the point you weren't taught to follow

7 a particular religion, but there was certainly a lot of

8 religious instruction given?

9 A. Yep.

10 Q. In relation to this question of assessment, Killian,

11 from paragraph 41, you tell us that you had no clue you

12 were there to be assessed for anything. So were you

13 aware of being assessed at any time?

14 A. No.

15 Q. Do you remember having meetings with any social workers

16 or any other people to try and assess you in any way?

17 A. I remember a Barnardo's social worker. I think his name

18 was Mark Hughes or definitely Mark, but I can't remember

19 his second name. He was quite a young hippy social

20 worker, quite newly into the role, and it was him that

21 brokered the move to Glasclune, but that was very late

22 on in the assessment centre. So up until that time,

23 probably six months, I didn't know -- it was a regime

24 that I was following within that confined space and

25 I didn't know. I just felt that I was being punished.

1 LADY SMITH: Killian, did anybody explain why you were being
2 taken to the assessment centre?
3 A. I don't believe they did. I would love to say
4 100 per cent 'no', but I don't believe that there was an
5 ex -- I always have believed that it was because I was
6 bad [Secondary Institutions - to be published later]
7 [Secondary Institutions - to be published later]
8 LADY SMITH: You say in your statement you thought it was
9 a punishment that you were receiving [Secondary Institutions - to be published later]
10 [Secondary Institutions - to be published later]
11 A. Yep.
12 LADY SMITH: Did it feel like a punishment?
13 A. It was very different to what I'd experienced up
14 until -- and actually in some ways it was different
15 because it gave me a break from the sexual element of
16 abuse. Which -- I mean, I can articulate that now, but
17 I can't imagine how I would have felt about that then,
18 but I'm sure I would have probably been a bit more
19 relieved that horrible things weren't happening to me on
20 a daily basis, when there was more freedom.
21 LADY SMITH: You very fairly pointed out which members of
22 staff, one in particular, who was good news in your
23 life?
24 A. Yeah, yep.
25 LADY SMITH: Ms Forbes.

1 MS FORBES: My Lady.

2 So Killian, this period in Howdenhall, as you have
3 said, was sort of like a prison regime that you were
4 following, but that came, as you've explained, with
5 a bit of relief because it came with a protection?

6 A. Yeah.

7 Q. You have mentioned Mark, the social worker, who became
8 involved later, but I think you say that up until that
9 point, you didn't really -- you don't remember any sort
10 of process of assessment or talking to you about what
11 was going to happen next?

12 A. No.

13 Q. You tell us a little bit about the things you could do
14 there for leisure time, Killian, at the
15 assessment centre. You say that there was this yard,
16 which is the yard I think you say your cell looked out
17 on to?

18 A. Yeah.

19 Q. In the middle, is that right? In the yard, this was
20 an open space which wasn't very big, but there were
21 baseball hoops and football nets in it, so there was
22 that kind of activity?

23 A. Yeah.

24 Q. You say also there was a communal recreational area
25 where you could watch TV, there was table tennis and

1 some games that you made in woodwork, but you make the
2 point, you were always locked in these different spaces
3 within the complex, is that right?

4 A. Yes.

5 Q. So you would be taken there by staff, doors would be
6 locked and you couldn't leave those places unless staff
7 allowed you to do so and locked the doors and let you
8 through, is that right?

9 A. Yep.

10 Q. Even in these recreational spaces, you would still have
11 to get staff to let you go to the toilet?

12 A. Yeah. If I wanted to go to the toilet, it would be when
13 everyone else needed to leave that space. So there
14 wouldn't be a member of staff that would take you to the
15 toilet. You would have to wait until everyone or, you
16 know, that particular activity ended and everyone went
17 to a different space, and then you'd be able to go to
18 the toilet.

19 Q. So even basic needs like that couldn't be met when you
20 needed them to be met. You would have to wait until
21 they were ready?

22 A. Yeah, yep.

23 LADY SMITH: Killian, did you have any knowledge of what it
24 was that had led other children to be placed in the
25 centre?

1 A. I didn't, nope. I don't even think I would have asked
2 that. You know, I think that's maybe an adult thing to
3 look back and say: I should have asked why you were
4 there. But as a child, I just don't think these things
5 would matter. We were all just kinda surviving this
6 space together and it's that simple. I don't think
7 anyone would be -- maybe the older boys would have,
8 'What are you in for?', you know, that kind of thing.

9 But even seeing it as a prison, that is an adult
10 impression looking at when I was a child. I don't think
11 when I was a child I would have seen it as a prison when
12 I was a child, I was just in a very different care space
13 than what I had been used to

Secondary Institutions - to be published later

14 Secondary Institutions - to be published later

15 LADY SMITH: Thank you.

16 Ms Forbes.

17 MS FORBES: My Lady.

18 I think you do say there came a point latterly,
19 before you left the assessment centre, where you were
20 allowed to go and play on swings and a chute
21 unsupervised?

22 A. Yeah.

23 Q. Was that outwith the locked complex of the
24 assessment centre?

25 A. It was. So it was in the front of the building. There

1 was a wee garden space with swings and a chute and,
2 yeah, I was let out to play there quite a lot latterly,
3 with another boy. So I was never out on my own.

4 Q. I think you make the point that you could have run away
5 at that point if you wanted to. You didn't. But
6 somebody could have come and taken you away, but you
7 weren't supervised?

8 A. Yep.

9 Q. Whilst you're in the assessment centre, you are having
10 to be taken through doors, opened and closed with keys,
11 allowed to go to the toilet and there came a point when
12 you actually were just allowed outside to play on the
13 swings?

14 A. Yeah.

15 Q. Still when you were back in the assessment centre, the
16 regime would have kicked in again, is that right?

17 A. Yeah, so just to clarify, the play time would be at the
18 weekends and early evenings, not during the normal
19 course of events that would take place every day, Monday
20 to Friday.

21 Q. Killian, you go on to talk about discipline at
22 paragraph 46 and you've already mentioned this term
23 'flakies', you said boys sometimes had what you called
24 flakies, I think we've heard evidence of people using
25 the phrase 'kicking off', that kind of thing, but you

1 say when that happened, it wasn't stood for at all, is
2 that right?

3 A. Yeah.

4 Q. That staff came down very quickly on those boys?

5 A. Yep.

6 Q. I think you have described restraint, is that right, at
7 paragraph 46?

8 A. Yeah.

9 Q. You say that involved grown men sitting on the chest of
10 little boys, pinning their arms down with their knees?

11 A. Yep.

12 Q. Is that what you saw happening?

13 A. Yes.

14 Q. How frequently would that happen?

15 A. Er, well, some of the children expressed their
16 frustration quite a lot, but I think that you learnt not
17 to do it because you knew what the consequences were
18 going to be, so you would probably shout and scream in
19 your cell, when not anyone else could really hear you.
20 So that pattern of expressing your frustrations in
21 a behavioural way was definitely not tolerated.

22 Q. When the grown men, you say, were involved in sitting on
23 the chest of little boys, is the way you put it, would
24 it be more than one male member of staff that would be
25 involved in this?

1 A. It would normally be two or three.

2 Q. You say that they would then cart you away and throw you
3 into a padded cell. That's what you saw happening to
4 other boys?

5 A. Yes.

6 Q. But I think you have explained you didn't go to that
7 cell yourself?

8 A. No. I just saw them being carted away. I don't know
9 where they went but I believed that it was a padded
10 cell.

11 Q. When you say 'carted away', can you describe what you
12 mean by that?

13 A. So someone would grab your legs and there would be
14 someone on one arm and someone on the other and you
15 would be kinda walked out. So you didn't leave those
16 spaces on your own two feet basically, you were carted
17 out.

18 Q. So carried out?

19 A. Yep.

20 Q. Was it only male staff that were involved in doing this?

21 A. Yep.

22 Q. Do you remember any female staff --

23 A. Two female staff, was the nurse and the superintendent's
24 wife. I can't remember her name, but she was a lovely
25 lady.

1 Q. Were they ever involved in any of that?

2 A. No.

3 Q. You go on, Killian, to tell us about another form of

4 punishment, this is at paragraph 47, over the page.

5 This was a strap. What would happen with that?

6 A. So if you were misbehaving or if you didn't, you know,

7 pay attention in the classrooms and stuff, then there

8 would be some level of discussion between staff and at

9 some point, someone would decide that you would be hit

10 with a wooden strap.

11 Q. When you say 'strap', can you describe what you remember

12 that being?

13 A. So, it was a flex -- I mean, it looked like cork or some

14 kinda -- not leather. I don't think it was leather, but

15 it was like a kinda cork semi-rigid material that they

16 would use. I don't even know it was designed

17 specifically for that type of punishment or if it was

18 something that they had available lying around.

19 LADY SMITH: How big was it, Killian?

20 A. So I would say it was maybe about a foot long.

21 LADY SMITH: Right. Thank you.

22 MS FORBES: You say that the strap that you've described,

23 that was something that you got?

24 A. Yeah.

25 Q. Did that happen to you more than once?

1 A. Er, probably on a couple of occasions, but I quickly
2 learned not to put myself in the position where I was
3 going to be, you know -- that was going to be the result
4 of any punishment.

5 Q. When you got the strap, where would it take place?

6 A. Normally in your bedroom or in the main office, which
7 was right at the front door.

8 Q. So either your own cell or in the office?

9 A. Yeah, yeah.

10 Q. Who would be the one who carried out that punishment?

11 A. Mr BFM was -- er, I think he quite enjoyed that and
12 the young chap with the slicked hair. I'm not saying he
13 enjoyed it, but I think he enjoyed the role of kinda
14 governing.

15 LADY SMITH: Killian, what made you think Mr BFM enjoyed
16 doing it?

17 A. Er, I just -- he liked inflicting pain and whether it
18 was with the strap or with his giant hands, where he
19 would crush your -- he was someone that really got off
20 on inflicting pain, not just on me, but the other
21 youngsters. You would see his big smile as they were
22 crushed on their knees in front of him.

23 MS FORBES: You tell us a little bit more about Mr BFM and
24 what he would do with his hands. We'll come to that in
25 a minute, Killian, but just before I leave the strap

1 issue, where would you get the strap on your body?

2 A. On your bottom.

3 Q. What clothing would you have on at the time when that

4 happened?

5 A. You would just have your uniform. I mean, the strap was

6 never given out overnight. So none of the night staff,

7 erm, would ever -- on me certainly. I didn't ever get

8 the strap at night. But you would just have your

9 uniform on.

10 Q. Were you asked to remove any clothing?

11 A. Er, so you would just take your bottoms down and, you

12 know -- you weren't bent over someone's knee or

13 anything, you were kinda standing up, and often -- if it

14 was in the office, you would put your hands on the back

15 of a chair and then they would give you two or three

16 whacks.

17 Q. So you say you would have to take your bottoms down.

18 Just to understand, the uniform that you wore, did it

19 have a top and a bottom part?

20 A. Yes.

21 Q. Okay, so you could remove the bottom part separately

22 from the top?

23 A. Yes, yes.

24 Q. Would you be asked to remove the bottom part or told to

25 remove?

1 A. Er, yeah, probably. Well, I would say that there would
2 be an instruction given to remove it.

3 Q. Would that mean then that there was any clothing left on
4 the bottom part of you or not?

5 A. No.

6 Q. So this was your bare --

7 A. Bare bottom, yeah.

8 Q. Do you remember how many times you would be hit with the
9 strap, roughly?

10 A. I would say two or three.

11 Q. It might sound silly, but was that painful?

12 A. Yeah.

13 Q. Afterwards, were you aware of having any injuries as
14 a result of that?

15 A. Probably bruising. I remember my feet being in absolute
16 agony as a result of it, so it had obviously transferred
17 down the nerves to the underside of your feet and, you
18 know, sometimes it was difficult to walk. I mean,
19 I'm not trying to make it sound that it was
20 an absolutely brutal process that they carried out, but
21 it was definitely something that was impactful and sore.

22 Q. How did you feel when you got the strap, were you upset
23 at the time?

24 A. Shit scared is the -- excuse my language, but that's,
25 you know, before and during and after, so it had

1 a massive impression and I don't believe that it was
2 overused. I don't think anyone got 10 whacks or 20
3 whacks. I think they realised just how impactful it was
4 by one or two.

5 Q. The type of things that you would get the strap for,
6 what were they? What would you have to have done to get
7 the strap?

8 A. So if you weren't paying attention in the class and the
9 teacher -- maybe the teacher didn't like you anyway,
10 I don't know, but, you know, if the teacher had reported
11 that you had misbehaved or -- I don't think there was
12 discussions on what the parameters of misbehaving
13 actually meant to children. So I wouldn't know that
14 I'd misbehaved just because I might have been doing
15 something that I shouldn't have been doing in my jotter
16 or anything like that. So I wouldn't see it as
17 misbehaving.

18 I'm not saying that I would, you know, throw my desk
19 up and swear or -- 'cause I would identify that as
20 misbehaving, but I cannot remember doing any of those
21 types of things, but I definitely remember not
22 conforming to what they would expect of you in class.

23 Q. So that was the type of situation that you experienced.
24 Not conforming in class, but that was enough for you to
25 get the strap?

1 A. Yep. So in fairness, there was a massive lack of
2 understanding neurodiversity and dyslexia in these days,
3 all of which I have and had when I was a child. So the
4 perception of adults thinking that you were being
5 disruptive in class or misbehaving and when in fact you
6 were really struggling to cope with what was going on in
7 the space.

8 Q. I think the way you've put it, Killian, at paragraph 47,
9 is if you were vocal or did anything that was contrary
10 to that sort of regime you'd get punished?

11 A. Yep.

12 Q. The strap you are saying was one of the punishments?

13 A. Yeah.

14 Q. I think whilst you have said, Killian, it was Mr BFM
15 or the other staff member with the slicked-back hair
16 that you have talked about, you say all of the staff
17 were able to give punishment whenever they wanted, was
18 that what you were aware of?

19 A. Yeah.

20 Q. They all had that power so it wasn't left to, for
21 example, the superintendent to do?

22 A. No. Well, actually maybe it was, I don't know, but it
23 appeared that they were able to at will, you know,
24 deliver punishment in that form.

25 Q. So your experience was other staff members did that?

1 A. Yeah.

2 Q. You mention MTM at paragraph 48 and you say

3 that you are pretty sure if he had to do it, it would

4 just be a little tickle, not a full-on whack?

5 A. Yeah.

6 Q. Is that because of the type of person you think he was?

7 A. Yep.

8 Q. Did you ever have the strap from MTM?

9 A. No.

10 Q. But that's sort of the impression you have of the man?

11 A. Yeah.

12 Q. Killian, you say that whilst you were at the

13 assessment centre, your family didn't visit. This was

14 a time when you weren't going back to your dad's house

15 at the weekend or anything like that. I think you say

16 that you remember your stepfather taking you back to the

17 house for the weekend once?

18 A. Yeah.

19 Q. You also say that the teacher that we have talked about,

20 Mrs Melville, she was allowed to come and take you out

21 and she took you out in her car and to her house?

22 A. Yeah.

23 Q. You say that she was a lovely lady and you felt that she

24 was someone who genuinely wanted to be involved in your

25 life?

1 A. Yep.

2 Q. You then go on to tell us, Killian, about the social
3 worker, this Mark, I think you have mentioned Hughes or
4 Young, a sort of young hippy kind of guy as you have
5 described him and you say you really took to him and the
6 way you recall it is that he is somebody who was very
7 vocal about how long you'd been in the assessment centre
8 and seems to have been key in the move from the
9 assessment centre to Glasclune?

10 A. Yep.

11 Q. Is that right?

12 A. That's it.

13 Q. Killian, this takes us to a part of your statement where
14 you tell us about abuse at the assessment centre, and
15 this is from paragraph 52. You have already mentioned
16 Mr BFM and you tell us he was an [REDACTED], probably
17 in his late 40s.

18 You describe that he had had some sort of accident
19 whereby the nerves in his right hand were damaged so he
20 couldn't feel any pain?

21 A. Yeah.

22 Q. And he would use that hand to crush boys' hands in his?

23 A. Yep.

24 Q. I think that's what you were describing before, that
25 this was his party trick; is that right?

1 A. Yeah.

2 Q. From what you described earlier in your evidence,
3 Killian, you say that this would mean that they'd be in
4 pain and on their knees, is that right?

5 A. Yeah.

6 Q. When he did that?

7 A. Yeah.

8 Q. Did he do that to you?

9 A. All the time.

10 Q. You say that he did that, you think, just because he
11 could?

12 A. It was probably his way of introducing his power over,
13 you know, a room full of boys that, you know, if he
14 demonstrated what he was able to do then it might make
15 his job -- I mean, I'm just saying that that's
16 a possibility. I don't know why he behaved in that
17 manner, but, yeah, he -- that was something he
18 absolutely loved to do.

19 Q. You also tell us, though, that he would quite often put
20 his body up against your body. Would this be from
21 behind so you would be standing in front of him or how
22 --

23 A. No, it would be face on.

24 Q. Face on?

25 A. Yeah.

1 Q. Where would this happen?

2 A. So this would happen in the dining room, where there
3 was -- because the dining room was the perfect place to
4 disguise that, other than one to one in a room, which he
5 didn't do, up until that point he hadn't attempted any
6 that physically close contact in my own personal space
7 in my bedroom, for instance, or in the shower. So it
8 was always when there was lots of other people about.

9 Q. I think you say it took several months for it to get to
10 that point?

11 A. Yeah.

12 Q. You are telling us, Killian, this was in the dining
13 hall, you'd be face to face. His body would be against
14 yours and what did you experience when that happened?

15 A. Just -- I would feel his erection right in front of me,
16 poking me in the upper part of my body.

17 Q. So you were aware of an erection and him being aroused
18 essentially?

19 A. Yep.

20 Q. Were you aware of that every time he did that?

21 A. It wasn't every time. Erm, but, yeah, it was several
22 times. And I knew what an erection was by then and, you
23 know, what a man could do.

24 Q. You describe it as pressing up against you; is that what
25 he was doing?

1 A. Yep.

2 Q. When you say he was able to do that in the dining room,
3 what was going on at these times that meant he could get
4 that close to you?

5 A. So we'd either be shuffling into the dining room
6 en masse or shuffling out of the dining room, so there
7 would be quite a lot of close physical contact between
8 staff and boys and boys and boys.

9 Q. You say that that's something that left an impression on
10 you?

11 A. The impression it left on me was I definitely knew it
12 was a sexual thing and why it wasn't taken further,
13 because up until then everyone wanted to have sex with
14 me. Every male that was in my life ended up, you know,
15 sexually abusing me. So it felt odd that it was just
16 a kinda -- I know that might sound daft actually, but it
17 just -- it felt odd that it wasn't taken ... I'm not
18 saying that I would have felt, you know, undesired or
19 anything like that, but it just felt odd that it wasn't
20 taken further and I fully expected that it would have.

21 Q. I think the way you tried to explain it in your
22 statement, Killian, is that you think it had more of
23 an impact on you because he didn't go further and you
24 were sort of wondering then what was wrong with you?

25 A. Yep.

1 Q. You said that that might seem like an odd way to look at
2 it, but because of what you experienced at that point,
3 that was the way you --

4 A. That's the adult way. That's my adult way of looking at
5 it. I mean, I'm not sure I would have had the same
6 impression as a child, but definitely, you know, I can
7 remember thinking: well, what's wrong? Why aren't you,
8 you know, doing what everyone else has done?

9 Q. You then left the assessment centre and by the time you
10 had left, it hadn't gone further than that?

11 A. It hadn't, no.

12 Q. I think you point out you didn't see him do anything to
13 other boys, but you have a suspicion he might have done
14 similar things to other boys?

15 A. Yep.

16 Q. You have explained, Killian, that it was really Mark,
17 the social worker, who sort of brokered a deal, perhaps,
18 to get you out of the assessment centre and you explain
19 that leaving was something you knew about in advance and
20 you actually had visits to Glasclune before you moved
21 there?

22 A. Yep.

23 Q. So at least this time the move was something that you
24 were anticipating and you had some experience of the
25 place before you were taken there; is that right?

1 A. Yep.

2 Q. You say that you remember the superintendent and his
3 wife saying goodbye to you and you left with a plastic
4 bag with your stuff in it. It was Mark who took you
5 then to Glasclune; is that right?

6 A. Yeah.

7 Q. I think you thought again you were about 10-and-a-half
8 or 11, but you were slightly older as we know from your
9 records. You were 12.

10 A. 12, yes.

11 Q. Glasclune, you were taken there on 4 August 1976, to
12 stay permanently for the foreseeable future.

13 I think we know from the records, Killian, that
14 there was a delay in you being admitted there. I think
15 this was on the cards for a while, but they were waiting
16 on, I think, a staff vacancy or something being filled.
17 So there was a bit of a delay in getting you there, but
18 in any event, you had been ten months by that point in
19 the assessment centre.

20 Again, we know that you stayed there until
21 26 June 1981, when you moved into a Barnardo's flat and
22 by then you would have been about 17 and I think
23 Glasclune was closing around that time and that was part
24 of the reason, maybe, that you moved into a flat, is
25 that right?

1 A. Yep.

2 Q. You then tell us about Glasclune, Killian, and this part
3 of your statement obviously takes up a large portion of
4 the evidence that you have told us about in your
5 statement and you gave evidence in detail about your
6 time at Glasclune previously in November 2018. So it's
7 not my intention today to go through all of this again
8 with you but I think it's important that we understand
9 the experience that you had there so if it's okay with
10 you, I'll perhaps summarise some of the things you tell
11 us.

12 A. Yep.

13 Q. You can comment on that as we go along, is that okay?

14 A. Yeah, that's fine.

15 LADY SMITH: Just before we do that, Killian, can I check
16 that you are, of course, aware that I've published
17 a case study findings about Barnardo's and I cover your
18 experience at Glasclune.

19 A. Yes, thank you. I've seen that.

20 LADY SMITH: I have a vivid memory of it.

21 A. Yep.

22 LADY SMITH: Thank you.

23 MS FORBES: Thank you, my Lady.

24 Killian, I think, overall, your experience of the
25 staff, the majority of the staff at Glasclune, was

1 a positive one and I think essentially you tell us that
2 this was an incredible setting and you were given a lot
3 of opportunities whilst you were there and staff took
4 a lot of interest in you, is that right?

5 A. Yep.

6 Q. But in particular there's one member of staff that you
7 name and tell us that he was someone who created
8 a relationship with you, who befriended you, took a lot
9 of interest in you and spent a lot of time with you and
10 that was QFB, is that right?

11 A. Yes.

12 Q. You tell us that he was somebody who, over a period of
13 time, period of again probably looking back now as
14 an adult, you say it was a period of grooming
15 essentially, where he -- you thought he cared about you
16 a lot and you felt that he cared about you, but he went
17 on to abuse you sexually, is that right?

18 A. That's right.

19 Q. This happened on more than one occasion and at different
20 locations, on trips away, at his parents' house down in
21 England and also at Glasclune and some other places, is
22 that right?

23 A. Yep, that's right.

24 Q. That took the form of the most serious of sexual abuse;
25 there was oral sexual abuse, anal sexual abuse, rape

1 that you experienced, is that right?

2 I think you explain in your statement, Killian, and
3 you've given evidence about this, very eloquently, tried
4 to explain the complicated and complex relationship you
5 had and feelings you had towards QFB, would that
6 be a fair way to summarise it?

7 A. Yep.

8 Q. That he was somebody who 80 per cent of the time showed
9 you a lot of love and affection and you welcomed that
10 part of the relationship; is that fair?

11 A. He was -- he was the first abuser that I loved, I think
12 that's --

13 Q. Even looking back and trying to rationalise it now, I
14 think you explain it's a very difficult thing to do,
15 because it's very complex and the feelings of love that
16 you have towards him are mixed in with obviously the
17 fact that he abused you?

18 A. Yep.

19 LADY SMITH: As you explained to me before, very, very
20 clearly, and I can understand why, Killian, you realise
21 now he groomed you?

22 A. Yep.

23 LADY SMITH: Very effectively groomed you and you can see
24 that as an adult?

25 A. Yes.

1 LADY SMITH: And it was quite wrong?

2 A. Yeah.

3 MS FORBES: I think it's fair to say that that period of

4 time at Glasclune, that relationship with him was a very

5 important part of your time there and that latter part

6 of your childhood, is that right?

7 A. Well, I think that's quite accurate, yeah, and also,

8 whilst it might sound odd, the grooming element of his

9 abuse actually helped me deal with the violent element

10 that had come before it by lots of different adult men.

11 I'm not saying he did me a favour, but it definitely

12 helped me cope in a different way with the violent abuse

13 that I had experienced throughout my younger time.

14 So here he had done it in a very loving way, that

15 I hadn't experienced before so ...

16 LADY SMITH: He made you feel special, didn't he?

17 A. Yeah, but he's done the most damage.

18 LADY SMITH: Yet he's done the most damage in the long term.

19 A. Yeah, yes.

20 LADY SMITH: There is no way you could realise that at the

21 time.

22 A. No.

23 LADY SMITH: But I suppose when you were in the midst of it,

24 it gave you time out, time away from, as you say, the

25 violence that was being meted out to you by others?

1 A. Yeah. Well, the exchange of sexual favours for him,
2 I guess, was fine because, you know, it was done in
3 a very loving way. So, I mean, it's bizarre that
4 I'm saying that, but that's how it felt.

5 LADY SMITH: And some of it was fun, like when he let you
6 drive his car?

7 A. Yeah, exactly.

8 LADY SMITH: Ms Forbes.

9 MS FORBES: My Lady.

10 I think, aside from QFB, there was a boy who
11 was there who was sexually abusive towards you and
12 violent, but I think you explain that that was in
13 a different way than what you have told us about
14 QFB. That was a very brutal way. It was the
15 same way -- I think you liken it to the same way as
16 had carried out things. So --

17 A. Yeah.

18 Q. -- there's this contrast between the way that
19 QFB, his relationship with you and what he was
20 doing, and then things that you had experienced in the
21 past and then this boy, who was also involved in abusing
22 you at the time.

23 I think you point out he was a child himself.

24 I think you say he was a bit older than you, but he was
25 a very well-built, and strong, and imposing, and

1 powerful boy?

2 A. Yeah.

3 Q. You describe yourself at that time as being quite thin
4 and petite. So to really understand, you know, your
5 journey, we have to understand the large part of it was
6 spent at Glasclune and this is as you are getting older
7 and this is the experience that you had there with not
8 only a staff member, but another resident, who was there
9 too?

10 A. Yeah.

11 Q. Before we leave Glasclune, is there anything you want to
12 say about that apart from what we've just talked about,
13 about that time?

14 A. I mean, apart from Glasclune being a very important
15 defining moment in my life, obviously QFB had
16 a different defining moment in my life, but the
17 environment was definitely -- it was like a reward for
18 everything that had happened to me. It was like a kid
19 visiting Disney and being able to stay there for a long
20 time. The staff were incredible. The setting was
21 incredible. The love and care was incredible. All of
22 these things I had never experienced.

23 So it was kinda being put into some sort of
24 fairytale, erm, and whilst I have my own arguments with
25 Barnardo's, that's definitely not one of them. That was

1 a very positive environment for me and very important.

2 LADY SMITH: Of course, Killian, you were able to stay at

3 Glasclune for about five years --

4 A. Yeah.

5 LADY SMITH: -- and that was the longest you had been

6 anywhere.

7 A. Anywhere.

8 LADY SMITH: Did that help?

9 A. Yes, absolutely.

10 LADY SMITH: Ms Forbes.

11 MS FORBES: My Lady.

12 I think from what you tell us, Killian, that there

13 was a large part of Barnardo's that was very, very

14 positive in your life, that hadn't been there before

15 that point?

16 A. Yep.

17 Q. It helped you in many ways, I think, as you approached

18 adulthood, but obviously you have told us about the

19 other things that happened to you, that you can't get

20 away from and separate from your time there.

21 I think we know that you went into the flat from

22 Glasclune. I think you thought you were about 16. This

23 is further down in your statement from paragraph 132.

24 But I think we know from the dates you were 17. We

25 won't worry about dates too much. It's all pretty much

1 the same.

2 You make the point that you weren't really ready,
3 this is at paragraph 132, for the big, bad world and
4 felt sort of institutionalised at that point and didn't
5 feel you had the skills to equip you to live on your own
6 and to deal with adulthood, is that fair?

7 A. Yep.

8 Q. Things like managing money, food to buy, that kind of
9 thing, the practical things. They were missing. So
10 whilst Glasclune was positive in many ways, it wasn't
11 something that you felt prepared you practically for
12 life on your own?

13 A. Yeah. In fairness to Barnardo's, you know, I don't
14 think they had time either, as a result of the home
15 closing, to prepare people maybe perhaps the way they
16 would have liked to have.

17 Q. You go on to tell us about your life, Killian, after
18 being in Glasclune. This is from paragraph 134. You
19 tell us about living in a flat there with three other
20 young people and there was a community service volunteer
21 there too.

22 You tell us that there was a time that you got in
23 with the wrong crowd during this time and you got in
24 a bit of trouble with the police. I think you point out
25 that you would always be the one that felt guilty and

1 you would phone the police and actually tell them what
2 you had done?

3 A. Yeah.

4 Q. So that caused frustrations with the crowd you were
5 hanging around with. When you went to court, you say
6 that even the judge was amazed at how honest you were
7 about what you had done?

8 A. Yep.

9 Q. You say that as a result of that, you got community
10 service and you describe that as being one of the best
11 things that ever happened to you. You tell us about
12 being involved with the Social Work Department and you
13 were then helping to decorate houses of people who had
14 disabilities?

15 A. Yeah.

16 Q. Is it fair to say that is something you really enjoyed?

17 A. I did, yeah.

18 Q. Even after you completed the community service order,
19 you continued to do it and you did that for a few years.
20 I think the way you've explained it is you felt that got
21 you involved and attached to something that was -- you
22 have described it as that was excellent?

23 A. Yeah.

24 Q. That's, I think, when you tell us that you started to
25 experience a bit more responsibility and started to

1 develop your talent and interest in music. You tell us
2 that Barnardo's bought you your first piano; is that
3 right?

4 A. Yeah.

5 Q. That led to you becoming very heavily involved in music.
6 Took up the drums. And I think you say the Social Work
7 Department you had been doing the community service with
8 actually got you a drum kit that they'd managed to find,
9 to source?

10 A. They did.

11 Q. You became a drummer in a band. You learned other
12 instruments as well?

13 A. Yeah.

14 Q. And were sort of mixing with musicians and you mention
15 the guitar and the saxophone, so lots of different
16 instruments?

17 A. Yep.

18 Q. I think the way you have described it, it's something
19 that you were very passionate about, is that fair,
20 Killian?

21 A. It was the only thing that I could trust in my life, so
22 they were all my best friends. So I formed
23 relationships with lots of different instruments very
24 easily and, you know, they were very important to me.
25 It was a proper therapy.

1 Q. I think you say that you had the talent where you were
2 quite quickly able to pick up an instrument and be able
3 to play it?
4 A. Yeah.
5 Q. You figured that out, and to a good standard as well?
6 A. Yep.
7 Q. Is that something that you continued through your life?
8 A. Yes.
9 Q. I think it's something that you perhaps still are
10 involved in; is that right?
11 A. Yeah. I've kinda realised also that it's a large part
12 of my neurodiversity issues that, you know, music is
13 a very good balancer to some of the challenges that
14 I have to face in life. In terms of focusing on writing
15 things, I would have very loud music, the louder it
16 would be, the more I was able to concentrate and so
17 I've kinda learnt to live alongside music and depend on
18 it.
19 Q. Now, there were a couple more things I wanted to cover
20 with you, Killian and I know that there's something you
21 want to say too, but we're approaching the mid-morning
22 break. So I wonder if this is a good time to stop and
23 then, when we come back we can do that without a break?
24 LADY SMITH: Would that work for you, Killian, if we did
25 that?

1 A. Yes, absolutely.

2 LADY SMITH: We'll have a breather now and I would love to
3 hear what you have to add after the break.

4 A. Okay.

5 LADY SMITH: Thank you very much.

6 (11.30 am)

7 (A short break)

8 (11.45 am)

9 LADY SMITH: Welcome back, Killian.

10 I think at this stage you would like to add
11 something to what you have told me already; is that
12 right?

13 A. Yes.

14 LADY SMITH: Please, in your own time, when you're ready, go
15 ahead and do so.

16 A. Okay, unfortunately, I hadn't had the time that I would
17 like to have had to write this. I was off quite ill
18 when I had planned to write, and as you appreciate,
19 things like this for me, I need to plan in advance, so
20 that -- so I unfortunately didn't have that opportunity.

21 So excuse that it might go off a little bit, I think
22 it covers some of the important points that I want to
23 make.

24 LADY SMITH: Please don't worry. It does not have to be
25 a perfect Royal Shakespeare Company presentation, just

1 you tell me how it feels from you. From the heart.

2 A. Okay, thank you.

3 Shall I just start then?

4 LADY SMITH: Yes, we are ready.

5 A. So in 2018, as you know, I gave evidence to this

6 Inquiry, regarding the residential practices within

7 Glasclune, a children's home owned and operated by

8 Barnardo's, located in North Berwick and where I was

9 held captive until I reached 16 or 17.

10 I arrived at Glasclune in 1976 when I was just 12

11 and, despite what should have been a place of safety, it

12 was anything but and I was singled out by one man,

13 QFB [REDACTED], who raped and sexually abused me

14 on multiple occasions. What appeared as a caring

15 character for lesser humans, was in fact a perfectly

16 camouflaged sexual appetite for young boys, children.

17 Before arriving at Glasclune, I had been held

18 captive at another establishment, known as 'the

19 assessment centre' in Edinburgh, for almost a full year.

20 This was a horrid institution, where caged children were

21 stashed in readiness for some sort of mass assessment

22 and I believe that the process should have been around

23 three weeks, but for me it was just around ten months.

24 Despite what any reports stated about why I was sent

25 to the assessment centre, I have always maintained that

1 I was sent here as a punishment by deceptive adults who
2 penned reports using unprincipled powers of governance
3 and who were ultimately scheming influencers of
4 misconduct.

5 Secondary Institutions - to be published later



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18 After giving evidence at the last Inquiry, regarding
19 Barnardo's, I was able to express some of the impacts
20 historic abuse had on my life and this is a hugely
21 significant platform to publicly air some very dark
22 layers of immoralities at the hands of responsible
23 adults, who were able to freely manoeuvre around
24 innocent children, their bodies, and bleed sexual evils
25 into their young veins.

1 I thank the Inquiry again and the staff for the
2 incredibly difficult job that you all do and have done
3 over the years and for continuing to support many people
4 who aren't able to articulate their past horrors, but do
5 so with the help of some multi-agency partners.

6 However, I am deeply damaged by the unconscious and
7 oppositional attitudes of some of these partners who
8 I recognise as human beings. Scrap that, humans being.

9 These include, but are not limited to, COPFS, Police
10 Scotland, Edinburgh Council, various healthcare and
11 welfare services and victim support, all who, in my
12 experience, have been let loose to unpick what has been
13 a very significant symbol of representation at this
14 Inquiry.

15 Affiliates out of control who seem only to focus on
16 finely tuning previously assigned restrictions within
17 the corridors of their own supremacy. It's an important
18 twist and I have an appalling experience to share on
19 each of them.

20 Of course, I realise the importance of having other
21 agencies supporting the overall aims and objectives of
22 the Inquiry, but my own experience with this alliance is
23 not a positive one. I had hoped for me, anyway, that
24 the last seven important years of us all listening that
25 things might have changed, even just a little bit.

1 I'm going to focus on one, the most important one.
2 The complete and utter aloofness of the Crown Office and
3 Procurator Fiscal Service towards me has been most foul.
4 Their ridiculousness again has exhibited a whole new
5 level of buffoonery. In fact, from what I hear from
6 others too, I would say without hesitation that they
7 have conducted themselves like mutineers, directly
8 undermining people who have been incredibly brave in
9 revisiting crime scenes in order to provide evidence, as
10 well as those who have been equally brave in attending
11 this Inquiry in person to give evidence.

12 I can only determine that tomfoolery of this scale
13 does not appear to be accidental.

14 Since 2018, COPFS have approached me for a third
15 time. The Inquiry may remember, at the end of me giving
16 evidence against Barnardo's in 2018, a Crown Office
17 representative apologised for the lack of
18 professionalism, insincerity and just how inappropriate
19 their communications were. I'm going to remind you of
20 the specifics of this anyway.

21 After the police had charged a man,
22 Mr QFB, more accurately known to me as
23 a rapist, a sexual abuser, a groomer, a monster for the
24 multiple sexual offences that he perpetrated on me
25 during a grotesque failure of guardianship when employed

1 by Barnardo's, this sexual predator, consumer,
2 paedophile, adult lover of my young flesh had escaped
3 justice again when I received a letter from the
4 Procurator Fiscal Service stating:

5 'Crown Office (senior lawyers) have considered the
6 information available and decided that no further action
7 is appropriate in this case.'

8 Now, I still cannot comprehend the word
9 'appropriate' when it is placed alongside any sexual
10 claims, particularly when there were sufficient evidence
11 to charge this man with sexual crimes against a young
12 boy. It was later explained in some foraging dialect,
13 I don't know, I couldn't make head nor tail of what was
14 being stated but I got the gist of the evil words, in
15 that, that it was not in the public interest to pursue
16 a man who had committed rape and multiple other sexual
17 offences against a child.

18 There was no mention of what was in my best
19 interest, the only interest that should have mattered.
20 As someone who has lived through extensive historic
21 sexual horrors and is able to articulate those evils
22 accurately, surely I had the same rights, the same human
23 rights, as anyone else.

24 I also had a voice, a very important voice, and
25 I knew how to use it effectively, responsibly and with

1 balance.

2 To then have my case administered by individuals who
3 were spectacularly insensitive, uncaring and lacked any
4 understanding around the impacts of monstrous sexual
5 crimes, is simply unforgivable.

6 My updated experience with the Procurator Fiscal
7 Services leaves one feeling quite helpless really and
8 it's been like falling overboard on an underprivileged
9 luxury cruise and being swept away by the undercurrent,
10 fighting to keep my head above the water so that the
11 lifeguard can see me. Thankfully he does, but he throws
12 me a lifebuoy that's made of lead.

13 Some time between January 2024 and May 2024, I had
14 been allocated a VIA officer, this was a Victim
15 Information and Advice Officer from the Scottish Child
16 Abuse Inquiry review team. On 6 June 2024, I received
17 an introductory call from this lady officer. During our
18 conversation she informed me that one of her team who
19 had been working very closely with the police had just
20 received a second police report about
21 Mr QFB . I believed this to be
22 additional allegations from perhaps other children, now
23 also occupying adult frames, and I asked if this was
24 something she could clarify. She promised to look into
25 it and get back to me. Needless to say, she didn't.

1 Move on 12 weeks, 29 August 2024, I received a call
2 from my solicitor informing me that she had just been
3 advised by the Depute Procurator Fiscal that on
4 [REDACTED] 2024, Mr QFB [REDACTED] had passed away
5 from a diabetic heart attack, so to clarify: this was
6 two months after I had received my introductory call
7 from the same service, and five-and-a-half months after
8 this monster had died.

9 I'll come back to the Deputy Procurator Fiscal in
10 a bit.

11 Move on another seven weeks, 10 October 2024,
12 I received a letter dated 8 October 2024 from my VIA
13 officer, essentially informing me of the same.

14 Ultimately, it had taken precisely 27 weeks, that is
15 just over half a year, to inform me that a man who had
16 raped me, the same man she had claimed had been
17 questioned just a few months ago, had in fact died seven
18 months ago and that now this 28-year-old case was closed
19 as if it meant nothing.

20 Her letter also advised that police enquiries
21 directed by COPFS had concluded and senior procurators,
22 known as Crown counsel, decided he should be prosecuted.

23 The last thing I saw in this letter was her
24 designation: victim and advice officer.

25 Victim. Let me tell you just how nauseating this

1 title is to see for anyone tattooed with sexual abuse,
2 past or present. Victims have names. Names that are
3 vitally important, particularly when someone has already
4 been stripped of their dignity by some evil monster and
5 the most important element to help someone feel
6 comforted, safe and human again is to use their name and
7 not for them to see the word 'victim'.

8 My name is 'Killian'. It has been ever since I can
9 remember. Ever since I was old enough to change it in
10 1984, my name was Killian. Ever since I introduced
11 myself to others as Killian, my name was Killian. Ever
12 since I got my driving licence in 1988, my name was
13 Killian. Ever since I struggled with life, it was
14 Killian struggling with life, and ever since I started
15 disclosing facts about my sexual, mental and physical
16 abuses, my name had always been Killian. Yet every
17 single authority figure or organisation I am forced to
18 interact with throughout my life has transformed me into
19 a cult-like single offensive word 'victim'.

20 My name is everything to me. It's who I am and who
21 I have been fighting to become all this time. It's my
22 soul, my personality, my success, my failures, my
23 silence, my voice, my ambition, my stability, my
24 actuality, but more importantly, it is the cornerstone
25 of managing my time here and there, past and present.

1 It is also how I endeavour to become the better version
2 of myself and yet everywhere I turn, I am plagued by
3 branding rather than my actual identity. Rather than
4 being Killian, I must first have to accept that I am
5 a victim.

6 When I hear someone refer to me as victim
7 I immediately correct them and say: don't you mean
8 'victor'? I use the word 'victor' to try to set
9 a different scene, change the overall perception of how
10 others that I'm forced to interact with view me,
11 particularly to emphasise that I am their equal and they
12 are mine.

13 I remember for years that I was very vocal about
14 anyone referring to me as a man or calling me 'mister'.
15 I still hate both these titles equally, simply because
16 they are triggers for me and always have been. It was
17 mostly people with titles who abused me and most of them
18 were men.

19 Another disgusting representation is the word
20 'survivor'. Survivors are people who have been rescued,
21 maybe from a sinking ship, a burning building, a plane
22 crash, a war zone or even an alien abduction. Me,
23 I haven't survived anything. I am in fact surviving and
24 will continue surviving each and every day, something
25 I fight to do and will likely be doing for the rest of

1 my life.

2 Who I am today isn't who I'm going to be tomorrow.
3 And it's the unknown that I fear, not the journey or the
4 fight. The fact is no one is a survivor of sexual
5 abuse, rape, historic or otherwise. We all continue
6 surviving it differently each day. Using this word to
7 describe historic rapes and sexual abuses is in fact
8 incendiary to me and many others that I have spoken
9 with. It's insensitive, societal branding that appears
10 to foreclose the mental, physical, physiological and
11 emotional impacts of historic sexual crimes.

12 Look at the word 'survivor'. It says: 'Okay, we
13 acknowledged you were raped and/or sexually abused, the
14 single most disfiguring event of anyone's life, but
15 there, there, it's all better now'.

16 What gives anyone who hasn't directly experienced
17 rape or morbid sexual abuses the right to designate me
18 as a survivor? Surviving historic sexual abuse and/or
19 rape is unfinished business and always will be.

20 Today, like any other day -- sorry, today, is like
21 any other day, meaning my full-time job is managing the
22 deeply complex and traumatised child living within my
23 adult frame. It's a difficult job and one would assume
24 that after a lifetime of doing it, surely it becomes
25 easier. It doesn't. The older one gets, the harder it

1 is, and you become more consumed by the injustice and
2 how long it takes to see justice. The lack of anything
3 positive for people who are surviving becomes more
4 tiring each day.

5 I suppose it would be like or easier to describe it
6 like living in constant quarantine. You know there is
7 a door to open, you know where the door is, you can see
8 it, but there's no handle on your side. You can see
9 through the door. You can even see all the people on
10 the other side, where there is a handle, but not one of
11 them are willing to open and invite you through.

12 Speaking up about -- excuse me, speaking up about
13 historical ... historic spaces and what took place then
14 and now is a lot to ask anyone. However, it is vitally
15 important people have that opportunity and it's the only
16 sure way of gathering -- sorry, of gaining a better
17 understanding of the many complicated personalities
18 charged with exposing evils, which brings me neatly back
19 to the Depute Procurator Fiscal.

20 This Depute Procurator Fiscal believed that their
21 most considered approach, basically their cowardly route
22 to me, was to offload a declaration of death regarding
23 a criminal case against Mr QFB [REDACTED] that
24 I had been fighting for almost 28 years to a solicitor
25 that I had recently instructed to act on my behalf on

1 a civil matter against Barnardo's and nothing to do with
2 criminal proceedings against Mr QFB.

3 It highlights contempt and a complete and utter lack
4 of respect towards me and the crimes, given that
5 I'm essentially the client. It's worrying
6 rebelliousness in that that this was a case I had
7 brought and had been fighting for decades and
8 I absolutely had the right to hear this news ahead of
9 anyone else.

10 It's important to understand also why I chose to
11 initiate a civil action against Barnardo's. This was
12 because I could not become part of any system that was
13 so deeply offensive by the methods used to offer
14 compensation to anyone surviving historic abuse, sexual
15 or otherwise, the Redress Scheme.

16 The Redress Scheme, as you know, was set up by the
17 Scottish Government, but realising just how defiled
18 I would feel by something that was simply
19 a government-sponsored gagging order in exchange for
20 cash, I wanted no part of it. The Redress Scheme simply
21 exploits everyone who deserves to have some level of
22 financial compensation and it is traded and swapped for
23 signatures and silence. Quite how that becomes --
24 became an incentive for compensation horrifies me and is
25 beyond even my imagination.

1 I have learnt that people in service provision are
2 generally confused and do not understand why they cannot
3 get well-roundedness to fit into square holes.

4 Ultimately, as long as I present myself as a victim, as
5 a survivor, as someone who is broken, it seems that
6 I'll be okay, but that's not me and having to accept
7 that less is somehow more seems entirely inconceivable.

8 Thank you.

9 That is not a reflection against the Inquiry or its
10 staff, who I 100 per cent support and think they're
11 incredible.

12 LADY SMITH: Killian, thank you so much for that and
13 I should probably confirm with you that the person you
14 are speaking about having contacted you was from the
15 Crown, from their division that liaises with the
16 Inquiry, it wasn't from us. That was the one earlier
17 last year.

18 But quite separately from that detail, Killian,
19 I can't thank you enough for what was a remarkably
20 thoughtful, articulate and powerful delivery of
21 extraordinarily valuable thoughts drawing on your
22 experience.

23 It will live with all of us in the Inquiry --

24 A. I believe that. Yes.

25 LADY SMITH: -- permanently. You have done us an enormous

1 service by pulling those thoughts together. I'm really
2 grateful to you.

3 I'm grateful to you also, as I said at the
4 beginning, for coming along again to talk about things
5 in your childhood, in residential care, that were not
6 good and some of which amounted to abuse and which
7 contributed in that ten-month period you were in the
8 assessment centre to a litany of young Killian not being
9 treated the way he should have been, and being subjected
10 to continuing damage. I can see that.

11 You will be exhausted.

12 A. I'm okay.

13 LADY SMITH: It may hit you later.

14 I'm now able to let you go, but be assured you go
15 with my deeply grateful thanks. Thank you.

16 A. Thank you very much.

17 (The witness withdrew)

18 LADY SMITH: Ms Forbes.

19 MS FORBES: My Lady, Mr Sheldon now has a read-in that he
20 can do.

21 LADY SMITH: Thank you very much.

22 Mr Sheldon.

23 MR SHELDON: Yes, my Lady.

24 'Travis' (read)

25 MR SHELDON: This is the statement of an applicant who is

1 anonymous and uses the pseudonym 'Travis'.

2 My Lady, 'Travis's' statement has been read in
3 before in relation to his experiences at St Philip's and
4 St Mary's Kenmure. The St Philip's transcript is
5 TRN-12-000000104. The St Mary's transcript, this is
6 Day 500, is TRN-12-000000133.

7 I should have said that 'Travis's' own statement is
8 WIT-1-000001246. The part of the statement to be read
9 in today relates to 'Travis's' experience at Rossie.

10 My Lady, material about 'Travis's' early life, life
11 after care and the impact of his experiences on him, has
12 already been read in, so I can perhaps go straight to
13 the Rossie passage.

14 Although just to recap very briefly. 'Travis' tells
15 us at the start of his statement that he was born in the
16 Vale of Leven. He talks about his early life and
17 significantly perhaps says that he had ADHD and I think
18 clearly struggled with school.

19 He says, paragraph 8:

20 'I was always too hyper.'

21 He didn't want to sit in a chair, he said he
22 couldn't do that. It's then that things started to
23 become difficult for 'Travis'.

24 At paragraph 11, he says he was at
25 a Children's Panel and even there, his ADHD was really

1 bad and at that point he was taken to his first
2 placement at a children's home in Clydebank.

3 Thereafter he had a number of placements before
4 arriving at Rossie, where he was admitted on
5 [REDACTED] 2006.

6 I think I should just note, my Lady, that it may be
7 that his statement is partly out of order. He was at
8 St Philip's, Plains, [REDACTED] 2005 and St Mary's, Kenmure,
9 [REDACTED] 2006, so after Rossie.

10 LADY SMITH: He started in Rossie when he was about 15 years
11 old, just 15?

12 MR SHELTON: That would be right, my Lady.

13 LADY SMITH: Yes.

14 MR SHELTON: Starting from paragraph 141, page 24, he says:

15 'I was in Rossie Farm for a short period when I was
16 about 14 or 15.'

17 We think 15:

18 'It was an old building. That was horrible up
19 there. It was the worst secure I had been in in my
20 life. I was in the Lunan unit.'

21 He talks about the routine and says, paragraph 142:

22 'They had a mad room downstairs. It was underneath
23 the Lunan unit. There was nothing in there except
24 a mattress and a toilet. There was a window. It was
25 like a police cell. When you first come into that

1 place, they put you into that cell to search you. They
2 used the cell as a punishment too.'

3 I think we heard about this room, my Lady, from the
4 witness 'Stan' last Friday.

5 LADY SMITH: Yes.

6 MR SHELTON: 'My gran did come and visit me though. I never
7 got home visits from Rossie, I did from the other units
8 but not Rossie, I don't know why this was, maybe you had
9 to earn home visits, but I don't know.

10 'When I didn't go back from home leave, the schools
11 would phone the polis to come out. They would always
12 get me at my gran's house. My gran used to say I needed
13 to stop doing it, but I told her I just wanted to be at
14 home with my family.'

15 He talks about abuse from paragraph 145 and says:

16 'The staff would drag you downstairs from the unit
17 and fling you in the cell for hours. The staff were
18 horrible people and they were horrible to you. They'd
19 put you there for arguing with them. The staff would do
20 stuff and you would shout at them. Then they'll hit you
21 and put you down in the cell. They hit you anywhere
22 they wanted. The way the staff treated us in general
23 was bad. They basically locked us in a room and left us
24 there until we calmed down. The staff put us in that
25 place, but then they were shouting and telling you to

1 bolt.

2 'They left you in that place even though you were
3 shouting "please". You'd be left for an hour or so. It
4 depended when they wanted to come and get you and until
5 you calmed down. You couldn't calm down because you had
6 anxiety at that stage. I'd take asthma attacks. I was
7 greeting and saying, "Please help me, please help me,
8 let me out, I can't breathe". I felt claustrophobic.
9 When I get claustrophobic in a wee room, I feel my
10 asthma and my breathing goes all dodgy. I can't breathe
11 at all. I didn't get any help for that. You'd kick
12 doors for an hour to try to get them to let you out.
13 The staff said you were kicking the door and so you
14 weren't getting out. They said to shut up and they'd
15 leave you. All you want is to get out for fresh air and
16 not be locked in a wee square. When you banged the
17 door, they'd come in and hit you.'

18 He names a particular guy, who he says was horrible:

19 'He was kind of bald and a wee solid guy. He'd
20 fling you about and drag you down the stairs.

21 'Strip searching always happened at Rossie ...
22 St Philip's and St Mary's were ten times better than
23 Rossie ... in every way. Rossie Farm was a completely
24 different level and wasn't like the way the other secure
25 were. It was an old layout and old staff. They were

1 horrible. Anybody who's been up there will say that.

2 'There were a lot of restraints. The staff grabbed
3 you and put you on the floor. They put your arms up
4 your back and your head on the floor. You got carpet
5 burns.

6 'I never told anyone about the abuse I was getting
7 at the residential schools. I just always did the same
8 thing, I ran away, just avoiding everything.

9 'I got my nose broke by some boy and the staff
10 didn't take me to the hospital to get it fixed. I got
11 whacked by a pool cue on the nose and then the person
12 ran away with the staff. The staff grabbed me because
13 I had grabbed pool balls to get at him. I had to stick
14 a towel on my nose for ages. It ended up all dried
15 blood. The staff did nothing for you. They didn't care
16 for your health. I phoned my mum and told her somebody
17 had hit me with a pool cue.'

18 My Lady, I should add that there does appear to be
19 a record of 'Travis' being taken to a minor injuries
20 clinic in Montrose on 1 January 2007.

21 Paragraph 152:

22 'I don't know why I was moved out of Rossie to
23 St Philip's. There was a lot of bad stuff happening.
24 We would kick off because of everything that was
25 happening to us. They were bullying young people. We

1 would think we weren't having that and we would do
2 something. Then we'd get moved.'

3 'Travis' then goes on to talk about his experiences
4 at St Philip's and leaving care.

5 As I say, the material about that has already been
6 read in, so I don't need to trouble my Lady with that.

7 LADY SMITH: Yes, I remember that. Thank you.

8 MR SHELTON: If my Lady would bear with me just for
9 a moment.

10 Ms Forbes has a read-in.

11 LADY SMITH: Thank you.

12 'Aaron' (read)

13 MS FORBES: My Lady, the next statement is from an applicant
14 who is anonymous and is known as 'Aaron'.

15 The reference for 'Aaron's' statement is
16 WIT-1-0000000019.

17 My Lady, 'Aaron' tells us he was born in 1958 and he
18 talks about his life before care between paragraphs 2
19 and 9. He was born and brought up in Glasgow, he lived
20 with his parents. He had four siblings. He was the
21 oldest. His father was in prison and his parents
22 separated when he was young. His mother became
23 an alcoholic.

24 He started running away to stay with his dad after
25 he was out of prison and he was going backwards and

1 forwards. He says he was sexually abused by his father
2 on one occasion and then things changed and he started
3 running away to be on his own. He says from the age of
4 9 he was basically on his own. His parents didn't care
5 where he was and eventually he was put into care.

6 He then tells us about some placements. He was in
7 a children's home in Fife and he was about at least 9
8 when he went there. He says he was there for eight
9 months or so. His two siblings were with him there. He
10 then went back to stay with his mother in Glasgow. He
11 was roughly about 10 at that point, but the windows were
12 all boarded up and his mother and stepfather were drunk.

13 He ran away, lived in various places, walked the
14 streets or lived in squats and he was caught by the
15 police stealing and he says that from that day on he was
16 classed as a delinquent, but he was stealing to survive.
17 He says he was taken to Larchgrove from court.

18 He talks about Larchgrove from paragraphs 49 to 100.
19 That part of his statement was read in on 22 March 2024,
20 that was Day 427 of the Inquiry. Essentially he thinks
21 he was 9 or 10 when he first went there.

22 There was a second time but he's not sure when, with
23 an eight-month gap between the two times. He was about
24 between three and six weeks each time being remanded and
25 he says whilst there there was physical assaults by

1 staff and bullying by older boys.

2 He was taken to a court hearing and sentenced to
3 Balrossie after, he thinks the first occasion, or on one
4 of the occasions, and again tells us about Balrossie
5 between paragraphs 102 and 149. That was read in on
6 9 October 2024, which was Day 483 of the Inquiry.

7 Again, he thinks he was 9 or 10 at the time, but we
8 know from records we have, my Lady, that he was admitted
9 on [REDACTED] 1970, so he was aged 11 and nearly 12 at
10 that point. So he was there for between eight months
11 and a year, he says.

12 He talks about some dental abuses he saw and there
13 was emotional abuse, where children were called names.

14 He said sexual abuse occurred, but he wasn't
15 sexually abused and he says though that boys were taken
16 out of dorms at night by staff, there were physical
17 assaults by staff and it was the same sort of physical
18 abuse he got in Larchgrove. There was inappropriate
19 touching by staff as well and bullying towards other
20 boys and he says that he took part in that himself to
21 avoid being bullied.

22 He then left Balrossie and he talks about that from
23 paragraph 150 to 153. He says he left because his time
24 was up. He doesn't know how old he was at the time. He
25 was supposed to go home to stay with his mum but he

1 ended up staying with, he says, 'toerag pals' and was
2 running here, there and everywhere and in his own words
3 he says he became a 'wee ned'. He got into trouble
4 regularly and was recognised by the police when they
5 picked him up and he was called a delinquent and unruly
6 and ended up in trouble and was taken before a court and
7 sent for a three-week assessment at Howdenhall in
8 Edinburgh.

9 Then he tells us about Howdenhall from paragraph 154
10 and he says that the unit he was in was secure, the same
11 sort of thing as Larchgrove, with bars on the windows.
12 You couldn't go from one place to another, the doors
13 would be locked.

14 He says, at paragraph 154:

15 'Liberton was okay. However, the staff were still
16 vile. There was a lot that happened in there.'

17 He tells us at paragraph 155 there were maybe about
18 40 children there. It was his first mixed placement
19 with boys and girls, but the boys were kept on the one
20 side and girls on the other.

21 At paragraph 156, he says:

22 'The boys and girls were initially segregated.
23 Later on they allowed us to have times when we could
24 interact. They started to do music sessions and things
25 like that where we could mix. I remember that during

1 these sessions kissing and cuddling happened. Before
2 you knew it, the boys and the girls were sneaking across
3 the place to get across to each other. There was loads
4 of that went on in there.'

5 He said that again he was sent there for
6 a three-week assessment by the court to decide what to
7 do next with him.

8 He tells us about the layout of Liberton as being
9 a square and that he said inside it was closed, there
10 was no way of getting out.

11 In relation to staff, he talks about that from
12 paragraph 159 and says:

13 'There were male and female staff members ...'

14 However, it was the male staff members who worked
15 with the boys and the female staff worked with the
16 girls.

17 He says at paragraph 160:

18 'Mr MTQ was SNR there. Mr Cybil
19 was a nice small gentleman. He was SNR
20 SNR .'

21 'Mr GBQ was an Irish guy who was there. Other
22 care workers included Mr PAU . He was a nice guy. His
23 house was somewhere in Edinburgh. I remember that I was
24 taken to his house on a few occasions during the third
25 time I was at Liberton. It was an amazing place. All

1 the foster kids were running around having a riot.'

2 He then tells us about some other staff members in
3 the following paragraphs.

4 He says at paragraph 165 that during his second time
5 there, he was there with his brother and then during the
6 third time, he was there with his cousin, but the first
7 time he wasn't there with any siblings or relatives.

8 He talks about the routine then from paragraph 166
9 and says that he was only there for a short period of
10 time the first two times, and that his memories are
11 really from the third time that he was there, which was
12 longer, but the routine was pretty much the same every
13 time he was there.

14 He says at paragraph 167 that he could see that
15 Liberton was made to be more relaxed. The staff spoke
16 to you a bit more, the classrooms were a bit better:

17 'It felt like Larchgrove but on a smaller scale.'

18 He says at paragraph 168:

19 'Looking back, the routine and regime that was in
20 place there was exactly like what you would get in
21 an adult open prison. It was as if they were preparing
22 you for life in prison. Even the shape of the place and
23 the facilities were exactly the same as some of the
24 prisons I went to in adult life.'

25 He talks about getting up then by either a bell or

1 the staff chapping the dorm door, having to make the bed
2 in a certain way with hospital wings, then got washed
3 and dressed before breakfast and then classes during the
4 day, after which there was some recreation time; TV in
5 the lounge or table tennis, but they made their own
6 entertainment, but there would always be two members of
7 staff watching them.

8 He then talks about the sleeping arrangements at
9 paragraph 170 and says there were four or five smaller
10 dormitories which they slept in and that all the dorm
11 doors were locked at night.

12 He tells us about washing and bathing at
13 paragraph 171, but he can't remember much about the
14 showers. He says that you had to get permission though
15 to use the shower, because the shower room doors would
16 be locked.

17 He talks about meal times and says at paragraph 172
18 that the boys and girls had separate dining halls, but
19 describes the food as being tremendous.

20 In relation to work or chores at paragraph 173, he
21 says:

22 'There were chores, but they were a lot less
23 stressful than the other places I went to. The chores
24 mostly involved cleaning.'

25 He says that you didn't receive harsh punishments if

1 you made a mistake:

2 'It was kind of more laid back in that way.'

3 In relation to clothing, he says at 174:

4 'It was basically just shorts, a T-shirt and a wee

5 jumper.'

6 He describes it as a kind of basic uniform but says

7 that there was no personal possessions whilst he was in

8 there, but thinks they got pocket money, because there

9 was a tuck shop that they could use.

10 At paragraph 176, he says:

11 'You weren't allowed to keep cigarettes on you. You

12 had to go and get your cigarettes when you needed them.

13 I think you were allowed two or three a day. After you

14 got your cigarette you had to smoke them in front of the

15 staff members or in the area that they were in. I think

16 they did all that really more because the staff members

17 were the ones who controlled the lighters and matches.'

18 He talks about school from paragraph 177 and says he

19 thinks the girls had separate classes from the boys, but

20 he's not sure and says:

21 'It was general schooling with lessons in English,

22 maths and things like that.'

23 He sat at the back of the class and was struggling.

24 He needed things explained to him. He comments that he

25 was that behind he couldn't even tell people his date of

1 birth and he didn't know what a date of birth was. He
2 remembers being made to look a fool when he was asked
3 things and didn't know the answer.

4 At paragraph 178, 'Aaron' says:

5 'Looking back, none of the boys listened to what was
6 being taught. Not one of us knew what the teachers were
7 talking about. We just weren't interested. The
8 teaching in there was probably quite good. I remember
9 teachers sitting down with me and trying to help me to
10 understand things. They did everything they could. We
11 just didn't give them a chance.'

12 He then goes on to tell us about leisure time at
13 paragraph 179 and talks about there being a gymnasium
14 where they could play cards, games or smoke and there
15 was a football pitch.

16 Going forward then in his statement to
17 paragraph 183, he talks about visits and says he can't
18 remember getting visits from anyone during his first
19 time and can't remember seeing any social workers during
20 all the times he was there and never saw any inspections
21 whilst he was there.

22 Going to paragraph 187, he says that in relation to
23 bed wetting, there wasn't so much because the kids were
24 older but it still happened, but it was dealt with in
25 a calm way.

1 He then tells us about abuse and he says, this is
2 Liberton the first time, from paragraph 188:

3 'A lot of what I remember comes from the third time
4 that I was there. I was only there for a short period
5 of time the first two times I was there, so I think that
6 is why I don't have many memories of incidents or things
7 happening from back then.'

8 He says that corporal punishment was used and that
9 the belt was used to discipline them and he says:

10 'You would get the belt for normal everyday things
11 like bad language and things like that.' He says he had
12 had the belt before but it was normally on the hand.
13 'It was never over the backside.'

14 He then describes the procedure at Liberton at
15 paragraph 190, he says:

16 'The procedure was that you would have to go up to
17 the office and see a man called Mr Cybil, Mr Cybil
18 always then delegated the belt. He was the only one who
19 delegated that. He never gave you the belt himself.
20 I think he was the one who delegated the belt, because
21 he was SNR . It was always then Mr GBQ
22 who then gave you the belt.

23 'The belt they used was one of the old pronged
24 leather belts that they used to use in schools. They
25 made you wear nylon shorts when they gave you the belt.

1 You had to put them on before your punishment and take
2 them off after your punishment. They would hit you over
3 your arse over the top of the football shorts.

4 'I remember that they were only allowed to belt you
5 six times at a time. I found out about that rule from
6 speaking to other kids who were in Liberton after I was
7 punished excessively one time by Mr GBQ during my
8 third time at Liberton. Learning the rules from the
9 other boys was the way you learnt most things in there.'

10 He talks about bullying at paragraph 193:

11 'By the time I went to Liberton the first time I was
12 living a bit like [he names some boys he had met at
13 Balrossie]. I had decided that nobody was going to hurt
14 me. I was a bully. I stayed that way when I was in all
15 the places from Balrossie onwards. I acted like that to
16 protect myself. I didn't really want to hurt others.
17 I had come to realise that through being stronger and
18 more aggressive I could control things.'

19 He then goes on to tell us that he left the first
20 time and he says that after he left, he got in trouble
21 for breaking into a barber's shop. He thinks he would
22 have been 11 years old at the time, but I think we know
23 from the record of Balrossie that he would have been
24 older, probably 13 at least.

25 He says then he was in the second time with his

1 younger brother and I think he says his brother was
2 about 7 at that time, but again he was probably older,
3 given the fact that he was older, but the second time he
4 was there for three weeks.

5 At paragraph 198 he talks about leaving the second
6 time with his brother and he says that they attacked the
7 social worker in the car on the way back home, made her
8 stop the car and escaped. He didn't want to go back to
9 an alcoholic household. He was caught and taken back to
10 Liberton the same day.

11 He then tells us about the experience of being in
12 a cottage on lochs in Dalmellington for a few weeks, and
13 the way he's put it is he blew it and wrote in paint on
14 the walls and then he was taken to a foster care
15 placement in a house in the west of Scotland, but he
16 can't remember the circumstances surrounding leaving
17 there and ultimately he was taken to Thornly Park.

18 He tells us about Thornly Park between paragraphs
19 221 and 265 of his statement, and this was read in on
20 9 October 2024 into the Inquiry, Day 483.

21 He thinks he was about 13 when he went there, but
22 again he might have been older, given the records from
23 Balrossie. He says he was there for about a year and he
24 recognised boys from his time in previous places from
25 Larchgrove, Balrossie and Liberton.

1 In relation to abuse, he says the staff were all
2 bullies. There was physical and verbal abuse.

3 He describes by this time, by the time he left
4 there, he was more wild and aggressive. His life
5 started getting out of control, he got involved in more
6 serious crime. He was supposed to be living with his
7 dad and stepmother but didn't do that and he was getting
8 into trouble with the police a lot and in cells every
9 week and he was caught, along with his cousin, and again
10 sent to Liberton for a three-week assessment.

11 He says he was about 13 when he went there the third
12 time, but again he must have been older. This time he
13 was there much longer, about five months, he thinks, or
14 longer. And he talks about Liberton the third time from
15 paragraph 266 of his statement.

16 This third time then, he tells us that he did get
17 regular visitors, this is at paragraph 267, the third
18 time. It was more from his father's side of the family
19 though in Fife. He wasn't really involved with his mum
20 by this point. Again though, he can't remember seeing
21 any social workers while he was there.

22 He talks about trips from paragraph 268 and says
23 there were some good elements of this third time at
24 Liberton, there would be walks in the Pentlands, but he
25 does describe a situation where two staff members who

1 worked at Liberton would take them on these walks.

2 At paragraph 269 he says:

3 'Mr PAU and Mrs [REDACTED] would go off together alone
4 ...'.
5

6 And they would leave, he says, he and this other
7 girl] to their own devices which he says gave them the
8 opportunity to kiss and cuddle, so they were happy with
9 that arrangement but he goes on at that paragraph to
10 say:

11 'We knew that what Mr PAU and Mrs [REDACTED] were doing
12 was no good, but it served our purposes. However, at
13 the time we weren't interested in what was going on
14 between them. Looking back, Mr PAU and Mrs [REDACTED] were up
15 to no good. They abused their position and abused me
16 [and he names the girl].'
17

18 He then goes on to talk about running away from
19 paragraph 271 and says:

20 'During the third time I was at Liberton, I tried to
21 escape. I escaped from the gymnasium. The windows had
22 small bars over them. We managed to start cutting the
23 bars with a hacksaw we had found. We had to do that
24 a little bit each day. We realised that when we had cut
25 them enough to get out we had to be quick, because we
26 only had a small window to get through. We planned it.
27 We removed the bars and smashed the window. In the end

1 it was only myself who got out of the window ...

2 'I then got over the fence and the football pitch.

3 I remember managing to leg it through the park that was

4 near Liberton. I remember that they had the dogs out

5 looking for me because I heard them chasing me. I ended

6 up hiding in a nearby burn. I then got away. The

7 hassle even to get that far was unreal. I eventually

8 got caught working across the Forth Road Bridge. I was

9 caught the same night. I thought I was to make it to

10 Fife but they caught me. I think I was then taken

11 straight back to Liberton.'

12 He talks about abuse this third time from

13 paragraph 273, and he says:

14 'Mr GBQ was an evil son of a bitch. He was

15 a brutal, sadistic animal. He was the one who always

16 seemed to punish the kids. I'm not sure but he seemed

17 to be in charge of all the discipline there. He was one

18 of the staff who gave out the belt as a punishment.

19 'I remember that after I was caught after running

20 away, I was brought back to Liberton. All hell broke

21 loose. I was put into a room, which was basically

22 a cell. For some reason I remember that they weren't

23 allowed to call it a cell, but it was a cell really. My

24 punishment was that I was to receive six of the best

25 with the belt over my arse from Mr GBQ. Looking

1 back, I think that was fair enough because I had caused
2 damage.

3 'What I think was too much was that I was then given
4 two further lots of six of the best immediately after in
5 two goes. In between the further punishments,
6 Mr GBQ walked out the room and then immediately
7 walked back in. He walked straight out, locked the
8 door, immediately opened it again and walked back in to
9 give me the next lot. He then did that again. In total
10 I was hit 18 times in quick succession. I remember that
11 the rule back then was that they couldn't give you the
12 belt that many times. They were allowed to give you six
13 of the best on a single occasion and that was it.
14 Mr GBQ did it all in one lot over a period of
15 minutes.

16 'Being hit that many times broke my heart. I was
17 greeting. It was hell. I remember Mr GBQ seemed
18 to be enjoying it all. He was an evil person. There is
19 the punishment part of these things and there is the
20 control part of things. Sometimes they punished you in
21 these places because they wanted no more of it. To me
22 that was what it was like in that room. Mr GBQ
23 had decided that he wanted no more of my crap and he
24 wanted an end of it.

25 'I wasn't the only one who received punishment in

1 the way that Mr GBQ did when I was there. There
2 were two other boys who escaped. They received exactly
3 the same sort of punishment from Mr GBQ. Those
4 were the ones who taught me how to steal cars.

5 'Shortly after receiving the belt from Mr GBQ
6 I was due a visit, my father and my stepmother came to
7 visit. My stepmother could see from the way I was
8 sitting that I was trying to cover up the injuries that
9 I had received from being [I think that should be
10 "given"] the belt so many times. She then looked at the
11 marks. When she saw the marks she flipped. She went
12 ballistic. She took me right into the office to see
13 Mr MTQ. She took my trousers right off me. There
14 was still blood coming from my back end and back. It
15 was bad. I remember that my stepmother was complaining
16 and that Mr MTQ said they would investigate. I don't
17 know whether they actually did that.

18 'I remember that later on I went to stay at my
19 father and stepmother's. When I went into the house it
20 was full of all of the old metal bunk beds that were
21 previously in Liberton. My theory is that my father and
22 my stepmother were paid off by Liberton with the old
23 beds so as my father could profit from the scrap metal.
24 It was like a trade-off. I think that my father
25 probably manipulated the situation after seeing all the

1 hundreds of beds sitting waiting to be scrapped.
2 I think that is probably how that all came about.
3 I remember those beds being in that house right up until
4 they moved out.'

5 He says then that his brother was released and
6 allowed to go home from Liberton and he was told that he
7 was being taken to Rossie Farm and by that time he was
8 aware of Rossie Farm from speaking to other guys in
9 other places.

10 At paragraph 281, he says:

11 'When I was told I was going to Rossie Farm I knew
12 that I was getting taken to "shit and hell". I was
13 crapping myself about going there. I really was.
14 I remember being taken to Rossie Farm in a car. I don't
15 know whether it was a man or woman who took me.'

16 He then tells us about Rossie Farm from
17 paragraph 282:

18 'The place was for general delinquents who were
19 deemed to be unruly. I think the place was set up to
20 try and nip in the bud whatever nonsense was going on in
21 our heads. I think that's what they saw themselves as
22 doing there.

23 'I think I went there at some point between the ages
24 of 14 and 15. I was probably in Rossie Farm for about
25 eight months. It could have maybe been as long as

1 a year. Rossie Farm was the last place I classify as me
2 being in care. I think by the time I left Rossie Farm,
3 I had got to the stage where I felt I was coming to
4 maturity.

5 'The place was full to the gunnels. There were
6 easily 100 kids in the place. There were perhaps more.
7 It was all boys. I would say that everybody was between
8 the ages of about 14 and 16. I don't remember there
9 being any younger boys there.'

10 He then tells us about the layout of Rossie and
11 talks about having massive grounds and that the
12 buildings were laid out in a circle. The classrooms
13 were on ground level and that's also where the staff had
14 their offices and the dining hall and assembly hall.
15 The level above was all the dormitories and there was
16 a swimming pool which stuck out the side.

17 He talks about MacDonald wing being adjacent to
18 Rossie Farm and that was the secure closed part.

19 He says at paragraph 286:

20 'It was a special unit that held about ten kids. It
21 was like Colditz. There was a 20-foot tall fence with
22 barbed wire all over the top that surrounded it. To get
23 access to the wing you would have to go through a big
24 secure door that looked like a safe door.

25 'The MacDonald wing was self-sufficient. No one was

1 allowed out. The boys who were in there got nothing.
2 They weren't allowed outside or to go to any activities
3 or anything like that. They were in there 24 hours
4 a day. I don't think there were any staff in there.
5 They were left alone to their own devices. It was
6 scary.'

7 He then tells us about staff from paragraph 288 and
8 he says there were only about six staff members looking
9 after all the boys. There wasn't many and the staff
10 controlled things in their own way.

11 He says SNR [REDACTED] was called Mr LLY [REDACTED], he
12 thinks, who would sit in his office all day. Then he
13 names somebody who was his key worker, who he didn't
14 have any qualms with.

15 There was also a janitor he talks about,
16 paragraph 291, he doesn't know his name. He was
17 an ex-army guy who sort of controlled and disciplined
18 the boys and he would tell people to shut up and what
19 have you.

20 He tells us there was a matron at paragraph 292 and
21 two chefs in the kitchens. In particular, he says at
22 292 about the chefs:

23 'One was a man, I don't remember his name, the other
24 was a woman called GBP [REDACTED]. I don't remember her
25 surname. She was probably about 30. GBP [REDACTED] was

1 replaced by another man towards the end of my time in
2 Rossie Farm. I don't remember his name.'

3 He tells us that the headmaster had a secretary, at
4 paragraph 293, who would come in, he says, dressed
5 inappropriately with mini skirts and low-cut tops and he
6 says that they never saw women and it made all the boys
7 have thoughts and they used to talk about it amongst
8 themselves.

9 He tells us at paragraph 209 that he knew all the
10 lads that were in there with him, they had come up
11 through the ranks is the way he describes it and they
12 were all from different areas of Scotland and they were
13 in groups, Edinburgh, Fife and Glasgow, but he went
14 across the groups because he was from all of those
15 places and he describes himself as being a helper
16 between the groups. If there was bother between two
17 boys in different groups, he would pass on messages and
18 that helped him, he says, not get into trouble from the
19 boys.

20 He then names some of the boys who were there.

21 He talks about the routine at Rossie from
22 paragraph 296 and he says he was taken into the
23 headmaster's office after arriving. It was a quick
24 introduction, the routine was explained abruptly, and
25 then he was introduced to his key worker, who showed him

1 his dorm and where he was sleeping. Then he was taken
2 to the matron who gave him his clothes and the janitor
3 showed him where all the boots were that they had to
4 polish.

5 He goes on to talk about what happened daily at
6 paragraph 297 and talks about being shouted up in the
7 morning about 7.00, making the bed before getting
8 washed, and then he says they had to stand for parade in
9 the assembly hall and when staff shouted your name, you
10 had to answer to show that you were there.

11 He talks about having to march, paragraph 298, on
12 the road between the main building and the road you turn
13 off to enter Rossie Farm's grounds. That was every
14 Sunday without fail and the staff would supervise those
15 marches. It was about two miles long.

16 In relation to sleeping arrangements, he says at
17 paragraph 299 that there were about eight to ten people
18 in each dormitory, with a bed and a side locker.
19 Everyone went to bed at the same time. There was
20 someone there at night supervising. You were allowed to
21 go to the toilet at night, but you weren't allowed to
22 wander.

23 He says then there was a massive shower block
24 attached to the dormitories and his wing with rows of
25 sinks and cubicles that you go in and out of.

1 He then talks about meal times and food from
2 paragraph 301. They would all eat together at the same
3 time in the dining hall, but they would be assigned
4 tables. He says the meals were good and they ate well
5 and they weren't forced to eat anything and he says he
6 always ate everything.

7 At paragraph 303, he says:

8 'Later on we used to go out places to work during
9 the days. I was in charge of sorting the food when we
10 went out renovating houses. I would prepare it all
11 before and heat it up when we were there. When we
12 worked in the fields, we were only fed two sandwiches,
13 consisting of bread, butter and jam and a cup of tea.
14 That was all you received for the eight hours you were
15 working. When you got back from working in the fields,
16 you were rewarded with one of the biggest meals you
17 could imagine. They fed you double what you were
18 normally given.

19 'I didn't have any chores because I was always in
20 the kitchens. I volunteered to go into the kitchens
21 instead of going to classes. I helped clean the pots,
22 make things, make up the tables, set up the tables and
23 things like that. I did what they generally needed me
24 to do in the kitchens. I worked in there from morning
25 till night. I was basically there full time.

1 'Rossie Farm would sometimes put the whole school
2 out to work. The staff would take us out in trucks. It
3 was just like a convoy. Sometimes we were subcontracted
4 out to farms. We would pick up stones or pick tatties
5 or berries in the fields. That always seemed to happen
6 during the harvesting season. Other times you were sent
7 out to paint and renovate houses. The house might be in
8 the middle of nowhere. You would end up doing that for
9 three weeks. We were paid for our work, but they kept
10 all the money. I think I was given 200 out of the
11 6,000 I would have earned doing that work. I was given
12 that when I left.'

13 He talks then about uniform at paragraph 306 and
14 says that they wore BDs and says they had two sets of
15 uniforms, a work set and a dress set for when you
16 weren't working. One set was brown and the other was
17 bluey grey and they wore boots.

18 There was no personal possessions, he says, and his
19 bedside cabinet he just kept his jammies, slippers and
20 a Bible that he was given and the money you got paid for
21 doing chores and working in the kitchen was enough to
22 keep you going in terms of tobacco and they sold
23 cigarettes in the canteen.

24 'Aaron' tells us there was a school at Rossie but he
25 never conformed to it. He says that from what he heard,

1 the ones who did conform were given good schooling. He
2 only went to a couple of classes and he remembers them
3 being more laid back than in other places he'd been and
4 he says he just sat around and did nothing. He treated
5 it as a carry on and kind of got in trouble during
6 class.

7 In relation to leisure, at paragraph 310 he says
8 they had all sorts of activities, everything was
9 organised and supervised. There was a swimming pool,
10 which was a big draw and they would drop everything in
11 the evening to go swimming. There was a football pitch,
12 but it all had to be organised through staff and they
13 even picked the teams. TV and music was restricted and
14 you were told when you could watch TV or listen to music
15 and it was always supervised and organised and done in
16 groups. You couldn't do that sort of thing on your own.

17 He then tells us that he got visits at paragraph 314
18 when he was there, his sister and his friend, but no one
19 else from his family came to visit and he never saw
20 a social worker while he was there.

21 His key worker was the person he went to, he says at
22 paragraph 315, but he doesn't remember doing that if he
23 needed anything and he would only be involved with him
24 if he got into trouble for fighting or something and
25 would come and have a word with him.

1 He talks about running away at paragraph 317 and
2 says the part that he was in was open so you could run
3 away if you wanted to, but he never did that. What
4 stopped him from wanting to run away was the MacDonald
5 wing and he knew they could send you there if he was
6 caught after running away and he heard it was hell in
7 there and there was a fear about being sent there.

8 He says, in relation to discipline at paragraph 318,
9 that the discipline was quite severe:

10 'Every one of the staff members was strict.
11 I'm sure the staff were all ex-army. They came across
12 like sergeant majors. There was no leniency whatsoever.

13 'A lot of the discipline was verbal. You were
14 addressed loudly. Normally by your second name. We
15 were all given numbers. We were sometimes referred to
16 by them, but it was mostly by our surnames. I remember
17 me and the other kids being called things like
18 "a delinquent bastard". You'd regularly hear the staff
19 saying, "You're just a delinquent" or, "You're a waste
20 of space". They really put you down. If you were
21 getting punished they would let everybody else know
22 about it. They would try to shame you.'

23 He then talks about the march being used as
24 a punishment for a handful of boys who had done
25 something wrong.

1 He talks about the MacDonald wing and being reminded
2 every day by staff that if you didn't behave you might
3 be sent there and this threat was the thing that staff
4 used the most over them and that was the one that made
5 them behave.

6 They used corporal punishment in the form of the
7 belt whilst he was there. It was always done over
8 shorts and they would again make him put on the shorts
9 before they received the punishment and it could be
10 whatever staff member who was on who would do that.

11 He says at paragraph 322:

12 'I remember you would be sent to your room and be
13 made to put on shorts and slippers. You had to do that
14 every time you were punished. You were then sent up to
15 the headmaster's office.

16 'The headmaster was the only one who gave you the
17 belt. Whatever the incident was you would be separated
18 out and taken to him. I remember sitting waiting to go
19 into his office in the secretary's office before him
20 shouting me in.

21 'You always received your punishment on your own.
22 You'd be punished through getting the belt over your
23 arse or on the back of your legs. It was like
24 a two-tongued school belt they used. Sometimes they
25 used their hands.

1 'I'd say I got the belt in there on six or seven
2 separate occasions. Every time I went I was hit at
3 least six times if I was hit on the arse. If it was on
4 the hands it would be just a couple of times. Some of
5 it was for minor things like talking out of line. Some
6 of it was for more serious things like fighting. No
7 matter what it was, the punishment was the same. There
8 was no such thing as a misdemeanour.'

9 He then talks about abuse at Rossie Farm from
10 paragraph 326 and he talks about the chef **GBP**, who is
11 in the kitchen, who was about 30, and he mentions a guy
12 who was there and gives us his name and nickname. He
13 was roughly the same age as him.

14 He says he was about 15 or something like that and
15 he had been working in the kitchens for a while by the
16 time he started there. He goes on to say that when he
17 started in the kitchens, **GBP** showed them how to wash
18 dishes and he says that she found that necessary, even
19 though they knew how to wash dishes.

20 At paragraph 327, he says:

21 'As she showed us how to wash the dishes she would
22 caress us. We all knew what she was trying to do. We
23 spoke about it amongst ourselves. At the time we
24 weren't bothered by that. We all liked it. We viewed
25 it as all right. Looking back, as much as we enjoyed

1 her flirtations and sexual advances, she abused her
2 position with us.

3 'There was really no sexual thing between me and
4 GBP. It was flirtation and touching. It was mostly
5 fondling, rubbing and kissing. There was no sexual
6 intercourse.'

7 Then he says it was different for the other boy he
8 mentioned, and he says his nickname, and he says he and
9 GBP were together and they were in a relationship and
10 that went on in the kitchens. It must have gone on for
11 a while. It was a full sexual relationship and he could
12 see that it was happening. The boys would talk about
13 it.

14 He says that he doesn't think the other staff were
15 aware of the way that GBP was acting around them.

16 Then he says at paragraph 330:

17 'Some time later GBP split up with [this boy].'

18 They all knew about it and it broke the boy's heart
19 and he was upset. He says that he and the boy ended up
20 having a fight over GBP and that was because of
21 GBP making advances to him, to 'Aaron', and that
22 caused friction between them and there was a bit of
23 jealousy going on. He says that that boy and another
24 boy attacked him in the toilets:

25 'They used one of the old floor brushes and pushed

1 it into my eyes. I was blinded from the bristles going
2 into my eyes. There was no way I could have just walked
3 away from that.'

4 He says that he either went to hospital or somebody
5 addressed it in some way, he can't remember. It must
6 have been reported but they all got punished for that
7 incident. They all got the belt and they didn't say why
8 they had been fighting.

9 He then tells us that roughly two weeks after the
10 break up and the fight, this boy, and he gives the
11 nickname, committed suicide and he says it was all over
12 GBP and he says:

13 'I know it was all because of her. I remember we
14 were working in the kitchens when it happened. Later on
15 we were all taken out of the kitchen and put in the hall
16 with all the other boys and told that [he gives the
17 nickname] had died.

18 'Not one of us was asked any questions about what
19 happened. Not one staff member asked me a thing.
20 I don't recall anyone asking me why [he] would have done
21 what he did.'

22 He says he didn't speak to police about it and he
23 didn't mention anything to anybody about why he thought
24 the boy had committed suicide. But he said he never saw
25 GBP again after that and she was replaced roughly

1 about the same time by a male chef. He doesn't know
2 whether there was any sort of investigation and what had
3 come out.

4 He says that he didn't report things to staff or
5 speak to them at Rossie. They kept their distance. He
6 could have gone and spoken to his key worker, but he
7 says none of them did. He says:

8 'If you reported anything to the staff [this is at
9 paragraph 337] then they just wouldn't have been
10 interested. You were just a "whinging-faced little
11 shit". I think all the kids in there had learnt a long
12 time ago not to say things. By that time the trust was
13 gone. You kept yourself to yourself. Your main concern
14 was your own safety.'

15 He said he thinks you had to work your way up to be
16 in a position to be released and he was told about
17 a month or so before he left he was getting released.
18 He must have been 15 and when he left he was given 200
19 cash that he had earned when he was there.

20 Then he talks about life after leaving Rossie. He
21 went back to his dad's, got into more trouble stealing.
22 He was sentenced to one to three years in Polmont. That
23 was only four weeks after leaving Rossie. He ended up
24 in Polmont and would have been about 16 by then.

25 He talks about Polmont between paragraphs 342 and

1 388. He says he did between nine months and a year.

2 He talks about a strict regime there, that there was
3 verbal abuse from staff, physical abuse, segregation and
4 bullying from the other inmates.

5 In relation to life after care, he talks about that
6 between paragraphs 395 and 402. He got married a couple
7 of months after leaving Polmont and moved to England.
8 Got a job, had children, but he says he was in and out
9 of prison over the years. His marriage only lasted
10 about five years. He didn't have contact with his
11 children after that. He came back to Scotland and
12 managed to stop criminality. He came back to Scotland
13 with a girl who had four kids and he treated them like
14 his own and then later they had children together.

15 They were together 35 years but then split up and it
16 was amicable. He met someone else.

17 He talks about the abuse from his father and the
18 fact that he found out about his father abusing other
19 children. He was reported to the police but he died
20 before any prosecution.

21 Impact and lessons to be learned are between 403 and
22 436. He says a lot in that part of his statement about
23 his entire time in care and his family background, so
24 I won't rehearse that, my Lady. We can see it and it
25 relates to his total experience.

1 In relation to hopes for the Inquiry, he talks about
2 that between 437 and 439. Some of that has been read in
3 before. But he says that speaking to the Inquiry is one
4 of the most important things he's done.

5 My Lady, sadly, 'Aaron' died before he could sign
6 his statement, but his statement is read in according to
7 the usual process, which is that those who took his
8 statement have indicated that this was his account.

9 LADY SMITH: Thank you very much.

10 We'll stop there until 2 o'clock, when we'll link up
11 by Webex for this afternoon's witness in person.

12 Before I rise, we used one name there of somebody
13 whose identity is protected by my General Restriction
14 Order, that's Mr GBQ . Please don't identify him
15 as being referred to in our evidence outside this room.

16 Thank you.

17 (1.06 pm)

18 (The luncheon adjournment)

19 (2.00 pm)

20 (Proceedings delayed)

21 (2.13 pm)

22 LADY SMITH: Good afternoon and can I begin with my
23 apologies for us starting a little late this afternoon.
24 A matter arose that I had to deal with before I could
25 sit again.

1 Mr Sheldon.

2 MR SHELTON: My Lady, this afternoon we have another witness

3 who is a live witness, but is giving evidence via Webex.

4 This is Holly Alex, my Lady.

5 Holly Alex (sworn)

6 (Via Webex)

7 LADY SMITH: Holly, as we go through your evidence this

8 afternoon, we'll be focusing on some particular parts of

9 the written statement that you have already provided.

10 I want to say thank you for that, because it's been such

11 a help to be able to read your written evidence in

12 advance. So it's already evidence in front of me. But

13 we'll add to that by exploring particular aspects of it

14 directly with you.

15 If at any time you would like to have a break,

16 please say. If we're not explaining things properly,

17 that's our fault not yours, so you just speak up if you

18 want us to improve on what we're doing.

19 Really, Holly, if at any time there's anything I can

20 do to make the whole experience of giving evidence to

21 a public inquiry more comfortable for you, just let me

22 know. If it works for you, it will work for me, all

23 right?

24 A. Okay. Thank you.

25 LADY SMITH: If you're ready, I'll hand over to Mr Sheldon

1 and he'll take it from there.

2 A. Yes. Thank you.

3 LADY SMITH: Mr Sheldon.

4 MR SHELTON: Thank you, my Lady.

5 Questions from Mr Sheldon

6 MR SHELTON: Good afternoon, Holly. I think you have your
7 statement in front of you?

8 A. Yes.

9 Q. If you can keep it in front of you, I think that could
10 be quite helpful for both of us. Before we get started
11 properly, there's a couple of pieces of housekeeping
12 that we need to do. You don't need to worry about these
13 details.

14 First of all, just to read the reference for your
15 statement into our records. It's WIT-1-000000775.

16 Holly, if you could turn to the end of your
17 statement, please, it's page 34.

18 A. Yep.

19 Q. Could you just confirm for me that that's your signature
20 and that you have dated the statement 11 August 2021?

21 A. Yes, correct.

22 Q. You say at paragraph 149:

23 'I have no objection to my witness statement being
24 published as part of the evidence to the Inquiry.

25 I believe the facts stated in this witness statement are

1 true.'

2 A. Correct.

3 Q. That remains the case, does it? Thank you.

4 Back to the start of your statement. You tell us

5 that you were born in 1990 and on the first page, just

6 a bit about your early life, about your parents, your

7 mum, your stepdad [REDACTED].

8 Your early life was in Leith and the east side of

9 Edinburgh really?

10 A. Yes.

11 Q. You tell us, Holly, at paragraph 3, that you grew up as

12 a tomboy and it sounds like you had fun in your early

13 life, is that fair to say?

14 A. Yeah, in early childhood, it was -- yeah, great for me.

15 Q. Tell us about being a tomboy.

16 A. Erm, the typical daughter that I think some dads enjoy

17 having, that just liked to get dirty, play football and,

18 yeah, just -- the things that typical little girls

19 didn't do and obviously the fighting to put me in

20 a dress of any kind, 'cause I hated dresses.

21 Q. Is that still the case or did that change?

22 A. I still hate dresses.

23 Q. You tell us that you were at Leith Primary School and

24 you got on fine until the first year of high school, and

25 again you were playing football, you were in the school

1 football team?

2 A. Yeah.

3 Q. At that stage, you were loving school?

4 A. Yes, enjoyed it thoroughly.

5 Q. What subjects did you particularly enjoy?

6 A. Erm, woodwork, home economics, PE. Anything academical,

7 no, but for the other, the practicals, yes.

8 Q. The practical things.

9 Over the page, paragraph 4, you tell us that when

10 you were 12-and-a-half, your parents split up and

11 I think that's when things started to become a bit more

12 difficult for you, is that right?

13 A. Yeah, that's correct.

14 Q. Can you tell us really just how you felt first of all

15 and what then happened?

16 A. Erm, it was a very odd situation. As it's obviously

17 previously stated, I was very close to my dad, so when

18 he wasn't there any more, erm, I didn't really have

19 anybody I could confide in or be close to. I'd never

20 been close to my mother, so that was a difficult thing

21 and there were incidences happening at home with my mum

22 where I acted out essentially to her behaviour. So it

23 started the spiral really.

24 Q. You certainly tell us in paragraph 5 that your

25 relationship with your mum was effectively breaking

1 down?

2 A. Yeah.

3 Q. To the point where you had physical fights?

4 A. Erm, yeah. There were physical fights between us both.

5 I know it might have been portrayed in her eyes as -- or

6 how she described to other people that it was me doing

7 a lot of the unprovoked, but that was not the case. It

8 was both of us.

9 Q. You tell us really in the wake of your parents' break-up

10 that -- this is your words, paragraph 4 -- you felt that

11 you went off the rails. Is that how it felt to you at

12 the time?

13 A. Erm, I don't know if at the time I would have said

14 I went off the rails. I think I just became defiant to

15 everything and looked for an escape. But as an older

16 person now, yeah, I would say completely off the rails.

17 Q. You tell us that you started drinking and there were

18 drugs?

19 A. Mm-hmm.

20 Q. I think this perhaps all culminated in an incident which

21 you think was about January or February 2004?

22 A. Yeah.

23 Q. Can you tell us what happened please and what happened

24 then as a result of that?

25 A. Erm, from my memory, erm, I was sitting in front of

1 a mirror doing my make-up, I don't have a full
2 recollection of the event, I just have little bits,
3 I was doing my make-up in front of a mirror and she'd
4 said something about my dad and I think I was a bit
5 hungover from the night before, and I did say to her,
6 like, 'If you don't stop, like, I'm going to go and
7 chuck a bottle at you'. Erm, I remember getting the
8 bottle, but I didn't chuck it. I just drank the
9 Lambrini that was in it, and then she ran into her
10 bedroom and that was like pretty much last time I saw
11 her, other than a few other times.

12 Q. Right, and then the next thing you know, I think, you
13 tell us the police were at the door?

14 A. Yeah, 'cause I'd went back to the mirror to finish doing
15 my make-up and the police just came through the door.

16 Q. What did you understand that was all about?

17 A. I had no clue, 'cause I got pulled up from the mirror,
18 erm, when I was sitting on the floor and just took out
19 the house and then I got told that she had basically
20 said that I tried to kill her.

21 Q. Is that something the police told you or a social worker
22 told you later?

23 A. It was definitely a police officer. He said, 'We've had
24 allegations that you've tried to kill your mum'. And
25 I remember being, like, what?

1 Q. You tell us that there were four police officers and
2 this is -- you're a 13-year-old girl. It might seem
3 a little bit over the top?
4 A. I don't know if that was the normalness back then.
5 Q. At all events, you're taken off to the police station by
6 these four police officers?
7 A. Mm-hmm.
8 Q. You say in paragraph 6 of your statement:
9 'The police didn't have a reason to hold me.'
10 So you were dumped at a social work centre on Leith
11 Walk?
12 A. Yeah.
13 Q. You sat on a chair in a corridor for four hours?
14 A. Yeah.
15 Q. You say:
16 'I know now that that was because the social workers
17 were trying to figure out where I could go.'
18 Did you know that at the time? Did you know why you
19 were just sitting in this corridor for hours?
20 A. No, no. I just -- I remember, 'cause I can see it, it
21 was a chair in a corridor, and I remember somebody
22 saying to me, I can't -- I don't know who it was that
23 said it to me, but I remember somebody said to me,
24 'You're just here until we can find you somewhere'.
25 Q. Okay, but that's all you knew?

1 A. Yeah.

2 Q. Did anyone come and keep you company while you were
3 sitting there?

4 A. Nuh-uh.

5 Q. It must have felt very isolated, perhaps frightening?

6 A. Erm, I couldn't comment, 'cause I can't remember my
7 feelings around it. I just remember what I remember
8 seeing.

9 Q. At all events, you say that you then are found
10 a placement. This is at Drylaw Children's Home in
11 Edinburgh. I don't want to spend any time on that, **Secondary**
12 **Secondary Institutions - to be published later**
13 **Secondary Institutions - to be published later**
14 **Secondary Institutions - to be published later** I was there a week,
15 so not much went -- not much happened within that week.

16 Q. Sure. Apart from what you must have been thinking and
17 feeling about having to leave your home?

18 A. Yeah, erm, I also didn't want to leave Drylaw as well.
19 Erm, I didn't know where I was going.

20 Q. Did you have an understanding of why you had to leave
21 Drylaw, why you were sent somewhere else?

22 A. Erm, yeah, so I had been given the room temporarily in
23 respite, erm, but I think their goal -- I think somebody
24 had said their goal was for me to go back home, because
25 the girl's room who it was was coming back from having

1 been with family so it was only ever temporary.

2 Q. I think then that you ended up with your gran --

3 A. Yes.

4 Q. -- for a little bit. This is your father's mother?

5 A. Yeah, yeah.

6 Q. You tell us that you were absolutely fine with that, but

7 I think perhaps it was difficult to some extent, is that

8 fair?

9 A. Yeah. My gran was quite older at the time and my

10 grandad had just been diagnosed with dementia, erm, and

11 my gran trying to be her saving grace to everybody, as

12 she still is at 86 years old, thought she could handle

13 it and she couldn't and I never, ever wanted to do

14 anything that would hurt or disrespect my gran, so it

15 wasn't a good match.

16 Q. All right. So I think the next place that you were, was

17 down in England and this is with your mother's parents

18 and how was that?

19 A. Erm, not good. Erm, it was a case of as soon as

20 I arrived, 'This is what's going to happen, you're going

21 to go to private school', this and that, blah, blah,

22 blah, blah and obviously I didn't want to be in England

23 in the first place. I was kinda just told I was going

24 there and I had an argument with [REDACTED] one day

25 and he held me up against the wall by the throat. Erm,

1 and after that incident, I stole some money and tried to
2 run away and get a train back to Scotland from a train
3 station that was about an hour's walk from my
4 grandparents' house. I wasn't even sure if the trains
5 from there went to Scotland, but I just wanted out.

6 Q. I think your nana, this is your mum's mother, found you
7 before you could do that and ultimately you were put on
8 a plane back to Scotland, is that right?

9 A. Yeah, the next day.

10 Q. You tell us that when you got to the airport, it was the
11 police, or social workers and the police that were
12 waiting for you?

13 A. Social workers, but the police were outside and I was
14 told they were there in case I tried to run.

15 Q. Presumably someone had said to the police or tipped the
16 police off that they thought you might be someone who
17 would run away?

18 A. Must have, if they were there, yeah.

19 Q. Then you're in another temporary placement at
20 Ferniehill. Then you move to Northfield Young Person's
21 Centre, that again, that is sort of east Edinburgh,
22 isn't it, the sort of Mountcastle way, is that right?

23 A. Northfield is near Meadowbank-ish.

24 Sorry, more closer to -- Northfield is more closer
25 to Portobello than anywhere else, so yeah.

1 Q. It doesn't really matter. I'm just trying to locate
2 this.

3 You tell us you moved to Northfield at the start of
4 2005, when you were 14. I think the records that we
5 have, and I think you've seen, suggest it might have
6 been about 12 April 2005, does that sound about right?

7 A. Possibly, yeah. I thought it was about February time,
8 but if the records have me then the records --

9 Q. At all events, it's early 2005 and this is about
10 a month-and-a-half after you've had to leave home. You
11 tell us that you were at Northfield for about nine
12 months.

13 I think we know that you ended up in St Katharine's
14 on 24 March 2006. So it might have been slightly longer
15 than ... but it's less than a year certainly.

16 A. Okay. I knew that was one that I'd been in quite
17 a while, so time's different when you're younger though,
18 I suppose.

19 Q. I think you know that Northfield isn't one of the
20 establishments that we're looking at in this case study.
21 So I'm not going to spend very much time on it.

22 A. Okay.

23 Q. But I just perhaps want to ask you how you were, how you
24 were feeling when you were at Northfield and what was
25 going on for you during that period at Northfield?

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10 Q. You tell us, this is page 5 of your statement,
11 paragraph 18, that there was an individual called
12 Gordon Collins, who was at Northfield at the same time
13 as you?

14 A. Uh-huh.

15 Q. We know that he later went on to abuse you at
16 St Katharine's, and we'll come on to that in a moment or
17 two and I want to ask you about that.

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6 Q. And, indeed, went to work at St Katharine's. I think
7 that was around about the same time as you, is that
8 right?

9 A. I think he was there before -- from what I've read now,
10 he was there before me, but I don't think I'd seen him
11 until like maybe -- I don't know, a couple of months in,
12 even a couple of weeks in.

13 Q. Did he recognise you from Northfield when you got to
14 St Katharine's?

15 A. Straightaway. One of the first things he did was give
16 me a cuddle.

17 Q. Okay, well, we'll come to that just in a minute, but
18 I want to ask you a little bit about going into secure
19 care. You say that was being talked about. Secondary Institution

20 Secondary Institutions - to be published later

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14 MR SHELDON: Given what you had been told about

15 St Katharine's, would it be fair to say that you were
16 feeling pretty anxious at that time?

17 A. Yeah, 'cause, I mean, as a child you watch programmes
18 about prison, so, you know, there's TV programmes about
19 prison, erm, so I thought I was going to a scary prison.

20 Q. You tell us, paragraph 60, that you went to
21 St Katharine's secure when you were 15, February 2006,
22 and --

23 A. Mm-hmm. I believe I did.

24 Q. Sure, the records suggest March, but it doesn't really
25 matter. It's around about then.

1 A. Yeah.

2 Q. You say -- we might come on to this a bit later as
3 well -- but you say in that paragraph you were 'ejected
4 from secure shortly after my 16th birthday'. Why do you
5 use the word 'ejected'?

6 A. They wanted me out of there very quickly, because
7 I've got a vague memory of a children's hearing giving
8 like how many other months an order would be, erm, and
9 I don't believe I was near the end of that order.
10 I think they very -- I mean, I could be wrong, but
11 I think they very quickly decided it was probably best
12 for me to move on, on the service.

13 Q. I was going to ask you about children's hearings a bit
14 later but since you've mentioned it, perhaps I could
15 just ask you now. I think you had a number of
16 children's hearings during your time in secure; is that
17 right?

18 A. I had a lot. I wouldn't be able to tell you all the
19 details about them.

20 Q. Sure. We don't need details. It's really just to get
21 an idea from you of what the experience was like, how
22 did you find it?

23 A. Erm, well, I think the first one I've got a little bit
24 more memory about was the first one I went to when
25 I'd first went into secure. I think it was maybe

1 a couple of weeks after I'd been in secure and I had one
2 staff member either side of me holding on to me and
3 escorting me in and I just remember that day was the day
4 that they told me that I would never be allowed to go
5 back to Northfield, because they gave my room to
6 somebody else eight hours after I left, erm, that they
7 wouldn't have me back and I made a panel member cry.
8 That is pretty much the only memory I've got of that
9 hearing.

10 Q. Okay, do you remember whether panel members would speak
11 to you directly?

12 A. I think one woman had asked me what I wanted and
13 I'd said that I wanted to be not in a secure unit,
14 'cause I wanted to support my gran, 'cause obviously my
15 dad was in prison at this point and my grandad was
16 getting really ill with the dementia, and that's when
17 she got upset. But other than that, I don't have any
18 memory of being spoke to.

19 Q. Okay, all right. Was it a friendly atmosphere or was it
20 difficult, anxiety provoking?

21 A. Well, now, as an adult, it reminds me of sitting in
22 a multi-person interview, like you've got three people,
23 I think, people in front of you and I was just kind of
24 sitting on a chair with two workers either side of me.

25 Q. Like an interview panel for getting a job?

1 A. Yeah, yeah.

2 Q. Paragraphs 60 and 61 then, you describe St Katharine's
3 and the arrangements inside. So taking that short, and
4 going to paragraph 62, you say that when you arrived
5 there were six children in the secure unit. So it's
6 really quite a small unit?

7 A. Yeah, there wasn't many of us.

8 Q. Did it feel small? Did it feel confined?

9 A. No, the building was huge.

10 Q. Okay. You then tell us a bit about staff at the secure
11 unit, paragraph 63. There was a lot of staff and you
12 name some of them, including Gordon Collins.

13 You then go on to tell us in paragraph 64 that the
14 staff were fine. Just to get a bit more idea from you
15 about what you mean by that, about what the staff were
16 like.

17 A. Secondary Institutions - to be published later
18 Secondary Institution I mean, they were more around the unit.
19 Like, you would see them. I mean, obviously it was
20 a locked facility, erm, so nobody could get anywhere
21 without the keycard, so if the young people are in the
22 main unit, whether they're in the PlayStation room or
23 the dining room or the living room, there was always
24 staff and they would sit with you and watch like TV with
25 you or ... I had my hair braided by one of the members

1 of staff mentioned in this report. Erm, I got taught
2 how to fry an egg, because I didn't know. Like, they
3 were more involved with young people.

4 Q. More involved in a good way or not in a good way?

5 A. No, they were more involved in a good way in regards to,
6 like, they were around. Like, even when you sat down
7 for a meal, like if you had your breakfast, dinner and
8 lunch, you would always have a member of staff at your
9 table so you would have somebody to talk to as well
10 while you were eating. In that regard, yeah, it was
11 good because they spent more time with you.

12 Q. You tell us that you actually offered and did cut one of
13 the staff member's hair?

14 A. Yeah, INA. Erm, he didn't refuse. He was quite
15 happy.

16 Q. You tell us about arriving at St Katharine's, this is
17 page 16, and that you were trying to have a smoke and as
18 it were had -- was that your last cigarette really
19 before you went in?

20 A. Yeah.

21 Q. You say that you were searched. What was the search
22 like?

23 A. Erm, it was like one of those ones that you get at the
24 airport.

25 Q. This is just patting down the outside of your clothes,

1 is that right?

2 A. Yeah, yeah. There was no under clothes --

3 Q. You didn't have to undress or anything like that? Okay.

4 You then tell us at paragraphs 67 and 68 that you

5 were actually held by the arm by two members of staff

6 and taken to your room, or really what you describe as

7 a cell?

8 A. Yeah.

9 Q. Can you tell us about that process, please, and how you

10 felt about that?

11 A. Well, like I say, it was one on each arm and you kind of

12 like escorted to the corridor where the bedrooms were,

13 where another member of staff was swiping you in. Erm,

14 and I think, like I said in my statement, where was

15 I going to go? I was in a locked facility, like. I was

16 able to walk. I'd accepted -- I came to secure by my

17 free will? Hmm, well, kind of. At least I came back

18 and let them take me to secure, so I had accepted the

19 fact that this is where I was going. I wasn't going to

20 go anywhere or do anything. I'd accepted that fact.

21 Q. You were kind of marched along the corridor to this room

22 that you describe, and I have to say from your

23 description it sounds pretty grim?

24 A. It is a cell. It is literally a cell with an en suite.

25 Q. Okay. We'll perhaps come on to the toilet arrangements

1 later on, but basically you're saying that there wasn't
2 really anything in the room, apart from a mattress?
3 A. Mm-hmm, one of those really horrible, blue, waterproof
4 ones.
5 Q. Okay, a sort of plastic thing?
6 A. Yeah.
7 Q. Okay. Were you later given some bedclothes?
8 A. Er, I did get bedclothes. I can't tell you when I got
9 them. But it would have been the same day. I just
10 don't know when I got them.
11 Q. In the short term, as it were, this is page 17,
12 paragraph 69 now, you are left in the room for about
13 four hours sitting in silence. Were you given anything
14 to do?
15 A. No.
16 Q. Did anyone come to speak to you?
17 A. No. The next time I saw somebody was when they brought
18 me food and they told me after I had finished eating,
19 I was allowed to come out.
20 Q. Did anyone tell you before that what you were doing in
21 this cell or how long you would be there?
22 A. No.
23 Q. Didn't know any of that?
24 A. Nope. The only thing that got said to me when they
25 opened the door and I went, 'It's a cell', and they went

1 to me, 'What do you expect?'

2 Q. Anyway, you're eventually let out and you went to meet

3 everyone and watched some TV.

4 You say in paragraph 70 that once you went into your

5 room it was locked?

6 A. Yes.

7 Q. You tell us a bit in paragraph 70 about the regime, as

8 it were, that a member of staff was assigned to each

9 room. There is a cupboard outside with your clothes and

10 possessions. So you don't have your possessions with

11 you in the room. They're kept outside the room, is that

12 right?

13 A. Yeah, so most of them -- I mean, obviously later on,

14 like I was allowed a CD player and, like, a few, like,

15 bits and pieces, but all your toiletries, all your

16 clothing, everything like that is kept in a cupboard

17 outside your room.

18 Q. So you wouldn't have access to that during the night?

19 A. No, no, unless I rung my buzzer and asked.

20 Q. Since you've mentioned it, Holly, what were the toilet

21 arrangements? You mentioned there was en suite in the

22 room?

23 A. Yeah, so there was an en suite and it was your

24 typical -- I've not ever been in a mental health

25 hospital, but I'm assuming it's the same as those, that

1 they're risk free. There's no -- nothing you could do
2 damage to yourself with, but there was a sliding door
3 and the sliding door could be controlled from the office
4 to not open.

5 LADY SMITH: Why would they want to do that?

6 A. Erm, I don't know. I know for an instance of myself,
7 erm, I went through a period where I was making myself
8 sick after meals so they would lock my toilet door so
9 I couldn't make myself sick.

10 LADY SMITH: Well, you couldn't make yourself sick in your
11 toilet. Yes.

12 MR SHELTON: Did you have any understanding of whether that
13 was the case with other children in the unit? Did the
14 staff control the doors for them as well?

15 A. Erm, well, I'm assuming they had controls for all the
16 toilet doors and the cell doors from the main office,
17 'cause there was a board that had lights on it and
18 stuff.

19 Q. It seems extraordinary that that would happen.

20 You go on to tell us about food and, Holly, we know
21 that the food at St Katharine's during this period was
22 criticised by the Care Commission. They'd said the food
23 wasn't that great. What was your experience of it?

24 A. Nutrition-wise absolutely not, but we enjoyed it very
25 much. A lot of us put weight on. Obviously eating for

1 many of us was not really a main priority, so you go to
2 secure, you get fat. That was kind of the saying. So
3 we enjoyed it, so ...

4 Q. Page 18 you talk a bit about the toilet situation there
5 and about leisure time and schooling.

6 Can you tell us a bit more about the schooling in
7 St Katharine's. How did you find that?

8 A. Erm, so I had enjoyed school. But obviously due to
9 everything that had went on, I fell behind. I really
10 enjoyed school and I found that the teachers within the
11 education really, like, pushed you to do your best and
12 I still to this day have some reports of ... school
13 reports from my teachers who have said nothing but
14 amazing things about me and how hard I worked.
15 I enjoyed being back in education.

16 Q. I think it was more or less a full school day, 9.00 am
17 to 3.00 pm, is that right?

18 A. I think so, yeah.

19 Q. You tell us, paragraph 77, that you couldn't do all your
20 Standard grades. Do you know why that was?

21 A. I don't know. I just knew that you never had the
22 opportunity to do as many Standard grades as if you were
23 at normal mainstream school. But you basically got the
24 basics.

25 Q. Right, was it just that they didn't have the teachers or

1 something like that?

2 A. I'm unsure, 'cause I did several lessons. I probably
3 could have done GCSEs in all the lessons that I did, but
4 I think you just got offered the basic.

5 Q. Did anyone in secure go out to school during the day?

6 A. Er, no, I don't think so.

7 Q. What about the close support unit, because I think you
8 moved in about August --

9 A. Erm, I'd left school by that age, so ... yeah.

10 Q. Were you conscious of anyone from the close support unit
11 going to school outside the unit?

12 A. No, no, I think at one point there was literally just me
13 in that unit, so there was a period of time when I was
14 the only young person in there.

15 Q. Okay, all right. You tell us about healthcare at
16 paragraph 78 and I think having -- **Secondary Institutions - to be published**
17 **Secondary Institutions - to be published later** that that left you
18 with some problems when you got to St Katharine's, is
19 that right?

20 A. Yeah.

21 Q. How was that dealt with?

22 A. I never knew there was an issue, somebody else had
23 obviously noticed, erm, and I believe that somebody had
24 said that I was at risk of a seizure due to alcohol
25 withdrawal and that I had to be put on diazepam.

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10 Q. You talk about making yourself sick, bulimia and
11 self-harming. Do you feel able to tell us a bit about
12 that and why you were self-harming at that point?

13 Secondary Institutions - to be published later

14 Secondary Institutions - to be published later For me personally I didn't know what
15 these feelings were and I somehow discovered
16 self-harming was a way of calming down. It calmed me
17 down when I had all these feelings that I didn't know
18 what they were.

19 Erm, the bulimia came around because I was eating so
20 much food that I was putting on so much weight and
21 giving myself sore stomachs that I wanted the sore
22 stomach to go away. So, erm, I started making myself
23 sick and then kinda realised: oh, this is a really good
24 way to be thin again so ...

25 Q. You talked about the feelings that you were having and

1 that self-harm at that time helped you with that in
2 a way?

3 A. Yeah.

4 Q. Looking back now, can you identify what those feelings
5 were?

6 A. Erm, so much anxiety but I never knew that that was
7 anxiety at the time. It was just so much sadness,
8 anxiety, panic, and the only way to stop those feelings
9 was to do the self-harming.

10 Q. If I can move on to paragraph 87, please. This is where
11 you talk about discipline.

12 You tell us that if you refused to come out of your
13 room for school or any other reason, the staff took away
14 your mattress, pillow and duvet and, indeed, they might
15 take other things out of your room as well?

16 A. Mm-hmm.

17 Q. Was there a situation really where there was nothing
18 left in your room, pretty much?

19 A. There would be occasions where, erm, granted I don't
20 think -- I can't remember if it happened to me a lot,
21 but there were definitely a couple of occasions where
22 I had nothing in my room.

23 Q. Okay. What did you have to do to earn these things
24 back?

25 A. Be nice.

1 Q. Okay, as judged by who?

2 A. Whatever member of staff decided they were taking the
3 stuff off you.

4 Q. So I suppose there was an incentive then for you to be
5 nice to members of staff like that?

6 A. Yeah.

7 Q. Moving on from that, you talk about restraint. In your
8 words, this is paragraph 88:

9 'One of the big things in secure was that I saw
10 a lot of young people restrained. There was a normality
11 to it.'

12 What do you mean by that, Holly?

13 A. Anything, anything could result in restraint. If you
14 had a frustrated young person that was maybe shouting
15 too loud, restraint.

16 Erm, obviously if things got chucked or broken,
17 stuff like that, but it was very -- a bit like the
18 police. It was very quick jump to bang of physicalness
19 without -- and then asking the questions later.

20 Q. You say perhaps anything could provoke a restraint?

21 A. Yeah, like even a little thing like shouting.

22 Q. Did you feel it was used ever as a punishment, rather
23 than actually stopping people doing something dangerous?

24 A. Oh, I think it was used as a punishment and I --
25 I actually read this in the other report and I agreed

1 with it, 'cause I think I'd said this to myself before.
2 I saw members of staff laughing after restraints, like
3 it was exciting or fun. Erm, and again similar to the
4 police, very heavy handed.

5 I was never restrained. I knew when to stop, so
6 that it wouldn't happen. Erm, but I remember seeing
7 a girl that was so thin and tiny, about six of them
8 piling on her. Not nice to witness and obviously not
9 nice for the young people either.

10 Q. Were young people ever injured when that happened?

11 A. I'd -- I'd seen one of the girls with marks on her arms
12 and on her neck. But I can't comment whether or not
13 that was done by the restraint or that was something she
14 done herself.

15 Q. Might those have been carpet burns for example?

16 A. Erm, to be fair, the ones on the bits here (indicating)
17 probably looked like carpet burns, but I wouldn't want
18 to make a comment 'cause I don't know.

19 LADY SMITH: The bits here you were indicating, was it your
20 upper arm?

21 A. Yeah, the upper arm, yeah.

22 LADY SMITH: Thank you.

23 MR SHELTON: You have mentioned, I think, the review, Holly,
24 and we could look at that, but I don't think there's any
25 need if you've read that and seen the passages, but

1 certainly some of the phrases that are used in the
2 significant case review about this aspect of life at
3 St Katharine's was that there was perhaps an overuse of
4 power. Is that something that you would agree with,
5 that there was a sort of macho atmosphere?

6 A. I wouldn't say a macho atmosphere, but I guess the
7 feeling of, 'We're the adults, we're the big adults and
8 we can restrain you at any time, if you don't basically
9 abide to what we're saying'.

10 Q. We're the bosses?

11 A. Yeah, pretty much.

12 Q. You said a moment ago that you thought restraint was
13 used too easily or too quickly?

14 A. Yeah. I mean, I would never restrain somebody for
15 shouting. You know, shouting is an expression.
16 Sometimes it's maybe not a healthy use to get your
17 feelings out, but it's an expression. And if every
18 young person was restrained for shouting, that's a lot
19 of children.

20 Q. We have some evidence that swearing is a good way of
21 relieving pain?

22 A. But that's a lot of children if you're getting
23 restrained just for raising your voice.

24 Q. So would you say then that restraint was used -- let me
25 put that the other way round. A lot of the guidance

1 about restraint suggests that that should be used as
2 a last resort. Is that what was happening at
3 St Katharine's?

4 A. No. I wouldn't say so. That was more of a first
5 resort.

6 Q. Thank you.

7 Holly, at this point I'm going to move on to ask you
8 some questions about Gordon Collins and what happened
9 with him.

10 My Lady, I'm conscious that it's about the time that
11 we usually take a short break?

12 LADY SMITH: This would be a good point to take a break.

13 Holly, I normally take a break in the middle of the
14 afternoon now, maybe for about ten minutes, would that
15 work for you all right?

16 A. Absolutely fine. That's fine.

17 LADY SMITH: Let's do it.

18 (3.05 pm)

19 (A short break)

20 (3.15 pm)

21 LADY SMITH: Good afternoon again, Holly. Are you ready for
22 us to carry on? Is that all right?

23 A. That's absolutely fine.

24 LADY SMITH: Thank you.

25 Mr Sheldon.

1 MR SHELTON: Thank you, my Lady.

2 So holly, we talked a bit about restraint at
3 St Katharine's before the break and I want to move on
4 now to talk about Gordon Collins, the person who abused
5 you at St Katharine's.

6 At paragraph 92, this is page 21 of your statement,
7 you start to talk about your experiences at
8 St Katharine's and Gordon Collins's part in that.

9 You tell us that he was 50 when the abuse started
10 and that it happened every weekend for six months.

11 I think we understand that that was because Collins only
12 worked at weekends. He was a part-timer essentially, is
13 that right?

14 A. Erm, yeah, I believe he was doing -- he was doing
15 something else during the week, training or something
16 like that. He was a locum, I guess locum staff, what
17 they used to be called.

18 Q. Sure. At paragraph 93 you really start to talk about
19 what happened with him.

20 Can I just ask you: what is your first memory of
21 something that, looking back, wasn't perhaps quite
22 right? How did it all start?

23 A. Truthfully, I can't pinpoint when it first started, but
24 I just remember it used to start off with, like, the
25 cuddles and, like, the kissing on the forehead and stuff

1 like that. That's kinda where it started.

2 Q. Certainly you tell us, I think you mentioned this

3 before, because you had recognised each other from

4 Northfield?

5 A. Yeah.

6 Q. That, this is paragraph 94, you were sitting at the

7 dining room table and Gordon came in with the biggest

8 grin and he came straight over to you and gave you a big

9 cuddle. Was that the first thing that happened perhaps

10 or was there anything before that?

11 A. Well, that was the first time that I had saw him moving

12 into St Kat's, yeah.

13 Q. Did these attempts to contact you physically, that

14 carried on, I think you're saying?

15 A. Yeah, yeah, obviously it went a lot beyond that initial

16 first meeting.

17 Q. Paragraph 95, you say that Gordon would take charge,

18 offer to take you anywhere you had to go within the

19 facility, like when you were doing laundry. You tell us

20 Gordon made himself available, that's available to you,

21 is that right?

22 A. Yeah, pretty much anywhere I wanted to go, any time

23 I rung my buzzer, 99.9 per cent of the time it was him.

24 Q. So how did that make you feel at that time in relation

25 to him?

1 A. Erm, at the start good, because I knew him. Erm, he'd
2 told me that he'd hated the old unit manager, who I had
3 never got on with, so I felt I had that friend in there.
4 Q. Did it make you feel special in some way?
5 A. Yeah, yep, that we had this connection that he didn't
6 have with anybody else.
7 Q. You tell us, and I'm jumping about a little bit, but
8 I'm interested in what you say about that in
9 paragraph 93. You say that for the first few months of
10 all this happening, you thought -- you felt you were in
11 a relationship with Gordon.
12 Can you tell us about that, please?
13 A. Erm, I don't know, like, I just did. Erm, somebody that
14 showed affection to me, somebody that seemed generally
15 interested in me, erm, was never horrible to me, never
16 treated me like a child, just really nice. He provided
17 that sort of comfort and love that I guess I had wanted
18 and hadn't received before.
19 Q. You tell us in paragraph 96 then that every time Gordon
20 saw you, he cuddled you and did it escalate, did it
21 progress from there?
22 A. Yeah.
23 Q. Do you feel able to tell us about how (audio distortion)
24 and what happened?
25 A. Erm, like I say, I can't tell you how like the scenario

1 of how it escalated but, like I said, it went from, you
2 know, a nice hug, if you want to call it that, to kisses
3 on the forehead, to, erm, kisses on the lip, kisses on
4 the neck, biting on the neck, all the way up to where it
5 involved penetration with fingers.

6 Q. You tell us about that at paragraph 97. We don't need
7 to go there, but it's very clear that things went a lot
8 further and Gordon took things a lot further.

9 Did it seem to you as if he was getting bolder?

10 A. Bolder in the sense that he started doing it in front of
11 people, but not enough that people could see.

12 Q. Okay, well, can you tell us about that then. Who was he
13 doing it in front of and how was that handled, as it
14 were, so that people didn't see that something was
15 wrong, perhaps?

16 A. So, erm, there were a couple of occasions, like if we
17 were in the education corridor and other young people
18 were there, erm, that he would kind of hold back and
19 I would be at the back and, like, he would grope my
20 bottom while the other young people were there. But
21 there was also the one with the bouncy castle that we
22 had in the gym hall, erm, and I'd landed on top of him,
23 'cause he'd stayed down the bottom of this bouncy
24 castle, and he used to do this really horrible growl
25 noise that he used to make and he obviously touched me

1 on the bottom and then touched me on the breasts at the
2 bottom of this slide, and this gym hall was full of
3 young people and staff.

4 Q. Okay, do you think anyone saw what he was doing?

5 A. I don't think --

6 Q. Or realised what he was doing perhaps?

7 A. I don't think anybody saw. I know from a report that
8 somebody had a concern, but not in a sexual nature, but
9 with that bouncy castle, but I think he got very bold in
10 the fact that he was able to do it in a room full of
11 people and not be seen.

12 Q. We'll look a bit later on at his history of other
13 offences and I think that perhaps helps illustrate the
14 point that you're making, Holly.

15 For the moment, can I just ask you, when did you
16 start to realise that all wasn't really right, that this
17 wasn't really right?

18 A. When it started moving to like things under my clothes.

19 Q. You tell us at paragraph 98 that you were getting
20 anxious and scared. What were you getting scared about?

21 A. I didn't enjoy it. I didn't want it. Erm, it just
22 didn't feel right and I dreaded him coming on shift.

23 Q. I think you tell us that you said to Gordon that it
24 couldn't go on, that he was too old?

25 A. Yeah.

1 Q. What was his reaction to that?

2 A. He broke down crying in my room.

3 Q. How did that make you feel at that time?

4 A. Sorry for him. I wasn't used to grown men crying in

5 front of me, erm, but I felt like really, really sorry

6 for him and felt bad that I was hurting him.

7 Q. When I think it came out that these things were

8 happening or had happened, this is what you tell us

9 about in next few paragraphs, about your diary being

10 read by some other girls and --

11 A. Yes.

12 Q. I don't think we necessarily have to go to it, but

13 I think you record in your diary that you became very

14 afraid that he might lose his job, that he might lose

15 his wife?

16 A. Yeah.

17 Q. So just thinking back to that, were you really in

18 a state of confusion about all of this?

19 A. I was in a state of a lot of confusion, 'cause I did

20 generally have feelings for him and I was very conscious

21 of the fact that he had a wife, he had a son around

22 about my age, erm, and I felt like I was doing something

23 wrong, because I had participated to a point and

24 actually enjoyed the attention. I thought I was going

25 to get into a lot of trouble as well.

1 Q. When it came to the point where staff at St Katharine's
2 speak to you about this, how were you feeling about
3 sharing with them what had happened? How did you feel
4 about that?

5 A. Terrified, 'cause I didn't want to get him into trouble.
6 I thought it was just something silly, he'd made
7 a mistake, and I didn't want him to lose his job.

8 Q. Again, I don't think we have to look at it, but the
9 records suggest that when adults were trying to speak to
10 you about this, that you appeared, from their point of
11 view, to be reluctant, that you were not turning up to
12 interviews, that you were running out of the room and so
13 on.

14 Again, I think -- I hope I know the answer to this,
15 but why was that happening at that time?

16 A. I didn't want to get into trouble and I didn't want him
17 to get into trouble. That was it. That was the basis
18 of it. I didn't want anyone in trouble.

19 Q. I think eventually you did give a statement. There was
20 a joint interview; is that right?

21 A. Yeah. I gave a -- the sedate version statement and
22 I gave some pages out of my diary. Just so people would
23 leave me alone.

24 LADY SMITH: Holly, do you realise now you were a child, you
25 were a child at that time?

1 A. It took me three years of therapy to realise that, but
2 I do now.

3 LADY SMITH: And Gordon Collins was in a position of trust
4 in relation to you.

5 A. Yeah.

6 LADY SMITH: In these circumstances, the child is not to be
7 blamed for the adult breaching the trust.

8 A. Yeah. No, I do know now, my Lady. It took three years
9 of therapy, but I know now.

10 LADY SMITH: It maybe helps you in some small way to know
11 that you're not alone in having gone through these
12 feelings that you did and failing to recognise that you
13 were a child and you were entitled to be protected, not
14 exploited.

15 A. Thank you.

16 LADY SMITH: Mr Sheldon.

17 MR SHELDON: Thank you, my Lady.

18 So in terms of the reaction of staff to what you had
19 told them, what you disclosed to them, what did it seem
20 to you was their attitude? Did you feel that they
21 believed you? Did you feel that they were confident in
22 what you were saying to them?

23 A. I was treated like an absolute leper. I don't know if
24 I'm allowed to use that word these days --

25 Q. You can use whatever words you want.

1 A. I was -- the whole shift of attitude with staff, I had
2 previously got on with, completely changed, completely
3 changed.

4 Q. Again, how did that make you feel?

5 A. Devastated, 'cause I thought everybody hated me.

6 Q. You tell us at page 105 that this reached the stage
7 where you actually hurt yourself. You cut yourself
8 quite badly?

9 A. Yes, erm, I really badly cut my arms and, erm, I now
10 know that I -- what I wrote in my statement is not what
11 I wrote on the wall [REDACTED] because there is another
12 report that states what I wrote and I do remember
13 writing it now. But, yeah, I cut myself and wrote on
14 the wall [REDACTED] something about, 'Male staff, watch
15 out 'cause I'll accuse you next'.

16 Q. At paragraph 107, excuse me, you say that at this point
17 Gordon was still on annual leave. I think you told us
18 in a previous paragraph -- I didn't take you to it --
19 that he'd gone on leave around about the time when you
20 went away with -- I think it's to Benmore with these
21 girls who read the diary?

22 A. He told me he was going on annual leave so he wouldn't,
23 like, see me for a while.

24 Q. As far as you know, he was annual leave and you were
25 then told that he was suspended pending

1 an investigation. Were you kept informed about how the
2 investigation was going?

3 A. Erm, not really. I know that it took several months and
4 I think eventually I'd spoke to Who Cares? or
5 a children's welfare person and they actually helped me
6 write a letter to Frank Phelan, I think it was, who was
7 one of the managers, to ask what's going on.

8 Q. We can actually have a look at that, if that's okay,
9 Holly. We can look at the record of that, it's
10 EDI-000004963.

11 A. Will I see this on my screen?

12 Q. I hope so.

13 No. Okay.

14 A. If you give me two seconds, I can log in myself.

15 LADY SMITH: It's dated 16 July 2007, Holly.

16 (Pause)

17 MR SHELDON: All right, Holly, I mean, I can just read the
18 passages to you if that would be helpful, I have a copy
19 of it here.

20 A. I've got it now. I have it now.

21 Q. I'm just looking at page 2 of this file, this document.
22 I think we see that that's what is described as a CRO
23 referral and I think we know this is about you.

24 The date is 13 June 2007. You had asked to talk
25 with this social worker.

1 'She's unhappy that she's had to wait for over
2 a year and doesn't know the outcome of the allegations.'

3 And just reading to the bottom of that page, the
4 social worker agrees that he or she will write to
5 Frank Phelan, who you have mentioned, and 'let him know
6 how difficult this has been for her'.

7 If we then go to page 1, I think we see that that's
8 a letter from Frank Phelan to Linda McCracken about the
9 allegations made by yourself. Just at the end of that
10 first paragraph, Mr Phelan says:

11 'It's my understanding that the Care Commission
12 and/or SSSC will be notified of the circumstances
13 surrounding this complaint and how it was not
14 satisfactorily concluded. I met with ...'

15 You. Do you remember having a meeting with
16 Frank Phelan?

17 A. I might have had a meeting with him, I don't know --

18 Q. That's fine. He's saying that he met with you:

19 '... to let her know of the situation and that we as
20 a department were not simply accepting the resignation
21 without further action.'

22 He says:

23 '[You] appeared relatively satisfied with the course
24 of action and I fed back that those involved felt that
25 she had provided credible evidence.'

1 Again, do you remember saying --

2 A. I probably did meet with him, 'cause I remember one of
3 those lines where you said it says 'we won't accept it'.
4 That sounds familiar, but I can't picture the meeting.

5 Q. So Mr Phelan is saying, at least at that stage, that
6 they're not accepting the resignation, but I think we
7 know that Collins was later employed again in a care
8 service, albeit an adult care service, in about 2013,
9 so --

10 A. Yeah, I heard that last night.

11 Q. -- it seems clear that at that stage there wasn't really
12 any significant action taken?

13 A. No.

14 Q. We'll look at that a little bit just in a moment or two.

15 You tell us at paragraph 107 that Gordon resigned
16 before he could be suspended. I think that's probably
17 what Mr Phelan is referring to there, when he is saying
18 that the investigation wasn't satisfactorily concluded.

19 A. Yeah, I had been told. That's what I've been told.

20 Q. So you then tell us a bit about the aftermath of all
21 this and you're allowed to leave the secure unit and go
22 into the St Katharine's close support unit. I think we
23 know that would be about August 2006. Does that sound
24 about right?

25 A. Yeah, like I say it was round [REDACTED].

1 Q. Okay. How did you get on with close support?

2 A. Well, I had a bedroom. I didn't have a cell. I was

3 allowed to go out for a cigarette. I wasn't. I was

4 allowed to go out for two 15-minute breaks. If I smoked

5 on those breaks, I wasn't to tell anybody.

6 Erm, and you were allowed to go, like, to college

7 and stuff. I think I briefly went to college or I went

8 to some kind of training course at one point when I was

9 there. So you had a little bit more freedom and, yeah,

10 you weren't locked in your room at night.

11 Q. Okay, I mean, this is described as a close support unit.

12 Did you feel closely supported at that time?

13 A. I'm not going to speak bad about them, because my

14 behaviour just completely deteriorated when I got in

15 there, I had far too much freedom. Erm, I know it's

16 called a close support unit, but if I'm not there the

17 majority of the time, I don't know how well they can be

18 a close support unit.

19 Q. You must have been feeling still pretty confused and raw

20 about what had been happening and at this stage you

21 didn't even know what was happening with the

22 investigation into Collins?

23 A. Nope. And, yeah, with my new-found freedom and the way

24 that I was feeling, I took every opportunity to go right

25 back to the same habits that I had done

Secondary Institutions - to be

1 and worse.

2 Q. You tell us in paragraph 114:

3 'The staff were at a loss as to what to do with me.

4 They were trying to move me through the units as quickly

5 as they could.'

6 You are moved to the open unit?

7 A. Yeah.

8 Q. But you were still drinking and taking some drugs. But

9 I think -- please correct me if I'm misunderstanding

10 your statement -- but I think you say that the staff --

11 this is in the Alison unit, the open unit, were quite

12 good with you, is that right, is that fair?

13 A. Yeah. I've kind of always said, like, throughout the

14 years I really do not have a bad word to say about

15 throughcare/aftercare, the Alison unit. Like, I don't

16 have a bad word to say about them. They did the best

17 they could with the way that I was and I still have to

18 some degree, erm, a really good relationship with that

19 unit manager and one of the other members of staff.

20 Q. You tell us at paragraph 117 that even after you'd left

21 the Alison unit, the staff said that you were welcome to

22 go and stay there for a couple of nights and come for

23 dinner if you wanted to do that.

24 A. Yeah.

25 Q. Was that helpful to you?

1 A. It was. I mean, they even -- they supported me when
2 I went to the High Court to give evidence, evidence,
3 they let me stay overnight and one of them came with me
4 to court. Like, they were amazing.

5 Q. I'll just come on to the High Court trial in a moment or
6 two, Holly.

7 But just thinking about your life after being in
8 care and the impact of all this on you, you start to
9 tell us about that, paragraphs 121 onwards, and you say,
10 'It's completely turned my life upside down'.

11 Paragraph 122, and bearing in mind what Lady Smith
12 was saying just a moment or two ago, that you were
13 a child, you say you feel:

14 'I think I was so naive.'

15 Can you just tell us about how you feel about that?

16 A. I hadn't started therapy at that point, so, er, that's
17 how I still felt before I started therapy. So, erm, I
18 laid a lot of blame on myself and I thought I would be
19 judged 'cause I was a willing participant, at least at
20 the start, and that I somehow at that age and in that
21 environment should have known that this wasn't right.
22 Erm, but, as I've said, three years of therapy, I no
23 longer feel that way so ...

24 Q. Well, it's an offence of abuse of trust, among other
25 things, Holly, and, you know, Collins was in a position

1 of power.

2 A. Yeah.

3 Q. You tell us a bit about your life between 17 and 18 and
4 some difficulties that you had because of, I think,
5 probably the trauma that you had suffered.

6 You managed, I think, to have some treatment and you
7 have told us you've had some therapy and has that
8 helped?

9 A. Erm, the therapy's been a godsend. That was probably
10 one of the better outcomes of the civil case, was that
11 it enabled me to have funds to go to private therapy and
12 I worked with my therapist for three years and I don't
13 think I'd be in the place I am now if it wasn't for her.
14 So immensely helpful.

15 Q. So going on to think about the trial, because we know
16 that Collins was tried in 2016 and convicted of a number
17 of offences, including against you?

18 A. Yeah.

19 Q. You tell us about the investigation and that initially,
20 this is paragraph 132, that this was really a terrible
21 shock to you when the police first approached you, is
22 that right?

23 A. Yeah. Erm, yeah. I literally felt like my heart had
24 dropped out of my body, because they didn't come
25 directly to me. They had tracked me down via my

1 stepdad, who had no idea any of this had happened, erm,
2 and I then had to explain it on the same day to my dad,
3 what had happened. That was not a fun day.

4 Q. Do you feel the police could have handled that better,
5 and if so, how?

6 A. Maybe done some research to find out where I was and not
7 turn up at my unexpected father's door, who had no clue
8 why they were looking for his daughter. Erm,
9 I understand why they were so insistent to speak to me,
10 but I was also at work at the time and I was a live-in
11 carer at the time so, you know, I had had two police
12 officers in my place of work, in somebody's home. It
13 all felt very sudden, rushed.

14 Q. So the police just turned up at your work?

15 A. Well, they had obviously found out where I was 'cause
16 they got my dad to phone me and they went:

17 'We need to come and see you and we need to come and
18 see you now.'

19 'I live and work in Lanarkshire.'

20 'No, yeah, we'll drive through.'

21 I'm like:

22 'I'm in a service user's house.'

23 'No, yeah, but we need to see you.'

24 Q. So in the run-up to the trial and, I mean, this approach
25 by the police was in 2014, the trial is not until 2016,

1 how were things for you in those two years or so before
2 the trial took place?

3 A. Everything just really heavy, fast decline of
4 everything, erm, and my mental health went in the
5 gutter, erm, and has proceeded to kind of remain half in
6 the gutter since then, so, erm, I didn't handle it very
7 well at all.

8 Q. Did you have any support at that time, psychological or
9 otherwise?

10 A. I'd been to see, like, my GP and had been through
11 different, erm, psychologists and psychiatrists, erm,
12 trying to figure out what the heck was going on.

13 Q. You tell us about the trial and I think it would be
14 really helpful just to hear from you how that went for
15 you, how it felt and what could have been done better,
16 if you think anything could have been done better?

17 A. If I'm being honest, my memory of the trial is very,
18 very hazy. Erm, I was very disassociated when I gave my
19 evidence. I don't -- I do remember I said to them that
20 I do not want to be behind a screen, 'cause I want to
21 see him. I don't think they could have done it any
22 differently. The court did what the court needed to do
23 and found him guilty, albeit all those years later. But
24 the court was okay. It was terrifying, but it was okay
25 from what I can remember.

1 Q. You tell us, this is paragraph 138, that actually during
2 the trial you got some further support from staff from
3 your old unit, the Alison unit?

4 A. Yeah, the Throughcare Aftercare unit, yeah.

5 Q. You make the point that your diary was perhaps the key
6 evidence in Collins being found guilty and sentenced?

7 A. Erm, yeah. I only said that because I was told that.
8 I can't remember who told me that. Somebody told me.

9 Q. In the wake of the trial, we know that there was what's
10 called a significant case review into the circumstances
11 surrounding Collins, his employment, and the
12 circumstances in which he came to be able to offend
13 against a number of girls in different Edinburgh homes.

14 Is it okay if we look briefly at a couple of
15 passages from that, Holly?

16 A. Yeah.

17 Q. The review is at EDI-000000749.

18 A. What page are you wanting me to look at, sorry?

19 Q. Page 24, please, first of all. I think it's towards the
20 foot of that page. It's the summary and conclusions.

21 I think we just need to look at this first
22 paragraph:

23 'During the period covered by this review, social
24 work and police enquiries and investigations were
25 insufficiently deep and limited in scope. In two cases,

1 professionals too readily accepted the girls' rebuttals
2 of abuse without providing the support necessary to
3 enable the girls to disclose later. The girls either
4 did not think they'd be believed if they disclosed abuse
5 or found they were not always believed when they did.
6 They felt they were in the wrong and under
7 investigation.'

8 Again, just thinking back, Holly, does that reflect
9 how you felt at the time about the way that the initial
10 investigation was handled?

11 A. Yeah, that would be accurate.

12 Q. It's perhaps an obvious question, but how does it make
13 you feel when you see the words 'police enquiries and
14 social work enquiries were insufficiently deep and
15 limited in scope'?

16 A. I've read a lot of this last night and I've went through
17 the different emotions of being absolutely devastated,
18 erm, angry.

19 Unfortunately, as horrible as this may sound, I am
20 now at the stage where I am like: of course. From
21 everything else I've learned: of course.

22 Q. What do you mean by that, Holly?

23 A. Just failure for everything, just failures in
24 everything.

25 Q. On their part, you mean?

1 A. Yeah.

2 Q. We don't need to look at it, Holly, but for Lady Smith's
3 benefit, pages 11 to 12 of this review give a rundown of
4 Collins's previous convictions. It's a timeline.

5 I mean, just looking at the first few lines, we see
6 that from 1973 to 1981, Collins appears in court on six
7 occasions, he's convicted of breaches of peace, theft,
8 road traffic offences. He applies for a residential
9 care officer post, declares, I think, some offences but
10 not others.

11 Then in 1987, he's convicted again of theft.
12 Edinburgh discover this but rather than sacking him
13 then, he's issued with a final warning.

14 Scrolling down again, there's yet another offence in
15 1987 and he pleads guilty to breach of the peace in
16 1988.

17 Yet he's still not sacked and is then appointed in
18 1992 as assistant unit manager in Northfield.

19 As you've told us, there were investigations at that
20 time into alleged, what they describe here, as
21 inappropriate relationships with a particular girl.

22 Again, does it seem that Edinburgh had a number of
23 opportunities to get rid of this guy, to make sure he
24 wasn't working with vulnerable people, and they didn't
25 take that opportunity?

1 A. This was the first page I saw last night. I have got --
2 I can't fathom how somebody can have so many final
3 warnings, be charged with more offences, but be
4 appointed as higher up -- promoted in work. I don't
5 understand why this -- I don't understand. I can't say
6 anything more than I don't understand.

7 Q. The person that wrote this review makes the point later
8 in the report, we don't need to look at it, but she
9 makes the point that these other offences, and in
10 particular the series and escalation of offences, would
11 be one indicator for someone who might be inclined to
12 abuse a position of power in the way that Collins did.

13 So we can set that aside now. Thank you.

14 Just back to your statement, Holly. You have made
15 the point that you had applied for criminal injuries
16 compensation. Did I understand you to say that that was
17 awarded? You were awarded criminal injuries
18 compensation?

19 A. Through the CICA, I was awarded after a fight with them,
20 but by the time they actually awarded me, I had already
21 started a civil claim.

22 Q. Is that civil claim still outstanding, it is still
23 pending?

24 A. No, that civil claim concluded but I am now going after
25 my old lawyers for professional negligence.

1 Q. Okay, all right.

2 A. Yes, there's a bit of a long process going on, but

3 that's something in the background.

4 Q. All right. You talk about having access to your

5 records, but I think you were able to go through the

6 records with your old social worker, Bernadette. Was it

7 helpful for you to have Bernadette there when you were

8 looking at the records?

9 A. Erm, yeah. I mean, I never knew Bernadette that well.

10 I don't think she was my social worker for very long,

11 but she was always nice when I had met her, erm, but

12 nice just to have that support while I was sorting

13 through them all, 'cause they kind of just got dumped in

14 her office in a box and I had to sort them all out in

15 order myself. Erm, but it was nice to have that little

16 bit of somebody just there helping me with the

17 paperwork, 'cause it was a lot, a lot. Erm, I didn't

18 really read them properly until a couple of years later.

19 Q. Did it feel quite difficult to do that?

20 A. Erm, yeah, and it was also very surprising to see some

21 of the things that had been said about me, erm, but they

22 are what they are. I can't change them now so ...

23 Q. We're in the business, Holly, of trying to change things

24 for the future and you talk about lessons to be learned

25 at paragraph 143 onwards.

1 Maybe you can just tell us a bit about that, what
2 you think we can learn as an Inquiry from your
3 experiences and how to try to make things better?

4 A. It's not even obviously -- it's not about, like, the
5 Inquiry, as in you guys, it's staff working in these
6 establishments. I don't know about now, 'cause I don't
7 know what changes have already been made, but I know
8 when I was younger, we were all just viewed as these
9 badly behaved children and that's how we were treated,
10 as badly behaved children and anything that we say, nine
11 times out of ten, just ignore them.

12 Q. I should maybe have asked you this before, Holly, and
13 I'm sorry to interrupt, but did you feel that any of the
14 staff made an effort to try to find out why you were
15 behaving the way that you were? To understand you?

16 A. Not really. There were members of staff that would do
17 their best to -- throughout the years that did their
18 best to comfort you, you know, and sometimes they would
19 ask why are you doing this? If you ask a young person
20 at that age why you are doing this, nine times out of
21 ten they're going to tell you, 'I don't know'. You know
22 so ...

23 In regards to a bit of comfort, I wouldn't say that
24 I never had comfort. I occasionally had comfort. But
25 to get to the root of the problems, no, I never had

1 that.

2 Q. You tell us a bit about the way that allegations are

3 handled has to be different.

4 A. Mm-hmm.

5 Q. What can you tell us about that?

6 A. The support -- so when the allegations came out, erm,

7 I wasn't allowed to speak to anybody. Staff wouldn't

8 speak to me. I wasn't allowed to speak to young --

9 I wasn't allowed to speak to anybody. I then had to

10 deal, for however many months it was, however long I had

11 to deal with that investigation, with that all inside me

12 because I wasn't allowed to speak to anybody.

13 Q. You had no outlet for the feelings that you were having?

14 A. No. Erm, like, even I never had an external person that

15 was totally separate from everything that I could

16 explain or talk to about how I was feeling or what had

17 happened to me, 'cause I was told: you have to keep

18 quiet now. You're not allowed to talk.

19 Q. In a way, what had happened to you was perhaps it felt

20 it was being hidden again?

21 A. Yeah, it was the feeling that it was being hidden,

22 nobody wants to talk about it, everyone's scared of you

23 and frightened that you're going to accuse them next

24 and, yeah, 'It's done now, let's get her out the unit'.

25 That's how it felt to me.

1 Q. Holly, thank you. I don't have any more questions for
2 you, but I understand that there is something that you
3 would like to say at the end of your evidence?

4 A. Yeah.

5 I have done like a little impact, personal statement
6 thing that I had asked if it was okay for me to read and
7 I was told I was allowed to.

8 LADY SMITH: Very much so, Holly, I'd really like to hear it
9 if you're able to tell me what's in it.

10 Please go ahead when you're ready.

11 A. Yeah, no problem. Thank you very much, my Lady.

12 For the past 20 years, I have carried the weight of
13 my time in care and the abuse I endured during that
14 period. These experiences profoundly shaped the person
15 I became, taking me from a social, hardworking, though
16 often overworking, individual, to someone who, for the
17 last decade, has grappled with PTSD and other mental
18 health challenges.

19 Many people have heard or seen parts of my childhood
20 experiences, whether online, in newspapers or through
21 word of mouth, yet no one has ever truly looked me in
22 the eye and listened to every word. These are my
23 experiences. This is my trauma. This is my truth and
24 one that I have sought to tell openly and without
25 reservation.

1 I have worked through a personal checklist of steps
2 that I hoped would help me close this long and painful
3 chapter of my life. With my abuser passing away in
4 prison, there was one final item left, the Inquiry.

5 Now that I have completed this step I feel a sense
6 of resolution.

7 I want to extend my gratitude to everyone who has
8 supported me over these years. I'm especially grateful
9 to Lady Smith and the Inquiry for providing a platform
10 where survivors like me can finally have a voice. But
11 my childhood trauma and experiences are not just about
12 me, it's a reflection of a system that failed to protect
13 those who are most vulnerable. My hope now is that what
14 comes from this Inquiry is a meaningful change. I hope
15 that lessons learned will pave the way for a future
16 where no child has to endure what I did. That no
17 15-year-old will ever find themselves sitting alone in
18 their room, terrified of who is coming through the door
19 next. And that no child is called a liar, disbelieved,
20 or so badly let down by a system collectively.

21 This has been one of the hardest things I've ever
22 done, but I know it was necessary and by speaking out,
23 I hope to be part of something larger, a movement to
24 ensure that no child is ever left voiceless, unprotected
25 or unseen.

1 Thank you.

2 LADY SMITH: Holly, thank you so much for that. That's

3 really helpful. I'm grateful to you for taking the

4 trouble to prepare it and let me hear what you have to

5 say.

6 You have done very well to get where you are and

7 I know that from what you've said things are by no means

8 easy yet, but I hope you're now able to look forward

9 more than backward and limit at least how much you

10 reflect on what was so awful in your past.

11 So thank you. I wish you well. I hope you can have

12 a good rest for the remainder of the day.

13 A. Yes, I'm going to nap now.

14 LADY SMITH: You'll need it, Holly. Off you go. Thank you.

15 A. Thank you very much.

16 LADY SMITH: It is neatly 4 o'clock and I think that's time

17 to rise for today.

18 What is the plan for tomorrow?

19 MR SHELDON: We have a live witness at 10.00 am.

20 LADY SMITH: Very well.

21 I'll rise now until 10 o'clock tomorrow morning.

22 (4.02 pm)

23 (The Inquiry adjourned until 10.00 am on

24 Thursday, 16 January 2025)

25

INDEX

1	Killian Steele (affirmed)	1
2	Questions from Ms Forbes	2
3	'Travis' (read)	83
4	'Aaron' (read)	89
5	Holly Alex (sworn)	122
6	Questions from Mr Sheldon	123
7		
8		
9		
10		
11		
12		
13		
14		
15		
16		
17		
18		
19		
20		
21		
22		
23		
24		
25		

