

**Scottish Child Abuse Inquiry**

Witness Statement of

LZI

Support person present: No

1. My full name is LZI. I am known as LZI. My date of birth is 1958. My contact details are known to the Inquiry.

**Background**

2. My parents' names were and . My mother's maiden name was . She passed away on 2018. My father passed away on 1998. I have one older brother, two younger brothers, and and one younger sister, . My older brother is known as .
3. I was born in Nairobi, Kenya. My father was in the British Colonial Service as a lawyer. . My parents were living in Kenya at the time of my birth. We lived there for a couple of years, after I was born, and then we moved to Lusaka, Zambia. .
4. Our life in Lusaka was very privileged. We had a big property, about twenty acres, with a clay tennis court. We also had servants, a nanny, a cook and a gardener.
5. I started off in primary school in Lusaka. I think special consideration was given to those, such as my parents, who were on colonial service so that their children could

have their schooling in South Africa or back in the UK. A lot of those who were children of parents on colonial service in Africa flew back to go to school in the UK.

6. I think the reason St Columba's was picked for me, and my brother [REDACTED] to attend was because my mother's brother, [REDACTED] had gone to St Joseph's College in Dumfries. St Columba's was the preparatory school for St Joseph's. I did not have to sit an entrance exam.
7. I did not visit the school before I started. I do not remember what was done by way of preparation for my starting at the school. My brother [REDACTED] is two years older than me. He was already there.
8. I was always told that I went to St Columba's when I was seven. I think that means that I went there for the beginning of the term, in [REDACTED] 1966. I turned eight in the [REDACTED] of that year.
9. When I first went to St Columba's I travelled with my parents from Lusaka to Cape Town or Durban and then sailed to the UK. We either flew or took the train up to Scotland from Southampton.

#### **St Columba's Largs**

10. St Columba's was run by the Marist Brothers and was a boys-only school. It was a very small school. I think there were probably between twenty to thirty pupils.
11. I recall that the school building was a really big house, with a stone driveway leading up to the entrance. There were rooms on either side as you went in the front door, and then stairs leading up to the dormitories. My recollection is that there were four levels. The classrooms were on the ground floor and the dormitories were on the upper floors.

*First day*

12. My parents and my brother [REDACTED] had travelled with me, so they were there when I was introduced to the school. I remember I did not want to be there. I cried a lot. I was pretty young and I just wanted out of there. Eventually, they coaxed me into staying.
13. I am almost certain that Brother MJD was SNR [REDACTED] when I arrived at the school and I was introduced to him. My parents stayed with me for a little while and then they left. I recall going into the dormitory and going to sleep. I do not recall any sort of formal or informal ceremony taking place by way of introduction to the school.

*Brothers*

14. The other brothers that I remember (apart from Brother MJD) were Brother MLA [REDACTED] Brother Douglas, Brother Germanus and Brother MZY [REDACTED] [REDACTED] Brother Germanus was not there originally. He came a little bit later. I think he came as an additional member of staff. I think Brothers MLA and Douglas were in their thirties or forties, Brother Germanus was older and Brother MJD was pretty old, maybe in his sixties.
15. I do not think Brother MZY was there when I first arrived. I think he might have been a novice. He was younger than the others. I think he was probably in his twenties. He was quite short, had darkish hair, pale skin and my recollection is that he had really prominent, red lips. That is about as much as I can remember.
16. I cannot recall anything else that made me think that Brother MZY was not a fully qualified Marist Brother. I just had this impression that he was not a fully-fledged brother
17. All of the brothers lived at the school. I think their bedrooms were on the level above the classrooms. I have a vague recollection of walking past them, so I think they were on that first level.

*Lay staff*

18. There was a matron at the school when I first started. I do not remember her name. She left shortly after I started. I do not think she was there for more than about a term during my time at the school. She was not replaced while I was there. I think her role was to look after the dormitory and the young boys in particular. She was not involved in any teaching activities.
19. I had piano lessons with a female piano teacher who came to the school to teach from outside. I do not remember her name.
20. I also remember that there was a male cook. I do not remember his name. I think there were other kitchen staff.
21. The only staff members that I can remember being there, apart from the Marist Brothers, were the matron, the cook and the piano teacher.

*Peers*

22. There was an Italian boy in my class called [REDACTED]  
[REDACTED]
23. I also remember the boy who was in the bed next to me in the dormitory I went into originally. I think his name was [REDACTED] or something like that. He had quite thick glasses and dark hair. I think he was also Italian.
24. I remember there were two day boys (or at least one day boy) at the school called [REDACTED]. He or they lived in Largs. I think one was [REDACTED] age and the other one was younger (I believe). I remember two other brothers who were from Iraq. I cannot remember their names. I thought their surname may have been [REDACTED] or something like that, but I cannot be sure.

## Routine at St Columba's

### *Mornings and bedtime*

25. The dormitory I went into originally was quite a big one. I do not have any real memory of how many boys slept in it. I do have a memory of my Grade 4 class and that there were eight of us, so there was probably a similar number in the dormitory.
26. There was a smaller annexe to that dormitory, which could sleep about two or three boys. There was a connecting door, but the annexe was a separate, little area. The bigger part of the dormitory was for the younger boys, probably aged about seven and eight. I remember starting off in the bigger dormitory and then moving into the smaller annexe.
27. I think moving into the annexe was a progression. I may have gone up a grade (I have some memory of moving from the smaller classroom at the front of the school (Grade 4) to a larger one next to it (Grade 5) but towards the back of the school) and then had the choice of moving into the smaller annexe or into a bigger dormitory downstairs. The older boys were downstairs. I think two or three of us went into this little annexe rather than going downstairs.
28. I do not think the dormitories had names. I do not have any memory of the older boys' dormitory downstairs. I am not sure if there was only one dormitory down there. I never moved to a dormitory downstairs.
29. I do not recall having to get up too early. I think we started school around 8:30 am or 9:00 am, so we probably got up between 6:30 am and 7:00 am (more likely to be 7 am). From memory, we would tidy our bed, get dressed and go down for breakfast before going to classes. I do not recall any of the boys having problems with bed-wetting.
30. I think we went to bed sometime between 8:00 pm and 9:00 pm. It might have been a bit earlier. I have a recollection of a routine of showers, getting into our pyjamas,

dressing gown and slippers, and then reading in bed for a little while until 'lights out'. I think we had some supper too, Cocoa or something like that.

31. We were not just left to our own devices at night. I do not have a recollection of who it was, but there was certainly someone who got us into bed.
32. I recall that on the one occasion that I was sexually assaulted, it was only Brother MZY who was walking up and down the dormitory after the lights went out. I do not have a recollection of any of the other brothers ever doing that, although perhaps brother MLA or Brother Douglas did it (on their own) from time to time when the matron left.

#### *Washing/bathing*

33. I remember there were showers with screens that you pulled across. I think there might have been two or three in a row. I think the shower room was on the level below the floor where my dormitory was. I have always assumed that we had a shower every night, but that may not necessarily have been the case. I know that we had a limited time to get showered, as there would be another boy coming in after you. I do not remember being supervised when we were having showers.
34. I know that there was a room with wash basins where we would get washed in the morning. I cannot remember whether this room was on the same level as my dormitory. I believe it was.

#### *Clothing*

35. Our school uniform was blue. We wore a blazer, cap and shorts. I have shown the Inquiry team a photo of me in my uniform. I believe we wore shorts when we went to classes, but I cannot remember if we wore them outside of school.
36. I do not know who was responsible for washing and pressing the clothes. I do not know what happened when the matron left. I think we had a bag where we would put

all our laundry, but I am not sure what happened then. I cannot remember where our clothes were kept.

#### *Food/Mealtimes*

37. We ate breakfast, lunch and tea in the refectory. All of the boys from the different grades ate together. We had porridge in the morning. I remember we used to get really nice bread rolls. We had ice cream on feast days and other treats such as lollies. I do not remember there being any issues with children not wanting to eat the food. I did not have any particular complaints about the food. We ate pretty well. We were also allowed to keep food and lollies that we received from our relatives when they visited us on Sundays.

#### *Schooling*

38. I'm pretty certain that I started in Grade 4. There were only eight of us in that year. Our classroom was immediately to the left as you went in the front door. I think Grade 5 had a classroom of its own and Grades 6 and 7 were combined. Brother MJD taught us when I first started at the school. I also have a recollection of Brother Douglas teaching us. I think Brother MLA taught the older boys.
39. We had lessons in the morning, a break for morning tea and then we stopped for lunch. We had more lessons in the afternoon until about 2:00 pm or 3:00 pm.
40. We had school on Saturday mornings and we had no lessons on Wednesday afternoons. I think Wednesday afternoon was a sport day. We played football or went for walks. There was no organised athletic programme or PE programme.
41. I remember Brother MJD had a particular way of writing, which he taught us. It was like italics. For example, when we wrote an 'a', it was not rounded at the bottom where it touched the line. It was pointed at the point where it touched the line.

42. I went from Grade 4 up to Grade 5, but I did not finish my primary schooling at St Columba's. I left when I was in or had just started Grade 5.
43. I remember having piano lessons at St Columba's with a female piano teacher who attended the school. I remember that she either passed away or became very sick just before I had to do an exam. I played the piano very badly. I have a memory of a female piano teacher hitting me on the hands with a ruler with metal lines on the side. I just cannot be sure whether this happened in Largs or later in Australia.

#### *Leisure time*

44. When we finished school, depending on the weather, we would go across to the soccer oval across the road from the school which led down to the River Clyde. We were always supervised by a brother at the oval. I remember getting changed into our football gear and it was so cold at times. We would go back to the refectory and have our tea after football. I cannot remember what we did in the evenings.
45. I remember we would also go for walks sometimes. These were also supervised by one of the brothers. I have a vague recollection that there was a golf course or common area behind the school. This golf course or common area was at the top of quite a steep embankment.
46. I would describe the atmosphere in the place as being fairly disciplined and dour. It was quite a regimented existence. I made some good friends, but I cannot remember ever being really happy. The only time I recall being really happy was when Celtic won the European Cup in 1967 beating Inter-Milan in Lisbon. The school had a black and white TV set and, as I remember, we all sat round it and watched the game.

#### *Trips*

47. It was not the sort of school that was very social. It was quite an isolating experience. We did play a football game against the local primary school, on one occasion. I think it only happened because the other school had asked to play a game against

us. This was a huge event for us and quite exciting. We played it on the oval immediately across the road from our school. I remember I was a linesman.

48. The only time I recall us going into town, as a school, was to go to church. It was about a twenty-minute walk into town. We were not allowed to go there on our own. We did not get to go to a day boys' house or have a sleepover or anything like that.

#### *Religion*

49. I was brought up a Catholic. I think I made my First Holy Communion in Africa before I went to St Columba's.
50. We went to church in Largs on a Sunday morning. Each one of the boys had their own kilt and tartan. We only wore our kilts on Sundays and special occasions. On Sundays we would get into our kilts, school blazer and cap and march off into Largs, and then we'd march back. We were taught religion and we always said prayers. There were evening prayers at or about the time we went to bed at night.

#### *Family*

51. We wrote letters regularly to our parents. It was compulsory. We went home to our parents at the end of every term. We would stay in [REDACTED] with our uncles [REDACTED] and [REDACTED] and our grandfather during half-terms.
52. I did not have much contact with [REDACTED] during the time we were in school. I did have contact on the weekends when we went out with our relatives on Sunday afternoons. At school, I saw him at mealtimes and sometimes when we played sport, but there was not a lot of contact between us.

*Visits/Inspections*

53. We were allowed to have visitors on Sunday afternoons. We had relatives living in Scotland while we were in Largs. Our paternal uncles, [REDACTED] and [REDACTED] and our grandfather would come and take us out. We would go into Largs or to Greenock to have afternoon tea with our aunt [REDACTED] who lived there with her family. I do not think it was every Sunday, but it was very regular. Our uncle [REDACTED] would also come to see us from time to time when he was home from sea. He was a deputy commander in the merchant navy.
54. I do not recall any other visitors, official or otherwise, coming to the school.

*Healthcare*

55. There was not a school nurse. I think the matron was the one who looked after those issues, when I first got there. I do not have a recollection of the specific regime for healthcare. I do not recall any routine health checks being carried out, or seeing a dentist in my time there.

*Discipline*

56. The brothers had long, leather straps. I only recall getting the strap once. I do not remember any of the other boys being strapped. But I was always wary of it. Apart from one occasion with Brother Germanus, I do not recall any other occasions of brutality

**Abuse at St Columba's**

57. The only episode of brutal discipline I recall was when I was having a shower one time. I do not know how this happened but I defecated by accident into the shower. I did not know what to do. I was trying to wash it down into the shower. I only had a very limited time to have a shower, so my time was up before I could wash it away.

The next boy that came in discovered it. He complained immediately to a brother. I do not remember who that was. I was sent down to Germanus and he strapped me over the bare bottom with one of the long, leather straps. I do not recall how many times he strapped me. I am almost certain it was more than once. I can recall being hurt, but I did not sustain any injuries. I cannot remember seeing or hearing about any other boys being hit in a similar way.

58. I was sexually assaulted one night by Brother MZY when I was in the bigger dormitory. The lights went out and then Brother MZY walked up and down the dormitory. There were beds on either side of the dormitory and mine was on the right hand side as you went in. My bed was close to the door. I cannot remember whether it was right next to the door or whether it was one or two down. My friend, I think, was right next to me. Brother MZY came and stood by my bed. I was laying on my stomach, and he lay on top of me on my back, with his face close to my face. Then he put his hand down my pants onto my penis and fondled it. I cannot recall precisely how long it lasted, but it was not for very long. He then said, "I'll be back" and he left. Luckily for me, for whatever reason, that was the extent of it. He never came back.
59. I think my main reaction was confusion. I didn't know what was going on and I was just really confused. I think I felt slight fear too, but I was not totally frightened. I did not scream or yell or anything like that.
60. I recall that I was in a class with Brother MZY the next morning. I think he did teach at the school, but I do not recall him being my teacher. I just know that he was in my classroom the next day. I did not know what had happened, or what was going on, and I looked at him and I just remember his red lips. He never said anything to me about what he had done. I did not have any other contact with him at all. I do not know whether he moved on or whether he was still at the school when I left.
61. I thought this assault happened pretty much towards the end of my time at the school, because when I remember seeing Brother MZY in that classroom, it was not the original classroom that I had gone into when I first started. It was a bigger

class, so thought I was in Grade 5 at the time. However, it also happened in the main dormitory, not the annexe, so it might have been earlier than I originally thought.

#### **Brother Germanus**

62. I also remember that there was a time when it got very cold and a number of the boys, including myself, started to get chilblains on our fingers. Brother Germanus had been away from the school for a while, I believe because he had been sick. This was around the time he came back. His way of trying to keep our hands warm was to invite us to put our hands under his armpits. I only recall this happening on one occasion to me.

#### **Leaving St Columba's**

63. Things changed in Zambia quite dramatically after independence and a lot of colonials were deciding whether to go back to the UK or to move on to Hong Kong, Canada or Australia. My parent's intention was to go back to Scotland, but some friends of ours did some research on Perth in Western Australia and we ended up moving there. Moving to Australia meant that we did not have to go to boarding school any more.
64. We moved to Perth in [REDACTED] 1968. We probably left St Columba's around the [REDACTED] break in 1967. I then went to Aquinas College, which was a Christian Brothers school in Perth. I went into Grade 5 and [REDACTED] went into Grade 7.
65. I did not keep in touch with anyone from St Columba's.

#### **Reporting of abuse**

66. I did not tell anybody at the time about Brother [REDACTED] MZY [REDACTED]. The only person I have now told is my wife. I cannot remember when I told her. I did not tell my brothers or my

parents. One of the reasons I did not want to tell my mother was that I thought she would feel guilty about having sent me to St Columba's. She often did feel guilty about sending us over to Scotland, and I did not want to give her an added burden to carry. One of the main motives for my mother choosing to move from Africa to Western Australia was so that she would never have to send her children to boarding school again.

### **Impact**

67. I have not been affected by the abuse. I do not have any psychological injuries, and I have never had to seek treatment or support because of my time at St Columba's. I think I was lucky.
68. For a long time, I just forgot about it. I did not think or worry about it, and I did not do anything about it. The only thing that I feel from time to time, particularly because of the publicity that has been given to cases here in Australia, is a sense of anger about the way abused survivors have been treated by the Catholic Church and the various religious orders such as the Marist Brothers and the Christian Brothers.
69. I was brought up a Catholic, and I am a sort of Catholic now but one who has lost complete faith in the Catholic Church and those orders. I have three children. They all go to Catholic schools, but I would never have sent my son to a Marist school, and I would have thought seriously about sending him to a school run by the Christian Brothers. What has been identified and disclosed in Australia is appalling, particularly the cover-ups and the moving of priests and brothers to other locations after they have perpetrated abuse.
70. I have never thought about reporting what happened to me to the Marist Brothers.

## Records

71. I read the evidence given by the Provincial of the Marist Brothers to the Inquiry in Scotland saying that there were no or very few records relating to St Columba's. Part of my motivation to come forward was to show that there are people like me who were there. I remember the names of some boys and I know which brothers were there, so I thought it might help someone if I came forward.
72. There are boxes of records that my mother kept. I have not had the chance to go through all the boxes, but I have been able to find two letters so far. One is a letter written in 1965 by Brother <sup>MJD</sup> to my father about my brother . It refers to how travelled to Largs and how he was settling in. I think flew over and was met by my father's two brothers, and they then took him down from Glasgow to Largs.
73. The second letter was written by to my parents. It is undated, but he refers to it being the last letter to be sent home from Largs, which would indicate that it was probably written in 1967.
74. We got school reports from St Columba's, which I think were probably posted directly to my parents. I do not know where they are now but will keep looking.
75. I am almost certain that there would have been other correspondence from the school informing parents about their children's progress at school and how they were doing generally. The letter from Brother <sup>MJD</sup> to my father is in answer to a letter my father had written asking how things were going, so I am certain that my mother and father would have written from time to time and there would have been letters sent in response.

### Hopes for the Inquiry

76. It was a different time and a different era when I was at school, and I think the world has moved on significantly from then. I hope Scotland now has what we have in Australia, which are practices, procedures and protocols for the protection of vulnerable children. Child welfare checks are carried out and background checks are done on people who want to work or be involved with children. You cannot necessarily pigeon hole the behaviour of some of the people who abuse children, because sometimes it is very opportunistic and very brazen too, as was the case in my situation, but carrying out these types of checks should help prevent giving perpetrators the opportunity to carry out abuse.
77. In a lot of cases, children do not understand what it is going on when they are being abused, as was the case with me. It is not unusual for people years later to all of a sudden disclose abuse. If children do not know what's happening, they cannot tell anybody, so there should be measures in place to allow opportunities for abuse to be discovered or to be brought forward through education.
78. I think organisations such as the Catholic Church and the Marist and Christian Brothers should be accountable, and continually open to scrutiny and checked after the light that has been shone on them diminishes. This is particularly so where they operate institutions that house vulnerable children. I think we went through a period where the Catholic Church and these other organisations were above the law. The Catholic Church has its own canon law and they dealt with priests in their own way. That has to change. They have started to do that, to an extent, in Australia. One thing they have done is that they have changed the law so that the Catholic Church and other Catholic Orders cannot hide behind the what is known as 'Ellis defence' any more. They now need to be accountable for what they have done.
79. There has also been a change in mindset. Rather than before, the mindset now is to believe children when they come forward. This change is particularly welcome in relation to the Catholic Church. People previously had blind faith in priests and brothers and would not have believed that these men were capable of doing these

things. I think the world has changed because of what has been discovered about the crimes perpetrated on children by those who were supposed to be protecting them.

80. I have no objection to my witness statement being published as part of the evidence to the Inquiry on condition that, I remain anonymous, I be referred to by pseudonym and that appropriate redactions to my statement are made in accordance with the Protocol on redaction of information from documents before they are published.
81. I believe the facts stated in this witness statement are true.

Signed.....LZI

Dated.....9-9-19