

Scottish Child Abuse Inquiry

Witness Statement of [KZW]

Support person present: Yes

1. My name is [KZW] and my date of birth is [] 1971. I am 46 years old. My contact details are known to the Inquiry.

Background

2. I am unemployed though I do voluntary work for a charity called [] for 2 or 3 days a week. It's an environmental charity. I am single and live alone. I have 4 kids, that I know of, who are [] (26), [] (22), [] (19) and the fourth one is [] or [] (also 19) but I've never met him. My mum, [], is still alive but my dad, [], is dead. I have 3 wee brothers who are [] (44), [] (41) and [] (39).

Life before care

3. I come from East Wemyss. I was nine years old when I first went into a home. I was running about with teenagers and one in particular used to use me to break into houses. I was called the key and would be used to get in through the windows. Normally, once I got the door open, I was told to beat it but the first time I was actually allowed into the house, we got caught by the police.
4. I was put in front of the children's panel in Methil in 1980. My mum and a social worker took me there. The social worker was called Mrs Fox. As far as I'm aware, this was my first involvement with a social worker.

5. The panel sent me to The Dale School in Brechin Road, Arbroath under the control of Fife Social Work and I was to be there for 1 and a half years. It was a List D school in the middle of Arbroath and was a couple of hours away by train from my home. That included a change of trains at Dundee. Again, it was my mum and the social worker who took me to the school.

The Dale School, Arbroath

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Secondary Institutions - to be published later

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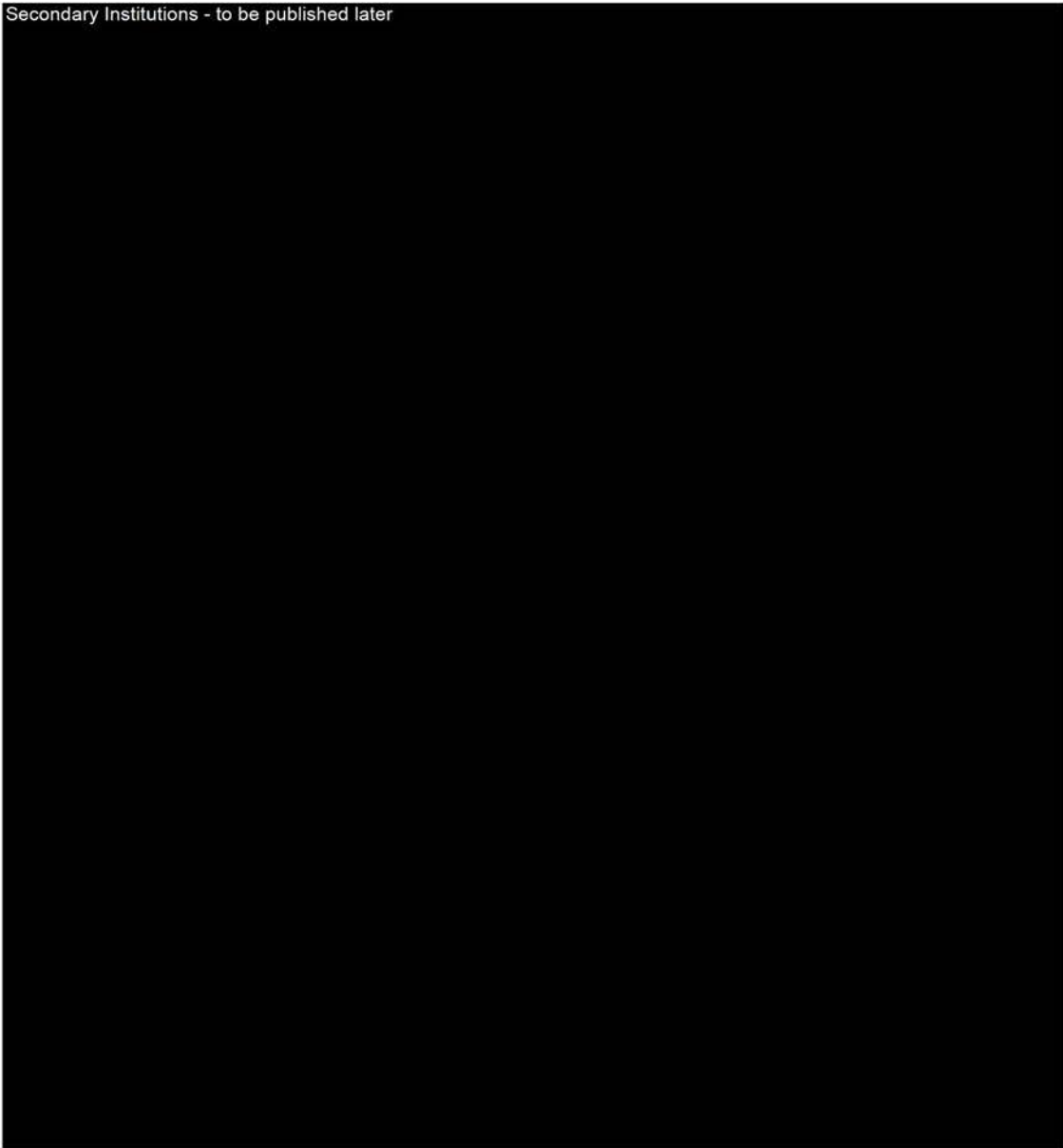
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Secondary Institutions - to be published later



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Leaving the institution

32. One day, I was told to pack my bags and I was sent home. The school, as far as I could see, was suddenly closed down overnight which is why I was sent home. Looking back, I always found it strange that such a place could close so quickly. I mean how would they have managed to move other boys to other schools or homes so quickly? There must have been a reason it closed down so quickly but I never did find out why.

Life after the institution

33. When I went home, I went to Coaltown of Wemyss school. I was sent there rather than to my old primary school because they thought that I would have been abused by the other kids at my old school as they would all have known I had been in The Dale School.
34. Whilst still in primary, I smashed a bus window and got put back into List D School by the Panel. They sent me to Melville House which was just outside Cupar.

Melville house near Cupar, Fife

35. Melville House was an amazing place and I was there for about 2 and a half years. There was no education as such, but the main thing was that there was no sexual abuse. They took us fishing and canoeing almost every week and there was lots of hill-walking. It was council run.
36. There were about 40 boys there all aged between about 12 and 18. It was a children's home that was a big private mansion. It had a full-size football pitch with a river and a forest nearby. It was SNR Mr GBJ, Mr PBP and Mr KTZ who I think had all previously been Welsh monks and who dressed casually.
37. There were loads of other staff as well. We didn't wear uniforms

Routine

38. There was 4 to 5 boys in each dorm. We would get up, wash, then have breakfast and go to school. There would then be meetings in a big hall, then back to school. After school, we would have tea then you could play games until bedtime. In the evenings, the boys could play pool or table games, football or go for a run.

- 39. There was a room where you could watch TV and there were also plenty of books to read.
- 40. There were plenty of showers and baths and you could have a shower whenever you wanted.

Food

- 41. The food was brilliant

Schooling

- 42. Jack Mills was the English teacher but basically took us fishing all the time. Mr Mathie taught us woodwork and joinery but you could really do whatever you liked. There was a woman teacher but you just read comics in her class. PE was really just me doing cross-country running.

Visits/Inspections

- 43. You would get home every week. You would leave on the Friday night and come back on the Sunday evening. My mum would come and visit me on occasion.
- 44. Lorraine Penman was one of my social workers. I went to various meetings with her, my mum and the staff. They spoke about the usual things like how I was getting on and what sort of progress I was making.

Medical Care

- 45. My dentist was in Cupar and, if a doctor was needed, one would be brought in.

Abuse

46. Abuse wasn't a problem in Melville House. I wasn't bullied. Perhaps if you were fighting with another boy, a member of staff might jump in to break it up and give you a wallop as he did so but that was about it. I wouldn't consider that abuse.
47. The one occasion where I suppose you could say I was abused happened after an incident on a Thursday night. I had been playing pool and one of the teachers, PKX [REDACTED], came in and told me to tidy away all the games. I told her I hadn't been playing with them and she grabbed me and dragged me across the chair. I hit my head off the radiator and was so annoyed that I lashed out at her and punched her on the face which immediately caused her eye to swell out.
48. The next day I was outside and Mr GBJ [REDACTED] grabbed me. He then battered my head of the mini-bus a few times. I wasn't injured. I want to add though that I thought Mr GBJ [REDACTED] was brilliant to me during my time there. I remember he used to always let me walk his dog.
49. Because of this, I ran away with 2 or 3 others to Glenrothes. The next day the rest went shoplifting but I just handed myself into the police. I got taken back to the home but there were no repercussions for having run away.

Leaving the Institution

50. Halfway through second year, the headmaster of Buchhaven secondary school used me as a guinea pig to try and get me out of care and into main-stream. I went between the two places for about 6 months then, in 3rd year, I went to Buchhaven full-time. That was me out of the care system.
51. I left school before I turned 16 and I lived at home till I was 18.

Impact

52. The last 37 years of my life have been a lie. It's not been real. The life I should have had, is one I never had because of this. I fought everybody because of it for years. I fought my mum and dad, I fought the law, I fought everybody.
53. A couple of years ago, I got new neighbours and for the first time in my life I tried to be a sociable neighbour. Before that, I would make as much noise as I liked and did whatever I wanted to.
54. I was twenty before I realised I wasn't gay. Secondary Institutions - to be published later
Secondary Institutions - to be published later
55. I spent about five plus years of my adult life in prison and I partly put that down to my time in care because I became so anti-authoritarian and anti-system. I just hated society, especially Fife Council.
56. It affected my education because the education was non-existent in those places. I only had two years of full-time education when I came out of care and that wasn't enough to enable me to pass exams. That had a big impact on my chances of getting work. I'm always telling my kids, they need to get an education.
57. I started taking drugs when I was thirteen years old which was probably because I had been sniffing petrol and gas earlier. I was doing it to try and escape from life and the real world. I did try heroin but didn't like it. I take speed because it helps me get through life. I've been taking it since 1990 but stopped injecting it in 2008.
58. I've thought about suicide and it's only because of my grandson, that stopped me doing it recently.

59. It has affected my relationships throughout my life. It probably affected me as a parent and maybe made me stricter. I remember I fought like hell to keep my son out of care when he was younger. I didn't want him going into one of those places like the ones I went to.

60. Secondary Institutions - to be published later

Treatment/Support

61. Secondary Institutions - to be published later

Reporting of abuse

62. Secondary Institutions - to be published later

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Records

65. I asked Future Pathways to get my records but they haven't got back to me. I don't know how else to go about it. I know my records existed in 2008 because the social worker mentioned them at the meeting we had concerning my son [REDACTED].

Lessons to be Learned

66. Secondary Institutions - to be published later
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68. I have no objection to my witness statement being published as part of the evidence to the Inquiry. I believe the facts stated in this witness statement are true.

Signed.... KZW

Dated... 11th 10th 2017