

Scottish Child Abuse Inquiry

Witness Statement of

Alexander SHANNON

Support person present: Yes

1. My name is Alexander Shannon. My date of birth is [REDACTED] 1966 and I am presently fifty-two years of age. My contact details are known to the Inquiry.

Life before going into care

2. My first memories are of when I stayed in the Springburn area of Glasgow with my family. Mum and dad were alcoholics and eventually dad left and mum had a breakdown.
3. Mum's name is [REDACTED]. She's still alive and her current surname is [REDACTED]. Dad was [REDACTED] and he died in 2009. [REDACTED]

4. In 1973 I started school at St Aloysius Primary in Glasgow and did six months there. [REDACTED] had been brought up as Catholics, but I had no time for the Catholic religion. In the summer that year the [REDACTED] family went to Blairgowrie to do berry picking and when we came back dad left and mum had a breakdown. After that, [REDACTED] taken into care at Dunclutha Children's Home in Dunoon.

Mornings and bedtime

10. There were about eight beds in each dormitory. At that age I thought the rooms were all quite big, but I can't remember if the dorms were single sex or not. [REDACTED] and [REDACTED] were put into a different dorm to me because they were older.
11. About six months later, [REDACTED] and [REDACTED] joined [REDACTED] Dunclutha and [REDACTED] was put in the crèche when a bed space became available. Later on he was moved again into a dormitory in the main building. I'm not sure what age he would have been when that happened.
12. I was always having nightmares and I used to sneak out at all times of the night looking for [REDACTED] in his bed. When I found him I would climb into bed with him, but then I would get put back into my own bed.

Bedwetting

13. Whenever I went to [REDACTED]'s bed, I would end up wetting it. I remember one occasion that I actually defecated in the bed and when SNR [REDACTED] found us in the morning we were both covered in faeces. There was a big fuss and I was marched into the shower until I was clean.
14. Once I was clean she told me to bend over while I was still naked and hit me three times across the backside with a leather belt. I got into my pyjamas again and was sent back down to my own dormitory. She told me I was never to go back to [REDACTED]'s bed and, because I was afraid of getting punished, I never did.
15. After that I really missed [REDACTED] and felt a sense of loss and ended up wetting my own bed. Every time I did, SNR [REDACTED] would hit me again across the bare backside with the belt. Usually it was three times.

16. I'm not sure how long this went on for, certainly a few months. I think it got to the point that SNR realised hitting me wasn't helping and she stopped.

Mealtimes

17. I remember there would always be a nurse about at mealtimes and that we used to get milk and a biscuit before bed, but I don't remember what the food was like or what happened if you didn't like it.

Clothing

18. We were dressed in whatever the nurses gave us. We had to wear a uniform at school, but we wore ordinary clothes at other times.

Schooling

19. I would have been six when I arrived at Dunclutha and I was sent to St Mun's Primary School in Dunoon with [REDACTED]. [REDACTED] never went to school straight away because he was too young, he came along later.
20. St Mun's was just a normal school life with physical training and football, or whatever, the only difference was that there were American kids there as well. They came from the American naval base nearby.

Leisure time

21. There was a lot of free time, or at least it felt like that. We had supervised activities at the weekend and the rest of the time we could just play. Most of our free time was spent playing unsupervised in the dormitories.

Trips and holidays

22. One of the staff, a lady from Glasgow called Nurse RCS who would have been in her mid-twenties, took a shine to me. She used to take me home to her parents on the south side of Glasgow every other weekend.
23. Some of the other kids went away home at the weekends, but other than my trips with Nurse RCS, we always stayed there.

Visits and Inspections

24. got two visits during the whole time in Dunclutha, one from my mum and one from my dad. they were split up, but never given any updates on where they were or what they were doing.
25. Although I think it was the Social Work that took to Dunclutha, I never saw a social worker while there.

Fostering

26. I remember we all used to sit in a square while people came in that were looking to foster kids. It was like a cattle market. They would walk round us and pick different children and then take the children they'd picked away. We would always see kids coming and going, in and out of foster care.
27. always left behind. I always used to think got ignored because had ginger hair. It was quite hurtful. I always felt rejected and lost.

Running away

28. I tried to run away a few times with, but we always got caught at the ferry. We just wanted to get back to parents.

Abuse at Dunclutha

29. What I do remember of Dunclutha is that was the first time I came across 'doctors and nurses'. By that, I mean sexual games, simulating sex and touching each other. Nothing was out of bounds. Even though I and some of the others were so young, we would get completely naked and simulate full sexual intercourse with each other. At that time I had no idea it was wrong.
30. There was a group of about twelve of us, boys and girls ranging in age from four years old to about fifteen years old, all playing with each other sexually. Everyone was willing and everyone was participating, encouraging each other on.
31. I've since spoken to [REDACTED] and [REDACTED] and they told me they were doing the same in their group. One of my group was [REDACTED] and, although I never participated in anything with her, she was fairly encouraging for me to play with her pals.
32. It always happened in the dormitories, pretty much all the time and either during the day or in the evenings. I do also remember a time when a black girl, who also stayed at Dunclutha, was standing behind me in a line at school and I had my hands down her knickers.
33. At that time I didn't think there was anything wrong and it became common and would happen pretty much every day. Even though I was too young to actually do anything, we would get completely naked and go through the motions of having sex with girls who were sometimes fifteen years old.
34. I don't think it happened in front of staff at any time. I don't think any of the staff would have been aware it was going on. I do wonder now how we managed to get away with it all, especially if the dorms were single sex, as I think they were. For some reason I've no memory of any of the staff being in the dormitories at all.

35. We used to go down to the beach in front of the home where an old guy had a boat club. I remember a time when a girl called [REDACTED], who is [REDACTED] was taken into the boat club herself by this man. I don't know his name, but he was some sort of handyman at the home. I thought at the time they were playing doctors and nurses and even at that young age I knew there was something wrong with that.

Leaving Dunclutha

36. I don't remember actually leaving Dunclutha, but [REDACTED] only there for eighteen months to two years before [REDACTED] went back to stay with my mum. By this time she had met another partner, [REDACTED], and he became my next dad, although they never got married.
37. They stayed at [REDACTED] in Glasgow and that was just another volatile, drunken relationship. They weren't good parents, alcohol was their main focus and [REDACTED] neglected. The only person that was looking after [REDACTED] was [REDACTED].
38. All the houses in [REDACTED] were falling to pieces. Our house was one of the old tenements with the toilet on the stairs and there were rats everywhere. [REDACTED] slept in the same bed with no blankets, just jackets [REDACTED]. It was real poverty and that was the start of [REDACTED] going off the rails and stealing.
39. [REDACTED] weren't getting fed for days at a time and I would steal whatever I could just to survive. One time I climbed through a window to eat a pie that I'd seen inside.
40. There were social workers about, but they were no help. I don't remember any of their names, but I think they must have come from the social work offices at Kelvinhall. I remember going to Seafield Residential School in Ardrossan for a couple of weeks, which had been arranged by the social work to give my mum a break. I don't remember much about being at Seafield.

41. [REDACTED] started going to Anderston Primary where [REDACTED] got school dinners, which would be [REDACTED] only meal of the day. Even in the summer holidays [REDACTED] used to walk to the school to get fed. It was a fair distance to Anderston Primary, but mum and her partner never walked with [REDACTED]
42. [REDACTED] going off the rails and started getting into trouble with the police and various other agencies. [REDACTED] would break into anything or anywhere to get money to feed [REDACTED].
43. [REDACTED] eventually moved from [REDACTED] to a hospital at Foresthall in Springburn that had a wing set aside for homeless families. We stayed in a large room that had partition walls separating the families. The partitions didn't go all the way up to the roof so you could hear all the other families. It was just crazy.
44. [REDACTED] started going to a school near the hospital, but [REDACTED] only there for three to six months. Mum was always drunk and fighting and by that time had split up with her partner, [REDACTED].
45. After that we were given a house in [REDACTED] in Springburn, which had an inside toilet. By then mum had met another man and he became [REDACTED] new dad. She was in and out of hospital having breakdowns all the time. It was a recurring theme for her to come home with a new partner. [REDACTED] hated it but there was nothing [REDACTED] could do.
46. [REDACTED] was good and [REDACTED] became stable, but mum was still disappearing for days at a time, drinking. [REDACTED] left to fend for [REDACTED], being looked after by [REDACTED].
47. [REDACTED] still going out stealing and [REDACTED] making quite a lot of money, enough to give to mum to pay the bills. [REDACTED] behaviour was coming to the attention of the social work and I think I attended about four children's panels. When I look back now, I can see I was screaming out to get back into care. All I could see about being in care was three meals a day and a bed.

48. [REDACTED] left [REDACTED] and [REDACTED] were put in prison for different things. [REDACTED] and I started getting bullied by other kids and gangs in the area and we had to move from [REDACTED] after a group came to our door with machetes. Mum's partner, who by then she had married, managed to get a machete off them and the tables were turned.
49. That group were part of a gang with a lot of power so we had to move from [REDACTED] quickly. If we had stayed we would probably have been murdered. As a result, we lost every possession we had. The social work got involved and we were put in a guest house at Charing Cross.
50. We stayed there for a few months and [REDACTED] and I would go into the town centre and continue our stealing. We got a house in Possilpark, but our stealing and mum's drinking continued and it was a horrible time. Mum was sleeping about, there were different guys every night. Sometimes she would be sleeping with some guy in the bed right next to me.
51. Eventually, by the time I was twelve years old, mum disappeared and my step-father just couldn't cope [REDACTED]. [REDACTED] a handful, so he wrote a letter for the social work and left [REDACTED] their offices in Kelvinhall. [REDACTED] I spent the whole day in their offices until they eventually sorted something out [REDACTED].
52. That was the day before my thirteenth birthday in 1979 and [REDACTED] put in a black car again and driven all the way from Glasgow to St Ninian's in Fife. Nothing was explained [REDACTED] about where [REDACTED] were going and I've no idea who the social workers were. The social workers left [REDACTED] there and I stayed at St Ninian's until I was fifteen years old.

St Ninian's, Falkland, Fife

53. St Ninian's was run by the Christian Brothers and the Brothers enforced a code of strict discipline all of the time. Only one or two didn't like the punishments so much.

54. I think there were maybe about ten Brothers and they comprised the majority of the staff. Father Ryan was the head and he ran the home. Two of the others that I remember were Brother Farrell and Brother Kelly. There was also a man who was a [REDACTED] there called MBV [REDACTED]. I know now that he used to be a Christian Brother
55. One of the Brothers who was kind to us was a young Scottish guy called Brother Burns and there was another one who was alright, but I can't remember his name. He was late-thirties, about five foot eleven inches tall and stocky build with an English accent. He wore glasses and always had stubble on his face.
56. Most of the Brothers had their own accommodation and MBV [REDACTED] had a house in Kirkcaldy. I think he could stay the night at St Ninian's as well when he wanted.
57. As well as the Brothers, there were cooks and cleaners, a Matron and two teachers. I don't remember the Matron's name. One of the teachers took [REDACTED] and he was called BHB [REDACTED], the other was MIK [REDACTED] and he took [REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
58. There must have been about forty boys at St Ninian's ranging in age from about eleven up to seventeen. I fitted in perfectly with all of them because they had all been in the same position as me. We were all from troubled backgrounds, all glue-sniffers and thieves, who had all been stealing to survive. Quite a lot of the boys were from the same families.
59. The building itself was a stone-built mansion in its own grounds. There was a big hall as soon as you came in the front door and stairs leading up to the dormitories on the first floor. Off the hall, on the ground floor, was the main office where the Brothers would normally spend their evenings drinking. We could always smell alcohol off them at night.

60. The dormitories were all to the left off a u-shaped hall and the toilets and showers were to the right. The younger boys were in the first rooms, then there was a room for the favourite boys, which was next to a room where one of the Brothers slept. Round the corner there were rooms for older boys and also a room for one of the other Brothers to sleep in.
61. All the rooms had between four and six boys in them, although I think there might have been one or two with just a couple of beds in them for the older boys. Outside every room was a loudspeaker, through which they played music from when we went to bed at night until about two in the morning.
62. All the Brothers had their favourite boys. It was common for each Brother to have his own group of boys around him all the time.
63. The room for the favourite boys was right next to the Brother's room because they were the boys that were getting abused sexually. Being right next door to the Brother's room meant it was easier for the Brother to get to them.

Routine at St Ninian's School

First day

64. I could tell straight away that St Ninian's wasn't a normal children's home and asked the social worker if it was a List D school. She told me it was, but not to worry as I was going that way anyway after being at the children's panels. If they had told me I was going to a List D school before I was taken there I would have run away.
65. It was dark when [REDACTED] arrived and I was scared. All I could see was a dark hall with all these priests or monks around. [REDACTED] never shown around, just told to go upstairs to a room in the dormitory, given a pair of pyjamas and told to get into bed.

66. The next day [REDACTED] provided with all the clothes [REDACTED] to wear by the Matron. Nobody explained anything about why [REDACTED] there or what they hoped [REDACTED] would achieve. That was about the only time I ever really saw the Matron. I don't know what she did every day.
67. All I got told by every one of the Brothers was what the rules were and if I broke the rules I would get the cane or the belt. They told me that they didn't take any nonsense and if I didn't obey I would learn the hard way. There was a code of conduct, even as far as how we walked about the place, a bit like the American army. I was told we had to walk on the left hand side, always say 'good morning' to the Brothers and had to attend Mass every morning and every evening.

Mornings and bedtime

68. The Brothers took it in turns to sleep in the rooms next to us, the rest of them slept in a separate part of the building.
69. Every morning we were woken up around about six o'clock by whichever Brother was in the room next to us. He would come in, switch the lights on and tell us to get up. I was a bedwetter at first and all the boys that had wet their beds were woken about fifteen minutes before everyone else.
70. Pretty soon after I arrived, I'm not sure exactly how long but after they discovered I was a bedwetter, I was placed in the room right next to the Brother's room. That was the room for the favourite boys.
71. As soon as we got up we had to go to the showers, then we would get dressed and then we would go to Mass before breakfast. After breakfast we would start so-called classes.
72. At night, after we'd been put to bed about ten o'clock, music would be played through the speakers outside our rooms. Once we'd all fallen asleep, the Brothers would go

back to the main office on the ground floor and sit and drink whisky. Some nights we might sneak about and we would see them in there.

Bedwetting

73. Every morning, because I was a bedwetter, I was woken at six o'clock along with all the other boys who had wet their beds. We all had to strip our beds and drag the sheets out into the hall and then go for a shower. I don't think there was any physical punishment from the Brothers, but I did get verbal abuse from other boys.
74. Normally the three Brothers, Ryan, Farrell and Kelly would be standing watching us as we showered. Sometimes one of them would take the soap off me and show me how to wash myself. Whichever Brother it was, mainly Ryan or Farrell, would rub the soap over my buttocks. At first I didn't find it strange, but I soon did as time went on.
75. After a time I stopped drinking any fluids after about three in the afternoon so that I wouldn't wet the bed. That worked and eventually I stopped wetting the bed.

Washing/bathing

76. The toilets were in a separate room next to the showers. We only showered in the morning, not at night and I hated the showers because they were open and communal. There would always be two or three of the Brothers, Ryan, Farrell or Kelly, standing there for the whole duration, watching us.

Mealtimes/Food

77. A woman and her daughter who both stayed in the village used to come up and cook the meals. They were always very sympathetic to all the kids. As far as I remember the food was generally okay, although I had been used to not getting any proper meals with my mum. I don't remember what we got, but I do recall I enjoyed it. I don't remember there being any problems with boys not wanting to eat their food.

Clothing/uniform

78. The clothes we were issued with were all jeans and tee shirts and that sort of thing. We never had to wear a uniform at all.

School

79. I had been quite bright at school, but my schooling stopped the moment I went to St Ninian's. There was no curriculum, it was all, in theory, home schooling. There were no classes as such, there were no books and there was no structure to the education.
80. We had teachers for [REDACTED] and [REDACTED] who weren't Brothers, BHB [REDACTED] and MIK [REDACTED], but the Brothers took us for the other subjects like [REDACTED] and [REDACTED] and whatever. What struck me as strange was that there were boys of all ages in the classes. None of what we were supposedly being taught was geared towards a particular age group.

Leisure time

81. After school and our evening meal we had free time when we were left to our own devices. We could play outside on the grass or there were various things to do in the main building. There was a library where we could read and there were board games to play. There was also a gymnasium where we could play indoor football or gymnastics.
82. Every now and again one of the Brothers would organise something like crab football, but generally we were left to ourselves and the Brothers would go to the main office. There were often fights between different boys and there was nobody there to break them up.
83. One of the things we were made to do from about eight o'clock in the evening was write letters to pen pals. There was a magazine with pen pals all over the world listed at the back and we were all told to pick one and write to them. I don't know if any of

those letters ever got posted and I certainly never got a reply. I think it was just to give us something to do.

84. At the weekends we were mainly left to ourselves as well. We could get up when we wanted and just had to try and fill our days ourselves.

Trips and holidays

85. A group of us were taken on a trip to Wales once, which was alright. I remember we climbed Mount Snowden while we were there.

86. In summer, St Ninian's shut down for two weeks and all the kids went home, but [REDACTED] I never did. Instead, [REDACTED] sent to Wallacewell Children's Home in Balornock and then to Blairvadach Children's Home in Rhue near Helensburgh.

87. Most of the other boys also went home every second weekend, but [REDACTED] I didn't because [REDACTED] had nowhere to go. There were a couple of other lads that didn't go either, but most went home.

88. [REDACTED] did go to see [REDACTED] one day in Glasgow and got dropped off at the bus station in Strathmiglo. [REDACTED] told to make [REDACTED] way to Glasgow and then make [REDACTED] way back later that same day. Most of the time was spent sitting on the bus getting there and back.

89. On a couple of occasions we were taken by one of the Brothers to Kirkcaldy or Glenrothes to swim or do something at the weekend. One time [REDACTED] I were taken to Dundee to go swimming and left there. I kept phoning up the home to get picked up and eventually, about eleven o'clock at night, [REDACTED] had to get a train to a nearby station.

90. Brother Farrell came to pick us up from the train station and I realised that he had been drinking. When we got back to St Ninian's the Brothers were having a party in the office and we were given a bar of chocolate and told to go to bed.

91. The [REDACTED] teacher, MIK [REDACTED], took [REDACTED] and I to his house in Strathmiglo for the day one weekend and another weekend Brother MBV [REDACTED] took me to his home in Kirkcaldy for the day. I don't know why, probably just to get me away from the home for a wee while.
92. About four months before [REDACTED] got out of St Ninian's, [REDACTED] I went to see [REDACTED] mum in Glasgow. [REDACTED] never been told anything about [REDACTED] mother up till that time and I had no idea where she was or what she was doing. By this time she was staying in a guesthouse, which was full of prostitutes and [REDACTED] stayed there with her for the weekend, but it was horrible. She told [REDACTED] then that she was trying to get a house in Possilpark and get [REDACTED] living with her there.

Healthcare

93. The Matron looked after all healthcare, I never saw a doctor or dentist in all my time at St Ninian's. We often had bruises and cuts from getting hit by the Brothers, but nobody bothered about it. We played rugby and football all the time and I'm sure a lot of our injuries would have been explained away to that. The truth was that they were injuries from getting beaten by the Brothers.
94. I would never tell the Matron how I came by any of my injuries. If I had, I knew it would have gone straight back to the Brothers. It was better not to go and see her at all and let things heal themselves.
95. There was obviously some sort of process for dealing with boys who were more seriously ill, although I never was. I remember one boy's spleen burst and he was taken away by ambulance. I don't know how his spleen had burst.

Religious instruction

96. There was a lovely wee chapel inside St Ninian's where we had to go for Mass every morning and every evening. I used to tell the Brothers I was not interested in the Catholic religion, but I was forced to go.
97. We all had to take turns at doing altar boy duties and I was forced to do so as well. I still have a picture of me when I was an altar boy at St Ninian's. I used to argue that I didn't want to do it, but every time I argued I was punished.
98. I would either get the belt or the cane off whichever Brother was telling me I had to take my turn as altar boy. It was usually Father Ryan, but sometimes one of the other Brothers, either Farrell or Kelly would hit me as well. I was always hit across the bare backside and it was usually three strikes.

Birthdays and Christmas

99. We all got a cake on our birthdays and sang 'Happy Birthday'. The rest of the boys went home at Christmas, but [REDACTED] would stay. I don't remember anything happening or any celebration. I think it was just another normal day.

Visits/Inspections/Review of Detention

100. I never saw any visitors to the home in all my time there. My mum never came at all and [REDACTED] were still in prison.
101. The only social workers I would see would be when they were bringing in other kids or taking them away, but I never spoke to any of them. I never saw any official visitors at all. If any did come they certainly never came near us boys.
102. I wasn't aware whether I had an allocated social worker while I was in St Ninian's. I was just dropped off by them and I never saw anybody else until [REDACTED] leaving.

103. I was never asked how I was getting on. Nobody was interested. Although I'd been at four children's panels before I went to St Ninian's I was never at one while I was there. I don't know whether I was under a supervision order and there were certainly never any sort of review of me being there that I was aware of.

Running away

104. Some boys ran away, but I never did. There was nowhere to go and I knew I would just end up living rough. [REDACTED] did. I think he must have run away about seven times and I know now that it was because he couldn't cope with the physical abuse or the sexual abuse.
105. Each time he was caught, usually by the Police, taken back and physically punished by the Brothers. Usually he would be caned three times by Father Ryan or Brother Farrell across the bare backside. This was done in front of everyone and I can still remember seeing it. I think this was their way of instilling fear in me and grooming me.

Discipline

106. Father Ryan, Brother Farrell, Brother Kelly and Brother MBV [REDACTED] were strict disciplinarians, although some of the other Brothers didn't like the discipline so much. The physical discipline often happened in front of everybody, including whichever other Brother might have been about, although it was often carried out by Father Ryan in his office as well. It was clear Father Ryan took pleasure in caning us.
107. I learned to play the game, it became a matter of survival to do so. I learned when and where to say things and when not to say things.
108. I remember the English Brother with the stubble on his face, stood up for the boys a couple of times because he didn't like the way we were being disciplined. I remember a boy called [REDACTED] was getting battered by Father Ryan and the English brother stepped in and told him to stop.

Abuse at St Ninian's School

109. A lot of the time the punishment was the cane or the belt from the Brothers across the bare backside, but it was also common to be slapped, punched or kicked on the head and chest. This was an everyday occurrence, usually by MBV [REDACTED] who was the most violent with the kids. We would be punished for anything, however minor. It could even be for something like rolling our eyes.
110. The level of violence they used was like an adult on an adult and we boys just accepted it. I probably justified a lot of the physical punishment in my mind because we were all from troubled backgrounds and I used to think we probably deserved it.
111. I saw lots of boys getting battered, including [REDACTED]. Although [REDACTED] was younger than me, he sometimes got it worse than me because he kept running away. I jumped in a couple of times that I saw [REDACTED] getting beaten, but then I would get it. It was always the same four Brothers, Ryan, Farrell, Kelly and MBV [REDACTED].
112. I remember the first run in I had with Brother MBV [REDACTED], which was on my second day at St Ninian's. I'd run out of the dinner hall after I'd had an argument with one of the other boys at the table, who was a bit of a bully. After I ran out, Brother MBV [REDACTED] chased me through the home before he eventually got hold of me. He threw me on the ground and I curled up in a ball while he kicked and punched me about the head and body. That was my welcome to the home and I learned to stay away from him after that.
113. The [REDACTED] teacher, BHB [REDACTED], hit us as well. He always had a bit of wood in his hand and he would often really hammer me and the other boys across the backside with this piece of wood.
114. We would often get dragged out of class for one thing or another. I remember one occasion Father Ryan thought I had been cheeky to him and he hauled me out. I'm not sure when it would have been. I hadn't meant to be cheeky, but he took me outside

the room, told me to take my trousers and pants down and beat me three times across the bare backside with his cane.

115. We boys all knew that if you were in the favourite room you would get called into the Brother's room during the night. While he was there, the Brother that slept in that room was generally Father Ryan and I was his favourite. I had been in another room at first, but then I was put into the favourite room after about six months when they realised I was a bedwetter.
116. There were four boys in the favourite room. When I was in there I remember one of the boys was called [REDACTED], but I can't remember the other two boys' names.
117. I used to think the loudspeaker outside every room in the dormitory was just for us to listen to music, but I think in hindsight it was to hide the noise of whatever was going on in the Brother's room.
118. I understand now about grooming. Every night Father Ryan would take me into his room because, he said, I had a rash on my bum. At first I trusted him because I didn't know any better. He would strip me naked and rub cream onto my back and my bum. This must have gone on for a couple of months and each time he rubbed the cream in his hands would get closer to my anus. I became more fearful, but even though I was, I still thought he was doing it for the right reasons.
119. Father Ryan was always wearing his black tunic, but when I was in his room with him he never had trousers on underneath, as he normally did. I started to notice he had an erection. After rubbing the cream on me, Father Ryan started to pull me in closer and sit me on his knee. I could feel his erection against my bare backside. I knew by then that it wasn't right, but I didn't feel there was anything I could do.
120. This went on for two or three months until one particular day when he told me after my shower that he would come and get me again that night and not to say anything to anybody. I was still thirteen at the time and by this time there was no rash there. Even so he came in about two in the morning and took me into his room.

121. Father Ryan stripped me naked and I saw that, once again, he had an erection. He sat me on his knee and bounced me up and down with his penis rubbing against my leg. He lay me down on the bed and gave me a full body massage. I tensed up and buried my head in the pillow. He told me to relax and then got on top of the bed and straddled me from behind.
122. Even though I couldn't see, I could tell from his motions that he was masturbating. He stuck two fingers inside my anus and it was really sore, he actually split the skin. This went on for a good twenty minutes until he ejaculated over my back and legs. All the time he was telling me I was one of the best boys, a really good boy.
123. I got up and told him this wasn't for me and I didn't want it. I told him I had to leave and eventually he let me go. I stayed awake all the rest of the night and put toilet roll on my backside to stop the bleeding. It took about two weeks for it to heal.
124. I believe Father Ryan's next step would have been penetration, however after that I tried to avoid him whenever I could. He tried to get me back into his room, but I would refuse to go and I was never back in his room again.
125. I think he must have known that he wouldn't have been able to take his abuse any further and he moved another boy, [REDACTED], into the room to take place of me. I can't remember [REDACTED] second name.
126. [REDACTED] then became Father Ryan's toy. He would go into Father Ryan's room at eleven o'clock at night and not come out till six in the morning. I saw this happen most nights and, although I'm now ashamed to admit it, I was just glad it wasn't me and that someone else was getting sexually abused and raped.
127. Everybody knew what was happening to [REDACTED] and, as is the way of things, [REDACTED] started to get bullied and called names by the rest of the boys.

128. Eventually [REDACTED] and I were moved out of that room and into the senior leg and I thought I was safe. Even though I hadn't wet the bed for several months, Brother Farrell, who slept in the room next to the senior boys, would wake me up about three in the morning. He told me it was so I wouldn't wet the bed. He would take me to the toilets, stand behind me and hold my penis. As he did, he moved his hand backwards and forwards, masturbating me. I couldn't see what he was doing to himself.
129. This went on every night for a few months, even though I would tell him that I didn't wet the bed. It was almost like I had been passed on from Father Ryan to Brother Farrell. I think it only stopped after a few months because I was slightly older.
130. Every time I saw either Father Ryan and Brother Farrell after that I would scurry off and try to avoid them. I was too scared to be near them or to be in their company in case anything happened.

Reporting of abuse at St Ninian's School

131. All the boys were aware what was happening to each other. We would all talk about it and make plans how to avoid Ryan and Farrell. I wouldn't tell any of them what had actually happened to me with Father Ryan, nobody ever disclosed all the details. It was common knowledge though that several boys were getting sexually abused.
132. I'm fairly sure the majority of the Brothers, including the ones who were kind to us, must have been aware of the sexual abuse as well as the physical abuse, but nobody said anything. We boys used to speak about it openly and I'm sure they must have been aware. Even though I had respect for the English Brother who stood up for us, I never felt I could speak to him about what was going on.
133. If a social worker had come to see me I know I would have told them what was happening and that I wanted out of St Ninian's. For some reason I felt that social workers could have helped.

Leaving St Ninian's School

134. I left St Ninian's when I was fifteen. It was only then, when they were doing the discharge process, that I learned that a social worker had been allocated to me.
135. The social worker, I don't know their name, came to St Ninian's and chaired a meeting about [REDACTED]. Brother MBV [REDACTED] and Brother Farrell and my mum were all there along with [REDACTED]. The purpose was to discuss [REDACTED] moving back in with [REDACTED] mum, but I made it quite clear I didn't want to go.
136. By that time I wasn't getting sexually abused, I was getting three meals a day and I had learned how to survive. I told them I wanted to stay until I was sixteen so that I could join the army. I didn't want to go back onto the streets of Possilpark.
137. Despite that, I was sent back to Possilpark to live with my mother and got involved in a life of crime once again. I believe she only took [REDACTED] back so that she could get the benefits because nothing had changed. All she saw was a meal ticket.
138. After leaving I never heard from St Ninian's again and I got no support from social work whatsoever. I ended up going to the social work offices to ask for help because I didn't want to stay in the house, but I was just fobbed off.

Blairvadach Children's Home, Helensburgh.

139. The four weeks or so that [REDACTED] spent at Blairvadach in the summer while I was at St Ninian's Secondary Institut[REDACTED] would have been about fourteen and [REDACTED] sent there while St Ninian's was shut for the summer.

140. Secondary Institutions - to be published later
[REDACTED]

141. Secondary Institutions - to be published later

142.

143.

144.

145.

146.

Life after being in care

147. I joined the army on 10 January 1983, by which time I had warrants out for my arrest. Luckily enough the judge gave me a deferred sentence and I managed to get into the army and make a career out of it. I worked my way up through the ranks and I am now a captain. A short time ago I passed my interview for promotion to major.
148. I got married when I was nineteen and my wife [REDACTED] and I have three children, a boy and two girls. We're now grandparents and have four grandchildren.
149. In August 1989 I was posted to Edinburgh and was there until January 1991, training recruits at Glencorse Barracks. In January 1991 I left the army for six months and re-joined in July 1991.
150. During the period I was out of the army, I got back with [REDACTED] again. By that time he was living a life of drug and alcohol abuse and was involved in crime. It was like being back in St Ninian's again and I tried to protect him. Eventually my wife [REDACTED] persuaded me to re-enlist.
151. After getting back into the army, I studied and gained a degree in psychology over a number of years. In 2012 and until 2014 I studied and gained a post-graduate diploma in counselling at Strathclyde University. Without really realising it at the time, I chose those subjects because I wanted to understand myself and get to the bottom of why I behave in certain ways.
152. As a result of my degree and post-graduate qualification, I now work with the National Health Service as a counsellor at Veterans First Point working with army veterans.

Autobiography entitled 'The Underworld Captain'

153. In 2011 I published an autobiography, which is part-fiction, entitled 'The Underworld Captain'. In it I detailed my life as a soldier and my involvement with Glasgow criminals

during the time I had left the army. I also included some detail of the grooming and the sexual abuse I had been subjected to by Father Ryan.

154. When I sent the manuscript to the publishers, they employed a crime writer to co-author it. The end result was more fixated on crime than on my life and I was completely unhappy with the final product.
155. I gave a copy of the manuscript to **MHK**, who had been another boy at St Ninian's. He had become friendly with the Brothers and I wanted him to give the copy to Brother Farrell, who by that time was a priest at Strathven. I highlighted the passage about St Ninian's and told him to tell Farrell to read it. I wanted Brother Farrell to take note of what it said. I never heard whether he read it or not.

Trial at Glasgow High Court 2016

156. I had never previously reported the abuse I suffered to the police, however sometime in 2014 or 2015 the police came to see me after my book was published. I got a phone call from the C.I.D. at Cupar in Fife, and they came to see me twice. I can't remember the officers' names.
157. I gave the police a copy of the manuscript and told them everything I could remember about what had happened. They asked me quite detailed questions, I handed over old photographs that I had and they came back later for me to sign my statement.
158. I had previously blocked out much of the abuse I suffered, I think I'd actually managed to convince myself that some of it never happened. Speaking to the police was the first time I'd ever spoken to anybody about it.
159. It was only after I gave my statement to the police that things started to come back. By the time of the trial at Glasgow High Court in 2016 I'd remembered much more, however it was too late. I couldn't add what came back to me into my statement.

160. The saddest thing was that by the time I went to court and gave evidence, Father Ryan was dead. I got ten minutes to speak about what he did to me and that was it. I wasn't allowed to speak about any of the sexual abuse.
161. I was in the witness box for three days because they spent the rest of the time trying to slaughter my credibility. They had my book in the court and all they tried to do was make me out to be a liar. I was left a complete and utter wreck.

Impact

162. When I had my own kids I felt uncomfortable if they were naked in front of me when they were young. I felt that I was a paedophile if I was looking at them. I felt dirty and disgusting and always insisted they wear underwear.
163. All my life, despite being in the army, I've had a fear of going into a toilet or communal shower if there is someone else in there. Before I go in I listen at the door to check there's nobody else there. I hated other guys bodies, I thought they were disgusting.
164. I never wanted to speak to anybody about the sexual abuse, the embarrassment and the hurt of it was too much. People don't really understand. You withdraw into yourself and go through the hurt, the blame and the guilt alone. I never spoke to anyone for years about it.
165. I can't remember the last time I shed a tear, even though I am a counsellor. I have the feelings and emotions inside but I am unable to express them properly. I have seen some colleagues in the army brutally killed, but even death doesn't bother me.
166. After the trial, I withdrew into myself and went into a bad state of depression. I lost a lot of weight and for two years I had nightmares about being back in St Ninian's. I dreamt about being back in Father Ryan's room, being back in the showers and being back in the toilets.

167. It has been a horrible two years for me and I have thought about committing suicide many times. About six months ago I walked up to my wife [REDACTED] and told her I needed help.
168. After the trial, I became involved with other former residents who are trying to sue the Christian Brothers. As part of that civil action, about four months ago, Digby Brown who are our the solicitors, arranged for me to see a psychiatrist to be assessed and the psychiatrist referred me to my G.P. to arrange further counselling.
169. The psychiatrist provided a report in which she diagnosed me as suffering post-traumatic-stress-disorder and depression, which she said was entirely attributable to my time in care at St Ninian's. She emphasised that it was nothing to do with my career in the military and active service tours.
170. My G.P. prescribed me a mild anti-depressant and I have been receiving counselling since, which has been helping greatly. The only problem with that is the army now have me on a risk management register and I can't deploy because I'm on medication.
171. The whole trial fixated on my adult life and not on the abuse I suffered at St Ninian's. I felt I was the accused person, not a witness and it was as if I was being abused and manipulated once again. To some extent the trial and how I was treated in the witness box nearly ruined my whole life.
172. My depression became so bad after the trial that I couldn't sleep at night and the army put me on an 'At risk' register for possible suicide. It's like a Pandora's box has been opened up and I can't shut it. Only now am I starting to get physically better, mentally it will take longer, if at all.

Records

173. I have never applied for my records and don't have an interest in getting them.

Lessons to be Learned

174. There was no communication with the social workers who took [REDACTED] to St Ninian's, they just ditched [REDACTED] there. It would have helped to prepare [REDACTED] if they had sat [REDACTED] down and told [REDACTED] what was happening. They could have told [REDACTED] where [REDACTED] going, how many kids were there, even shown us pictures. I felt I was just dumped off because I was a burden on them.
175. There was no care plan or sense of a duty of care from the social work department that I was aware of and nobody ever came to see me. The social workers should have been there regularly, speaking to me on a personal basis and checking on my welfare both while I was in care and after care.
176. People don't understand the impact of giving evidence in court. Even though a victim might want to see justice by giving evidence against their abuser, they are forgotten about afterwards. My giving evidence has had an impact on my army career. There should be some way of communicating with victims' employers so that they don't wake up every morning thinking they might be losing their job.

Other information

177. I learned recently that one of the girls who was at Dunclutha at the same time as me, [REDACTED], has a [REDACTED] about abuse that happened there. I'm not sure what the content is or what she's trying to achieve. I just know that nothing happened to me there other than playing doctors and nurses with other boys and girls.
178. I have never told my mum what happened to me in care. I've never even told her about the court case. She's old now and frail and I think it would upset her too much.

179. 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.

Sign 

Dated *5 Feb 2011*