

## Scottish Child Abuse Inquiry

Witness Statement of

PJI

Support person present: Yes

1. My name is PJI. My date of birth is 1964. My contact details are known to the Inquiry.

### Life before going into care

2. I was born in Bellshill in North Lanarkshire. My mum was called and my dad was called . I have two brothers and four sisters. was ten years older than me. He died when he was twenty-eight years old. is eight years older than me, is three years older, then there's me. is two years younger than me, is four years younger and is six years younger. We stayed with my dad's parents.
3. We moved to West Mains in East Kilbride when I was five years old because there wasn't room at my dad's parents. My mum worked in pubs. My dad was an engineer and stopped working when he was forty-five years old. I never had a great time. My parents drank and fought constantly. We lived in a five apartment house. The house was a mess and we were like tramps. Me and my brothers and sisters were neglected.
4. I went to St Kenneth's Primary School. I got on alright and I had friends. My older brothers and sisters went to St Bride's Secondary School. The only time social work got involved was when I was at St Bride's. When I started secondary school, my mum and dad kept me off the first six weeks school because I never had a uniform. They were spending their money on drink. The school was split into boys and lassies classes

and the kids came from all over East Kilbride. I didn't know many of the boys and they had all been at school for six weeks together.

5. We did the first year at the annexe and I went all the time. In second year you moved up to the main school and that's when the bullying started from boys in my own year. I stayed off school more than I went. I was getting bullied because of the state I was in and the state of my clothes and shoes.
6. We called the social worker the 'dogger woman' because she came when you dogged off school. The dogger woman came and picked me up at the house in the morning and then she took me to school. I went in one gate and out the other. If I saw her then I bolted. She had a bright red motor and you couldn't miss her. I don't think anyone asked me why I didn't want to go to school.
7. There was a children's panel in Strathmore House in East Kilbride. The social worker was a man who recommended that I go into care. I think they had their minds made up before I got there. I don't remember if I was asked about anything. My dad was with me. I got a date to go into Redheugh which was [REDACTED] 1979. I was fourteen years old. I knew I was staying there until I was school leaving age, which was sixteen. I came out on [REDACTED] 1980. No-one else in my family had been in care.

### **Redheugh Adolescent Unit, Kilbirnie, Ayrshire**

8. Redheugh was a big mansion house run by the Salvation Army. It was under Ayrshire Council. There was a long driveway, big gates and a wee house at the gates. There were trees all around the big house and the grounds were massive. There was a full size football pitch. You went in the main entrance and there was a side room. To the left of the main doors was the reception room and to the right was the office. After the reception room was the games room and then the snooker room.
9. There was a big staircase which we weren't allowed to use. Along the corridor was a small room, then the dining room and then down to the showers. There was a kitchen

but we were never in it. There was a back stair which went up to the dorms. There were four or five dorms and the single rooms were in the attic. There were half a dozen of them. I eventually got put in a single room.

10. It was all boys in Redheugh. There were thirty-five to forty boys between twelve and twenty years old. There was the odd fight with the boys but generally, the boys got on alright together. The older boys were being prepared for outside and there were only a few of them. We called one of them [REDACTED] because he was always catching you around your neck. [REDACTED]'s younger brother was in Redheugh too and he was about seventeen years old.

*Staff at Redheugh Adolescent Unit*

11. The staff were there to keep you in order. HDD [REDACTED] was SNR [REDACTED] and his wife, RFF [REDACTED] was his partner in crime. HDD [REDACTED] was a big lump of a man and was about six feet four inches tall. He had grey hair. RFF [REDACTED] was about five feet two inches tall and stocky with ginger hair. RAB [REDACTED] was their daughter. She was tall with blond hair and a medium build. There was PXL-SPO [REDACTED], PZD [REDACTED], George Gillon and Arthur Steven. [REDACTED] was the nicest woman I've ever met but PXL [REDACTED] was a brute. The staff were from their late thirties to fifty years old. RAB [REDACTED] was the youngest in her early twenties and PXL [REDACTED] was the oldest.
12. The staff were on a rota and two or three would be in the building at night. PZD [REDACTED] stayed in a wee cottage opposite [REDACTED] with his wife and two lassies. He was from East Kilbride. PZD [REDACTED] was over six feet tall with a big mop of ginger hair. There was a husband and wife who stayed in the cottage at the main gates. They were fine but they must have seen boys being hit by other staff. There were no keyworkers and no staff were responsible for certain groups of boys.

## **Routine at Redheugh Adolescent Unit**

### *First day*

13. I was fourteen years old when I went to Redheugh. I was really upset and frightened at getting taken away from my family. That's what it felt like. In some ways it worked out for the better but there were other experiences that weren't so good. The social worker took me. When I got there, I was even more scared. HDD [REDACTED] and RFF [REDACTED] were there when I arrived. You got taken into the wee reception room and told the rules. The rules were that you had to do what you were told and behave, or else. The staff didn't say 'or else' but that's how it was. Then I went to the dorm. The other boys were still at school.
  
14. I put what little stuff I had away in the bedside cabinet. I had a radio cassette player and a few bits and bobs. I listened to a band called Showaddywaddy back then. After that, I went down to the sitting-room and the boys came back from school. [REDACTED] and [REDACTED] were in my dorm and they took me back up to the dorm. They told me what was what and that [REDACTED] was in charge. That settled me down a bit. They were nice boys. They told me that if you were sent to the reception room then you were going to be hit by the staff. They said that would definitely happen and I wasn't looking forward to it. I got on fine with the rest of the boys in the dor too.

### *Mornings and bedtime*

15. The dorm had me and five other guys in it. You got up at half past seven and had your shower. You got dressed and went down for breakfast. Then you went to school. When we came back from school, we had about an hour before tea and we could do what we liked. Tea was at six o' clock. We had the rest of the night to play football, snooker or other games, or wander about the grounds. We were restricted to the grounds but they weren't locked.

16. Lights out was at ten o'clock and you had to be in by then. The staff put the lights out and we put them back on. We ran about daft. I didn't wet the bed. A couple of boys did but I'm not sure what happened if you wet the bed.

*General Routine*

17. The food was alright. You had breakfast and tea. There was no supper before bed. A couple of staff were in the dining-room to supervise. If you didn't like the food then somebody else would eat it. It was, like it or lump it. There was no punishment for not eating and the food wasn't served up again at the next meal. Lunch was at school.
18. The shower area was called The Ablutions. The showers were poor. It was a communal shower area with eight showers and was first come first served. I never had a cold shower so there must have always been hot water. There was always a male staff member in the shower area. Toiletries were provided and when you ran out then you went and got more from the staff. You kept your toiletries in your bedside cabinet.
19. We had a football team. I was a good footballer and played in goals. We went out and played other schools. We played a List D school called Gielisland School. Those games could be quite exciting and we beat them more than they beat us. There was a snooker table and another games room with board games. There was a smoking room. I bought cigarettes off my pocket money or the money my dad sent me.
20. At the weekends, the staff took us out to Largs and Saltcoats. We went pot-holing and I enjoyed that. We were taken on walks up Ben Lomond. We were taken on holiday to youth hostels at Loch Lomond, Stirling and Lochearnhead for two or three nights. We went hillwalking, canoeing and fishing.
21. They gave you a school uniform, stuff for PE, trainers and a pair of boots. I was given dress trousers and shoes and a couple of pairs of jeans and a tracksuit. You wore your dress trousers for going on home visits. You had drawers in the dorm to keep your clothes in. The clothes I went to Redheugh in probably went in the bin.

22. If you were not well then you were given hot drinks and put in your bed. I didn't have to go to the doctors. There wasn't a nurse in Redheugh. If you needed to go to the dentist then the staff got you an appointment.
23. We all went to the Salvation Army Church on a Sunday morning. The people all had their uniforms on and we had our school uniforms on. The place was mobbed. There was a service and games after it. The service was at 11 o'clock. You got wee certificates but it was nothing exciting. I got certificates for running. A boy was picked at random by the staff to say Grace at mealtimes. He said, "Bless this food and make it good, Amen." There were no other prayers.
24. There was a rota for chores and you did chores once a fortnight. You had to clean the shower area and the toilets. You had to Hoover and that was the only time you were allowed up the main staircase. Chores were alright if you got the Hoover.
25. I was at home for my birthday and Christmas. Boys' birthdays weren't celebrated at Redheugh. We got two weeks at home at Christmas. One boy was an orphan and he and a couple of other boys stayed at Redheugh at Christmas. They seemed to do alright.

#### *School*

26. School was a normal secondary school in Kilbirnie town centre called Garnock Academy. We were taken in the mini-bus but you could walk if you wanted to. It was a twenty minute walk. School was fine. There were boys from Beith, Dalry, Glengarnock and Kilbirnie. Because the boys from Redheugh stayed in Kilbirnie, we teamed up with the Kilbirnie boys. There were no issues at school because we stayed in a home.
27. I was quite smart. It was just when I stayed in East Kilbride that I wasn't for going to school. I got Certificates of Secondary Education (CSE's) in arithmetic, geography and English.

*Visits / Inspections/ Review of detention*

28. The only people who came to see me were social workers. A female social worker came and took me to Largs, about once a month. I was told when she was coming and I got the day off school. I did a couple of chores until the social worker came and took me out. She didn't ask how I was getting on and I didn't tell her anything about the problems I had at Redheugh. I had another male social worker who came from Bellshill. I never saw any inspectors in Redheugh. I didn't go back to the children's panel in the time I was at Redheugh.

*Home Visits / Contact with family*

29. You got to home after your second weekend at Redheugh and for school holidays, as long as you behaved. They wouldn't keep you back in the holidays for the full duration. If you didn't behave then you didn't get home. That happened to me about half a dozen times. Misbehaving could be anything, such as giving back chat, not doing what you were told or fighting.
30. On Friday after school, the staff gave you your train fare and your £2 pocket money. That was a lot back then and I had it spent by the Saturday. You went back to Redheugh on Sunday. Going home was great. I went to the football on a Saturday with my pals. We did whatever we did on a Saturday night and I went back on Sunday afternoon. I wasn't feeling the best on a Sunday. I was anxious.
31. I got a letter from my dad every week with a couple of pounds in it. The letter was sealed when I got it and hadn't been opened. I didn't write back to my dad.

*Running away*

32. I was fed up with getting slapped and me and another boy ran away. We walked from Kilbirnie to Paisley. We broke into a telephone box and got the train fare to East Kilbride. I was away for five days. My mum and dad were separated by that time and

I went to my dad. The police were looking for us so me and the boy went back to Redheugh ourselves. My dad gave me the train fare and we went by train.

33. I was scared going back because I knew we were going to get a slap, at the very least. When we got back to Redheugh, we were asked why we ran away. We said we were getting bullied and then we got slapped about again. The staff didn't ask about the bullying because it was them that was doing the bullying, and they knew it.

#### *Discipline*

34. If you did something wrong there were different punishments. It was usually **HDD** **HDD** or **RFF** who punished you. You didn't get to go home for the weekend, you got slapped by the staff with their hand or they kicked you. Your pocket money could be stopped or the staff gave you half. **RFF** was handy with her fists.

#### **Abuse at Redheugh Adolescent Unit**

35. The main ones who punched, slapped and kicked children were **HDD**, **RFF**, their daughter **RAB**, **PZD** and **PXL**. It wasn't just me but everyone was getting it. It was regular and at least twice a week. It was like being at home and getting a smack off your mum or dad, only **HDD** was a lot bigger than my dad. If you were fighting, that's how things were done back then. It wouldn't be okay now. The first time I was hit I felt sore and afraid. You got used to it because you had to put up with it. It got to the stage that if you were in the corridor and you saw one of them coming, then you ducked into the smoking room or the toilet to dodge them.
36. Two or three weeks after I first went in, me and another boy were arguing. **PZD** **PZD** came in and told us to shut up. I gave him a bit of backchat. I got a slap on the head and a kick. It was totally out of the blue and I ended up on the floor because the slap was that hard. **PZD** played five-a-side football with us. He got really rough and was fouling us in a rough way. He was a big guy. He kicked the shit out of us and elbows were flying everywhere.

37. You could be walking past **RFF** in the corridor and, for no reason at all, she gave you a backhander. A backhander was being slapped on the head by the back of her hand. **RFF** was a tiny woman but she was like the Tasmanian Devil. When **RFF** came in in a bad mood then everybody got it. **RFF** walked around the dining-room slapping folk.
38. **HDD**'s daughter **RAB** was apt at giving you a cuff round the head, on your body or a wee kick on your knee, in the corridor. It was never on your face and was for absolutely no reason.
39. If you were fighting in school then you got taken to the reception room. There would be four or five of us and we were taken in one at a time. I was scared. It was usually **HDD** and whatever member of staff reported you. In the room you got slapped, punched and kicked from both of them. You were pushed on the floor. They didn't hold back and you got some right beltors. There were boys in the reception room every day. You knew what you were getting if you were going there. If you were just getting told off then the staff did it in front of the other boys.
40. I didn't have any medical treatment after being in the reception room. Once, we were going for a smoke and **██████████** came out of the reception room. His nose was burst and his mouth was bleeding. Someone asked **██████████** what happened and straightaway **HDD** said, "The idiot fell, didn't he." We knew there was no way he fell. There was nothing to fall over, only a couple of couches and a desk. **██████████** should have been taken to hospital but he wasn't. Now I think that was because **██████████** would have told someone at the hospital what happened.
41. I was in the dorm for six months. I went back after Christmas and one of the boys said I was getting moved. The drawers in my bedside cabinet were empty. **PZD** **██████████** said I was going into a single room in the attic. I was happy that I was getting a single room but it was going from sharing a room with five guys to being in a single room. I thought it was going to be alright but it wasn't.

42. The first week I was there, I was in my bed at night and PXL came in. I didn't think anything of it because other staff members came in your room too. I had on a pair of shorts. PXL sat on the chair at the side of my bed and rubbed my stomach. He worked his hand down the way until he got to your pubic area. He rubbed your pubic area and knew you got erect. He never touched me but he knew I was getting aroused. PXL did that for a wee bit and then he stopped. While he did that he was 'talking in tongues'. To me it was gibberish but PXL said it was prayers. I felt dirty and scared. I never said a word to him.
43. That went on for months until I left Redheugh, every night PXL was on the nightshift. I dreaded nights he was on duty because I knew he would be coming into my room. I don't think I was the only one he was doing that to because it was all the vulnerable kids who were in the attic. I can only think that those kids were in the attic because PXL wanted them there. Everything was different back then and nobody spoke about those things.
44. I didn't feel I wanted to tell anyone about the abuse at Redheugh. I was afraid and didn't think I'd be believed. You couldn't talk to anyone in Redheugh and I couldn't talk to my family. If an independent inspector had come in and asked me how I felt then I might have told them what was going on. I don't know one boy who complained or said anything. I had pain from being hit but I was never bleeding. The staff always hit the back or side of your head or your body. They never touched my face.

#### **Leaving Redheugh Adolescent Unit**

45. I was only at Redheugh to get me to go to school and so I came out the day I left school on 1980. I was sixteen years old. I came home from school, packed up and I was off. I'd been in Redheugh for a year, a month and a day. I felt glad to be out. I got the train and went to my dad in East Kilbride.

## **Life after being in care**

46. I stayed at my dad's house and I saw my mum now and again. My two younger sisters stayed with my mum and my brothers stayed with my dad. I didn't see any social workers after I left Redheugh. I came out on a Friday and started on a Youth Opportunities Programme on the Tuesday. I worked as a storeman with the council for a year. I enjoyed the work and it was smashing being out working and getting paid. The wages were £23.50 a week. I've worked in outdoor jobs with a couple of council departments and in construction. I went to England with my wife before we were married. We worked there for a few months. I have sciatica and had an operation on my spine that means I can't work now. I met my wife when I was seventeen and we have two children.

## **Impact**

47. I started drinking when I was seventeen. Sometimes it helped me to forget but other times I got emotional. I found it easier to cope with the drink but I got worse and worse. Every offence I've committed has been when I've been drinking. I was hitting the bevvv when I worked for the council and I was told to resign or I was getting sacked. That's been my life since then. It seems to always be around the week before Christmas that I get bad with it. I don't know what triggers it. I've been in rehab and I've stopped drinking a few times.
48. It was probably worse living at home because the fights between my mum and dad were constant. It's hard to describe how you feel sometimes. I was bad with anxiety at Redheugh and I have been ever since. I have no confidence and I could never express myself at job interviews. Financially, I have nothing. I've only got what is in my house. I was always quiet and withdrawn and I still am. I'm shy around people. I can be sitting in company and not say a word for ages. That makes me feel worse. I've blocked a lot of things out. I'm terrible for keeping things to myself and they build up.

49. My relationship with my wife is like any other couple and we have our up and downs. My wife has her own flat because we weren't coping living together. That's down to my drinking. I've had bother with my relationship with my weans. Everything's good now but my weans don't know what happened to me. My sister [REDACTED] was more like my mum. I told [REDACTED] I was speaking to the Inquiry. She said she knew something was going on when I was in Redheugh but, every time she asked me, I said everything was fine.
50. I was clever and I enjoyed school until I went up to the big school in second year. Once I was in Redheugh, I just wanted out again and I didn't sit any exams.
51. I have chronic obstructive pulmonary disease because I've been smoking since I was ten. I'm on medication for anxiety. The addiction team suggested that.

### **Reporting of Abuse**

52. Since I contacted the Inquiry, I've made a complaint to the police and they took a statement from me. The police couldn't trace HDD [REDACTED], RFF [REDACTED] or PZD [REDACTED]. When they eventually traced PXL [REDACTED], he was dead. The police said PXL [REDACTED] was prolific and was at it all over the world. The case is closed as far as the police are concerned.

### **Other action taken**

#### *Revisits*

53. I haven't been back to Redheugh. I looked Redheugh up on the internet when I came out of rehab and saw the building had been turned into flats.

### *Compensation*

54. The police told me to contact the Criminal Injuries Compensation Board and I did that. The Board said it would be eighteen months before I heard back from them. I've never asked for any acknowledgement or apology from the Salvation Army about what happened to me at Redheugh. Maybe I should.

### **Treatment / support**

55. I had counselling last January when I was in rehab. I talked about my time in care and I felt relieved. I told the counsellors everything. It had been building up for forty odd years and I hadn't spoken about it. The counsellors were really good. They didn't press you into talking but encouraged you. Once I started talking then I couldn't shut up. After that I felt able to cope better and I stopped drinking.

### **Records**

56. I've thought about getting my records and trying to get in touch with some of the boys I was in Redheugh with. We were all good pals. That's never materialised.

### **Lessons to be Learned**

57. There should be more inspections of children's homes. Independent inspectors should be going in regularly and at least once a month. They should check the welfare of the kids. Counsellors and social workers should go in to get the weans to talk. There should be someone who is sympathetic and who the weans can trust. There should

also be more screening of people who want to work with weans. I hope that having the Inquiry will mean that there is less abuse of children.

58. 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..... PJI [REDACTED] .....

Dated..... 10-8-22 .....