

**Scottish Child Abuse Inquiry**

Witness Statement of

PLJ

Support person present: No

1. My name is PLJ [REDACTED]. My date of birth is [REDACTED] 1968. My contact details are known to the Inquiry.

**Life before going into care**

2. I was one of four boys. My brother [REDACTED] was a year old than me, [REDACTED] who was a year older than [REDACTED] and [REDACTED] is five or six years older. [REDACTED] was from a different marriage, so he was my half-brother. Then there was [REDACTED], then [REDACTED]. My father gave me a bit of information that he did not think [REDACTED] was his. Then there was me. I think my mother had [REDACTED] to appease my father for having [REDACTED], and I take it my mother and father split up because my father was always chasing after my mother. Usually after a kicking the night before. I think he must have realised that [REDACTED] wasn't his either, so they had me to appease him for [REDACTED]. The way I see it, if you can't look after one child why have three more. He was an awfully jealous and bitter man.
3. I think I was about six years old when I first went into care. At that time we were in care for short periods of time then back home and then back into care, back home, back into care. I think we were in three or four children's homes before we were put into Milton House Children's Home in Stranraer.
4. When we went into the children's homes [REDACTED], [REDACTED] and I were kept together. [REDACTED] was in another one. The only thing that I can think of is that the children's

homes are set up in certain age groups. [REDACTED] was a bit older and maybe they thought that he would be a bad influence on us.

5. The initial reason we were taken from my mother and father was because both were acute alcoholics. My first childhood memory is my father assaulting my mother. There was also pure neglect in the home. We were left in the house by ourselves. My granny used to be in the block downstairs but she was too frail to come up the stairs. It was my granny that actually called the social work, my father's mother. It was just absolute neglect.
6. I would be away for a couple of months and then I would be put back home because I take it the social work would rather see the family together. The social work did try. My father was a wood cutter and sometimes with his work he would have a static caravan. He would just park the static caravan in the woods and live there. This is going back to the 1970's. He was a very weak man and he once said to me "We [REDACTED]s are like swans, we mate for life". I thought, get it the together. He was very possessive with my mother.
7. Secondary Institutions - to be published later  
[REDACTED]
8. Out of the blue, something happened, that made me rebel. We were told we were going somewhere else. They didn't give us any warning. It was just basically one day you are back from school and told to pack your bags, you are going to this foster home. At the time nobody explained to me what a foster home was and I thought they were trying to get us a new mother and father. We were taken to the foster home and I totally rebelled. The couple were heavy Christians and they wanted you to go to Sunday school.
9. I remember they had a birthday party for me and I looked in through the window and I could see this big spread. They had all made an effort but I didn't bother going. Like

I said, I thought they were trying to give us a new mother and father and it wasn't for me. Eventually the man put us all in the car and took us to the social work department and said "I can't put up with these boys anymore". We were horrible to him, we were very disrespectful. That is when we ended up in Merkland Children's Home.

### **Merkland Children's Home, Moffat**

10.

Secondary Institutions - to be published later

in Merkland it was pure hell. It was a social worker who put us in Merkland so I take it that it was a social work funded children's home. I didn't take any books or photo's in with me. We just went straight from the social work office.

### **Routine at Merkland Children's Home**

#### *First day*

11. I remember going to Merkland. We were going down the drive and it was a lovely summer's day. There was a minibus parked out the front and I saw these boys carrying shopping. The basic food stuffs was going downstairs into the kitchen area and all the treats, all the crisps and sweets were going upstairs. It made me wonder why it was happening because I was a very curious boy. I found out later that Peter Harley, who ran the home, had a flat in the attic [REDACTED].
12. We were introduced to Peter Harley when we were on the stairs and he was asking us questions, general knowledge type questions and I would answer them. I got most of them right. In hindsight I think that was him trying to figure out how clever or

how aware we were but I didn't realise that at the time. I was always the little quiet boy in the corner. I kept myself to myself.

13. That first day when he had that quiz on the stairs, one of the questions was, what is the sequence of traffic lights and I got it right. There were other questions on general knowledge about what you see around about. I know for a fact it was to test out our awareness so that he could figure things out, who actually sat and looked. After the test he didn't come near me and went for my brother [REDACTED]. In all the homes [REDACTED] actively seeked out attention from the staff.
14. I remember that first day he was examining you a little bit. He put us all in the shower and he was poking about but I didn't think anything of it. He didn't leave the bathroom and he said he had to be in there. He gave us medicated shampoo and he made a big thing about this and he had to see that we were applying it properly. He was probably eyeing us up.
15. We went to school and like I say I kept myself to myself. There were quite big grounds, a couple of acres with trees and bushes, so I used to just climb. I don't know, I just sensed there was something just not right. There was a pleasant outward appearance but there was just an undercurrent. I could not figure it out but I really did sense it. I think that saved me a little bit. When we were in the previous children's homes I used to call [REDACTED] a 'sook' because he was always vying for the staffs attention. That kind of backfired on him in Merkland.
16. There wasn't that many workers in the place. In the laundry was Beth. She lived in her own little world. There was a gardener, but he wasn't really in the building he was mainly in the garden. Then there were just a couple of women staff members. Peter Harley and [REDACTED] JDW really run it by themselves. [REDACTED] JDW name was [REDACTED] JDW or something like that. She was a small woman. There were no night staff. I think because he lived in the attic they didn't need night staff on.
17. There was a separate building from the main home, it was like a big garage. It was a kind of sport's room. They had table tennis, an arcade machine and a pool table. The boys used to hang out there after school but I used to keep myself to myself. I would

just wander round the gardens and try and not be noticed. That was my mission, to try and not be noticed. Harley's sons had motorbikes and I remember [REDACTED] [REDACTED] and another boy, who I can't remember, stole them. They didn't know how to ride motorbikes. I think they had them in first gear and didn't know how to change the gear and one of them blew up. What a kicking those boys got from Peter Harley.

*Mornings and bedtime*

18. We would get up and there was a big dining room. There was a kind of store where they had big cereal boxes and there was a cup in each box. You would just scoop a cup and put it in your bowl. I remember one day we were all sitting down eating breakfast and Harley said "Did you enjoy your Rice Krispies boys?". We answered "Yes" and he said "The cat pissed on them and I dried them out". He was horrible. He used to do anything to undermine us.
19. After breakfast we would get dressed. There used to be a launderette where your clothes were and you used to pick up your clothes, which had your name tags on them. The clothes were provided by the home. I can remember when I went there some of the older boys had high waisters, but they had two false zips round them. I wanted to be like older boys because I just had normal trousers and so I got a pair of high waisters.
20. There was about eight boys in my dormitory. I would say anything from twelve to sixteen were in the home altogether. There were no girls initially but two or three girls did eventually come. They had their own bit in the home.
21. After getting dressed and having breakfast we would then go to school. It was 300 to 400 metres away from the home. You just walked to school then you would come back. I can't remember if we had lunch at school. I think we did because I can't remember going back to the home at lunch time.

*Food*

22. The food was alright in general. That's what I mean, it did seem that Harley was deliberately trying to confuse us by being a nice guy, with a couple of horrible things thrown in. A deceptive underbelly. We were all clean, well-presented and well fed. The basics were attended to.

*School*

23. The school was brilliant and I did stick in. Until the moment he got his hands on me I stuck in at school. I loved school, I loved learning. I can remember once in English we were asked why a spittoon was called a spittoon and I said because it is more sophisticated than calling it a spit bucket. I remember the teacher saying "That is an excellent answer PLJ, did JDW help you with your homework?". I thought, I can't even escape them here. He didn't help me with my homework but I thought they were taking merit for my intelligence. I was also part of the school play. I loved school, but as soon as the abuse happened it messed up my head and I just totally didn't care.
24. I made friends at school. My friend and I were going to start up jogging. I got invited back to a pool party from one of the girls in the class. I think her family were the [REDACTED]'s who owned [REDACTED]. I was quite a popular guy.

*Bath time>Showers*

25. On our level there was a room with the sinks and the toilet cubicles and then next to that was the shower and bath room. I think that was it. We would have a shower once a week I think. Harley would always be floating about at bath time. You had absolutely no privacy when you had a bath or a shower.
26. Usually my brothers were in the same time as me. As a kid you did not know, it was normal routine, everybody was running about and it was the normal routine. There was nothing openly perverted going on, until night time, but you used to go into the

bathroom naked and come out with a towel round you. You just got dried and dressed, and as I said, Peter Harley did float about at times. He knew who the easy victims were and he would stick with them, like my brother [REDACTED]

#### *Holidays*

27. There was one time we went on holiday to Kilwinning and it was in tents. It had been raining and all the worms had come to the surface, inside the tent as well. It was on a farm, we were in a field and we were all playing in the hay shed. We had destroyed a couple of the bales of hay and Harley came up and chased us, but he got [REDACTED] to stay. I think he sodomised [REDACTED] in that hay shed.
28. I can understand it a lot better now. Sometimes you would think he was a really nice guy with some of the things he would do. He used to organise trips to here, there and everywhere but I never went on the trips. This was before he got his hands on me, but I just knew that something wasn't right with him. I just kept away from him. There was one time I did go to the military tattoo, but most things I didn't go to.

#### *Birthdays and Christmas*

29. I cannot ever recall my birthday being recognised. I didn't have many of my own possessions. Not as much as his favourite boys. I remember we used to get a pillow case full of toys at Christmas and my toys were rubbish and some of [REDACTED] were half decent. But I had nothing really. I don't remember many celebrations.

#### *Visits/Inspections*

30. My parents never came to visit us at Merkland. However, because my father visited us in [REDACTED] Secondary Institution it wasn't an impossibility. There was the chance that he was coming to visit and it might not have been my mother and father, just my father or it might have just been my mother. That's why I thought they were coming on the day he abused me in the office. But they never visited us in Merkland. We didn't see

them for three years except at children's panels. We never got to visit them at home either.

31. I only saw the social worker once the whole time I was in there, which was three years. I don't know what was going on, it was quite annoying. The only other time I would see a social worker is when they picked us up and took us to the children's panel.
32. There was a policeman that used to come up every now and again. I don't know if that was a social visit or because we were kids with behavioural problems. I don't know if there was any trouble down the high street or whatever.

#### *Healthcare*

33. The only time I was sick was when Peter Harley battered me and apart from that I was never ill or needed medical assistance. I can't remember ever seeing a doctor.
34. I didn't see a dentist because that was all taken care of in previous children's homes like **Secondary Instituti**. I got most of my kid's teeth taken out due to neglect from my parents.

#### **Abuse at Merkland Children's Home**

35. We were in dormitories of about ten beds and if we were misbehaving Peter Harley would come in raging and shout, "Right PT gear on". So we would all stick our PT gear on and he would drive us out to the middle of nowhere for three or four miles, through country lanes, which weren't tarred but kind of gravel surfaces. He would dump us and tell us we had to run back. You would be running along petrified. There were no lights, it was just the moonlight and you would hear somebody that maybe fell or wandered into a ditch. You just kept your head down because you were petrified yourself until you would get home.

36. There was a five-a-side football pitch and he used to set up hurdles and you used to run around in a circle and jump over the hurdles. He would give the head-boy the belt and he was all kidding on and joking but after a while the hurdles seemed quite high and then the head boy would run round and if he caught you he would skelp you with the belt.
37. For ten to twelve months I kept myself to myself, then Peter Harley broke his leg in a football game. He moved his bed from the attic into his office down on the ground floor. One day he told me that my mother and father were coming to visit me. I got all excited about this and I didn't even think about where my two brothers were. I was just that pleased that my mother and father were coming to visit me.
38. I sat at the bay window watching the drive and I would say, "Right count to 100 and they would come". He was lying on his bed and he was setting me up. Now I know that but I did not know that at the time. He must have realised that I was right at my peak of devastation that my mother and father hadn't turned up. He got me into bed for a cuddle and he started interfering with me and I am not going to go into detail with that. I wouldn't give him the satisfaction. Then he tried to get me to interfere with him. I 'shit a brick' when he put my hand on his penis and I will never forget that look when he saw the fear in my eyes. He had a smile on his face but his eyes were screaming in panic like he had overstepped the mark.
39. A few weeks later I was in the toilets, I think I was either ten or eleven years old. There were about five sinks and there were five toilet cubicles. He walked in and I saw him looking at me. His eyes were predatory and before he said a word I said, "Touch me and I will tell JDW [REDACTED]". At that he just picked me up threw me into a cubicle, stomped all over me and didn't stop punching me. I can't remember leaving that toilet. I got told that I was in bed for two weeks after that. I have got no recollection of anything that happened after it.
40. When I was eighteen or nineteen I heard that there was the Freedom of Information Act and you could get what the authorities had written about you. So I approached the social work in Castle Douglas and through the Freedom of Information Act I got

what Harley had wrote about me and it said "PLJ was off school for two weeks due to infrequent nose bleeds". It wasn't infrequent nose bleeds it was the black and blue and swelling from Harley assaulting me. This was his official record, what he would have told the social work. So he leathered me. He didn't need to give me another kicking. That was brutal enough.

41. I take it Harley didn't see me as a threat because I didn't know anything about what was going on at that time because I didn't associate with him. I suppose that all changed after that incident in the toilet. Up until that incident I was unaware of the majority of what went on. I was aware that something wasn't right, with the beatings and the jogs in the middle of the country.
42. Then there was the treats. We would all be in the dining room and Harley would sit at the table and we would have games of bingo and treats were handed out if you won. They weren't fairly handed out. I can't speak about whether he had his favourites going up to the attic and getting treats when nobody else was around, but we never seen many treats. The cans of juice, crisps and chocolate bars were all up in the attic.
43. At nights you would see him on the couch in our living room with a blanket over him with other boys under the blanket and he was obviously masturbating the boys. You would see the blanket moving. It was disgusting. It was an open secret. You would say to your pals, "Fancy coming up tonight to do something", and they would say "No, I am not going near that poof". So even people outside the home knew.
44. The type of incident in the TV room happened very frequently. There was always a few other boys in the room but it wasn't something startling, it was just run of the mill. That was how it was. It was nothing out of the ordinary. He would have a blanket over him and whoever the boy was at that time. Some of the boys there were [REDACTED], the [REDACTED] brothers and [REDACTED]. I don't really remember that many.

45. There was a policeman that used to come up, I can't remember his name. I don't think he knew what was going on. I don't think he was part of it. Harley would do anything he could to intimidate me. One time a social worker came up and I had worked up the courage to tell him what happened because he had been my social worker before and I thought he was a nice guy. I thought, "Right I am going to tell him", and when I actually got hold of him that day to speak to him he said "PLJ I am not just here to see you I am here to see everybody". That devastated me. I had plucked up the courage to say something to him and before I got the chance to say anything he shot me down in flames. In hindsight Harley probably told the social worker to be wary of me, that I was seeking attention and the social worker took Harley at face value. He thought the best thing would be not to give me any attention. So when he said that to me he just devastated me and I never said another thing.
46. I don't know the social worker's name but it should still be in official records. I fought for recognition from the social work department for fifteen years. I met three directors of the social work and Sheila Klingan, who is head of Children's & Families & Strategic Planning and she can get hold of the records. She would know who that social worker was.
47. At dinner times it was some regime. Another trick of Harley's was that we used to sit down in the dining hall and there was stew, really fatty stew and I couldn't eat it. He would tell me to eat it and I tried but I kept bringing it back up. He said "Right boys you know the drill". We used to eat off plastic plates and he used to just get everybody to bounce their plates off the wall and whoever was getting punished would have to clean up the mess. There were about sixteen to twenty kids in there and that was the first time I had to clean up the mess, but it wasn't the first time that it had happened. It has affected my eating ever since.
48. There was no-one asking, "How is everything going on and how is school". Before the incident in Peter Harley's office I was in the top five of my classes and I was really doing well. I remember the geography teacher putting me into a little storage room with the head of geography and the head saying to me, "PLJ you have got a

chance, there is no chance with your brothers but you have got a chance. Why are you misbehaving?". I just burst into tears because where do you start? There was so much. It wasn't just the abuse. It was neglect as well. It was horrible.

49. We used to go to children's panels. These were horrible as well because they used to allow my mother and father into them, and they were always drunk. They should have cancelled the children's panel. After the incident with Peter Harley he started coming to the panels. He hadn't come before the incident but he must have been scared in case I said anything. I never got up the nerve to say something. I looked across the table and saw him looking at me and I lost my nerve because I knew I was going back there that night. So I didn't say anything.
50. I totally disagree with Peter Harley being allowed into the children's panels. He wasn't in any until after the incident with me. I think that was just so that he could keep an eye on me.
51. One time he asked me if I wanted some chewing gum, so I took it but he'd given me a laxative and I shit myself outside the maths class. It was all to undermine my confidence.
52. One time [REDACTED] and some of the other boys were smoking in the toilet, or smoking somewhere. When they got back to Merkland, Harley gave him the belt across the bare backside. I think that was some perverted sexual fulfilment. Paedophiles are very sneaky people. I didn't really associate with [REDACTED]. He tended to take his frustrations out on me, so I kept out his road. He was a bully.
53. Harley had three sons of his own. That was an incident as well. There used to be an internal staircase and an external fire stair case and then a kind of door in the partition to the attic suite, which had wire square mesh glass. I was standing on the landing of our dorms and I looked up and I saw Harley on the staircase with his oldest son [REDACTED]. He must have asked Harley for something and he replied "You need to give me a kiss". [REDACTED] gave him a kiss on his cheek and he said "It's not that kind of kiss". That got the red lights flashing as well. I couldn't figure out that incident

but I found out later on he was his adopted son. I don't think his real son [REDACTED] was abused.

54. Peter Harley had these kind of big torches that used to take the big square batteries and I actually saw him battering someone over the head with one. When he was violent he couldn't control himself. There was no preference. I saw him leathering a couple of boys.
55. JDW [REDACTED] was a would be hairdresser and one time Peter Harley said "Right if any of you need your hair cut JDW [REDACTED] will do it, but if you are not happy with that you can go down to the local barber." A couple of boys wanted to go down to the local barber. I can't remember this boy's name who wanted to go down to the local barber, but he ran away. When Peter Harley got his hands on him, JDW [REDACTED] just cut lumps out his hair, while Harley held him down. She didn't even try to do a decent job.
56. JDW [REDACTED] was a nasty little witch. As I said, she did that to that boy's hair and I remember once I got an airfix aeroplane and I built it. [REDACTED] had one but he had mucked his up. He said to JDW [REDACTED] that my plane was his plane, but it wasn't. Because she was an evil little witch I just accepted it and gave him my plane.
57. I actually think she was having an affair with the head boy. When this all came out, Kate Thompson, who was leading the investigation for the police, said when they approached the head boy he said that it was the best years of his life. I actually think JDW [REDACTED] knew about Harley's sexual orientation, [REDACTED]
58. Another thing I can remember was that Peter Harley used to run one of the workers home. She stayed three or four miles outside the town. I remember two or three of us sat up and watched Peter Harley taking this woman home. We knew where she stayed and it should only take fifteen minutes, but he would be away about an hour. We used to say "What are they up to?". We all decided that he was having sex with her. All the staff must have known.

59. I remember one member of staff came in and he was from outside the area. I became quite friendly with him. I can't remember his name, let's say it was 'Tom'. He was into ornithology and we used to read books, looking at birds and what not. I remember once at school there was going to be a fight with two boys in my year. They went to the local park to have their fight and it lasted about two minutes. When I got back to the home Peter Harley asked where I'd been. I can't recall where I told him I'd been but I told him I had seen Tom across the street and he said it was alright. I said I'd shouted to him and he nodded his head. I know Peter Harley was totally petrified of this Tom, this worker, because he wasn't in the cleek.
60. I remember going round to the office and Peter Harley was there. JDW might have been there too, and this care worker was there. Harley said, "Right PLJ what happened? Did Tom tell you that you can stay out?". I knew that it was being used as a reason to get rid of this Tom. I went to Tom and he said "It is alright, I understand". So I continued my lie. When I went back up to the dorm even the boys must have known about it. I can remember saying to me, "You have just got that man the sack". Tom said "I understand PLJ". So I think if you understand, why didn't you say anything. That's why I live with it on my conscious, I did get that guy the sack by telling a lie. You could see that Harley was fishing for any reason to sack him because he wasn't in the cleek. As soon as I said that, that was enough and he got the sack.
61. When Tom came in you could feel the apple cart had been rocked and everything just seemed to be a bit different. I don't know if Peter Harley wasn't committing any abuse at the time or he was hiding it better.
62. It was not a case of that I thought JDW and the staff were aware. They couldn't be unaware. It was the same staff from the day I went in there to the day I left, apart from this Tom who they got rid of. He was only there for two or three weeks before he got rid of him as soon as he could. He also used to give the staff member a lift home and she only lived a few miles away and it used to take him ages. So I am only speculating here, but they must have spoken about stuff. Then there were three girls

brought into the home and because the extra staff were females they more or less looked after the female residents. He had it exactly how he wanted it.

63. On hindsight, Peter Harley gave Merkland an outward appearance of being a lovely place, a really good place. The social worker did speak highly of it and thought he was a brilliant guy. I got that impression by the way the social worker spoke to us on the way up to the home.
64. His main punishments were these runs in the middle of the night but there was one time he got us to watch a scary movie. It must have been blowing a gale that night because he got bed sheets and he put them outside the window. He tied them to the window sill so they would flap about and make a howling noise.
65. Merkland was the kind of the place for disruptive boys, those with behavioural issues. It was a perfect setting for a paedophile. People with behavioural issues that he could undermine whatever they said and put it down to attitude and behaviour. It was a perfect set up. There was no outside interference. There was no outside support or assistance. None whatsoever. It was his little kingdom that he had to himself.
66. I can't remember there ever being a fight in the place. I think we were a tribe. We were all in there for the same reasons so we kind of accepted each other. I can't remember a bad word amongst the boys.
67. That is the main things that stick in my mind. The incident the office, the incident in the bathroom and the punishments. There was no-one in Merkland you could speak to. I did get close to Tom, but the isolation at Merkland was terrible. That was your world there was nothing else. I was in there for three years and left when I was twelve or thirteen. At the start of second year.

### Leaving Merkland Children's Home

68. █████ left Merkland first, a few weeks before us. I didn't really understand, even until this day why that happened. So █████ left, then █████ and I followed suit. But I always wondered why █████ left first. He went home to my mother and father. My father had a four bedroom house. Two or three weeks later █████ and I arrived back. It was a case of pack your bags you're going. Once █████ went we knew it was on the cards. We did have a couple of children's panels that year before we went home.
69. I would say that the majority of children's panels we were at we left in tears. We were wrecked again. I don't think they would allow those sort of children's hearings now. I remember one children's panel my father was drunk and he fell out with the chair of the panel and said "Just fucking keep them". I thought, "You're talking about us like we're items". We ended up howling. They were at most children's panels. They were quite brutal. They were mainly held at Kirkcudbright because my father stayed in Gatehouse which is a town next to Kirkcudbright. Comfort wasn't a thing. There was no comfort. It was just basically, "Right a children's panel, in the car." We were taken to the children's panel and then put into a room. We would then either hear or see our mother and father, just in the passing, and then straight out the children's panel. It would end up in chaos just with them being drunk but that is the main one that I remember.
70. When we got out of the children's home my father told me my mother had contracted multiple sclerosis. He never went into any detail. I didn't understand what multiple sclerosis was. My mother obviously had a severe strain so she ended up in a wheelchair. There was one time the social work paid us an aftercare visit and there was no electricity in the house. I don't know what time of the year it was but it was kind of dark. My father had a coal fire. When the social worker came my father said we would get some fish and chips. As soon as the social worker left I said, "When are we getting the fish and chips?" and my brother █████ said "Don't be so stupid █████, there is no fish and chips."

71. I was very disappointed in how that social worker addressed that situation. She just came and took my father for his word and left. With my father it wasn't so much abuse as neglect but he did not change his ways. My mother did not change her ways either and we basically brought up ourselves.
72. My mother and father had a downstairs bedroom later on in life, after my mother had contracted multiple sclerosis. I walked in one day and my mother was in bed crying. I asked her what was wrong and she said "It is that bastard through there." I popped into the living room and my father was sitting on his chair, steaming drunk. He was talking to himself and he said "Aye, [REDACTED] isn't even mine." That is the first time that I even questioned whether [REDACTED] was his. My father was such a weak and horrible man. I reckon when [REDACTED] was born if my father thought that he wasn't his he would cast it up to my mother. He was probably horrible to him too. [REDACTED] probably felt that without realising he was feeling it and he was a sook in the home. He was an attention seeker so Peter Harley would stick with people like my brother. He didn't bother me for at least six months to a year. He didn't bother me until he caught me.
73. Alcohol was the big thing in my childhood. I remember once my father had been at the pub all day and my brother [REDACTED] had made dinner. I heard [REDACTED] saying "Fuck him", and he ate his dinner. My father came home from the pub and said "Where's my dinner?", and I was looking at [REDACTED] and he was looking at me. My father went into the kitchen and I don't know if [REDACTED] had said there was some on a plate for him but he has come through with a plate and said "Is that fucking it?". He bounced the plate off the wall. It wasn't a plastic plate, it was a glass plate and it smashed and I thought, Merkland all over again. That was just the way he was. I started laughing and because he thought I was laughing at him, which I was, I remember him standing over me. He still had the fork in his hand, he called me "A wee bastard" or something and he went to stab me. I turned my head at the last second and it stuck in my ear. I ran out of the room and I hadn't taken the fork out of my ear. The fork hit the door and it twanged. If I hadn't turned my head the fork would have taken my eye out. He was full of rage.

74. But he was a 'yes' man with other people. I remember when we used to go home from other children's homes and back home for summer holidays we were always in the pub and he was a 'yes' man. If someone said black is white he would agree with them. But behind his own doors he was the king of the castle. It got to the stage that whenever he used to hit me I ended up laughing. I think my mother wanted to be there for us but she couldn't and would go off back to her mother's. When she contracted multiple sclerosis and ended up in a wheelchair, very quickly I think my father thought "I have got her, she can't leave now". But she used to go in a taxi. So we raised ourselves. Not having any electricity was quite a common occurrence.
75. I would say that the social worker who came the time when there was no electricity and no food in the house was wet behind the ears. A young social worker, and she heard answers that she wanted to hear. She would write a report saying that she went into the house and stated "You have got to get this and got to get that". The social worker would probably have wrote that my father was going to do this and that but I knew for a fact he was going to do nothing. I think she was just happy to hear all the right statements coming back at her. She was young. I remember I used to go round with notes to people's houses from my father asking people if he could borrow money. I remember when we initially went back our clothes were a disgrace. I can't remember why they were a disgrace but they were. I remember the social worker saying something about the state of our clothes and I think my father got money for new clothes, which would have went towards beer.

### **Reporting of abuse at Merkland Children's Home**

76. I suppose I could have spoken to teachers, but being at the age I was and not understanding sexuality, how could I talk about something that I didn't understand myself. I did not grasp the basics of it so that is how he got away with what he did, because you wouldn't know where to start.
77. Years later, when [REDACTED] and I were on probation, we told a social worker about what had happened in Merkland. She apologised for not picking up on it. I can't remember her name. So she did apologise. [REDACTED] then spoke to police and that kicked off the

investigation with Kate Thompson, who is a high ranking officer. I gave a statement to the police, however Harley pled guilty to a number of offences so I didn't give evidence.

### **Life after being in care**

78. I stayed with my mother and father for about four years. I was at school leaving age and got out of that house as soon as possible. I went down to stay with an Auntie. All the reasons that we were put into the homes in the first place still existed with my mother and father.
79. I ended up becoming a drug dealer as well. People have pictures of these sort of things in their mind but it is not like that at all. I used to work in the fishing boats and I arranged to meet a friend in the pub. My friend didn't turn up and one of the other boys on the fishing boat was in the pub. He said that they were going to a rave and asked if I wanted to go. As my friend hadn't turned up I decided to go to the rave. When I was there I took ecstasy for the first time. I had never experienced anything like the feeling you get from an ecstasy before and it really appealed to me.
80. I remember at the time ecstasy cost about £15, and they were paying up to £20 but nobody from the village or fishing port wanted to go and score the ecstasy tablets so I said I would go. I think it was Ayr that I went to and I got introduced to a dealer. When I went back down the road I said I had got the ecstasy and asked how much they wanted to pay for them. I said a tenner as that is what I had paid for them, but they said they would give me the full price. Eventually the drugs overtook my abilities to work as a fisherman and I just packed in working on the boats. I was making more money from drugs but it wasn't some evil scheme. It was just that the boys didn't want to travel to buy the ecstasy and I did and because they had given me something that I had never experienced before I got right into them. Ecstasy and speed.
81. I got a six year jail sentence for dealing and that got me into heroin. The police actually lied to get me the jail. I remember I was lying on my bunk in Shotts prison

thinking, "Wee <sup>PLJ</sup> from a village and in a maximum security jail. How the fuck did you manage this?". I just burst into laughter. I got in touch with a criminal psychologist in the jail and I started having sessions with him and that is when I started dealing with Merkland.

82. I have had help in spats. It has all helped. I did voluntary work at a European Peace Sanctuary. I worked in the gardens for them and that has helped as well. I have kind of put everything to bed. When I called my brother [REDACTED] who got most of the abuse, and I see where his head is I think, "Thank fuck I am out and got some help".
83. [REDACTED] has never discussed what happened to him at Merkland. That would be one statement that would be absolutely horrendous. I ended up in Shotts prison and [REDACTED] came up for a visit. I had been speaking to the criminal psychologist down there and when [REDACTED] came up I wanted to help him because I knew how messed up he was. I tried to hint to him that some of Harley's acts were abuse masked as love because I think my brother was looking for some love from somebody and that is why he was looking for the attention. I could see it in his eyes that I struck a nerve so a lot of things happened to [REDACTED] in the name of love. I know for a fact that Peter Harley had boys sexually active in front of other boys, in front of each other. The ones he could control.
84. [REDACTED] is going to die that way. Christmas is a bad time for him I am sure. A couple of times I think it has been for attention, but I know for a fact that at one time he did try and kill himself and made a serious attempt. It was just by the grace of god that he didn't. Because of the previous demons that I had I kind of think what demons he's bound to have, and I think, no way is he going to face them. If he was going to face them it is now or never and he is not going to face them. It is quite hard to accept that [REDACTED] is never going to be all together.
85. One time we were outside [REDACTED]'s bedsit which was above a pub. [REDACTED] was on the stairs crying with his girlfriend. He said, "He raped you as well <sup>PLJ</sup>". I said, "No he didn't". [REDACTED] then shouted, "I must be a poof". He walked outside and a couple of people passed and he just punched a guy. He was only going out for a pint and

█████ cracked him and then the police got a hold of him. Before that █████ and I were on probation and we told a social worker about what had happened in Merkland. Years later she apologised for not picking up on it. I can't remember her name, but she did apologise. █████ then spoke to police and that kicked off the investigation with Kate Thompson, the police officer I previously mentioned. She got a promotion through her investigation of Merkland.

86. I remember once I had a meeting with Kate Thompson. I decided to try and get recognition. I am actually quite famous with the local councillors down here because there was a social care meeting going on and I went along. There were tables set in a horseshoe shape and I got a bit of paper that had their agenda on it. I remember a woman looked over at me and gave me a smile and I waited until they finished their agenda and I stood up and said "I want to bring to your attention what is happening with kids that were in Merkland children's home. Some have committed suicide and I know for a fact that some have tried to commit suicide unsuccessfully. What are you going to do about it?". This guy that was sitting said, "We weren't in power at that time". I said "I am not speaking to you as a person I am speaking to you as a representative of the seat you are sitting on".
87. The directors stood up and said I was quite right and thanked me for my time. I walked out and sat outside and just cried. The next thing the director of social work came out and he looked at me and I was in bits, crying my eyes out and then a woman came out and the director looked at the woman as if to say "What the fuck". They just went back inside. Then a councillor called David McKee invited me to a meeting. So I went to the meeting, I can't remember if it was with my brother, but there was another person with me. David McKee said, "Right <sup>PLJ</sup> █████ what do you want to say to us?", and I just burst into tears because that was the first time someone had asked me my opinion on the matter.
88. I think the tears spoke a thousand words and it took me fifteen years and three directors of social work to finally get that. The last director, John Alexander, actually worked in children's homes at the start of his career. I had meetings with John Alexander and Brendan Cairney who was head of the Legal Team. I went into his

office and there was a picture of a kid or more than one kid either on his desk or on his wall and my first words to Brendan were, "Mr Cairney I want you to treat this case as if it was your kid in that home, and what you would expect from the Council if it was your kid". It gave me the perfect opportunity.

89. Brendan was a nice man and I have spoken to him many times. I also seen it from his professional point of view. He was there to protect the council as much as possible. I remember I had lots of meetings with the director, Sheila Klingan, Head of Child Services, and Kate Thompson. The most important meeting was with Kate. I was sitting in her office and I had this list of fictitious questions that I supposedly got from other survivors and other victims. I said "Right Kate, somebody has asked me to ask these questions", but they were all mine. I got into a nice sense of security and I hit her with, "I put it to you Kate that nobody from the council was done with criminal neglect because you got a promotion through it". She became overly defensive and started ranting, "I'm sick of people saying that". So I thought, "I'm not the first", and I just thought, "You've been caught". I think that did happen, she got promoted through keeping her mouth shut and not rocking the boat.
90. I think I have went from hero to villain. I can remember once I was walking up the high street and my pal who owns a cobblers said, you've been on the radio. He said a councillor was on and said, "All this would have been swept under the carpet if it hadn't been for one person", and that person was me.
91. So John Alexander told me that he had a budget of £72 million and I said, "Well John you can spare a few pound for ex-residents". He was all for it and he ended up giving 44 ex-residents twenty grand each and apologised at a full council meeting. Two councillors were against this because he was under no legal obligation to give us this money. Now the law has changed where anybody after the 1965 time bar has been expelled. So now my two brothers are choking to try and get more money. I said to Sheila Klingan when I met her afterwards, "Money wasn't the problem, it was the recognition", and she said "PLJ you are not the first person to say that to me".

92. Kate Thompson became head of crime down here and then she got moved up the road to another promotion. So she is very high up now, and it was definitely off the back of Merkland. I have no doubt whatsoever that when I confronted her about not taking any action against the council for neglect her defence was too strong. It is the first time I had seen her losing her composure.
93. █████ started going out with a girl the same age as me, he is two years older than me, and they got married. He went for the security and he went financial. I think he saw his solace in being financially stable and everything would be alright. So he started seeing a girl who worked in the bank and he ended up marrying her. He probably will love her but I don't think he fancies her. I think that is your punishment for the rest of your life, but he has done well for himself.
94. My older brother █████ spent all his life on his own. He had absolutely no trust whatsoever. If he is in a situation where he had to say something he would rather tell a lie than the truth even if the truth sounds better. █████ has been in denial about everything all his life, which is a shame. He just sits in his house now and gets drunk. He wakes up in the morning, or whenever he wakes up, opens a can of beer and watches the TV until it is time to go to bed. He does the exact same thing every day.
95. My parents are dead. I think of my father, he had three or four kids that he had to be responsible for and the pressures of that, but he did try to take my eye out. I don't think he deliberately tried to take it out. He just lashed out but I just turned my head at the last second or my eye was coming out.
96. I remember the day my father lost all or any power over me because I was lying on the couch coming down off speed and he came in steaming drunk with a quarter bottle of whisky in his pocket. He took the whisky out his pocket and raised it above my head and called me all the little bastards, you're useless, you're this, you're that, and I have had enough. I jumped up and threw him on to the couch and hit him, just to show him that he never had that power to hurt or dominate anymore. That night I wedged a bit of wood against the door because he is the kind of man who would

come through during the night and try and attack me. When I say hit him, I hit him with my wrists, not my fists.

97. The words on my tattoos, I wrote these a few years ago, this is how I live my life now, "compassion", "respect" and "fortunate" because of my son [REDACTED] I always forget the last one. I just try to live a positive life as much as I can now.
98. I am working just now as a general labourer. I am actually trying to get into social care but I am having a lot of hassle with my enhanced disclosure. Through the voluntary work I have taken a lot of kids from poor backgrounds to adventure days out from the peace sanctuary. They have had great times. I was trying to get a bit of positivity in their life.
99. I have a son, [REDACTED]. He is fourteen years old. I am not with his mum. I see him every weekend.
100. The first serious relationship I had was when I started doing the fishing boats. I am not proud of this but I remember I had an argument with my girlfriend at the time and the skipper wanted me to fish the weekend because of the bad weather during the week. We couldn't get out so we had to make it up. So I went out on the boat, came back and found out that she had slept with someone else. My reaction was to hit her and I gave her a black eye. I was so disgusted with myself that I didn't have another relationship for a couple of years. I had to figure out why I did that. Then when I started to look into social care and behaviour, I had done a GSVQ 3 in social care in Clydebank College, and learning about behaviour, it was what I had seen all my life with my father. That was my programme of an initial reaction.
101. The last time I had a domestic with a girl was when I was staying up in Glasgow. I was running about with Glasgow gangsters after coming out of Shotts. I had learned that was my new life, I kind of soaked up the environment. It is funny, she looked at me as if to say, "What are you going to do? Are you going to stab me or crack me?". I just shrugged and walked out the door and never laid a finger on her. I was absolutely delighted with my response. That is the thing I do. I have little moments in

life when I reflect back. I think "You have totally swung that around **PLJ**", because I have questioned my behaviour and I am delighted. I might not die happy but I might die a bit more peaceful. I tell a lie, I did lay a finger on her, two actually. I held my hand an inch from her face and flicked my fingers across her chin as a gesture and not to inflict pain.

102. Counselling was fundamental. I am sure you have had people in this chair that have been full of tears and I have been through that stage. When I went to the council meeting regarding an apology and compensation I was in the corner with my hood up and all I heard was, "Excuse me, excuse me". I looked up and there was the director of social work coming towards me. He shook my hand and said "This day wouldn't have happened if it wasn't for you **PLJ**". After that meeting I went back to independent living support, which was a support group that I was using at the time and I said "I could do with a pillow and a quilt, I could just sleep". I felt totally drained and that was the conclusion I needed. The director of social work did say a lot of nice things about me. I called him up afterwards and I asked him to give me a copy of the speech he was reading from. The bit he mentioned, "The tireless quest of survivors facing doors slammed in their face and to carry on the fight", and he was talking about me. He said "I put that in **PLJ** just to keep everybody happy, that ex-survivors and ex-victims would be happy, but I was really talking about you." So I have got that in my kitchen. Every now and again I will have a little look at it.
103. You really need to look at the neglect that went on. As well as what actually happened, it is what didn't happen. Being seen as a human being rather than a problem. I really did think through my childhood that I was something that nobody wanted to deal with. I was just pushed and passed about and put on to different people for responsibility. In a short period of time I was in numerous children's homes. I have seen this from other people, mainly down in England. A boy being in care for a year and a half and he was in twelve different residences. I just think a kid is innocent and it is not just the abuse it is the neglect. The guidance and the reassurance. I don't think that you should be just looking at what abuse happened to them but the whole picture of what happened to them.

104. My hopes for the child abuse inquiry are, back in the day mental health was seen as something you didn't talk about. Something that was kept in the family. Nobody spoke of mental health issues. I have no problems speaking about mental health and I would like the inquiry to get child abuse brought to the surface to such an extent that people feel free to talk about it. It is not a taboo subject that someone doesn't want to talk about. I think you should seek them out. Whether it is councillors, whether it is police or top business people, anybody that has been abusing kids regardless their place in society should be openly dealt with.
105. I didn't give evidence at Peter Harley's trial. I gave a statement to Kate Thompson. I was on remand in Barlinnie when the trial took place and she came up and said "PLJ I am not taking away anything you experienced or felt but we have offered him a plea so that people don't have to give evidence and he accepted it and it was the worst cases". He pled to it.
106. I would have given evidence if he hadn't pled. I had a funny experience, I was in Shotts prison after he got sentenced. There is protection and there is mainstream and I was in mainstream. I went to the Appeal Court in Edinburgh and came back to Shotts. When I came back and was being taken back to the hall the sex offenders in the protection were getting taken back and I saw him. I was actually talking to somebody and as I was walking the guy that I was talking to said what is up with you. I couldn't see it but it took me back to being a young child and I know psychologically that is what you do. I'd like to have thought I would have stabbed him or something but I didn't. I am just glad that it has all been put to bed, I really am.

### **Impact**

107. It has taken my childhood and my latter life. It has affected me all through my life. I am writing a book about it. I have titled it "[REDACTED]". That is how I would sum up my childhood. I had no guidance, just neglect and because of that I have had to learn lessons through mistakes. I have made every mistake that there is to make. I have suffered with confidence and anxiety issues all my life as well as mental health issues. It's a horrible way to realise it but with speaking to my brothers

and seeing the issues that they have still got and I realise that I don't have those issues. When I hang the phone up on them I know what life I am going back to and I know what life they are going back to.

108. I am delighted I have put in so much work in the counselling area of things but Harley totally destroyed my confidence and self-belief. A lot of times I have started a profession, like the fishing boats, I've got to the very top where I have been offered my own fishing boats. These aren't cheap, these are £1,000,000 boats, and I have knocked it back because of the responsibility of other people's lives. So I don't know if I have been testing myself with my intelligence to see if I can reach these points and when I get there I shun away from it because of the responsibility issue. I think that all stems from the lack of people taking responsibility in my life and showing me guidance.
109. I have suffered with confidence all of my life because of him. Before I came here I thought he played a big part of stealing my childhood. He also stole the end of my life as well because of the amount of drugs I have taken to hide it and it has knocked years off my life. So he has taken my childhood and my final years.
110. I really think paedophiles should get life sentences because they do take a life, they really do. They take more than the life, they actually put people in hell. I sometimes think that a lot of these judges are at it so they don't want to hit people too hard. What did shock me was a social worker who has been really brilliant and really inspired me to keep the fight said to me, "PLJ you have to understand that we didn't know about paedophilia in the '70's". I thought, who are you kidding, I have heard about it in roman times, where a general might get court marshalled for something and his punishment is to bugger a boy. Then you had Aristotle and Socrates, who all had their little boys. It is known throughout history that there had been paedophilia, so why not in the 70's? They just didn't want to face facts, but I found that a shocking thing to say that they never knew about it in the 70's.
111. The most ignorant thing I ever heard was how ex-kids like me are seen. We were talking about children's homes and the social worker called them 'problem kids'. I

said "How dare you". It is not a problem kid it is a kid with problems. I think the whole mentality of putting the word before the kid is making people see it from their own point of view and that really disgusted me. Not the fact that I thought she was a horrible person but just the way it was viewed as a problem kid when it should have been a kid with a problem. You have got a big impact on people's thoughts and if your words are wrong to start with the outcome will be wrong. I was disgusted.

### **Records**

112. I got a copy of my records through the Freedom of Information Act, but they had watered them down. Joy Usher, who was my social worker at the time and who was brilliant, gave me support through this by saying "PLJ" I re-typed some of the statements because in the 70's they spoke differently from what they do now". I think she was just trying to protect me. I could imagine what the social worker did have to say.
113. The records I saw were mine but they were diluted. I think if I fought, I would have got the original records. I remember once I read a story in the newspaper about a boy who went on a crime spree who got a chance to rehabilitate by a positive step, rather than a punishment, by being sent on a safari. I thought about that, so I went into my local social work office with it and they sent me backpacking around Europe. I remember when I was backpacking I was stuck in Florence and Joy sent me money. It was her own money. Her boss told me afterwards. She got compensated from the social work department, but initially she had to transfer that money from her own bank account. I trusted Joy with my life. I never seen her as a mother figure, she was just a really lovely lady and it is as simple as that. She did it for my benefit. She was a social worker and she had seen it all and I trusted her.
114. 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.

PLJ  


Signed.....

Dated... 16.2.18 .....