

Scottish Child Abuse Inquiry

Witness Statement of

FBB

Support person present: No

1. My name is FBB. My date of birth is 1952. My contact details are known to the Inquiry.

Life before going into care

2. I was born in a hospital in Leith which is where I stayed with my family. My entire family always called me FBB. My dad was a seaman and worked on the trawlers. His name was and my mum was. In those days there was no council housing and we stayed in a camp full of Nissen huts at Lochinvar which was in Granton. I do not remember this as I was so young. At that time I had a sister called who was one year older than me however my parents went on to have nine other children who were called , , , , , , , , and . For the life of me I cannot remember ever living with and I cannot say definitely the order most of my siblings were born. went to a convent and the first time I remember seeing her was when I was about sixteen. They were all brought up in care some all their lives and some for shorter terms. is dead now but he was brought up in a home somewhere near Aberdeen and he spent his life up there. I only met him once and I think he was a year or so younger than me. My sisters went to a convent but I don't know where my brothers went when in care.
3. We were very poor and my parents often argued and fought and I mean proper fighting with the language being terrible. Both my parents drank but my mum was the

heavier drinker and with that came her cruelty, laziness and violence. She was also very promiscuous. There is only about a year between each of her children being born. My dad was also spending time with other women. I don't remember much about living with my parents before I went into care the first time. I have a picture of me however I am not even convinced that it is me in that picture and not one of my other siblings. A lot of my memories are based on the times I returned to stay with my parents in between care placements or hearing things from my parents especially when they were arguing.

4. When I was six weeks old my mum dumped me on a step at a children's home in Canning Lane, Edinburgh. I think it may have been called Claremount or something like that. I can only remember there was a sandpit and that the nurses who looked after us wore a blue uniform. I don't know how long I stayed there but I do have a vague recollection of sitting on the nurses knee and playing in the sandpit. I also recall being examined and can remember a woman and a man standing in front of me and being taken in a car when it was snowing. That is when I believe I was being taken to my foster carers house in Fife. These memories are not clear to me but just distant. I have a lasting memory of trying to push myself up off something hard which I have always thought was the step at that home. It's been with me all my life but I just don't know and can't remember things when I was so young. I do not think I ever returned home from Canning Lane and that I went from there to foster care.

FRN-SPO [REDACTED] foster care, [REDACTED], Fife

5. My first memory of being with my foster carers is sitting on their floor in front of a fire. I remember having wee short trousers on which were made of hard wool and the fire was red hot which made me sick. I have no timeline for my memories so it is difficult for me to know the dates and order of things from that time. My memories include two women speaking to each other but I don't remember the conversation. I believe I would have still been a baby and do have a memory of being in a high chair in the kitchen whilst my foster mother was making jam.

6. My foster parents were called **FRN-SPO** and whilst I stayed with them I was referred to as **FBB** although my name was never officially changed. I think the man's name may have been **█** and he was tall and thin. He wore a grey suit and he worked but I don't know where or what he did. She had long jet black hair and seemed tall to me, maybe five foot six inches tall. I don't recall what I called them but it was possibly mum and dad.
7. They stayed in a terraced corner house at either **█** or **█** Fife. I know the address to be one of those I have provided as in later life I went back to see the house. The house had a large garden to the front and back. The front door led to a living room and kitchen downstairs and upstairs I had a bedroom at the back. I had a single bed. The kitchen had steps leading to the back garden where Mr **█** grew lots of vegetables. I don't remember the rest of the layout of the house but it was always clean and tidy. I have no recollection how many bedrooms there were or even where the toilet was.
8. They had three other children staying with them but I don't know whose children they were. The oldest was called **█** and he was good to me. He was jovial and he was a big boy possibly aged around fifteen. He would put me in a wheelbarrow and take me to the saw mill or race me down the street. There was **█** who was also about fifteen or she might have been older than **█** and a younger girl called **█** who was between eight and ten years old. They also had a cat called Cheeky.

Routine at Foster Care – **FRN-SPO, **█**, Fife**

9. In the mornings when I was younger I remember sitting watching Andy Pandy on the TV and I also had Andy Pandy pyjamas to wear.
10. There was never any affection given no matter what the circumstances. I had measles once and was in bed for three weeks. There was no affection or love even as a sick child. The only kind of attention I got was from the man. He would take me fishing and into the garden. He was a kindly man and at that time things were not

bad even if there was no affection. Mrs^{FRN} [REDACTED] was very strict and a church goer although I never went to church with her. She liked things to be done in a certain way and if not she would give you a clout around the ear.

11. The man took a disease in his arms which left him losing the use of both his hands. I remember he had a blue car used by disabled people but he would still take me out as he had these hook things on the end of his arms to help him steer the car. We would still go fishing and go for long walks to reservoirs or to the countryside. He also had a mate with a garage and we would all go fishing. We never went away on day trips or holidays as a family. I remember being very sad that he was ill as I liked him. That was the only type of affection I got.
12. Mrs^{FRN} [REDACTED] became a carer for her husband and when he became ill that's when things started to change. [REDACTED] and [REDACTED] were no longer around so it was just me and [REDACTED] in the house. I have no idea where they went they were just not there after Mr [REDACTED] became ill. I would be fed and sent straight out to play so she could look after her husband. I was a burden and was made to feel it. I would say that Mr [REDACTED] was also made to feel a burden to her. I would go and play in the parks and fields near the gas works. I met a young boy called [REDACTED] and we were really good friends. He had a heart problem. We would play at an old haunted house which had an orchard next to it and we would go and steal apples. I got caught and I fell off the wall and through the greenhouse one day we were out playing. I still have the scar on my knee caused by my fall but at the time I hid the injury as I was scared to tell Mrs^{FRN} [REDACTED]. [REDACTED] died when he was about eight years old. I found out when I went to his house for him to come out and play and his mum told me. His mum was lovely but I was so upset and cried my eyes out. He was my only friend and I didn't have anyone to talk to about what had happened or to help me understand about death. In those days everything was hard, the people were hard.
13. As Mr [REDACTED] deteriorated he needed more care and I was often made to sit under the kitchen table for hours. Mrs^{FRN} [REDACTED] would shout at me and she became nasty. Mr [REDACTED] couldn't help and she actually hit him a couple of times. This made me

cry as I liked him. In hindsight I can see that Mrs FRN was under a lot of stress but things just steadily got worse.

Food

14. The food was fine before Mr became ill, I don't remember much of it but there are no bad memories of food until that point. After that I survived on cat food primarily which was sent to me when I was in the shed.

Schooling

15. I went to the Primary School down the road which is where I first started school. I was taught to write and got to play with blocks. In those days you went up a class every year and I remember I was there long enough to go up a class.
16. When I was in Primary two I was in the upper playground and leant against a metal railing which was slack and it fell onto the lower playground. I got the blame for this and was sent home. My foster parents were shocked as I was accused of deliberately throwing the metal spike to the playground below and narrowly missing a child. I knew this to be wrong but in those days adults didn't believe children. I was made to feel bad about it and I had done nothing wrong. Mrs FRN gave me a cuff across the ear which at that time was standard procedure if children had been accused of doing something wrong. It was not a case of anyone at the school or home asking me what had happened. I ended up back at the school but under a different teacher.
17. I walked to and from school myself as it was only a few streets away from my house and back then there was very little traffic. I crossed side streets but not any main roads. One day I tripped over my school bag smashing my front teeth out on the kerb. It was very painful and my foster mum took me to the doctors but that was it, there was no comfort given. I presume it was just a case of me losing my baby teeth. I just remember them being all shattered along the front on my mouth.

Visits/inspections

18. The welfare woman came to visit now and again. I was sent to the kitchen so she and Mrs FRN could talk. I remember the welfare woman as big and burly and she wore a navy uniform. She never spoke to me. I remember hearing her ask Mrs FRN on one of her visits if I wet the bed and she replied that I did which was untrue. I got the impression Mrs FRN wanted rid of me. Any visits were known about in advance and I would always be sent out of the room when they were going on.

Birthdays/Christmas

19. I have no memory of any birthday or Christmas when I was staying with the FRN-SPO

Abuse at Foster Care – Mr and Mrs FRN-SPO

20. Mrs FRN changed the more care she had to give to her husband and she became very nasty and cruel. When I was late home for my tea she would send me to the shed in the back garden and lock me in. It was only an eight by six building that Mr had built when he had been well. It would be for any reason really, just things that kids would normally do like accidentally dropping a dish. I was sent there even if she was just in a bad mood. I would be made to sleep there overnight. There was no heating, any form of light or electricity and no bed or blankets. I would just be wearing pyjamas and had to sleep on the floor. She started putting me in there regularly and for longer, two nights or three nights at a time. I would be starving. I definitely thought she didn't want me around. Each time I was brought out the shed I was allowed back in the house. I started to become reclusive. I would sit in silence and even at school I kept myself to myself. I remember asking myself why this was happening to me and what had I done. These memories are vivid.
21. One day Mrs FRN sent to the shed with cat meat on a saucer to feed me. She put it on the floor for me to eat and this became a regular pattern for me to be

fed. I had to eat it as I was starving, there was no choice. Then one day [REDACTED] sat on the floor in the corner and started to play with herself and I had to watch her. She took a nail and pushed it into the top of my penis. It was very sore and she said if I told mum she would do worse to me. That was the first and most horrific thing that had happened to me. She would have been between eight and ten years old.

22. From around that time I was only ever given cat food to eat and this was normally given to me on a saucer to eat from the floor. [REDACTED] would bring the food to me in the shed and she would play with herself and I was forced to watch but she never harmed me again. No-one noticed any change in me whether that was physically or mentally. I never said anything to anyone what was going on as I was so terrified after [REDACTED] had hurt me. I just lived in fear that something worse could happen to me.

Leaving foster care

23. When I was five or six years old I was removed from Mrs ^{FRN}[REDACTED]'s care but I don't know why. I was collected by the welfare department and taken back to my parent's house travelling by train and car. I had had no contact with my parents or any of my family since I had been dumped in Canning Lane so I didn't know them and didn't recognise them. I had never been given any information about my family so I knew nothing about them and nor did I have any memory of living with them. In the intervening years that I had been in care they had had more children but they were all in care. It was just me living with them back at home.
24. When I got home the house was clean and tidy and we were living in [REDACTED] [REDACTED], Niddrie Mains, Edinburgh by then. There was a train set given to me by the welfare department and I played with it on that first day when they were there. The following day my mum took the train set off me and it was sold.
25. When mum started to feed me I was being sick all the time. She took me to the doctors and he said I was suffering from severe malnutrition. He put me on malt extract four times a day and big brown vitamin tablets also. No-one had noticed

before I left care and my parents wouldn't have known what I looked like growing up anyway so they were not going to notice anything either.

26. I remember the [REDACTED] turned up at the door although I have no idea who told them. I had my picture taken standing over the sink, I was so skinny I looked like someone out of Auschwitz. There was an investigation and Mrs FRN [REDACTED] said that I had been bad and had done things like hitting her husband but I was only five years old and in any case I liked him. She was believed and that was the attitude back then. I wasn't believed and nothing happened about me being so malnourished. No-one questioned how a child my age could have done all the things she said I did to people who were bigger and more powerful than me. I was told by the welfare via my parents that everything I had said was lies and my mum gave me a hell of a tanking for that.

27. Being at home was not good and things turned sour very quickly. I had been put into Craigmillar Primary School but someone came into the school and took me away to Redhall House in Edinburgh. I remember I was wearing the small grey suit comprising of shorts and a jacket. This was my uniform from when I had been going to school in [REDACTED]. I don't know how long I had been at school but it could only have been a matter of weeks before they removed me. I think mum had gone on the drink again. She would spend all the money on drink and be very promiscuous. I ended up going back and forward between Redhall and my family home. I was probably returned home every time my mum came off the drink. For me it was just a back and forward thing and I never knew if I was coming or going. I would last only a couple of weeks back home before they returned me back to Redhall. I felt like my life was hectic.

28. Every time I went home it was the same. I was made to do all the housework. I was up at 4am and made dad his breakfast and lit the fire. I had to run the messages and clean the stairs. I was regularly beaten by my mum. When the kids came along I did all the caring, feeding, washing and changing of them. She did next to nothing and would disappear for weeks and I would be back in Redhall. It was confusing for a child my age.

Redhall House, Edinburgh

Secondary Institutions - to be published later

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Leaving Redhall House, Edinburgh

58. I left when I was eight years old. It was without warning or any explanation. The adults do all the talking and decision making. I was just put in a room and then taken in a car to Red House.

Red House, Musselburgh

59. Red House was in Mill Lane, Musselburgh. It was SNR by FSK and his wife FSE who was SNR. They had a son and daughter. Mr FRT worked there and Mr Clark was SNR. Mrs Bryce was the cook and I believe she and Mr FRT lived on the premises as did Mr FSK and his family.
60. It was a private house in a walled garden with a vegetable patch. It had a tarmac yard with a couple of workshops. There was a school shelter and a sand pit. The older boys had a building with a games room with snooker and billiard tables. There was a house that the cook, Mrs Bryce, stayed in near the [REDACTED]. There was an outside toilet with a urinal and cubicles and if you were out in the yard that's where you were expected to use.
61. Inside there was a washroom with rows of sinks and toilets. Down a corridor led to the recreation room and dining room. Past the dining room there was the kitchen on the right. There was a sitting room used by Mr and Mrs FSE-FSK. There was a winding staircase that led to a linen room then a dormitory and through that led to another dormitory. Staff working overnight stayed in a room nearby. There was a spiral staircase which led to a dormitory and staff room. FSK had his rooms up there too. There were also attic dormitories each containing five beds.
62. I believe Red House could take up to thirty boys but there was rarely that many and a lot were not there long term. There were no girls at this place. The boys ranged in age from seven or eight years old up to fifteen years. You had to leave by the time you were sixteen. The boys I remember were [REDACTED], [REDACTED], [REDACTED], [REDACTED] whose real name was [REDACTED], [REDACTED] and [REDACTED] and they were all aged about

fourteen or fifteen. The younger boys my age that I recall are [REDACTED] and [REDACTED] and [REDACTED]. [REDACTED] was known as [REDACTED] and [REDACTED] had a twisted thumb. I don't think you could make strong friendships in a place like this because people were always being moved either back home or elsewhere. I also remember [REDACTED] who I think was put in there when his mum went on holiday. His dad was a solicitor. I heard in later years that he had committed suicide but I don't know if that is the case or not.

63. There was a school register which was blue in colour and was also used to record pocket money and good behaviour. There was also a punishment register which was similar but it was a separate book.
64. FSO [REDACTED] came to work after I arrived. He had been in the Argyll and Sutherland Highlanders and used to tell us stories about Pearl Harbour and fighting the Japanese. He had all the names of those in his platoon tattooed on his shoulder. He used to play cricket and rounders with us but everything he did was in a military style. He had also been in a prisoner of war camp and would have us marching around the yard army style.

Routine at Red House Musselburgh

First day

65. I was given the number [REDACTED] when I started there although the staff referred to me by my surname. My towels, toothbrush and towel peg had number [REDACTED] on them. My dormitory was at the top of the stairs in the first room you came to and my bed was third on the right. The beds were made up army style and I was shown once how to fold the bedding into a bundle and wrap a blanket round it. It had to be right, the blankets had to be square with the folds all the same as the one underneath. You had to fold the mattress up and then put your bedding on top of it just like you would do in the army. This was how the whole place was run, it was all very regimental.

Mornings and bedtime

66. We were woken at 6.30am every morning and FSK would inspect the dormitories every day. He would throw your bedding off the bed if it wasn't right and you had to remake your bed repeatedly until he was happy with it. It was a very strict regime. If you got it wrong you were never shown how to do it correctly you just had to keep remaking it and sooner or later you would get it right. There was also a small locker at the side of the bed and if it was dusty he would push it over and you would have to sort and polish it. Each locker had a torch within it.
67. We went to bed at 8pm but the older boys got to stay up until 9pm.

Mealtimes/Food

68. Breakfast was porridge in the winter and cereal such as cornflakes during the summer. Mrs Bryce was a good cook so there were no problems with the food.

Washing/bathing

69. Every Sunday was washing night and we would all have a shower. When I first went there they had a couple of baths and rows of sinks but about six months or so later it was altered and four showers were installed.

Clothing/uniform

70. We had to wear a black woolly jersey, khaki shorts, t-shirt, ankle socks and rubbers which were gym shoes. Once you were thirteen or fourteen you got to wear long trousers. The home was called the jaggy jersey home by the locals because of the woolly jerseys we wore and the locals would threaten their children if they didn't behave they would be sent to the jaggy jersey home. I didn't know this at the time it was something I learned when I was older. I only knew we were called the home boys when I was staying there.

Leisure time

71. When I was ten or eleven I got to sit a first aid course and got an extra shilling pocket money when I passed the course.
72. We got to go swimming at the pool at Loretto School and got to do our swimming badges and earned medals too.
73. When you were nine or ten years old you got to go out. I could go to the pictures or go fishing. Different staff came in including a younger man just out of university who was tall with curly black hair. I could sense things were changing as it became more relaxed and we got to play cricket and badminton. Even FSK became softer. It wasn't all bad especially as you got older but some staff like FSO kept up the regimental treatment.
74. We also had pen friends in the USA and had to sit and write letters every three months. The letters were censored and if you didn't write anything good staff would write a letter on a sheet of paper for you to copy. It was often difficult to know what to write as we didn't have a lot to tell them.
75. Now and again FSK also used to have classes making things with balsa wood. I also used to go to the Boys' Brigade. When FSO came he had us playing cricket and rounders and was always handing us out pennies.
76. Most of the time there wasn't a great deal to do and we sat about reading old comics. John Merrilees who was the Chief Constable of the police and was on the Board of Governors for the school gave us a black and white telly in 1962 and we got to watch that from 7pm until 8pm.
77. When I was nine or ten they had us doing archery with real crossbows. I could hardly pull the string back. FSK would be filming us. He filmed us a lot doing things

when we were on holiday. In the winter nights we would all watch these films. In hindsight the archery was just dangerous as there was such a lack of supervision.

Trips and holidays

78. The Musselburgh Rotary Club would organise a trip to Troon each year and they would take us in their cars for the day.
79. We had annual camp for three weeks each year to Thornton Loch, Cockburnspath. It was tough but they encouraged you to do things. I would go away and make up fishing lines. I was already a loner and for me it was just another regime.

School

80. I went to Musselburgh Primary and Musselburgh Grammar but I didn't do well although I never had any bad reports. I sat my eleven plus there but they made a mistake and had me sitting it when I was ten instead of when I was eleven years old. No adult took an interest in my schooling and I don't feel there was any encouragement to do well or help with homework.

Healthcare

81. If I needed to see the dentist I would be taken into town to see a local one. The doctor would come in and give us a check-up now and again. We were given castor oil, cod liver oil and syrup of figs once per month.
82. I remember in the first week after I arrived we were taken to the gas works by Fisher Row to play football. In those days it was leather boots and a leather ball and I got knocked out when the ball hit my face. I had concussion and had to be carried back to the home. I didn't get any medical check as a result of this injury other than by FSE

FSE

SNR

Religious instruction

83. We went to church every Sunday and had no choice about this. We walked in twos in crocodile style. At church we had to each sit next to two members of the congregation. There was no other religious instruction.

Work

84. All the chores were done by the boys. We had to polish the floors using great big buffers which I could hardly push. We did all the dusting and cleaning and if you didn't do it right you had to do it again. They didn't have cleaners so the kids did it all. The chores were mainly done at weekends and nights.
85. We did earn pocket money and the amount depended on your age.

Birthdays and Christmas

86. Christmas was a horrible time. I was the only person staying in the place for a couple of years and there was no tree or decorations. One year I was taken to the house of someone from the church for Christmas dinner. They were good people with their own family. They had a tree and I got a present of an Airfix battleship. Birthdays were never celebrated.

Visits/Inspections

87. We would hear that someone would be coming for a visit to the home but it was always when we were out and it would be the staff they would speak to. I never spoke to anyone who asked how I was doing or how I was feeling.

Family contact

88. When I was eight years old my mum came to Red House. She was at the gates at the front door and she was drunk, shouting my name. I had been in the yard but I didn't go and see her. I felt I didn't know my parents and never classed them as my mum and dad ever.

Personal possessions

89. I had no personal possessions to take with me.

Running away

90. Some guys did run away but there was nowhere to go. The police would spot them by the clothing they were wearing. They would be punished by having their pocket money or activities stopped. They may have also been given chores. I never saw anyone being caned for this.

Discipline

91. The place was run very strict and regimentally. Often if you did something like a chore and didn't do it properly you were made to re-do it until it was done to the standard they wanted. Although it was tough living there they did also try and get you to do other things like the first aid course. These type of activities were a choice.
92. When Mr **FRT** and some of the older boys left things were definitely changing with the regime. Most of the new staff were softer and I even sensed **FSK** was becoming more relaxed. **FSO**, who came after Mr **FRT** left, treated us like we were in the army, having us marching around the square.

Bed Wetting

93. I wet the bed a few times over the course of about six months and some other boys were persistent bed wetters. They had a system with an electric bell with a rubber mat that went onto the mattress with two clips that were attached. If you wet the bed this bell went off. It was so loud and sounded like a fire alarm. It ran off a battery and I am sure you would get a shock of it when it went off.
94. If you wet the bed then no matter the time you had to get up and take your sheets off the bed and wash them in the washroom basins or bath before putting them on a pulley at the back of the building. Once the showers were installed you then washed your sheets under the shower. You would need to bathe or shower and you would then be given fresh sheets. This all upset the other kids and staff who would be disturbed from their sleep as the lights were put on until the sheets had been washed and the bed remade. I only did it once or twice. Bed wetters were ostracised and called names like pee the bed. There was no help if you were a bed wetter they just thought the bell would sort it.

Abuse at Red House, Musselburgh

95. Night time was a scary time in the dormitory. Mr **FRT** and a couple of the older boys would sneak into the dormitory and I would hear them taking someone out from the small dormitory nearby and upstairs. I could hear them creeping about and whispering. I would lie on my stomach and pretend I was sleeping. The next day you would know who it had been as they were crying. I learned that some of them couldn't deal with it and in later life in a chance meeting with **██████████** he told me his brother had committed suicide. Mr **FRT** and these older boys had such a hold over the place and the kids. I was never abused in the dormitory but the abuse was talked about amongst the boys, whispering in twos and threes. We were too frightened to tell anyone and I don't know if any other staff were involved in it. There was insufficient supervision so the abusers had nothing to fear.

96. Some of the older boys hung about outside the exterior toilet block. I know that [REDACTED] was grabbed and abused in there. [REDACTED] and [REDACTED] were involved and so was Mr FRT [REDACTED]. Mr FRT [REDACTED] smoked with them and he knew what was going on and was part of it although he didn't do anything during the day it was only at night for him. I avoided the outside toilet and Mrs Bryce would question why I would go inside to use the toilet. Once I went in to use the outside toilet and [REDACTED] came in and tried to push the door open. He pulled his trousers down but I got past him and into the yard.
97. At summer camp, when I was about eight years old, I was promoted to help in the linen room with Mrs FSE [REDACTED]. This involved sorting out clothes and putting them into pigeon holes. As she climbed up a ladder I could see she was not wearing any underwear. I had previously heard stories from the other boys that she used to run around with no underwear on but this was the first time I had witnessed it. She didn't like me after that and I found her to be quite twisted. She told Mr FSK [REDACTED] that I had called her a cow and I got six of the cane across my bare bum. Mr FSK [REDACTED] used to carry a cane around with him. I know he recorded this punishment as I saw him write it down. The cane was long with a handle although he had three or four of them. I think the thinner it was the sorer it was. I cried for three days with the pain but that was the way it was and no staff tried to comfort me. Mr FSK [REDACTED] also had a leather belt which he kept over his shoulder hidden by his jacket. He also had a yellow duster in his jacket pocket which he used to fold over your wrist when he belted anyone over the hands.
98. Every Sunday when we were showering the showers would continually be deliberately switched off and we would be hosed down by a cold water hose connected to the outside tap. It would be Mr FRT [REDACTED] or one of the older boys who would do this. This happened a lot and you would come from the hot shower to suffering freezing cold water. I am also aware that [REDACTED] who was a persistent bed wetter would be hosed down every night when he was washing out his sheets. I could hear him screaming as the dormitory was almost above the shower room. It was horrendous to hear this and I felt powerless to help. FSO [REDACTED] continued this cold shower regime when he came to work at the home.

99. Robert Black was in Red House the same time I was there. I have read his story and even met him by chance years later in a pub when he was a young man. He was waiting on a train to go to London. I believe it started out that he was abused but he became an abuser with [REDACTED] and [REDACTED] and I saw him hanging around the toilets with them following boys inside.
100. FSO [REDACTED] used to put a brush pole over your neck and would have us all in competition to see who could stand the longest. We had to remove our shirt top and had no choice whether to take part. Whoever won got a penny but I just thought it was barbaric. I knew nothing about prisoner of war camps but when I was older I could see the similarities to how he treated us. He also told us horrific stories about when the war ships were sunk and how they had to survive by eating seagulls and when the ammunition ran out how they had to kill their comrades. He also spoke of how he survived in a Japanese prisoner of war camp. He spoke of a women's prisoner of war camp where the women would be getting their fingers and skin cut off and how they would make things like lampshades with their skin. I was only eight years old and it was horrendous. He also had us standing holding a medicine ball out to see who could last the longest. [REDACTED] who had been in the home with me told me years later that FSO [REDACTED] had been taken to court for doing something to some of the boys at Red House although I never saw him doing anything. I think this happened after I left.
101. One night at summer camp I found a rabbit that had been hypnotised by a weasel. Me and this boy [REDACTED] who was the same age as me took the rabbit to Mr FRT [REDACTED] and he told us that we could sleep in beside him in his hut that night. [REDACTED] and I slept next to each other in separate camp beds. I woke up to find [REDACTED] lying on top of me kissing me. I threw him off and never spoke to him again.

Reporting of abuse at Red House, Musselburgh

102. I am aware that one of the boys told FSK [REDACTED] what was going on at night time. I think this was about a year after I arrived. I wasn't present and I learned of this when I got back from school that day. Mr FRT [REDACTED] was gone when we got home and some of the

older boys were gone about the same time. I heard they were caught and it was widely spoken about by the rest of the boys but the staff never told us anything.

103. I also believe that Mrs Bryce overheard us talking about the abuse going on when she was supervising us in the recreation room. I think she went to [FSK] about it and he asked me if anything had happened to me but I said no. I don't think [FSK] was aware of any of the sexual abuse that was going on.

Leaving Red House, Musselburgh

104. I left Red House when I was eleven and I can only assume that my mother managed to convince the welfare she was fit and capable to look after me.

Life after being in care

105. When I got home I was the oldest child with [redacted] who was barely five and [redacted] who was still in a pushchair. It was a full time job for me to look after my brothers and do all the housework as my mum was still drinking heavily. I was always either late for school as I had to get up at 4am to make dad's breakfast and light the fire or my mum kept me off school to look after my brothers. When I was late for school I would get six of the belt. I don't know if my dad was aware just how much school I missed as he was away working. He just thought I was an imbecile.
106. No matter how bad life was in care it was far worse at home. I was badly abused by my mother primarily but my dad also treated me badly. I was regularly beaten and locked in the coal cellar. I had to have cold baths and we often had no electricity. I was sent to the chip shop to get my dad's dinner one evening and I lost a sixpence which was what I had to pay for his chips. Mum had been drinking all day and she dragged me out of bed and hit me with the fireside brush which split my head open. She threatened me not to tell my dad what she had done and when he came home he just assumed I had deserved it anyway. I needed to be taken to the doctors and she told him I had fallen. I would say I was battered every day at the hands of my mum.

107. The welfare visited once or twice over the first couple of weeks I got home and if I saw them it would be with my mum and dad present. Mum and dad argued regularly with each other, fighting, breaking windows and smashing up furniture. The police would come and they would arrest both of them. That's the only time the welfare would get involved. My brothers were put into care in Glasgow for a short time as they were Catholic but I cannot remember where. I had never been baptised as I had been abandoned as a baby that's why I got put into different places. It just went on and on with them living like that.
108. One night on new year's eve my gran came to see us. I had been in the cupboard and I stepped on a piece of glass and broke it. Mum and dad had been drinking and all hell broke loose. I was tied to the settee having been stripped naked by my dad whilst my mum restrained me. Mum held my feet down whilst dad repeatedly hit me all over my head and body with a big belt with studs on it. I was battered unconscious and the last I heard was my gran screaming whilst my mum was shouting at my dad to keep hitting me. The next thing I remember was waking up in my bed with stud marks and bruises everywhere. Years later when my gran was in her nineties she told me that she struggled to live with what had happened that night. At no time in my life have my parents ever acknowledged what they did or apologised for this.
109. Another time when I was looking after my brothers I fell asleep and [REDACTED] got a belt and battered [REDACTED], who would only have been about four years old, until he was black and blue. Mum came in drunk and [REDACTED] said it was me. I got a hammering for that and [REDACTED] never admitted what he had done or ever apologised to me.
110. On another occasion I was standing at the kitchen work top eating my dinner when the door opened and my mother picked up the poker from the fire and threw it at me. I instinctively shut the door to protect myself and the poker came straight through it. She nearly killed me and I would say that was the closest she came to actually killing me. This was life back home, it was just constant hammerings every day. Everyone knew as the neighbours would hear everything going on and the police were always at the house arresting mum.

111. My life became a routine of raking buckets for clothes and standing outside pubs in the Grassmarket with my siblings. My mum would take me and my brothers to the houses of men where she would go into the bedroom with them leaving us sitting outside. One of my brothers has repeatedly asked me who his real father is. I know who he is but I just cannot tell him. I could be standing outside pubs with the pram as late as 10pm.

112. The school had made a mistake with my age so at fourteen I had to re-sit another year but as soon as I could I left school and home. I would be fifteen years old and had various jobs but I ended up on the streets for five years. I was sent to court in Edinburgh and was ordered to go home because I was not sixteen however I refused and was sentenced to three weeks at a remand home in Gilmerton. I ended up on the streets and in a hostel at 75 Grassmarket in a 6x4 box with nothing to my name. I would sleep in Princes Street Gardens, alleys or stairways. For food I would rake hotel bins because I was starving. There was no help. I couldn't claim benefits because I didn't have a permanent address and just lived by my wits. I would beg or steal to survive but I had nothing and nobody but it was better than being at home. It was hard to get out of that pit of despair and poverty and I tried to commit suicide once ending up at the Royal Infirmary. I was seen by a psychiatrist but he didn't have a clue and didn't seem interested and nor did he care. He just judged me as homeless. Regardless of how bad life was I would never go back home

113. I then got into trouble and ended up at Wellington Farm Approved School, Penicuik between the ages of sixteen and seventeen. This was a horrible place where you had to fight to survive. They had different named houses and they all fought against each other. I don't have anything else much to say about the place but it got me out of the Grassmarket. They had a system to prepare you for leaving there so I got out early when I was eighteen. You needed to show you could behave yourself and then you got moved to a pre-fab in the grounds. I got to work at Peebles Hydro and the wages were paid to Wellington Farm but I got part of them. I got measured up for a suit and treated like a human being. When you left there they had a place in Edinburgh where a man and his wife looked after things whilst a welfare person got me money and clothes. You were still under the watchful eye of Wellington Farm but there was also

a welfare officer helping and giving me some sort of support. That was me out of the Grassmarket.

114. I have also worked as a miner and did three years of my mining apprenticeship before the 1971 miner's strike. Apprentices were not allowed to strike so we were blacklegged by the Union. Years later I did get an apology from the union but that was the end of that job.
115. I ended up getting an assistant manager job in a hotel, life started looking up and I met my wife. We got married when I was 24, got a house in Pilton with nice neighbours. My wife already had a son called [REDACTED] who was three years old then. I consider [REDACTED] my son and brought him up as my own. We had three children together, [REDACTED], [REDACTED] and [REDACTED]. Somehow my mum found out where I was staying and she came and smashed the windows and one of my brothers shot the door off with a shotgun. He got the jail for that. There were other incidents with my family and ultimately my mother chased us out of Edinburgh. We moved to Fife and I got my diploma in auto engineering and had my own garage business for years. My children have grown up and I am proud of each of them. I came from nothing and have a beautiful family.
116. My children have never had to go through what I did and it keeps me sane that they are safe. I know I have been over protective and it has been hard to get it right to make sure they were safe whilst keeping what happened to me to myself. It took its toll and I became an alcoholic which nearly cost me my marriage and family. When someone abuses you they steal your childhood and I feel I didn't grow up to be the person I should have been. It's hard for my kids to understand that as they have grown up in different times and never faced what I did. My wife does know I was in care and when we got married I told her about the physical abuse. My children are now aware, not the details of the abuse just that I was physically abused. I have never spoken to them or my wife about the sexual stuff.
117. My wife and kids put up with my drinking. I was not violent but I was starting to go down the route of being verbally aggressive and would say horrible things. That's just as bad as what my mum did to me and I was on the verge of calling it a day. I realised

I needed help and I went to see my GP who referred me to a counsellor. I was in my forties at this time. The counsellor couldn't handle it and gave me a booklet to read. She said I wasn't the only person to suffer in care but she couldn't believe I was still alive and hadn't killed myself. She sent me a letter to say she couldn't cope with what I had told her. It must have been overwhelming for her. There were no further appointments.

118. I came off the drink, got my act together and got a job. I stopped hating these people and this helped me deal with the volcanic like feelings I had. That's why I drank as it helped me to forget it. I changed and whether my kids can ever forgive me for the things I have said I can only hope. I have apologised and they now know about my time in care but I don't know if they can understand as they have not experienced my life. I know it's not an excuse. I have had no further counselling or support.
119. I have been diagnosed with a heart condition and at my age they cannot treat it as it would be too high risk. One day my heart will just stop. I have a 75% risk of stroke. My dad is still alive but he has suffered a stroke. I take medication daily. I have also suffered from depression, especially during the time I was drinking, but not since I learned to cope. I feel in a better place without hating.
120. It was my choice to get baptised whilst I was in the approved school. This happened in the Protestant church we attended.

Impact

121. I feel I wasn't given the chance to be the person I should have been growing up and that this affected most of my adult life. I don't think anyone can understand what it is like growing up and then dealing with the consequences of childhood abuse unless you have experienced it. I have done well in my life but it is always there. I have become a survivor. It took me years to stop hating my abusers and when I did I feel I became a better husband and father. I don't forgive them but I have found a way to stop hating them. Before then I know my drinking and the bad behaviour that resulted

from this stems from me not being able to cope with the abuse I suffered both in care and at home.

122. I am still a loner and don't really have friends. I like to work very hard and over the years I made lots of money. I don't think I can trust anyone except my immediate family. I believe that the people in charge were to blame. In care shouldn't mean your childhood is stolen, it should be safe.
123. I have had no contact with my family and most of my siblings I have not seen in over thirty years. I still visit my father once every six years but he is a father on a piece of paper and I have no love or bond with him. I felt the same about my mother when she was still alive.

Reporting of abuse

124. I have never reported anything as I was too busy surviving both physically and mentally. Most people like me never told anyone. They say that children make up stories but I am coming to the end of my life now and why would I lie. I have nothing to gain. I have not tried to get any financial redress, money will not buy back my childhood. I was abused and not on a small scale. Most of the people who abused me are probably dead but I believe they will have paid for what they did. Abuse in these places and foster care were rife and people hid behind a curtain of doing good and no one in power questioned them.

Records

125. I have tried to get my records but you have to pay for everything. I have also tried to recover the [REDACTED] article from their archives but I do not know how to do these things. Researching things like ancestry isn't something I feel able to do on my own. I have also tried to get photos from school but have not been able to find them. It just seems to me that it's all official and I don't have the power to get records from these places. Records would have filled in the gaps and help me remember more. I would

have loved to have seen the register for Red House and it would have allowed me to say who was who and what they did.

126. I went online to a reunion forum and that was when [REDACTED] got in touch with me. He was in Red House with me and he is like I was and still trying to live with it to this day. He went through hell and hasn't spoken to anyone about it but some people will never come forward.


Lessons to be Learned

127. I don't know what children's homes are like now but I would think they would be more open and would like to think there is more listening and believing children. I think that lots of good people work in these homes but not all are and there needs to be a way to weed out the bad. We need to get behind the scenes and see what's really going on. We need to be more in touch with the kids.
128. I hope that what I have told the Inquiry can help some other kids somewhere and give a full understanding of what life in care can be like. It won't change my life but it could be used to help kids now growing up in care. We can learn from the mistakes of the past. I wish government bodies would understand what it is like to live with the torment as it's a living hell. A childhood is very precious and being brought up in abusive care means that childhood is stolen. If by coming forward I can help even one child in care then I will have done something good with my life. I cannot change what happened to me or the other kids who were in care with me.
129. Something that has always haunted me is that if they had stopped these people who abused the likes of Robert Black who then went on to be an abuser maybe they could have prevented the crimes he went on to commit. Even if they had dealt with the abuse he was committing in Red House things could have been so different. Not only for the little girls he killed but the kids who he and others abused when they were in Red House. Some of them went on to commit suicide as they couldn't deal with it in later life. If children felt able to tell someone, staff were able to recognise the signs, if reports

hadn't been swept under the carpet and if children had been listened to back then maybe it was all preventable.

Other information

130. 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... 

Dated... *6/03/2020*