

Scottish Child Abuse Inquiry

Witness Statement of

EAF

Support person present: No

1. My name is EAF. My confirmation name is EAF. That is not the name which is shown on my birth certificate. I was given that later on. My date of birth is 1951. My contact details are known to the Inquiry.

Life before going into care

2. My parents were called and . My father was a hard man. He was a hard-drinking, hard-working, hard-fighting man. Back then he would have been called a "macho man". My mother was from Bridgeton. She was from somewhere that was the exact polar opposite of Gallowgate where we lived. She was a Protestant. She converted to Catholicism when she married my dad. She took up the religion more fervently because she was a convert. She was at chapel practically seven days a week. I was in fear of my dad. My mother was a moaner.
3. I have one younger brother called and had one younger sister called . I think my sister was three years younger than me. She died when she was young. was in the home with me. My younger brother wasn't born at the time I went into care.
4. I was a sickly boy. I had meningitis when I was born. I was put in calipers. They were like tin legs. I had the calipers off by the time I went into care. I'm not sure when exactly they came off. My illness left me deaf in one ear. They thought that I

might not be able to walk. I was confined indoors because of that. I was restricted. I couldn't go anywhere. That made me a timid boy. I was scared.

5. We stayed in rooms. It wasn't houses. It was rooms in tenements. I think the room we stayed in before I went into care was on [REDACTED] but I may be confusing that with later addresses.
6. My mother had TB. She had to go into a sanatorium. My dad was working and couldn't keep us so he put me and my sister in the home. That was when I was about six years old. I wouldn't know anything about whether there were court orders or anything like that putting me in the home. I don't remember.

Unknown residential care institution

7. I don't really know when I went into the home exactly. I have photographs of me and my sister sitting outside of the front of the home. On the back of one of the photos is written the year 1957. I must have been there in 1957. It could be around 1956 that I went there. I think my mother was in the sanatorium for two years, so I take it from that that we were in the home for two years. The best I can say is that I was at the home for a period of two years for some time in the fifties between the ages of four and eight.
8. I can't say whether I was there for a continuous block or whether it was staggered. That said, I can't remember being out for a while and returning.

Description of institution

9. I don't know where the home was. There's something that makes me think it was in Renfrew. I don't know what makes me think that. It could be somewhere that sounds like Renfrew. It was a big house with its own grounds. It was built of blonde sandstone. It stood by itself. It had an expanse of grass at its front. There was an

iron fence around it. There was no fountain or anything like that about it. We weren't out that much, so I can't really describe the area around the home.

10. The place was massive. I'd never been in a house that big. I was used to staying in a room. I'd never seen a place that size before. It was overwhelming and overpowering. It seemed excessive to me.
11. I have photographs that show the place. You can see it in the background. The photos show that the lower basement windows had bars over them. The ground floor windows don't. It had flower pots outside. There's big urns with flowers in them. Another photo shows big parklands around the house with an iron fence around the grounds. There's a lot of trees and rhododendrons.
12. The place wasn't full, but it was quite full. There were two wings. There was a lassies' side and a boys' side. I think there were about fifty children in my dormitory, but I don't know how many dormitories there were in the building.
13. The age range of people there was about my age and lower. I know that my sister was about three years old at the time, so maybe that would have been about the youngest there. I don't remember seeing babies. I can't remember what age the kids there went up to.
14. I'd love to know where it is. I don't know why. Maybe I'd escape some demons if I found out. It's not demons in the worst sense. I just have a bad smell about the place.

Staff

15. I can't remember the exact name of the order who looked after us. They were called something like the Sisters of the Poor or the Sisters of Mercy. They wore black and had white floppy winged hats. I remember the nuns were all in austere black shoulder padded habits with a big white bib. They wore black belts. They had

rosary beads around their middle. They were dressed like that from head to toe. It was almost like a hijab that they wore.

16. It was all nuns who ran it. I don't remember any other staff. There were quite a few nuns there. I'd say there were about ten nuns there alongside the Sister Superior. The Sister Superior was in charge of them. The Sister Superior was like God in there. I can't remember the names of any of the nuns. I don't want to remember the names of any of them. They were pretty much all Gestapo. They were physically and mentally bad. One or two of them were quite kind.
17. It was a strict Catholic disciplinarian system. It was draconian. It was bleak and austere. The nuns were mentally powerful. They subsumed you. They had total power. You were only a wee boy and you were fighting against the Catholic Church. The nuns wanted you to fear them. They succeeded.

Routine at unknown residential care institution

18. I can't remember anything about being taken to the home or my first day. I just remember being there. I went there with my sister [REDACTED]. I do remember that [REDACTED] got taken away from me. They were bad separating my wee sister and me. My sister was like my boss before I went in there. She was my wee guard. She fought my battles. She stood in for my pals. I needed her because I had been sickly and not gone out. I lost all that when I went into the home. It was brutal.
19. I didn't have much contact with my sister whilst I was in the home. We were in separate dorms. We weren't allowed to play together. The only time we met was when our dad came up to see us.
20. I've never given much thought about being separated from my parents and whether that affected me. Being separated from my sister did affect me though.

Mornings and bedtime

21. You were got up about six o'clock in the morning. A nun would come in and wake you. You then got washed. You then had breakfast. We had breakfast in the dining hall. After that we came back up the stairs to the dormitory. We would then make our beds. We might have made our beds before we went down. I can't really remember.
22. That would be it then. We just had to sit in our dorm for the day. There was a nun who would watch us. She would supervise us. I would just sit on my bed all day. That was the same for all the boys. That's about all I remember from the daily routine. If other things happened I've not registered it.
23. I can't remember any of the detail of the routine about going to bed. The dormitory was massive. It was sparse. There were about fifty in my dormitory. We were all lined up before we went to bed. It was like an army of weans. I think there were about four or five nuns allocated to our dormitory. They were committed to our dormitory. They used to patrol us at night.

Hygiene

24. The nuns would get us up for a wash in the mornings. We had to stand lined up at a sink. We used a brush to do our nails and things like that. You had to scrub your hands and things. You got a bath once a week on a Saturday night.

Food

25. I've no memories of what the food was like. I don't have any memories of eating in there. I can't remember getting anything to eat.

Clothes

26. I can't remember a uniform or anything about clothes. I don't remember having anything of my own. There wasn't pocket money or treats or anything like that.

School

27. I can't remember going to school whilst I was there. I'd be telling a lie if I said I remembered anything like that. I don't remember education or anything like that.

Holidays

28. I was never taken on holiday by these people.

Birthdays and Christmas

29. I don't remember Christmas. I don't remember being taken out for Christmas. I don't remember birthdays or anything like that.

Leisure time

30. I can't recall playing with a ball or getting outside or anything like that. I don't remember being outside. When I think about it, all I remember of the day is sitting in the dormitory. I remember there were other weans in there with me, and we were all just staring out of the window. I remember looking at green grass and a couple of bushes. I don't remember seeing anyone else outside.
31. I can't remember there being anything for us to do in the dorms. I can't remember toys or games. I don't recollect any television or radio. I don't remember any books.
32. I don't remember having a pal. It's funny because weans make pals. I can't understand how I don't remember making pals. You'd think, being in that bleak place, you'd have found a soul-mate but I never found one.

Chores

33. I can't remember any work or chores.

Religious instruction

34. God wasn't thrashed into my head. That came later by the Catholic Church at school after I left the home. I don't remember going to mass whilst I was in the home. I think I did have to pray. I remember being on my knees by the bed first thing in the morning. I can't remember there being anything like a chapel in the place. There might have been.

Visits/inspections

35. When there were visitors the nun would tell us, and we had to go and get washed and changed. We weren't pre-warned about visits. We were just told that the visitors were there. The nun would then take us down to the foyer of the house. We met our visitors in the main foyer. I think that visiting time was at the weekend.
36. My dad came to visit. That's the only time I remember being taken out of the home. I remember that my dad came to visit once or twice over the two years. It might be more. He had a scooter first of all, but later on he had a motorbike and sidecar. He came out on those to see us. I remember him taking us out on the scooter and later on taking us out in his sidecar. He took us out on a run. I remember us being on the road and in the countryside. I think he was allowed to take us out of the grounds because he was a parent. Maybe he had more leeway because of that.
37. My granny and Auntie [REDACTED] used to come and see us as well. That was my dad's mum and sister. I think my granny and Auntie [REDACTED] came up once a week. They were both from Gallowgate. They would let us out into the garden in the grounds. I can't remember how long the visits lasted. My granny and Auntie [REDACTED] used to bring us oranges and things like that.

38. I've no recollection of inspectors or anyone official coming to the home. I didn't have a social worker that came to see me.

Healthcare

39. I don't remember any regular healthcare. The only thing I remember was one incident. I don't remember how long I had been at the home when I did this. You used to get a collar stiffener in your shirts. They were wee white things. It was a wee plastic bar. I deliberately pulled one of those out of my shirt collar and stuck it in my ear. I was trying to make myself deaf. I remember doing that in my bed in the home. I kept shoving it in and it got stuck. I don't know why I was inflicting pain on myself but I was in pain. Maybe it was a cry for help?
40. I managed to damage my ear. I burst my eardrum. They took me to the hospital. I can't remember which hospital. I can't remember staying in the hospital. Thank God it didn't have long term effects because I was deaf in my other ear from the meningitis.

Abuse at unknown residential care institution

41. My memories of the abuse I got off the nuns is more general. I was very young. There is nothing in particular that stands out. It's maybe because I was used to violence when I went into the home. My dad used to beat my mother. I remember that. You couldn't escape from it because we were all in the same room. I remember my dad being drunk and giving beatings to my mum. Maybe I was inured to violence and that is why nothing sticks out?
42. I did know that the nuns were beating us up and doing bad things. I knew that the nuns were doing things that they shouldn't have been doing. I was only a wee boy but I knew it wasn't right.

43. The nuns in charge of our dormitory would beat us. They were bad to us. They would physically beat us with their hands in the dormitory. They did it mainly at bedtime and night-time when there were no witnesses. I don't know why it happened at that time. I don't know whether that was when their shift changed or something like that.
44. The nuns would sometimes hit us with their beads. They would hit you everywhere. Nothing was sacred. Most of them were bad. We didn't deserve that. I really don't know why they were doing it. It seemed that they were doing it for no reason at all. It seemed that they were just doing it out of badness. It happened whenever they took the hump. If they had a bad day we would get a doing. I'd be lying if I tried to give you a number for the times I got a beating. I can't remember. It felt like we were getting beatings quite regularly.
45. The nuns in charge of our dormitory would make you stand. They would humiliate you in front of the other weans. They would humiliate you verbally. They would say bad things about you. They would say you were a "pauper" and a "bastard" and things like that. It didn't make me feel good them saying things like that. They were bad. They tried to demean you. I'd be lying if I tried to give a number for the amount of times I got verbally abused. I can't remember. It felt like it was quite regular.
46. I saw the nuns beat my sister. They did that in my dormitory. Me and my sister were supposed to be going out for the day. We joined up in the dormitory. The nun singled out my wee sister and gave her a beating. She took my sister up the back and started slapping her about her head. She slapped my sister's face. My sister was only three. I don't remember the name of the nun. When I was noticed seeing my sister get slapped I was told to face the front by the nun. That's the only time I recall seeing my sister getting a beating.
47. I didn't get to see my sister many times because we were separated in the home. My sister would tell me when my dad and granny visited that she was getting doings. I remember her telling me what happened in her own words.

48. It didn't matter who we were. We all got it. We all got the beatings and the verbal humiliation. I saw the nuns doing these things to other weans. We didn't get a kind word off of the nuns I knew. I think looking after us was seen as a chore for them. I daresay that was what the thinking was in those days.

49. I cried every night I went to bed. I was on the bed crying every night. I was only a wean. I have no happy memories there. I just remember it being a big bleak place. It was like jail. I can compare it to things now like that but I couldn't do that back then. It was confinement. It felt as if I had been there all of the time. The only good thing that came out of my time in the home was that I wasn't sexually abused.

Bed-wetting

50. I wet the bed. I was sometimes a regular bed-wetter. We used to get a doing for that. The nuns used to beat you on your legs with a belt. They would beat you. They did that at night time. They would find out you wet the bed because they would inspect the beds. They would make you stand up wet in front of everybody and humiliate you. They would make you change the bed. They would make you wash your sheet. You did that outside the dormitory in a wash hand basin.

51. Sometimes they gave you a clean sheet but sometimes they didn't. Sometimes they'd take your mattress away. They'd make you sleep on the springs with no mattress or sheet. That happened to me once. I had no covers or anything. The same things happened to a couple of the other boys as well.

Leaving unknown residential care institution

52. I can't remember anything about leaving the place. My next memory is being back home. Even that memory is kind of fuzzy. I think I left because my mother had come out of the sanatorium. I know the only reason we were staying in the home was because my mother was staying in the sanatorium. I don't know whether I went back to Gallowgate. I take it I did. I never went back into care after I returned home.

Reporting of abuse

53. I couldn't tell my mother or my dad about what was going on. I couldn't tell anybody. Nobody would believe me. No one would think nuns would do that. If I told people they would have just said "Nuns wouldn't do that to you". That was the hard part.
54. I don't know why I felt I couldn't tell my relatives about what had happened to me. I just couldn't tell them. The nuns were in authority. My relatives wouldn't have believed me. In those days if you said a doctor had cut out your heart and the doctor denied it they would have believed the doctor. You didn't question authority.
55. In later life I tried to tell a priest about what had happened to me during confession. I was about fifteen. I was becoming a bit of a rebel at that time. The priest was from St Philomena's. That was my parish at the time. I knew the priest but I can't remember the priest's name. He was old. I told him in the confessional box that I had been getting doings off of these nuns when I was in the home. I don't really know why I chose to tell him at that time. It was the first time I had told anybody about what had happened to me. The priest just told me to leave. He wouldn't accept it.
56. In later life I also told a couple of my cousins what had happened to me.
57. I never went to anybody formally like the police. The police wouldn't have believed me anyway.

Life after being in care

58. When I left the home I think we lived in Gallowgate in the East End. We later moved to Easterhouse. I went to school when I came back to the family. Later on I lost my wee sister. I'm not sure when that was after I came out. She was five. We were living in Easterhouse at the time. There were no schools in the area built at that time so I went to [REDACTED] Primary School in [REDACTED]. I remember coming off the

school bus in Easterhouse and someone telling me that my sister had been killed. I wasn't sure what that meant. I was then taken away to my auntie's to stay. My mother was grieving. It was a big blow.

59. Later on we moved to Blackhill. It was a notorious gangster area. I was supposed to go to St Mungo's Grammar School because I had passed the eleven plus. I didn't though. I ended up at a new comprehensive secondary school called St Gregory's. I was sent to see a psychiatrist by the school when I was thirteen. That was because I had been playing truant.
60. The psychiatrist wanted to know why I was missing school. They tested me. I was quite intelligent and wasn't getting where I should have been getting. I didn't know what was happening. I know now, in hindsight, where I could have been. The psychiatrist said I was excellent and normal. He said I was a normal boy and that I was just being a bit of a rebel.
61. I eventually ran away from home when I was about fifteen. I don't know why I ran away. I ultimately became a structural engineer. I was married but now I'm divorced. I have five kids; three boys and two lasses.

Impact

62. I've put it all into the trashcan. It can consume you. I've had to deal with it. I've not let it consume me. If you hold onto things it makes you a bad person. You're better forgetting about the thing. I've always been optimistic about life and looked forward. It's not the be all and end all of things. I've lived my life. I know that things that happen in your childhood can affect you in later life. I don't think it's messed up my life or my head. I don't think so.
63. When I was younger I went through the angst of trying to explore myself. I went through a period of trying to understand myself. It wasn't my fault. I couldn't have done anything about what happened to me. It was just circumstance.

64. I've tried to come to terms with things. I've tried to be pragmatic. I've tried to think "Why was this done?" and "why was that done?". I can't account for other people's actions. I've got to think about the thinking back then. The thinking has all changed now. It was all different back then. I try to rationalise things. I don't really think about it at all.
65. I don't really think it has affected me too much. It has a bit, but I wouldn't say it's ruined my life. I've had other things to think about. The wee bit that affected me was what the nuns did to my wee sister. What they did to her was cruel.
66. I've never had any support or treatment for what happened back then. I've been strong enough to deal with it myself. I'm not daft. I can read. I can overcome things.

Records

67. I've never tried to get my records. I'd like to know where I was staying in order to expel my demons. Sometimes seeing a place makes things tangible. Speaking to the Inquiry makes things tangible and I'd like to know where I was.

Other information

Final thoughts

68. I think the Catholic Church has to come out and tell the truth. They've got to open up and let everybody know what they have done. They need to do that and let everybody move on. It wouldn't really make a difference to me now if they did that but they need to do that. Since the beginning of time the Catholic Church has done nothing but tell lies. It's just a monolith for making money.

69. I don't blame them. I really don't. That's what the times were about back then. You were seen and not heard. You had to obey your elders and doff your cap. You had to do what you were told. That was what you had to do when I was a wee boy. I don't know whether that was good or bad, but that is what it was like.
70. A lot of people wouldn't listen to me for a long, long time. I want to put my protest in. I want to let people know what has happened. I want a record. I want people to know what happened to people, what happened to me and that it is all true. Nobody believed us for a long time but it is true.
71. No wean should go through what we went through. Nobody has got the right to mess a wean's head up. Nobody's got the right to take a childhood away from a wean. That lives with you for ever. Anybody who wants to do those things deserves to be locked up.
72. I just don't want these things to happen to any other wean. That's the main reason I'm speaking to the Inquiry. I am not in this for any financial gain or anything like that. I'm not speaking out because of egotism or revenge or anything like that. I just want to get it on the record that this happened to me and happened to a lot of other people.
73. 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. 7/8/17.....