

Scottish Child Abuse Inquiry

Witness Statement of ^{LBC} [REDACTED]

Support person present: No

1. My name is ^{LBC} [REDACTED] and my date of birth is [REDACTED] 1969. I am 48 years old. My contact details are known to the Inquiry.

Background

2. I was in care from the age of 10 months and was taken into care along with my sister [REDACTED] who is a year older than me.

Life before care

3. I have no recollection of my life before being taken into care at the age of 10 months. The story I got was that myself and [REDACTED] were in an empty house with eight other children. As far as I know there were two older sisters who were from my mother's previous marriage and the other eight of us had the same parents. I've gathered this information from having met various brothers and sisters over the years though I have no contact with them now.
4. My mother was [REDACTED] and her maiden name was [REDACTED] My father was [REDACTED] [REDACTED] Both were alcoholics and I believe that when I was taken into care as a ward of court my mother was in Cornton Vale woman's prison and my dad was in Peterhead prison. Both are now dead. Over the years I've met sisters and brothers who are in Castlemilk and Coventry.
5. I was taken to Nazareth House in Cardonald but was apparently first taken to David Elder Hospital and it was there that me and [REDACTED] were made wards of court. [REDACTED] is a year older than me.

Institution.**Nazareth House, Cardonald, Glasgow**

6. The first memory I have of being in Nazareth House was when I was baptised at the age of maybe 4. I recall standing at the font of Our Lady of the Rosary and I was wearing a red cloak.
7. Sister LKR was SNR of Nazareth House. We slept in dormitories and were told that it was an orphanage and the bit we were put in at first was for babies. Later, when we moved to dorms, the boys and girls slept in separate dormitories and I had about nine other girls in my dorm, one of whom was my sister [REDACTED]. Our beds were always next to each other. My bed was at the window close to a radiator and [REDACTED]s was against a wall with a set of drawers between us. There was a big teddy that sat on a chair in the middle of the dorm but we had no personal stuff except maybe your hairbrush.
8. There were four groups in total, one of which lived in the bungalow. I always thought of them as the nun's favourites.
9. There were full-time staff, part-time staff and volunteers who would come and go. Two nuns I recall were named Sister LHW and Sister LJS and two of the members of staff I recall were Mrs Moore and Mrs McCormack.

Routine*Mornings and bedtime*

10. We would get up at about 6 am, get a shower and get dressed then go to church for mass and prayer. If we giggled or talked or had eye contact and got caught we knew we were going to get it i.e. beaten. After church we would get breakfast. We would then do our chores like cleaning up or tidying things away and then we would go to the school next door.

11. One of the things I remember about going to church was that, if a nun had died (and that happened quite a lot), she would be laid out in the church and we would all have to kiss her and say a prayer. We didn't even know them. To us they were just old women.
12. We always went back to the home for lunch then back to school in the afternoon. We would go back to the home after school and have tea. Sometimes we would play in the wee garden or in the two fields that were near the home.
13. At the weekends we would sometimes be taken out by couples who came to the home. I think this was with a view to adopting or fostering.
14. We had play-clothes and school-clothes and you had your name-tag on all your clothes. We also had chores to do like making the beds, clearing and setting the tables and basically making sure things were in order like normal family chores. It was all very regimented.

Food

15. I was a terrible eater and it was the meat they served up that I found particularly disgusting. It was like grey grizzle. If I didn't eat it at whatever meal they served it up then it would be put back in front of me at tea, then supper and again at breakfast. I just couldn't swallow it and there were times that I would chew it for hours. Sometimes I was forced to swallow it by Sister ^{LKR} holding my nose and mouth and I would be forced fed five or six pieces of the meat this way. This went on for years.
16. Sometimes I would be sick on my plate and was told to eat the plate clean. This was done in front of staff and other kids at lunchtime. I would be late back at school and would tell my teacher Miss Robb that I hadn't eaten lunch or my breakfast. I couldn't tell her about the force-feeding.

17. I would try and hide the meat or would try and put it in the "pig's pail" which was where they gathered scraps of food which were later fed to pigs. If I got it into the pail then I was fine but if they caught me doing it then they would force me to take it back out of the pig's pail and eat it.

School

18. We went to the school which was across the road to the home. We were walked there by one of the staff. My teacher there was Miss Robb. I was always able to tell her that I hadn't had breakfast but I would never tell her about the forced feeding.
19. Those of us from the home were clearly different from the other children at the school and were poorly dressed. The others considered us to be scum. Miss L.J.G. was SNR and clearly hated us. We were always getting the belt. We just looked so poor and different from the others.

Holidays

20. We didn't go on any holidays unless you count a trip to Fairly for a week each year. This was just another home and quite a lot of the children went, including my sister but I never went.

Birthdays and Christmas

21. I remember one birthday in particular because about six of us had our birthdays round about the same time. They gave us a cake in the shape of a train. The track was made from curly-wurlys and that was the only bit I got. I don't recall any other birthday celebrations or ever receiving a present.
22. We did go to some organised Christmas parties and I recall especially going to one organised by Debenhams.

23. I remember one Christmas Eve when we went to the Barra's in Glasgow. I recall a man there putting lots of presents in to bags and I especially recall seeing him put in a teddy bear which I thought was going to be for me. We never did see any of those presents. I don't recall any toys at all. We certainly didn't have any in our dorms.
24. Christmas Day itself was simply us going to mass but that was it. I don't recall anything else going on. Religion was a big thing in the home. It was prayers in the morning, mass and prayers at any time of the day. Everything was about lessons from the bible and going to Hell was also a big thing.

Visits/Inspections

25. Sometimes, when I was about nine years old, I would go to some couple's homes at the weekends. I think they were people with no children and had connections to the Catholic Church. One of the people whose home I used to go to was [REDACTED] [REDACTED] [REDACTED]. She eventually fostered me when I was eleven. We were never told why we were going with these people though the visits were usually okay.
26. I don't recall social workers coming to see us except on one occasion. Me and [REDACTED] were called in to a room where we saw a woman who we later got told was called Miss Joan Watson and was a social worker. There were some daffodils in the room and when [REDACTED] saw these she started laughing. She laughed so much she wet herself and we were both told to get out. Because of this the meeting didn't go ahead and that was the closest we ever got to seeing a social worker. Other than that I have no recollection of any formal inspections.

Medical care

27. There was a married couple who were both doctors and who lived in the home. Their name was [REDACTED] or [REDACTED] or something like that. We always seemed to be getting injections from them every couple of months. Looking back I realise that this couldn't be right but it was never explained to me why we needed so many injections.

28. The dentist was across the road from the home. I also used to go to Berryknowes Clinic because I regularly had warts on my hands. I was always taken by a member of staff.

Bed Wetting

29. My sister [REDACTED] was a bed-wetter and every night she would wet her bed then climb into mine. Every night Sister LKR [REDACTED] would check the bed to see if it was wet then, if it was, then God help us if it was [REDACTED]'s bed. She would be ordered to get up or dragged awake by the hair to the toilet screaming or locked up in the boiler room.
30. If [REDACTED] was in my bed or mine was wet I would be repeatedly dragged while screaming "sorry". I would cling to my bed or the radiator but when I did I would be constantly hit with a belt, hairbrush or, on a few occasions, a tennis racquet. I would say that this happened constantly over three years. We always wore nightdresses with no pants so we were bare when we got slapped or beaten.
31. We would try and hide the wet bed-clothes or sometimes you would wash them in the shower but, if you could get away with it, you just slept in the wet bedclothes. In fact my sister [REDACTED] and I would joke about who was sleeping in the deep end. We often tried to fight back, especially [REDACTED] who was a big girl, but Sister LKR [REDACTED] was always stronger.
32. On one occasion I remember holding on to the radiator, on to the top of it which had a plate with holes in it. As I got dragged away the lid came off in my hands which then got dragged along with me until I let it go. I was muffled over my mouth and dragged along the polished corridor to the toilets which was at the metal fire-exit stairs. After I was beaten I was left there overnight. I hadn't wet the bed but I think the bed was wet because of sweat due to the radiator being so hot. I remember crying and praying all night.

33. There was also a pants inspection every so often when my pants were put into a basket at bedtime. I got quite a few smacks for my pants being marked or soiled so I often wore them inside out to school or hid them down the side of the radiator next to my bed.

Abuse

34. Discipline was regimental and institutionalised. Everything was set for a specific time-table and you would get punished for something as simple as laughing. I got beat most mornings because [REDACTED] would have wet the bed. We would get smacked with the hand a lot on the head or put over their knees and hit on the backside. You were permanently scared and lived with fear. You just knew that you were going to get a beating no matter how good you were.
35. Beatings were a regular occurrence in the home and could be for anything. You would get a slap or hit with anything they had at hand. I remember one occasion I saw a lit cigarette in an ashtray and took a puff from it. As I was walking out of the kitchen Sister LKR [REDACTED] grabbed me and lifted me right up into the shower area by the head and neck and repeatedly slapped my legs, back and bottom. It was lunchtime and there were other staff there. I would have been about nine years old.
36. Another time was when one of the other girls had a pretty skirt on which swirled around when you spun round in a circle. I thought it was beautiful and asked if I could try it on. We swapped skirts and I swirled around wearing the pretty skirt and just at that moment Sister LKR [REDACTED] came in and saw me flashing my pants. She told me to sit on the bed and told the other girl to get out.
37. Sister LKR [REDACTED] then left the bedroom but came back shortly thereafter carrying a belt. I think I was about nine or ten and I called her a fucking cow. She then beat me continuously with the belt. She then dragged me down to the shower-room and used carbolic soap to scrub my face and inside my mouth. Such beatings were often done in front of other members of staff who were clearly aware of what was going on but I think they were too scared for their jobs to say anything.

38. I remember I stole some orange/tangerine flavoured jelly crystals. We didn't get sweets and I ate a whole load of the crystals. I ended up with the skitters and diarrhoea for two days. I was sick and also dirtied the bed and had to lie in it for two days. I was also sick all over the floor and was told to clean it up and clean the sheets by Sister LKR [REDACTED]
39. On another occasion I was in the field in the evening behind a large hedge. I had my nightdress on and was having a cigarette. The next thing I knew Sister LKR [REDACTED] put her hands through the hedge, grabbed hold of me and dragged me through the hedge. She then ran me along into the side door and repeatedly strapped and punched me before sending me to bed.
40. I had a friend called [REDACTED] who stayed in [REDACTED]. Her mum phoned Sister LKR [REDACTED] and asked if I could stay over. It was a Saturday night and I was told I could go but was to be back for mass the next morning.
41. I made it back in time for mass the next morning but Sister LKR [REDACTED] stared at me throughout the mass and as soon as I got back to my group she started shouting at me for staying out all night. She then repeatedly slapped me around the face and head. I answered back that Mrs [REDACTED] had phoned her and told her I would be out all night but she just called me a liar. She then dragged me to a toilet sink and rubbed carbolic soap in my mouth before sending me to my bed.
42. The boys were often getting beaten. There was one incident where somebody had crapped behind the shower cubicle and [REDACTED] who's now dead, and [REDACTED] got the blame. We told the sisters that it was the cat that had done it but they still beat him.
43. There was one [REDACTED] girl called [REDACTED] in the home who got beaten by Sister LKR [REDACTED] and she was spitting up blood. The TV programme [REDACTED] was on at the time and she got called all kinds of [REDACTED] names. [REDACTED] used to fight back and one

time she managed to snatch Sister LKR [REDACTED] hat off her head. [REDACTED] life was hell in that place.

44. There was an incident when I was nine years old. It was May and I was wearing a pinafore. I remember I had had my first cigarette. Me and my sister [REDACTED] were taken out of the class by a member of staff and told that our father was there. He took us out of the home and took us to his house in [REDACTED] in a red car. He told me to go into the room to play with dog Queenie. He then came in to the room and had sex with me. I don't think I can call it rape as I didn't fight back. I don't know if he also had sex with [REDACTED] but years later, when she was about twenty, she asked me if it was okay to have sex with your dad so I assumed he did.
45. To this day I still don't understand why the nuns allowed us out with my dad that day when they must have known that he wasn't allowed to ever see us never mind take us away because we were wards of court. We were away for a few hours. I recall there was a woman in the house that day who said she was our mum but she wasn't.
46. We were in the same dormitories throughout my time there and the boys were in the dorm next to ours. There was an occasion when we went into the boy's dorm to say our prayers in the morning. Unfortunately, while getting dressed I had tucked my skirt inside the back of my knickers. Some of the boys were giggling about this and I ended up getting another beating because of it.

Reporting of abuse

47. While we were in the home there was nobody we could report the abuse to. We wouldn't dare tell our school teachers and there was nobody official we could speak to. We would be too scared to do so anyway. Other staff members must have known what was going on but they were probably too scared for their jobs.
48. We reported my dad to the police years later, about 1993, and they came and took statements from us and also asked us if [REDACTED] had a boyfriend to which we said "No". They came back later, called us liars and pointed out that [REDACTED] had

convictions for soliciting. We told them that they hadn't asked us about that but that was the end of the matter as far as the police were concerned. The police officers were both men and probably from Pollok police office but I don't recall their names.

49. My father actually told the other members of our family that myself and [REDACTED] had made these allegations against them and I remember them trying to kick our door in. We were terrified and sure that they were going to murder us.
50. The second time I contacted the police about my father was when I heard he had a new girlfriend who had a daughter. This was a few months after the first time I tried to report him. The police did nothing about it.
51. About fifteen years ago I went to Aikenhead Road police office to report what had happened to me at Nazareth House but they told me they couldn't speak to me as there were no female police officers around. However, just after I left I met a friend who happened to be a female police officer and told her what had happened. She took me back to the police office and took a statement from me. A few years later I got a phone call and got told no action would be taken because the case was time-barred.
52. A couple of months ago I was contacted by a couple of police women about an allegation concerning Nazareth House. [REDACTED]
[REDACTED] When the police contacted me I panicked because I thought they were there about my complaint against my father.
53. I told my sister [REDACTED] that the police were coming to see me at that time and, even though I told her they wanted to see me about [REDACTED], she took an overdose and ended up in The Glasgow Royal Infirmary. When the police officers came to see me they were so nice about it and came back to talk to me about my treatment from Sister LKR [REDACTED]

Foster Care

54. I was about eleven when I was placed in foster care for an elderly lady who seemed to have contacts with the Catholic Church. Her name was ^{EIK} [REDACTED] and she was in her late fifties. She had serious health issues. My social worker, ^{LVL} [REDACTED] ^{LVL} [REDACTED] from the Church Street social office, came to the house a few times and was fully aware of the filth and debris and the general ramshackle condition of the house. In fact I remember seeing in a report that ^{LVL} [REDACTED] had refused a cup of tea because "of the state of the place".
55. Auntie ^{EIK} [REDACTED] as I called her, was very well off and did a lot for The Catholic Church. I don't recall any of the details about my foster but I think she was basically told to have her pick of the kids and I was the one chosen. Nobody discussed with me that I was being fostered and as far as I was concerned I was going home.
56. Auntie ^{EIK} [REDACTED] was a hoarder and, when we knew ^{LVL} [REDACTED] was coming to the house, we actually had to clear a path through all the rubbish in the house so as she could get in. In fact there were times she didn't even get in yet she never questioned that. I asked ^{LVL} [REDACTED] for help several times over the years and even asked to go back to Nazareth House but she simply ignored me and told me to get on with things. Nurses used to come out to the house, to attend to ^{EIK} [REDACTED] as she was constantly poorly, but none of them asked after my welfare.
57. There was no electricity at times, the taps were broken and I just felt that I was there as a carer. We cooked on a calor gas stove and everything was grimy and dirty. We had no washing machine and I had to hand wash my own clothes.
58. When I had my first period I didn't know what was going on. I went into my foster mother's room and told her I was bleeding. She looked at me as if I had laid down with ten men and it was horrific the way I was made to feel that day. She got out of bed, went into a drawer and gave me a packet of what looked like mattresses. They were Doctor White sanitary towels and that was the only help I ever got from her in

dealing with my periods. I had to go to a local chemist who knew my foster mother very well. I would have to ask him for money.

59. I was well clothed by Auntie ^{EIK} though all my clothes were very sensible ones, certainly not the sort of fashionable things that a teenage girl would want. I remember I bought myself a pencil skirt once but she put it in the bin.
60. Auntie ^{EIK} had two dogs, both pedigrees, who ate very well. She herself would sometimes get out of bed and potter about listening to the radio. We didn't have a television.
61. I wasn't allowed out at night and there was a local family called the who I wasn't allowed to visit. Even though I wasn't allowed I still went there as I loved it because they were an actual family.
62. I went to St Thomas Aquinas school but when I turned thirteen I started playing truant. One time I got caught and I begged the teacher, Mr McLaughlin, to send me back to Nazareth House. I still went there regularly to visit and sometimes I stayed overnight.
63. At fourteen I got into a bad crowd and would sneak out of Auntie ^{EIK}'s house at night. She once caught me, wasn't best pleased and called ^{LVL} who I also begged to send me back to Nazareth House. I just wasn't fitting in where I was.
64. When I was fifteen a social worker came to see me and told me that relatives of mine were trying to get in contact with me. They stayed in Castlemilk and I went to see them and met my maternal grandmother and my sister She showed me pictures of my mum and told me that my mum was staying in Coventry. I went there to see her but they wouldn't let me in.
65. I did eventually see my mother in Glasgow about ten years ago in my sister house but she just sat on the couch and stared at me saying nothing.

Abuse

66. If Auntie ^{EIK} [REDACTED] was annoyed with me then she hit me with an old school strap that she had. She was an ex-teacher and kept one in the house. Having said that, I can only recall one occasion which was after I told my art teacher John McLaughlin that I wanted to go back to Nazareth House. He knew Auntie ^{EIK} [REDACTED] and told her what I had said which is why she hit me with the strap.

Life after the Institution

67. Because I was a carer for an elderly lady I never got to have any sort of life during my teenage years. I was very troubled and would play truant. I ended up drinking a lot and was pregnant when I was sixteen. Because my foster mother was a strict Catholic I was forced to get married. The day I got married was the day that I stopped being subject to any sort of care order.
68. We stayed in Castlemilk and had next to nothing and no money. My husband's family stayed in Partick and, three or four times a week, we would walk the ten miles there pushing the pram simply to get some food.
69. My marriage only lasted a year. What happened was that one day I went to visit Auntie ^{EIK} [REDACTED] and found her dead behind her door. I think that that was part of the reason why I walked away from my husband with my son. I would add though that my husband was, and still is, a fantastic father to our son.
70. My sister [REDACTED] left the home at sixteen but has never been out of care her whole life. She has had alcohol and drug issues and has been in homeless units and prison her whole life.
71. I haven't had any contact with other members of my family for years. When I split up with my husband I stayed in a homeless unit in Dalmuir, Clydebank then moved to a flat up the road in Mountblow. From there I moved to Darnley and my daughter [REDACTED] was born. I was next with a man called [REDACTED] who I married

and who was my son [REDACTED] father and who also took on the role of father to [REDACTED]. He had a successful job but was an alcoholic and we split up after six years.

72. Eventually I went to college and got enough qualifications to go to university but, after two years, it was clear I couldn't afford it. It was just me and the three kids and it was a real struggle even with the various jobs I had..
73. I met my present partner seventeen years ago and he has been great. He was firm but fair with the children and he has been great to all of us over the years.

Impact

74. Nazareth House has had a huge impact on my life. I am now 48 years old and hardly a day goes by without me thinking about my time there. I still have frequent nightmares and sweats and frequently have bouts of self-loathing and depression. I often have dreams about "The Grim Reaper" but my partner says it's the nuns I'm dreaming of.
75. I had a self-destruct button. I always thought I wasn't pretty and if anybody showed me any affection I would run. I've often thought of suicide but wouldn't do that to my partner [REDACTED] or the kids. I often thought of suicide when I was younger but it was the fear of going to Hell that stopped me.
76. You feel a freak. I always wondered why my dad was attracted to me when I was nine. Was it because I had black hair and no breasts? That's why I've been blonde since I was fourteen and even had a breast job. My sister [REDACTED] tried to cut off her breasts.
77. One of my best friends died about five years ago. She had a facial twist which her doctor said was Bell's Palsy. It turned out that she Motor Neurone and went downhill very quickly before she died. That had a big impact on me and was probably why I

went to see a female counsellor. I saw her once a week for about 3 or 4 weeks but it wasn't for me.

78. I've always found it difficult to deal with other people's emotions.
79. My sister [REDACTED] is still within the care system having never got out of it. She is an alcoholic with serious mental health issues. I'm sure she has blocked her childhood out of her mind. She has self-harmed for many years and has had to attend many psychiatric hospitals due to suicidal issues.

Records

80. I went to the Social Work Department in Church Street about twenty years ago and spoke to LVL [REDACTED]. A lawyer came with me and we saw records relating to me. However, an awful lot of the information had been edited out. I was trying to find out why I had been put into Nazareth House, who was involved and who was responsible. All I recall about the lawyer is that he worked in Berkeley Street.
81. There are no medical records concerning the first ten years of my life.
82. One person who does know what went on is a woman called LKB [REDACTED] who is in her seventies now. She was a child in Nazareth House then worked there and now stays there in the old folk's home. She has loads of photo albums of the home and those who stayed there over the years but she won't speak to the police out of, I believe, some sort of loyalty to the place. She knows about everything that went on in Nazareth House.

Lessons to be Learned

83. Children should be listened to. People thought we did things just to get attention. Kids in those situations, the last thing they want is attention. At least nuns don't look after children anymore and people looking after kids are properly trained. I think

social media also makes people more accountable. The stigma of having been in a home has to be removed though at least people listen nowadays. Kids in care, especially teenagers, need somebody to trust.

84. 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.

LBC

Signed.....

Dated..... 16 oct 17 .

