

## Scottish Child Abuse Inquiry

Witness Statement of

EIC [REDACTED]

Support person present: No.

1. My name is EIC [REDACTED]. My date of birth is [REDACTED] 1952. My contact details are known to the Inquiry.

### Life before going into care

2. I was born in Kilwinning, Ayrshire and spent my early childhood mainly between my parents and grandmother in the Stevenston area. My parents name were [REDACTED] and [REDACTED] while my grandmother's name was [REDACTED]. My brother is called [REDACTED].
3. There were several moves for me between my parents and grandmother as my mother was regarded as an unstable character and my father, unfortunately, spent much of his time in prison and at one point when I was two or three years old he got a five year sentence. I have clear memories of this period up until [REDACTED] 1960 which is the day my grandmother died. She had been the main support to myself and my younger brother [REDACTED] who was eighteen months younger.
4. I have a very clear memory of my grandmother dying in the small hours of the morning and of being taken into care by the Children's Department on that day at 11:00 pm. I was taken to Clarke's House in Largs. We were taken there in a taxi by social workers. I'm aware that at some later date my brother [REDACTED] was returned to my mother who was at that time living with [REDACTED] in Southampton. I didn't see my mother after that until I was about fifteen.

5. From about that date I find myself in a state of confusion regarding where I was living or what was happening to me. I have been making enquiries for some time now and am aware that, at times, I lived in the following places:-

Clark House, Largs (twice)

Burnside Children's Home, Irvine (six times)

Gargath Children's Home, Mossblown (twice)

I was also fostered with the following relatives:-

Mrs [REDACTED], my mother's sister – [REDACTED] Saltcoats

Mr and Mrs [REDACTED] another of my mother's sisters – [REDACTED] Saltcoats

Mr and Mrs [REDACTED] [REDACTED] was my dad's brother – [REDACTED]  
[REDACTED] Stevenson

I would be put into a children's home for a short period then sent to a relative's house before getting sent back to a children's home, basically going from pillar to post. This went on for years and I was constantly changing schools. This was all organised by social work and I think the main man that dealt with me was called McVie or something like that. Eventually I was put into foster care with EIB [REDACTED] who lived in New Cumnock when I was about eleven.

### **Clark House, Largs**

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Secondary Institutions - to be published later

## Burnside Children's Home, Irvine

Secondary Institutions - to be published later

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## Gargath Children's Home, Mossblown

Secondary Institutions - to be published later

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## Foster Care with <sup>EIB</sup> [REDACTED] [REDACTED] New Cumnock

10. <sup>EIB</sup> [REDACTED] lived with [REDACTED] and it was well known in the local area that they were lesbians. <sup>EIB</sup> [REDACTED] was known locally as <sup>EIB</sup> [REDACTED]. I didn't know what this meant at the time but, looking back, I do wonder about the appropriateness of putting us in the care of two such women. Especially in the 60's. I don't remember what we called <sup>EIB</sup> [REDACTED] and [REDACTED] I don't know what age <sup>EIB</sup> [REDACTED] was but she used to boast about driving the lorries during the war.
11. The house they lived in had three bedrooms, one of which was downstairs. <sup>EIB</sup> [REDACTED] and [REDACTED] slept on the couch downstairs. There were another six boys who lived there who were all also being fostered by <sup>EIB</sup> [REDACTED] She got paid for fostering us and told us many a time that that was the only reason we were there.
12. It was social workers that took me to <sup>EIB</sup> [REDACTED]s but I don't remember arriving. As well as the bedroom downstairs there was a kitchen and a living room. The bedroom

downstairs was a show room and was never used. Myself and the other six boys all slept in the same bed though I tended to sleep on the floor. The oldest boy, who was about fourteen, was a pervert and what went on in that house was weird but it's things I don't want to remember and I don't want to go into details.

#### **Routine at Foster Care with EIB**

13. EIB would get us up in the morning by shouting and screaming at us and they would then make us breakfast. We got dinner at school. I think we went to bed about 9:00 pm.

#### *Mealtimes/Food*

14. It was porridge for breakfast every morning and we often got pigeon or rabbit soup. You got plenty of food but some of it was strange. There were no cups in the house and we drank tea out of jam-jars. We got dinner at school.

#### *Washing/bathing*

15. We had a bath about once a week on a Sunday night for school the next day and the water was normally refreshed with hot water between each of us getting a bath but not always. I don't recall brushing my teeth.

#### *Clothing/uniform*

16. I'm not sure where we got our clothes from. We just wore what we were given.

#### *Leisure time*

17. We were next to the River Afton and, when we got out, we played there or at a nearby farm. In bad weather, or if we had been misbehaving, we stayed in the house staring at the TV or just staring at each other. If you moved or talked you got sent to bed. I don't recall any books or comics.



### *Trips and holidays*

18. Every couple of years <sup>EIB</sup> and [REDACTED] got a new car and they would take us to Girvan or Stranraer beach but it was all controlled. You would get out of the car after a long drive, play on the beach for a while, then it was straight back into the car.

### *Schooling*

19. I went to the local primary school but I didn't enjoy it as I found I always had to fight for everything. I remember one teacher called Miss <sup>EIE</sup> [REDACTED] who I drove mad with my antics and at one point she grabbed me by the throat but that was me pushing her to breaking point. Going from pillar to post and changing schools so often really unsettled me and I always found school difficult.

### *Healthcare*

20. I don't recall much in the way of visits to the dentist. I think we went to see a doctor if we needed to but I don't actually recall going to see a doctor or a dentist. I think if I had it would have been a memorable occasion.

### *Religious instruction*

21. Religion didn't feature in my life while I stayed with <sup>EIB</sup> [REDACTED]

### *Work*

22. We would do the dishes and Hoover around the house and each took turns at doing these things like in a normal house.

### *Birthdays and Christmas*

23. At Christmas we would be given a pair of socks and an orange but birthdays were never celebrated. We were never given any treats and, at Easter, we wouldn't even

get an Easter Egg. The only reason we knew it was Easter was because we were off school.

*Personal possessions*

24. I don't recall owning anything that I would call my own. It was as if we were just there to be fed and go to school

*Bed Wetting*

25. Bed wetting was never a problem for me while I stayed at EIB's.

*Visitors*

26. A social worker came once and I remember sitting on a stair getting grilled by a social worker but I have no recollection what that was about. Social workers never asked how I was getting on and I never felt that they were interested in me. It was as if they had found me a place to stay and that was there job done. I know I couldn't have said anything to a social worker because EIB would have been present and if I had said anything out of place she would have given me a leathering.

*Family contact*

27. While living with EIB I had no contact with my family whatsoever.

*Running away*

28. I ran away constantly and would always get a belting when I got back. I would just head off and try and thumb a lift but I never got far. On one occasion I got picked up by the police and they asked me where I was going. I told them I wasn't going back to EIB's and told them what she was like. They weren't interested and just dropped me back at the house where I got another beating.

**Abuse in Foster care with EIB**

29. I don't remember what I had done wrong but I was bent over a chair, had my trousers pulled down, and belted with a proper school belt. I just remember the horror of it and the feeling of wanting to just crawl away. I think this happened to me two or three times but it's that one occasion I really recall and I think I just got used to it.
30. EIB used to also slap me on the face on a regular basis which could simply be for getting in her way. It was EIB who did all the assaulting. was quiet and stayed in the background. Neither ever showed me any affection.

**Leaving Foster Care with EIB**

31. I ended up in court in Ayr though why I'm not sure. The court sent me to Dr Guthrie's in Edinburgh under, I think, some sort of Child Protection Order. I've always felt that I was shipped off to Dr Guthrie's because things were happening in Ayrshire with the Social Work that wasn't public knowledge. Edinburgh was miles away at a time when there were no motorways. Most of those in Dr Guthrie's were from the East Coast and I only recall about three boys from Glasgow.
32. After I left foster care I developed a hatred for New Cumnock, probably because of the horrible experience I had of living with EIB I still don't understand why I was placed with those women and I think the local council for that area has a lot to explain. I would say that most of the boys who were fostered there at the same time as me will be dead given their life style.

**Dr Guthrie's School, Edinburgh – 1965 to 1968**

33. Secondary Institutions - to be published later

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**Geilsland, List D School, Beith**

Secondary Institutions - to be published later

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**Life after being in care**

71. When I was sixteen I went to Southampton and joined the Merchant Navy and did a trip from Las Palmas to Cape Town which was a five week, two day trip. I met my wife when I was twenty and got married a couple of years later. We waited another four years before we had our first child.

72. In those days my attitude was that I was the worker and had to go out and earn money for the family. I now have three sons and three daughters and none of them have a criminal record because I always made sure they had a different childhood to me. For me children come first although I was never one for cuddling my kids.
73. I spent much of my adult life working as a driver of a variety of lorries of all sizes. In 1988 I had a quadruple by-pass and had an initial bad reaction to it. I was only home a week when I was rushed back into hospital. For four or five years thereafter I was unable to work. After that I returned to driving lorries up to 7 tonners and also ran my own business dealing in fridges and cookers though it closed after three years.
74. During my early adult life I probably drank too much, smoked too much and worked too much. That sort of lifestyle catches up with you. However, I've always tried to do what was right and always did my best to make sure my family were safe and secure. I didn't get it right all the time, who does, but I always did my best by them.

### **Impact**

75. Due to the lack of affection I received in growing up I always found it difficult to show affection to my children. That changed when my grandchildren arrived and I was able to show them affection and hug them.
76. For me one of the biggest impacts has been rejection. I spent my childhood being rejected by everywhere I was placed until I ended up in St Guthrie's. It still seems strange to me that the only place that didn't reject me was an approved school.
77. Being rejected so often made it difficult for me to form relationships and put trust in friends and it wasn't until I met my wife that I realised somebody loved me for just being me. It still took a couple of years for me to put my trust in my wife and have children but we have been together ever since.
78. I certainly don't trust social workers due to their complete lack of support in my early life. This is affecting me to this day as there are problems with one of my grandchildren

and I truly believe that the social workers involved have got things completely wrong. I don't like working with them but the rules and regime mean I have no choice.

79. I often think about my time in care and think about those who are no longer with us. I think that given how my early life was my life hasn't worked out too bad. I also became very cynical in life and it takes a long time for me to trust people. I think my time in care has made me more aware of danger and that has helped me guide my own children through life.
80. Because of my time in care I came to believe that your time as a child should be spent being a child. Unfortunately I passed this to my children and wish I had made them realise how important education is for a chance to improve your later life and that of your family.

#### **Treatment/support**

81. I'm about to start seeing a psychologist. This is to help me get through life with the constant pain I'm in with my knees and shoulders and the painkillers I have to relieve the pain. I'm also riddled with arthritis. I have never seen a counsellor with regards my time in care.

#### **Reporting of Abuse**

82. I have never reported anything that happened to me in my early life to anybody in a position of authority and certainly not the police. My wife doesn't know much about my childhood and I would never discuss such things with my children.

#### **Records**

83. I have tried to get my records from my childhood but so far there is so much missing and my main concern is the complete lack of records about me from the early 60's.

The question is though have I forgotten that period to protect myself? Do I want to remember those times? I don't know and it's something I have to think about.

**Lessons to be Learned**

- 84. In my opinion there are two or three reasons why somebody would speak to The Inquiry. You either do it to help build better facilities so that people learn from the mistakes of the past or you do it for revenge. You can rule out revenge as far as I'm concerned because those involved are all dead and you don't get revenge on dead people. If you believe in God then they've gone to Hell and that's the end of it.
- 85. For me, this is about the truth coming out and the hope that children in care in the future will be better cared for. Children didn't matter when I was in care and that has to change.
- 86. You have to give children in care some targets to achieve. A routine for them would help and give them a sense of security but being able to work towards something gives them something to look forward to.
- 87. 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... EIC .....

Dated... 14 DECEMBER 2021 .....