

Scottish Child Abuse Inquiry

Witness Statement of

FCP

Support person present: No

1. My name is FCP I was born on 1959. I am 57 years of age. My contact details are known to the inquiry.

Background

2. I was born in Glasgow in 1959 and I think that I resided at in the Garthamlock area. I checked my birth certificate and found that my parents were called and or it may have been that my mother was called . I can't remember which way round that it went.
3. My parents were married. I was the older brother and I also had two younger sisters. I was between 5 or 6 years of age when my parents abandoned me and my three year old sister in in Glasgow. My younger sister FEM was a baby and I think my parents took her with them.
4. After being abandoned I somehow managed to get me and back to our home address in Garthamlock but our parents were gone. We were looked after by neighbours. The neighbours then put us in touch with other family members who lived in Carntyne in Glasgow. I think that they looked after us for a few weeks before we were put into care. I don't know where my youngest sister FEM was at this time, she would only be a baby.

5. I have not seen my parents since and I do not know if they are still living. I have had no real contact with my sisters [REDACTED] and FEM [REDACTED] for the past 35 years. I think I can remember that on one occasion in 1964 or 1965 my biological mother came to the school I was attending. I think that she wanted to try to take me back but nothing ever happened.

Before being put into care


6. I have no real recollections of my life before being put into care. Before I was abandoned by my parents I can remember having just started primary school but not much more. I don't recall being subjected to any abuse at home and I think that I had a normal family life.

Life with parents


7. I have no real recollection of my parents. I don't think that there was anything out of the ordinary with them. They treated us well as far as I know. I have no idea why they abandoned us as they did. I have made no real attempt to track them down. They are almost certainly deceased now.

Castlemilk and Eversley Children's Homes

Secondary Institutions - to be published later



Secondary Institutions - to be published later



12. I do remember the day the potential foster parents came to the home. I had been in the home for about 4 years. I was taken into the "piano room" and made to sing to them while someone played the piano to accompany me. The prospective foster parents watched me perform. These prospective foster parents were [REDACTED] I was being fostered out with my sister and as far as I can remember these were the only potential foster parents I ever met.

13. At first we went and stayed for a few weekends to see if we could settle in. I don't think I was ever asked if this is what I wanted to do. I would be about ten or eleven years old at this time. It seemed like a good thing and I don't remember feeling bad about it.

The [REDACTED] foster care

14. The first visits with the [REDACTED] family were weekends or day trips out with them. They were very pleasant experiences as we were spoiled with sweets and other presents which we were not used to. They took us to nice places.

15. Their names were [REDACTED] I would estimate that they were aged between 35 and 40 years old at that time. They were married but

had no children of their own. When we initially moved in with them they were residing in a council house in [REDACTED] Motherwell. We were there for about a year. They then applied for a new built house in [REDACTED] in Motherwell. This house was much bigger and in a very desirable area. They now had myself and both my sisters living with them and so they were entitled to a bigger house.

16. I had been there for about six months when the social work department managed to track down my sister FEM [REDACTED]. She joined us at the FJD/FJF [REDACTED]. I stayed for four years with the FJD/FJF [REDACTED] family which was an unbroken period apart from the time I was forced to spend at The Gryffe Children's Home for troubled boys in Bridge of Weir, Renfrewshire.

Routine

17. When I first moved into foster care I had no apprehensions. It was just me and [REDACTED] for the first six months before my sister FEM [REDACTED] joined us for the rest of the time we were to spend in foster care. I had a room of my own and my sisters slept in another room.
18. Breakfast time at the house was always a slice of bread and butter and was eaten standing at the breakfast bar before we went to school. I thought that this was strange behaviour but it was their routine.
19. We were enrolled at the local school and went there every day. When we came back to the house we were not allowed to sit on the furniture which was covered with plastic sheets. I would be terrified to sit anywhere but on the floor for fear of ripping the plastic sheets.
20. The house had an upstairs where all the bedrooms were. When you came back from school in the afternoon you had to be quiet as the FJD/FJF [REDACTED] would be downstairs napping on the sofas. You couldn't make a noise and had to stay in their presence while they slept. This really added to the tension in the house as

you couldn't sit on the furniture and you were terrified that you woke them up. I had nowhere else to go because of "the grounding" and house confinement .I couldn't make friends so I had no school friend's houses that I could go back to after school or at weekends.

21. The living arrangements were very intense. You would get smacked for bad behaviour. I considered this to be normal and it was not considered to be abusive punishment in those days. I don't think that they thought they were doing anything wrong. I also think that they didn't know how I was feeling which was very awkward and added to my anxiety.
22. We lived as a normal family watching television and staying in our rooms to read. The FJD/FJF used to go out together once a week to socialise. We were left to look after ourselves.

Food

23. The food provided by the FJD/FJF was adequate for what we needed. We had a piece of bread and butter for breakfast. Lunch was mainly school dinners apart from the holidays. There was always an evening meal which we sat down to. When I was being punished I was not allowed to sit down with the others and was called out of my room to sit and eat by myself. I was never called by my real name which was very humiliating.

Schooling

24. When I first started living with the FJD/FJF I attended at Muir Street Primary School and then moved up to Braidhurst High School. I could walk to school and although I attended and took part I wasn't interested in it but I didn't cause any trouble.
25. I also attended a residential institution in Bridge of Weir called The Gryffe. It was a residential home for boys who were troubled but it was not a borstal. It

was somewhere in between. I was put there after the [FJD/FJF] made a complaint about me to the social services. It was the one chance I had in my life to get away from the [FJD/FJF] family but unfortunately things again did not work out and after being there for about a year I was returned to foster care with the [FJD/FJF]. I was never abused or ill-treated there. I suspect that it was like any other children's home.

26. [Redacted]
Secondary Institutions - to be published later

[Redacted] My foster parents came to visit me and the result was that I ended up back in their care. I didn't want to go back to the [FJD/FJF] but I didn't have any say in the matter.

27. [Redacted]
Secondary Institutions - to be published later

28. I did receive pocket money after I returned to the [FJD/FJF] house from The Gryffe. It was a lost opportunity for me as I felt I could have been placed with foster parents away from the [FJD/FJF].

29. I returned to my old school when I came back from The Gryffe. It was very embarrassing as I had to explain to the other pupils where I had been.

Pocket money

30. I started smoking when I was ten or eleven. I wasn't getting any money apart from school dinner money. I had to make a choice between dinner money or a cigarette. I usually smoked two a day. You could buy cigarettes at the school gates.
31. I had no real friends as I was grounded for so long. I didn't get any pocket money so I couldn't socialise with the people I knew at school.
32. It was only after I had been to the Gryffe Institution that I started to get pocket money that I was entitled to through the fostering agreement that the [FJD/FJF] had with the social work department. [Secondary Institutions - to be published later]
[Secondary Institutions - to be published later]

Visits

33. There was never a visit organised between my biological parents and me. The only occasion I was aware of my mother showing some interest was when she came to the school and through the railings told me that she was going to get me back. It never happened and I never saw her again.

Inspections

34. In all the times I stayed at the [FJD/FJF] I remember one social work contact with me. There was no way that I was going to speak to the social worker in front of [FJD/FJF]. They did leave me alone with the social worker but they were able to hear the entire conversation through the serving hatch in the kitchen. I couldn't tell the social worker what was happening for fear of the consequences. They may have spoken to the [FJD/FJF] but I can't remember being involved in any discussions.

35. The truth of the matter was that there was very little control over the foster parents at this time. I suppose if I could, I would have run off but I had no place to go and I was very young. I really didn't know any better. I was trapped.

Psychological abuse

36. The abuse really started one day after we had been there for a few months. The FJD/FJF asked me one day what memories I had of biological parents. I remember telling them that my father reminded me of Rock Hudson and my mother was just like Princess Anne. Both FJD and FJF appeared to get upset at this and started ranting and raving at me. I was told that when the FJD/FJF had found us we had on odd shoes and how dare I think that my parents were royalty. I was shocked at this outburst. Thinking back I was only saying what I think any young boy of my age would say about his parents. The FJD/FJF took a dislike to me from that moment on.
37. I had a bed wetting problem which was diagnosed by a doctor and is called nocturnal enuresis. The FJD/FJF did not acknowledge this and used to punish me for wetting the bed. I would have to wear the wet pyjamas to school under my uniform. This caused me problems at the school with the other pupils. I was called names and isolated at school. I was never able to make friends at school.
38. Looking back I can see things in a different light now that I am an adult. When we first moved in with the FJD/FJF we were living with them in one of the least desirable areas of Motherwell but as a result of me and my sisters moving in they got a much better council house in a much better area of Motherwell.
39. One day I was kicking a football against the wall of one of the flats. The neighbour came out to give me a row and my step-father intervened. He argued with the neighbour. The result was that I was put on a curfew and grounded. It meant that I was kept in the house for ninety per cent of my remaining stay with them.

40. At this time my sisters were not the subject of any abuse. They were actively encouraged to get me into trouble. I definitely put the start of the abuse down to the answer I gave to the description of my biological parents. I was always called a "no user" by them and because of the bed wetting and the groundings I was unable to make friends at school. I had terrible feelings of uselessness and very low self-esteem. I spent a lot of time in my bedroom reading books.
41. Because I was a smoker when I was ten or eleven I used to have to find ways of getting cigarettes. When the [FJD/FJF] used to go out together once a week they would leave a packet of cigarettes lying about the house along with a purse. I used to pinch a cigarette or some five pence pieces from the purse to buy a cigarette at school. The cigarettes were sold at the shop at the school gates. Unbeknown to me the [FJD/FJF] had deliberately left the cigarettes and the purse there for me to access and steal. I had been trapped by them. They kept a record for a few months of every cigarette or coin that I pinched. When they told me about the trap they had set they called me "thieving scum". The groundings were worse and I was allowed no interaction with other people from school or my sisters. I had to eat my meals on my own after the rest of the foster family had eaten theirs.
42. The [FJD/FJF] then used this information to pass to the social workers. The result of this was that I was placed in Gryffe Institution for troubled boys. I was to remain there for about a year. I would be about thirteen or fourteen when I was placed in there. I have no idea why they would do this to me but it was all part of the abusive way I was being treated.
43. I knew it was wrong to steal but what sort of parents go about it that way to deal with such matters. When I finally got my pocket money allowance that I was entitled to the need to steal went away.
44. I was constantly reminded by the [FJD/FJF] how good they were to me and how I was no good like my biological parents and how I was a thief. I was told so often that I started to believe this and my opinion of myself fell even lower. They didn't call me by my name they just referred to me as boy but mostly as

"hoi you". I had never heard of abuse and couldn't define what they did to me. I now realise on looking back that although I did not suffer physical or sexual abuse I was being subjected to the worst type of psychological abuse.

45. When I returned home after my spell at the Gryffe there were some changes for the better like receiving my pocket money. I was still "walking on egg shells" in the house. I don't recall seeing or meeting with any social workers at this time.
46. This incident that I am going to describe may appear to be bizarre but it was another occasion when I was deliberately targeted by them and made to feel useless. I was sitting in the lounge with the FJD/FJF and my sisters. We were all watching television. I got up to go to the toilet and was asked where I was going. I told them I was going to the toilet. They asked me why. I repeated that I was going to the toilet. I was trying to come up with the correct term so that I didn't appear to be swearing at them. I didn't know the real term. The only appropriate words I could come up with at the time were I was going for "toilet water". On reflection it was not the best choice of words but I didn't know any better. It caused FJF to jump out of her chair. She started screaming at me and calling me a "fucking poof". She went through to the kitchen and came back brandishing a kitchen knife at me. I firmly believe that she would have stabbed me if FJD had not interfered and taken the knife from her. FJD told her that she was going too far. She continued raving at me calling me a poof. It was the only time that they were in disagreement over the way they treated me.
47. This had the effect of causing me to doubt myself and wonder if in fact I was gay. I also questioned myself as I was to why as I was getting older I was not able to defend myself and face up to things. I was not physically abused by the FJD/FJF but I did get the odd smack which was I found to be acceptable as a means of punishment. It was not excessive.

48. I was never sexually abused the whole time I was with the [FJD/FJF]. I recall one evening when they came into my room after they had been on a night out. This was totally out of character for them. They put on the main light and showed me a poster of a girl wearing suspenders and stockings. It was a cartoon type picture. It was not pornographic. They said what do you think of this you poof. I was traumatised by this event. I didn't know what to think.
49. Shortly after arriving in foster care I was subjected to all the abuse that I have described. I lived in constant fear of the [FJD/FJF]. I was terrified to do anything that most people would consider normal like helping yourself to a biscuit, turning on the television or going to your room without permission. Living was like walking on egg shells with consequences for failing to please the [FJD/FJF]. I could do nothing right.

Life after foster care

50. About a week after the incident with the poster I felt totally insecure. I had been called a "no user" and a waste of space like my biological parents. I had no self-esteem and was full of doubt about myself. I did the only thing I could think of to escape I joined the army as a boy soldier. I was fifteen years of age going on sixteen. It was the year 1976. At that time the army had "junior leaders".
51. I don't think I would have joined the army if my home life had been better. I served 5 years in the army. I think that the [FJD/FJF] were happy for me to join the army. It wasn't a career for me it was an escape. I had taken O'Level exams at school but I never really bothered as I knew I was going into the army.
52. After 5 years' service I left the army and instead of getting a flat I went back and stayed with the [FJD/FJF]. I was now nearly 21 years of age. I didn't know what else to do as there was no guidance when you left the army. I would describe the army as being comfortable and I liked being in the army

environment. I carried my problems with me to the army but I was not subjected to abuse there.

53. My sisters were still living with the [FJD/FJF]. It suited the [FJD/FJF] to have me back as I was paying dig money to them and helping them out to pay for things they needed to do and buy about the house. When I was in the army I had managed to get a HGV licence and found work delivering coal and frozen foods. This gave me an income but the [FJD/FJF] still treated me as a "no gooder" and useless.
54. My life then took an about turn and I went back to college. I had read that children who had been in care missed out on education so I went back to college to remedy this. I went to Motherwell College and managed to pass my higher exams to get access to study for a degree. I got a degree in sciences. I then took a job as a lecturer at another college. I lectured on the science subjects mainly to students who were doing access courses. I was a college lecturer for twenty years but had to stop because of mental health problems.
55. While I was lorry driving I met my wife and we got married. My wife already had a child in a previous marriage so he became my step son. At this time I started to have mental health problems. I had very low self-esteem and felt that the only reason I had joined the army and got married was to escape from the [FJD/FJF].
56. I was about twenty three years old when I attempted suicide for the first time. I [REDACTED] I even considered this to be the coward's way out because of my condition. The doctors that treated me confirmed that I could have succeeded had I not received help. I loved my wife and we had just had our first baby which was my daughter. I just felt so strongly that I didn't want to be there. I had too many problems to make a successful marriage.
57. I had a short stay in the Hartwood Hospital where I received treatment for the physical symptoms. I did not receive any psychological help. It was shortly after

that I went back to full time education and went back to college. I thought this would be good for my status and would aid my recovery.

58. I didn't have much contact with the FJD/FJF after I got married. I was living in Motherwell but didn't run into them. I don't think I have seen them for thirty years.
59. About fifteen years ago in 2001 I had another suicide attempt where I [REDACTED] [REDACTED] I knew that you could recover from this but die later from liver damage. I was also thinking of my children and didn't want them to see a damaged body. I thought that the children would just see me lying in bed having fallen asleep. I know that this is not rational thinking but when you are in that state of mind there is no real logic to your thinking. While being treated I refused to take the carbon drinks that were used to stabilise you. As a result I was then committed to a hospital where I received treatment for the [REDACTED] without the psychological support. My marriage broke up after that as my wife could not cope with my problems. My ex-wife and I are still friends and I have a good relationship with my children. I am now with another partner.
60. After the suicide attempt I started to get stronger and started to feel better. Two or three years ago in 2012 or 2013 the Scottish Government decided to merge a lot of the colleges. I worked in the [REDACTED] and had been there for 23 years in different roles. It was a very small science department. There were only four of us working there and I could cope with that. When the college merged the department increased to forty staff members. Some of these persons were strong characters and I could not cope. I started to unravel again.
61. I then started work in a garden centre where I am currently employed.

Reporting abuse

62. I have never reported any of the abuse I suffered to the police or other authorities. I was not able to report the abuse I suffered at the hands of the [FJD/FJF] to the social work department as the only interview I had with them was conducted within their hearing and would mean that I would suffer even more for what I told them.
63. I did have a lot of contact with [Secondary Institutions - to be published later] He was a social care worker based there. I felt that he listened to me and was trying to help me. I thought that there was an opportunity then to get me away from the [FJD/FJF] but it just didn't happen and it is one of my biggest disappointments with the care system.

Impact

64. The impact of the abuse I suffered at the hands of the [FJD/FJF] has been considerable. I have twice attempted suicide. I have always considered myself to be a weak person with very low self-esteem. The sense of isolation and humiliation can be overpowering.
65. I am aware that other people who have suffered physical or sexual abuse may well have physical scars which are obvious. I have no physical scars. I have had behavioural problems which I directly attribute to the abuse. What I suffered is no less painful and all the scars are emotional and not obvious to anyone looking at me.
66. In March 2016 I completed a six month counselling and therapy course with a psychologist. This has enabled me to come here today to speak to you. The therapy finished and this was the first time I was able to confront the past and see it in a different light. This was the first person to listen to me and to acknowledge what had happened. It's not revenge that I am seeking but acknowledgement.

67 Secondary Institutions - to be published later

68. I want to know how your parents are able to abandon you and why they are not tracked down and asked why. I want to know if they are accountable and accept responsibility for what happened to me and what my life became. I could have brother or sisters and I don't know anything about them. Did my birth parents go on to have a good life, I don't know and it bothers me.

69. Why did the social work departments in Glasgow not have more meetings with me out with the hearing of my foster parents where I could tell them what was happening. It is only on reflection that I have these thoughts because when it was relevant I was just a child and didn't know any better.

70. I have spent half my adult life going to bed and hoping not to waken up. It is a terrible feeling. I wish I could sit down with my sisters and find out why they blamed me for leaving them in the care of the FJD/FJF to join the army. What happened to them when I left that caused them to resent me.

Treatment and support

71. I had not spoken to my sisters for a long number of years and my daughter decided to try to track them down on Facebook. It must have been about 35 years since I last saw them. ██████ did not want contact but FEM ██████ did express an interest. FEM ██████ asked for my mobile number to contact me by text messages. Her text messages basically asked me why I had left the FJD/FJF and gone to the army as she had become the target of the FJD/FJF.

72. This caused me to become ill again but instead of attempting suicide I contacted my local doctor and I received counselling and psychological support as I again had depression issues. I was off sick from work for long periods. I was now ignoring my sister's text messages. I also learned that she had received therapy for what had happened to her.
73. I have just completed a sessions of psychotherapy which started in November 2015 and ended in March 2016. This has enabled me to speak to you here today and to confront what happened to me.
74. My sister FEM informed me by text message that she had been a target of abuse and had suffered mental health issues. This is one of the main reasons that I am making this statement to your Inquiry.

Other information

75. What is abuse? Is it getting a cigarette stubbed out on your body, is it being called a poof or is it being sent to school in "pishy pyjamas". It's all these things and more. My foster parents the FJD/FJF benefitted from having me and my sisters residing with them. They got a better house and money to look after us.
76. Evil people get older and should be accountable. I spent most of my childhood grounded in my bedroom. Psychological wounds don't show and being addressed as a non-person is "life affecting".
77. There were lost opportunities in my life when things could have changed and my life may have taken a different course. The best chance for me was when I was at the Gryffe School for troubled children. There was a total lack of social work guidance or interference. I had no say in the matter.

78. I would have liked my birth parents to be held accountable for abandoning me and I would like my foster parents to be similarly held accountable for the abuse I suffered at their hands. I don't really want revenge all, I want is recognition of all the mistakes that were made by the social services and other organisations who should have been able to support or advise me.

79. When I left the army I had a number of acquaintances but no one I would describe as a friend. The army was full of people running away from family circumstances. When I came out the only option I had was to return back to the FJD/FJF There was no support or advice given me and I didn't realise that I had other options.

80. I would need to think about whether or not I am able to provide oral evidence to the enquiry hearings. I am an experienced lecturer but unsure whether I would be able to do this.

81. 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 FCP

Dated 9/12/16