

## Scottish Child Abuse Inquiry

Witness Statement of

EPT

Support person present: No

1. My name is EPT My date of birth is 1985. My contact details are known to the Inquiry.

### Life before going into care

2. I was born in Dundee. My mother was called and my father was called I had a late brother who was called and he was two or three years older than me. My parents split up around the time I was born and my father took to live with him. I had a younger brother and sister. They were called and although their birth names were was a year younger than me and was four years younger. Their father's name was
3. We lived at Dundee. was abusive towards my mum and me and he threw me in a cupboard when I was very young. I remember my mum and me cutting up his ties, shirts and clothes and throwing them out of the window. She was shouting expletives and he was saying he was sorry. My mother was abused as a child by family members. All behaviours are learned behaviour. My mother had a history of mental illness and she is bipolar.
4. My mum had a relationship with after She was looking for security in a relationship so she married him and I took on his name. I think they got married when I was four or five years old and we lived in I'm not

sure when we moved from [REDACTED] to [REDACTED] but it was before I went into care and it was after [REDACTED] came into our lives.

5. I attended Mid Craigie Primary School. Its nickname was the rainbow school because of its shape. I was really boisterous in PE and annoyed the teachers. I also set a piano on fire. The police have been involved with me since I was young because I was absconding and shoplifting and misbehaving badly at school. A boy was tapping his pencil on his desk in school next to me and I stabbed him straight through his hand with the pencil. My mum was once called to school by the headmaster to come and take me home because I defecated on the trampoline in the PE hall.
6. I set fires a lot. I lit a piece of paper in the electric fire and set it on the carpet. I had done this a number of times but not so badly so my mother belted me for doing that. One day my mum lost her lighter and because I was known to burn things she blamed me and she gave me a clout. My mum was struggling to cope with me. She told me this and I saw it in my records as well.
7. My cousin once found me sleeping outside on the grass on the way to school and I told her my mother hadn't fed me breakfast. My mother and my step dad were on benefits and I believe they were struggling. I now only eat tinned fish, beans and sweetcorn. I can't touch any other tinned food because I was fed them so often. My mother put red sauce on everything and when I complained I was verbally abused. She also physically abused me when I refused to eat. She would drag me out of the room by my collar and sometimes slap me. Sometimes I just wound her up which I enjoyed and that was probably what made her violent to me.
8. I once knocked on a woman's door and said that I had been abandoned. I pointed out an empty house which was boarded up and the woman phoned the police. The police dropped me off at home. My mother was nice when the police were there but after they left she gave me the worst hiding of my life. I have been wrestled to the ground by police and care staff but I have never had a beating like that. She kicked

me, punched me, slapped me, scratched me and knocked me off the walls. I don't know if I was bitten but she was a bit of an animal that night.

9. Afterwards she left and locked me in the flat. Either my mother or the neighbour contacted the social work department and told them that they needed to get me out of there before she killed me. This was in my records. I don't think my stepdad and my brother and sister were in the house when this happened and I wonder if this was planned. I want to know why my stepfather and my brother and sister weren't there. Was the plan that my mother was going to kill me? I want to know what happened that night and I have asked my mum but she won't talk about it. According to the records my mum was charged with assault against a minor.
10. Neil Davis and Rita Fox were my first contact with the social work department and they were the two who took me into care. I have no memory of involvement with social workers prior to that but my records say that they were involved with me previously.
11. The night I was taken into care Rita and Neil got me into the car and they asked me if I was hungry. I said that I would like fish and chips because I had never had it before and it was something mum ordered for herself but never shared with me. They briefly explained what was happening and they asked me for some information. Then they took me to the hospital to get a body check. I don't think I attended a panel before I went into care on [REDACTED] 1994.

#### **Foster care with the [REDACTED]**

12. I remember arriving with the [REDACTED] It was scary and daunting but they were friendly and warm. I think they had a teenage son. The [REDACTED] had worked all their lives and their home was lovely. It was three floors and it was on [REDACTED] [REDACTED] in Dundee. I had my own bedroom which overlooked [REDACTED] and I loved it.

13. I lived with my Auntie [REDACTED] who lived just across the road from the [REDACTED] at one stage but I think this was before I went into care. She spoke to my mum about adopting me because she didn't like how my mum was behaving. I attended Morgan Primary School when I was with the [REDACTED] or at my Auntie [REDACTED]s.
14. The [REDACTED] were an older couple and I didn't match with them although they directed me mentally for the rest of my life. They gave me a mind which would accept information and regurgitate it when required. They introduced me to reading which I loved and it was my escape. I used to drag my social workers around bookstores. Reading gives you knowledge and knowledge gives you power. Reading gave me a sense of belonging because I read things like Oliver Twist. A few years later I played Oliver Twist on a live theatre set with a school.
15. I thought this was a long term placement until things could be sorted out at home but I was only with the [REDACTED] for a short time. This was weeks or months but no longer than six months. I was happy to be safe but I missed [REDACTED] and my brother and sister. I felt lost, so I went out and fire raised in the local area and I ran away. I also went round and smashed windows. I was an angry wee boy but it wasn't to do with the [REDACTED] it was probably rebellion against their rules. I was doing what I wanted to do instead of what society wanted me to do. People wanted me to do what they wanted to do and I wanted to do what I wanted to do.
16. I think if I had been an older child with less baggage, I would have done alright there. It was the right people at the wrong time. If I could talk to them now I would thank them for trying and tell them I am sorry it didn't work out.
17. Rita was appointed as my social worker and she was a constant. She wasn't brilliant at getting stuff done but she was there when she needed to be and she was like a second Auntie to me. I requested not to see my mum at that time because she was up and down mentally. Occasionally I requested to see her and was told no so then I would kick off.

18. I was removed from the [REDACTED] as a result of my disruptive behaviour. Rita would have told me I was leaving and she would have told me the reason why but I can't remember her exact words.

#### **Foster Care with** [REDACTED]

19. I then went to live with [REDACTED]. They lived in [REDACTED] possibly on [REDACTED]. It was a nice house which was not in a scheme and [REDACTED] seemed okay. They were called [REDACTED]. [REDACTED] was the nicer one of the couple. They had a teenage daughter who was about fifteen and a slightly younger son who was called [REDACTED]. They also looked after a younger boy later on and his name may have been [REDACTED]. He was about two or three.
20. I was there for about six months. I was settled into a school and I had at least one befriender. Then I got bored almost and I didn't want to be there because of the strictness of the rules. [REDACTED] were stricter than the [REDACTED]. You weren't allowed to leave the table unless you were excused and I was made to tuck my arms in and sit up straight when I was eating but I refused to comply. I was a very angry young man and I rebelled. I refused to have the TB vaccine when I was there and I never had it.

#### **Routine at** [REDACTED]

##### *Chores*

21. I had to do chores which I had never had before so I rebelled against that too. I started doing them but then I decided they were too much hard work and I refused to do them. They wanted me to do the dishes and I point blank refused. My mum wanted me to do them at home too and I had big fights with her about that.

22. EPU-SPO wanted me to do the hoovering. They expected me to Hoover the stairs at that young age with a heavy Hoover and I was grounded if I didn't complete the chores. For bad behaviour I was put into the bedroom that I shared with [REDACTED] for four or five hours. I wasn't locked in but I was told to remain there. I played with toys and used my imagination to escape from the situation but that was the last time I was able to do that for a long time.

*School*

23. I used to go by taxi to Mid Craigie Primary School.

*Visits*

24. Sometimes Rita took me to MacDonald's but other times she took me to a meeting room in the local social work department.
25. I had a befriender who was called Graham Chester and I believe he was appointed by the social work department. He was amazing He was about 35 and he was like the big brother I never got to know. He would take me to the beach and we would fly kites. He would ask me what I wanted to do and we went and did it.
26. I loved Graham Chester. I don't know what happened to him and why we stopped seeing each other but it was maybe because I was put into Duncan Place. I had another befriender who was appointed by the social work department before Graham but he may have been there afterwards as well.
27. I believe I had contact with my mother when I was with EPU-SPO because I have a vague memory of being taken to [REDACTED]



*Religion*

28. I got on well with the daughter but because of my behaviour and them being a Christian family things became difficult. My mum used to tell me that religion was for me to decide but EPU-SPO wanted me to conform to Christianity. I was expected to attend Sunday school and Church every Sunday but the Bible stories scared me so that really set me off. We also had to say grace at dinner time and I consider that to be an abuse not a guidance because that was pushing something on to someone.

**Abuse at** EPU-SPO

29. As a punishment for doing something I was sat on the back step in the back garden and the back door was locked so I couldn't get back in. I had only a t-shirt and tracksuit bottoms or pyjamas on and I was freezing. EPU then swore at me and asked me if I was ready to speak. She acted like she was my mum and she was aggressive towards me so I kicked off again and swore at her. She then washed my mouth out with soap. She took me into the downstairs bathroom, ran some water over a bar of soap and put it into my mouth. She rammed it around in a circular motion and up and down.
30. The next morning/day EPU asked me if I wanted to go ice skating the following day with her son and daughter. I said I would love to and I think we went to Forfar ice rink so the incident with the soap was smoothed over. I'm not sure if I ever told Rita or Graham about what happened in foster care. The things that happened to me have stuck in my memory better than any conversations I would have had about them afterwards but I told people later and I have told my son and daughter about it to show them that they do not want to be in care.
31. EPU-SPO drove a Volvo estate which had two seats in the boot. I don't remember EPU taking me to school in the car although she took her own children. One morning during the school run I was left in the car with as EPU had taken the toddler into day-care and and I started to fight. He hit me in the mouth and

chipped my tooth. I had the chipped piece on my finger and I showed it to EPU She took it off my finger, inspected it and replied it was too soft to be a bit of tooth and flicked it out of the car. Nothing more was said. I complained but it just fell on deaf ears as usual because EPU just ignored me when I shouted and screamed and that to me is neglect. These incidents always play on my mind and they will never stop being on my mind.

#### **Leaving foster care with EPU-SPO**

32. I am not sure why I was taken away from EPU-SPO and put into Duncan Place but I think it was due to a breakdown in the relationship.

#### **Duncan Place Young People's Unit, Dundee**

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**Rossie Farm, Montrose, Angus**

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**The Small School at Red House, Buxton, Norfolk**

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### **Foster Care in Lanark**

108. I went to foster carers in Lanark and I was told that I could stay there if all went well. I was told it was a mainstay which to me at that age meant permanent. The family were lovely and I had my own games console in my room. They had a son but I can't remember any other children there. The house was situated on the edge of a farm and it was a lovely large bungalow. I was there for a maximum of three months.
109. Any time I was going to be moved there was a children's panel. I stayed there until my next panel and then I moved on to my next placement. I don't know why the placement broke down. Looking back as an adult I would like to have stayed there



but as a child I had issues and I probably didn't feel comfortable there because it was still so far away from home. I knew I was back in Scotland and I probably wanted to be closer to home.

**Strathcarron Place Children's Home, Menzieshill, Dundee**

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**Balgowan List D School, Dundee**

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**St Mary's Secure Unit Kenmure, Bishopbriggs**

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**Kibble Education and Care Centre, Paisley**

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## Home

152. I went home and there was a two week honeymoon period and then I was back to square one where my needs were being neglected and my mum didn't care properly for me. I put up a fight about going to school because I preferred to watch educational programmes on television. I was pushing it and starting to smoke weed in the house. My friends were coming round and we were getting drunk. I caused a lot of the issues myself but my mum couldn't handle what I was doing. She was no longer hands on. That was where the neglect came from.
153. I should have been attending [REDACTED] High School and a garage where I was an apprentice mechanic but because they made me run around like a tea boy I packed it in after two or three days. Nobody had explained to me that you make a cup of tea for a week or so and then get to do the job so there was neglect again from my mum and the education people. I would have loved to be a mechanic because I loved to drive.


## Balgowan School, Kirkton, Dundee

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**The Elms Children's Home, Charlestown, Dundee**

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### **Life After Being in Care**

185. My grandmother lived with my mother and when I moved home she was dying and that destroyed me because she was like a mother to me. I had a row with my mum and my grandmother intervened. I spoke back to her, walked out and that was the last time I saw her before she died.
186. My mum's marriage to [REDACTED] broke down after fifteen years. [REDACTED] told me to leave the house and I ended up with a friend and his mum for a couple of weeks. We made a plan to go to Edinburgh and work so we moved there and lived with his auntie. I had left Dundee so I was in a new city and I was trying different things. Things didn't work out so I left there, went to the council and ended up in the system for the homeless. A few months after that I was introduced to heroin again.
187. There was a place where people would congregate in the morning to get their breakfast but there was also dealing going on. I used false names when I was arrested by the police and I moved around a lot. You had to be eighteen to use

certain facilities like night shelters so I had to lie about my age. The staff knew I was younger but they were making sure I was safe. I wasn't criminally active at that point.

188. At 17 I went to Polmont for four months. There was no contact with the social work department when I was in Polmont. I was in Perth on remand for about a month and [REDACTED] 2003 was my liberation day. I didn't like prison. I was slopping out and I got the real experience and that put me off which was good. I got out for good behaviour. I had my liberation money and I had a free ticket so I went to Edinburgh and got high. I was on heroin until I was 21.
189. On my 21<sup>st</sup> birthday I was in a police cell in Perth in custody in relation to another car offence. I served probation and did community service. I managed to get my head together again and I withdrew myself from heroin by smoking weed. I stayed in a homeless hostel called Cunningham House in Edinburgh. They provided three meals a day plus supper. I came off the heroin cold turkey in my room. They knew what I was doing so they checked on me and encouraged me to eat. Six months after my 21<sup>st</sup> birthday I was clean.
190. I met the mother of my children, [REDACTED] in a bed and breakfast when I was homeless and we were together for just under ten years. I got a flat in Edinburgh from Edinburgh council with the kids' mum but we had a volatile relationship and we were unfaithful to each other. We ended up in Dundee in 2013 and lived together until 2017. We have two children, [REDACTED] and [REDACTED] and I am in regular contact with them. They live in Motherwell.
191. After we separated I took the children to Glasgow with me initially but then [REDACTED] took them back and then blocked my contact with them. [REDACTED] and my brother and sister all have their own homes and jobs. [REDACTED] was on the dole for as long as I can remember but he is working now.
192. I rented a room from my brother for a while. Rita says in my records that I needed a home with a family unit where I felt safe. When I was settled, I was settled and this was usually within a family environment. I did everything I could to keep my family

together and when that cracked, I cracked. Instead of criminality I packed my job in because of my mental state. I was offered speed by a guy at work and I took it and that led to a spiral out of work.

193. Predominantly I have worked in kitchens. I worked in Burger King in Edinburgh but I lost this job as I was homeless. I have worked in kitchens at horse race meetings through agencies. There was no structure to my work life. I was always interested in art but in 2012 I upped my game and set up a business.
194. I had a mental breakdown and moved to Edinburgh but things didn't work out so I moved back to Dundee and I have been here for just over a year. Near the end of my stay in The Elms I thought I would like to go back work with children in care in order to make a change but I am not ready to do that. I now have a registered limited company and I have a new business idea.
195. I am engaging with Future Pathways. I am also in touch with the jobcentre and they have provided me with a laptop. I hope to support the local community with the majority of the profits so that we don't need the care system in the future.

### **Support After Leaving Care**

196. I needed a one to one after I left the care system like a befriender for my first year out of the care system when I was sixteen. My mum abandoned me before I went into care but I also felt abandoned at the end of my time in care as I didn't get any kind of support. I didn't have trust all through care because the staff weren't communicating in the way I needed them to communicate and they weren't supporting me the way I needed support.
197. It was quite a shock to me when I went to Through Care After Care and I was looking for Rita and I couldn't get her and I was allocated Neil. My contact with Through Care After Care was on the phone. Anytime I needed money I would phone and they bailed me out through my homeless period and got me back from England.

I was predominantly based in Edinburgh but I went to places like Middlesbrough and Newcastle, Leeds and York. I was a little bastard and I needed a boot up the backside but nobody did this. They effectively funded my drug habit and then they withdraw financial support when I was twenty. I thought Through Care After Care lasted until you were until 21.

198. The prison ran a scheme called SACRO for aftercare of prisoners and that was the closest to any sort of social work support I got.
199. I ended up on the [REDACTED] with my ex-partner and I got six sessions with a psychologist to help curb my weed smoking. Even then I didn't feel supported properly as I couldn't relate to the psychologist.
200. I was part of a chat group of ex residents and staff members from Red House.
201. I am on a 33 week waiting list for a psychologist appointment through my GP. I requested this because no one helped me get it. I have put myself forward for this psychological evaluation because I want to know if there is anything I should be addressing before it gets worse or something could be triggered later on in life.

### **Impact**

202. I am looking for an acknowledgement of what went on in my past. I am struggling mentally now and I want a psychological evaluation to get an answer. I am a deep thinker and I like to philosophise.
203. I maybe have PTSD. I am hyperactive but I am undiagnosed because the care system never looked at it properly. I had an appointment for an assessment when I was in care but it didn't take place for some reason. I think Rita would have arranged this. I am worried about my physical health but I am not getting answers so this is affecting me mentally as well. I have had lifelong depression but I can pull myself out of it.

204. I have memory issues due to cannabis use over the years. It mainly affects my short term memory but it doesn't affect my long term memories and the flashbacks I have. I suffer from hyperhidrosis as a result of social anxiety and I take medication for this.
205. I have difficulty with social interactions as a direct result of being in care and being messed up by the education system. I am not very good at connecting with people socially. People like me but on the inside I am scared when I am talking to them. To this day I don't have friends because I don't trust people. I think everybody I trust or love will either be taken away or disappear.
206. I missed a lot of my education as a result of my delinquency. I did creative things when I was in care but nothing was followed through. If I got to a job interview with a limited CV I wouldn't get the job over someone who had a good CV.
207. I was a smoker and eating sweets all the time so this affected my oral hygiene. This was going to happen whether I was in care or not but I was not encouraged to go to the dentist in all placements.
208. A child who has been in care for a long time is more likely to become a drug addict or to be fair will become some form of self harmer through drugs, drink, alcohol or indeed prostitution etc. My drug abuse was a direct consequence of being in care and also because my biological father was not in my life. I think I turned to drugs because I was easily led as a result of not being educated about the impact of drugs. I was exposed to weed early on in the care system and it was a form of escape. More and more I wanted to hide away from the world.
209. I have been on my own for three years since the breakdown of my relationship because I won't trust anyone so easily the next time. Being in care has impacted my self-esteem because there is a stigma to being a child in care so I am cautious about sharing my experiences with new partners.

210. My homelessness was a direct result of me leaving care. If the job had been done properly I would have stayed in care or I would have been in independent living. I ask myself whether they gave up on me because I was difficult. The things that have happened in my life are a direct result of me either being brought up wrong or being put into the care system or both.
211. I was in a single room for the majority of my time in care. I was in single rooms in bed and breakfasts and hostels and when renting a room from someone. This room becomes your space. I adjusted to the homeless system easily because the room felt like home to me because of what I had learned in care. I had at least thirteen placements and this did not include respite care. I learned that moving about was okay to do because I was moved so often and that change was good.
212. As a direct result of being moved about my brain has a mental breakdown, shuts down, then opens up again and starts again. That has happened me numerous times over the years. I may be uneducated in a formal sense but I am educated in life experience and I have had a lot of time to think about it, particularly in prison cells and in solitary confinement. I don't like being drunk or around drunk people unless I am on that wavelength. I generally don't drink.
213. I don't have flashbacks as much these days as I seem to have called them somehow, but I have memories whenever I am talking about my experiences. I want people to know this happened to me and I want my experiences on record. I have nightmares sometimes during stressful periods. I sweat through the night and this is maybe as a result of dreams I don't recall.
214. I am trying to build a relationship with my mother but she doesn't really pay attention or listen to me. She is more interested in the television. That hurts but it is expected. She doesn't want to admit to what she has caused.
215. For the last three years I have been trying to find myself. Since contacting the inquiry I have thought more and more about my past. I want to express myself through my creative side. I still have a childlike excitement but I have never had the key to unlock



it properly. It squeezes through the bars of an imaginary prison and I want to be able to open the gate.

216. The mental health of children was never looked at properly when I was in care unless it was evident. I should have been assessed while in care and I should be assessed now as a priority as a compensation. I should be able to walk into a college or university and enrol because I want to learn something but I didn't get the right education to progress into that. I would love to have been a stuntman but my skills were never encouraged and that is a failure. Children asked for things but were shut down or challenged. In some areas of care people were lazy.
217. Everything I have experienced up to this day has been as an indirect or direct result of being in care and my earlier upbringing with my mum. Half of my life with my mum and half of my life in care. Five years of homelessness. Ten years of a relationship. Three years of trying to find myself and learn something. No person should have to grow up like that. I know I will be alright in the future whether I get support or not but it is still there at the back of my head.
218. I have had time to reflect on my time in care and my life up until the present day. I call myself a philosopher. I want to write a book about my experiences in care and what I can do from these experiences.
219. I am a completely different person now to what I was growing up and that is all thanks to myself. I may not be in the perfect place but I am getting there.
220. I would like compensation and I am owed a scholarship at university. I will claim if I have to and get an award but I would sooner make a difference. Any money I would get would go right into the community in Dundee. I haven't spoken to a lawyer about claiming compensation although I do feel I am owed something in terms of an education. I have been on benefits long term although over the last three years I have started to come away from them.



221. I have had brief contact with Neil Davis in the last few years and we have discussed what happened in the past. If I wasn't channelling my energies into my art and creativities I would have probably ended up in prison. If I wasn't so strong mentally because of what I have been through I would be in a bad place. Later on I developed an interest in art. I want to write a book about my life and there should be a movie too.

### **Reporting of Abuse**

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Secondary Institutions - to be published later

### **Records**

223. I recovered my records but I left them in the family home in Dundee when I separated from my partner. I requested them from Dundee City social work department and the procedure for obtaining them was straightforward. I got ten boxes of paperwork although there were a lot of things missing and a lot of things blanked out. A lot of those were forms relating to my absconding. I wanted to know why the things were blanked out but they would not answer.

### **Lessons to be Learned**

224. I hope the Inquiry can achieve a better understanding of a young person's mind. Children in care need one to one support and my company will be able to help with this. Private companies should not be contracted for security services. Care staff should be trained and placed into that role. Secondary Institutions - to be published later
- Secondary Institutions - to be published later The inquiry needs to listen to what it is being told by the children who were in care.

225. I am very much an advocate for change in the care system. Children in care would respond to me on a one to one basis because they could relate to me. Snobbery, to me, equals authority. I could relate to the carers who grew up around the rougher edges of life. You need someone who can connect with you on an emotional level and staff need to be properly vetted. The majority of the staff during my time in care were good. There was a lot of good out there but there was a small proportion of bad. There were staff members who studied and went on to university because they wanted to better themselves and do things properly
226. A family should be extracted from the family home to a nice pad where they can be given support. The focus can then be on them and they can be observed. Children's homes are a breeding ground for rubbish. Homelessness is a breeding ground for drug use, mental health issues, violence and crime. If a child is having difficulties you remove him from the home for a cooling off period and place his family in another house like a holiday home away from any bad memories of the other house. It would be like a holiday to the family and they would all be given intense support.
227. My mother needed help too because she was bipolar. I was moved out of my home town away from my family like I had done something massively wrong and I have never been able to get my head around this. There has to be help for everyone involved. People have to be educated about their mental health issues. Communication with that child is key and the family of that child. I am mentoring a child at present and he is really responding to me.
228. Part of the process of leaving care should be to teach people about work in the care system.

#### **Other information**

229. Secondary Institutions - to be published later

Secondary Institutions - to be published later

230. My mum still has some contact with Rita. This is because they live In the same city, but don't see much of one and other.

231. 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.....EPT.....

Dated.....27 April 2021.....