

Scottish Child Abuse Inquiry

Witness Statement of

Michael BULLA

Support person present: Yes

1. My name is Michael Charles Bulla. My date of birth is [REDACTED] 1976. My contact details are known to the Inquiry.

Life before going into care

2. My mother's maiden name is [REDACTED]. She married twice and later on had the surnames [REDACTED] and [REDACTED]. She is from West Pilton in Edinburgh. My father's name is [REDACTED]. He is from Germany. My mother met my father in Mallorca. My mother got pregnant with me, my father moved to Scotland and they got married. I was born in Edinburgh. My mother was seventeen when I was born. I believe that my mother was training to be a nurse at the time she had me. I stayed with my mother and father in West Pilton for the first two years of my life. My mother gave up her nursing training so she could look after me.
3. I have no memories of the time when my father was with my mum. My mum has told me that my dad was violent towards her. She has also told me of an incident where I went to touch a fire. She said that my father went to put my hand into the fire to teach me a lesson. I don't know whether that is true or not.
4. My father left my mum when I was two years old. He met a German woman and moved back to Germany. After he left I didn't have much contact with him. My father ultimately married another five times. He eventually emigrated to America. He currently lives in Orlando in Florida. I have three half-sisters and one half-brother

on my father's side who live in Germany. I also have a half-sister on my father's side who lives in Mexico.

5. My mother did re-marry but that was after I went into care. She married a man called [REDACTED]. He is now dead. I have a half-brother called [REDACTED] who now lives in Edinburgh. He is thirteen years younger than me.
6. After my father left I lived with my mum. Life at home was very difficult. My mother had two jobs. I remember that she worked in a shop in Stockbridge called Toy Tub. I remember going to my grandparents whilst my mum was working. My grandmother was called [REDACTED]. My grandfather was called [REDACTED]. They also lived in West Pilton. I spent most of my time with them. My relationship with my grandparents was good. I remember them making me fried Scottish breakfast, mince and potatoes and haggis
7. Before I went into care I went to St David's Primary School in West Pilton. I only spent a short time there. I remember that I had a teacher who treated me as one of her favourite children. I remember sitting on her knee during class. I used to tell her that the work was too difficult for me. Because of that I was allowed to play with toys whilst the other kids were doing their school work. I remember going to my grandparents at lunch time for my dinner. Those are the only memories that I have of my time at St David's.
8. One day, when I was about five and a half years old, I was walking to school. I decided not to go to school and went to the West Pilton adventure playground instead. I went there by myself. I was approached by a man who was a glue sniffer. I didn't know him. He was high on glue. He grabbed me and raped me. He then threw me into some wet cement. After the incident I went to my grandparents. My mum was there. I told her what had happened and then she gave me a bath. She then decided that she wouldn't be able to prove what had happened to the police. Neither my grandparents or my mum ultimately called the police. The incident was never reported.

9. After that incident my behaviour became erratic. I had behavioural problems. I became very difficult and I remember my mum being very stressed. I remember her hitting me. That's what happened in those days when children misbehaved. People did smack their children. Society has changed now. It's very different now.
10. My mum got in a babysitter to try and help out with looking after me. She left me on my own with the babysitter. My mum discovered that my babysitter was giving me medication to get me to sleep. I am not sure what medication it was but my mum has described the situation as me being "drugged". When my mum found out about that she wasn't happy. She didn't report the babysitter to the police. Looking back it wasn't a good thing that the babysitter was giving me the medication. It could have harmed me. I think my mum was stressed back then. She was looking for help with looking after me. I think that was why she got the babysitter in to look after me.
11. At that time the area my mum and I lived in had a problem with gangs. I remember my mum having a brick thrown through the window in the house. It was a hard and violent area. There was a lot of crime. My mum's house got burgled nine times. I also remember that there was a person who had done not nice things to children who lived next door. When my mum found out about that she drove the man out of the estate. It wasn't a nice area to grow up in.
12. My auntie's name is [REDACTED]. She is my mum's sister. I only saw her a few times because she didn't get on with my mum. I think she knew about the rape because my mum had told her. She approached my mother and asked whether she could adopt me. My auntie had money and said that I would get given private schooling if she adopted me. However, my auntie also said that if my mum allowed her to adopt me she wouldn't allow my mum access to me. Because of that my mum turned my auntie's offer down.
13. My mum was diagnosed with depression and couldn't cope with looking after me. My auntie was concerned about my safety. She was under the impression that my mother was going to kill me. My mum has since said that she wasn't going to kill me but that is what my auntie thought. My auntie then got in contact with the social work

department. I don't know whether there had been social work involvement before then. It was after that that I was taken into care. I first went into care at the age of six.

Secondary Institutions - to be published later

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Secondary Institutions - to be published later

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In those days people just got moved. They didn't tell you what was happening before you went. They just told you you were moving and that was it. It was all done suddenly.

Dr Barnardo's, South Oswald Road, Morningside, Edinburgh

22. I can't remember what age I was when I went to Barnardo's. I would estimate that I was about six years old. I was in Barnardo's for a long time but I can't remember exactly how long. It was for years not months. I might have been still at Barnardo's when I was about ten years old. The children were all around about the same age as me.
23. It was like a big mansion with a garden, playground and grounds. Downstairs there was a kitchen, a big dining room, a TV room, a snooker and pool room, an office and a games room. There were a lot of dorms in the house. They were all upstairs. You had access to all of the rooms except the office.

Staff

24. I think everybody had a key worker but I can't really remember who was mine. There were a lot of staff. It would be difficult for me to say how many but I do remember some of them.
25. [REDACTED] was called [REDACTED] BDL [REDACTED]. He was a big heavy man. He was very fat and strong. Sandy was [REDACTED] [REDACTED] He played the guitar and was into the rock group Van Halen. He lived with his wife and kids in a flat that was attached to the children's home. He was around the home all of the time. [REDACTED] BEI was a member of the normal staff. She was a care worker for the kids. The cook in the kitchen was called Tony.

Routine at Dr Barnardo's

Routine

26. I can't remember anything about the day to day routine whilst I was there. You were in the home during the week and you didn't get to leave. You spent a lot of time in the care home. I did, later on, get to go home to my mum's at weekends.

Sleeping arrangements

27. Some of the rooms were shared at Barnardo's. Others were single rooms. I had to share a room with other boys. I remember there being maybe five or six boys in the same room as me. I can't remember the age of the boys who were in the same dorm as me.
28. When the kids were asleep at night a staff member would sit outside of the dorms. They stayed there until they thought the kids were asleep. I know that because I wasn't always asleep and remember seeing them not being there.

Mealtimes / food

29. I think we had all our meals together in the dining room. The meals were cooked in the kitchen. There was a proper cook in the kitchen called Tony. I think the food was good.

Clothing / uniform

30. There was no uniform to wear. The home bought us our clothes. We didn't have very good clothes. You could choose your clothes when you went shopping for them with the staff. You went wherever you could afford to get clothes within the budget they had.

Pocket money / possessions

31. They gave you pocket money. You got it once a week. I can't remember having any possessions. If I did it wouldn't have been much.

Chores

32. Everybody had to take their turn hoovering or cleaning. You had to do that in your room or on the landing. I can't remember anything more than that.

Leisure time

33. There was a playground there. I remember playing japs and commandos with the staff in the garden. You could play outside any time apart from mealtimes. I didn't get involved with any clubs or scouts or anything like that when I was there. That wasn't encouraged.

Trips / holidays

34. The only thing I remember is that they used to take us to the sweet shop once a week. I can't remember going on any other outings or trips with Barnardo's.
35. I never went to my mum's on holiday. I did go on a holiday to Spain with Barnardo's. I can't remember how old I was when I went on that holiday. We went to Costa Brava and stayed on a campsite. I remember that me and some of the other boys got into trouble for letting the fire extinguishers off. I remember us spraying each other with the water. That was the only holiday I remember having with the care home.

Birthdays and Christmas

36. Birthdays were celebrated. The cook would bake a cake. The children would gather round and sing happy birthday. I don't think your parents could visit you on your

birthday if it wasn't at the weekend. Visiting was restricted to certain times. I was in the home during Christmases that didn't fall on the weekends. You got presents from Barnardo's.

Visits / inspections

37. I had an outside local authority social worker when I was in the home. Her name was Iris Fletcher. She came in to see me maybe about once a week. I got on well with her. Nobody else came in to visit me from outside of the home.
38. I don't remember any inspections or people coming in from the outside.

Leave

39. When I was in Barnardo's to begin with I couldn't go home at the weekends. I don't know how long that was for. My mum had to go to court to allow me to go home at weekends. She had to fight for that and she won. After that I saw my mum and grandparents at the weekends. I went home to my mum's house every weekend. By that time my mum had remarried and my stepfather was also there. They had met in the catholic church. I think the fact that my mum had re-married and that my step-father had a job was part of the reason why my mum was successful in getting the court to let me go home at weekends. They had also bought a new flat. I remember the visits home being good.

Healthcare

40. On one occasion the children's home took us on an outing to a play park. I can't remember how old I was at that time. We were playing chicken. I went in under the roundabout. My leg got caught and got broken in two places. I was taken to the hospital, had an operation and had my leg placed in a plaster cast. Other than that I don't remember seeing a doctor. I don't remember seeing a dentist. There were no psychologists or psychiatrists in the home. I was never referred to anyone.

Discipline and punishment

41. I can't really remember how the staff disciplined the children. They might ground boys for a day in their room if they had been fighting. I think you could get given chores as a punishment as well. They took your pocket money from you if you misbehaved. There probably were occasions where you might not get to go home for the weekend as punishment but I can't remember that happening with me. I think those are about the only things that they did.

Abuse at Dr Barnardo's

42. When you first went into Barnardo's there was an initiation from the other boys. You got your head kicked in by the other boys. They did that to welcome you to the children's home. It was like something out of a movie.
43. You had your bullies in the home. There was a hierarchy of bullies and everyone below the bullies was submissive to them. Sometimes a new boy would come into the home, knock out one of the bullies and take their place. It was all physical bullying. It was crazy. The home didn't do anything to deal with the bullying.
44. When I got back to the home from the hospital after breaking my leg they put me in a room on my own. I was put in there so my leg could heal. I remember there was a boy called [BDJ] He used to be one of the other children who bullied me. [BDJ] came into my room. He became aggressive, threatened me and pushed me onto my bed. [BDJ] then sexually assaulted me. He pulled my pants and trousers down and rubbed his penis against me. There was no intercourse.
45. [BDL] restrained me when I misbehaved. He would put his body weight on my chest. I remember not being able to breath properly. I understand that people have to be restrained. However, he was too large to be applying that pressure to my chest. Nowadays the way in which he restrained me would be viewed as unacceptable.

46. [REDACTED] BEI wasn't very nice to me. She was responsible for my care for a long time. She had big long sharp nails. When I misbehaved she would lift my top and scratch my chest with her nails until my chest was bleeding. She did this every time I didn't do what she wanted me to do. I can't remember how many times she would have done that to me.

Reporting of abuse at Dr Barnardo's

47. I did tell a staff member about what was going on in the home but nothing much happened. He didn't believe me. I don't remember his name. I didn't speak to anyone about the incident with [REDACTED] BDJ. I didn't tell my mum. It only came out in adult life.
48. I told [REDACTED] BEI I was going to report her. I did. I reported to a staff member what [REDACTED] BEI was doing to me with her nails. The staff member didn't take it seriously. [REDACTED] BEI carried on what she was doing after that. She continued to scratch me. I don't know how long that behaviour went on for. It just carried on.
49. These things in the care homes happened all the time. It becomes normal. There is also peer pressure from other children. The other children would think you are soft if you made a complaint. I got bullied by the other children when I was in Barnardo's as it was so making a complaint would have just made things worse.

Leaving Dr Barnardo's

50. I left the home on bad terms. I wanted to leave because I was getting bullied and suffering abuse from the staff. I went into the kitchen, turned the gas on and set fire to the home. I was trying to blow the place up. I was punished by the home for trying to do that. I was made to clean the kitchen. I did a little bit of it but ultimately refused to finish doing that. Later on, I jumped over the wall with another boy and

set fire to a workman's hut in a neighbouring building site. Later on still I broke into a nearby garage, doused it in petrol and tried to set it alight. The owner caught us and called the police. I can't remember what happened next.

51. I only did those things because I wanted to be moved. It was the only way I could get out. I had to do something extreme to get moved. I can't remember how I was moved. I think the police might have taken me away.

Secondary Institutions - to be published later

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Secondary Institutions - to be published later

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Secondary Institutions - to be published later

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Secondary Institutions - to be published later

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Dr Barnardo's, Cruachan, Balerno, Edinburgh

69. Cruachan was in Balerno. I didn't know who ran the home. I thought it might have been private. It was a normal big house. I was maybe there for a couple of years. I maybe would have been about twelve or thirteen when I went there. It was a mixed home so there were boys and girls. I can't remember how many children were there in total.
70. The other places I had been in up until that point had all been old school boys homes where there was no affection or love. I found them hard. Cruachan was a good home. I think it was a home for children who had emotional problems. I remember someone telling me that once.
71. I have no complaints about the staff or the way I was looked after. There was no stress there. The groups of children were small. It was a calm environment in a nice area of Balerno. The kids weren't violent towards each other.

Staff

72. The staff spent a lot of time engaging with the kids. They would interact with you normally and they listened to you. There were one to ones. You felt you could speak to the staff. That was the first place I felt that I could do that. I can't remember whether there was a lot or too few staff in the home.
73. I remember a staff member called Christine. She was the manager of the home. She was older. She was maybe in her fifties back then. She was nice. I remember her saying to the kids "sit down on your chorus and verses" instead of saying "sit

down on your arses". She didn't want to say the bad words. There was another staff member of staff called Martin. I remember he was into music.

Routine at Cruachan

Sleeping arrangements

74. It was all single rooms.

School

75. I went to school when I was there. That was the first time I had really been to school since I had been at St David's. I remember that by that time I could read but my writing wasn't that good. I can't remember where I had learnt to read. I couldn't do maths.

76. The school that I went to was a special school in Kingsinch, Edinburgh. I don't know who made the decision that I needed to go to a special school. The other children in Cruachan went to different schools. I was the only one who went to the school in Kingsinch.

77. I didn't like going to the school because it was a special school. I felt embarrassed. I remember being taken to the school in the school's bus. I remember being made fun of by people from other schools. They called the bus "the mongo bus." I was in a class with children who had downs syndrome and children who were in wheelchairs. I found it all very difficult. I didn't enjoy going and there were times when I refused to go.

78. There was an incident at Kingsinch concerning a teacher called Mr Boyd. He was a crabbie bad tempered man. I was in his class. We were cutting and polishing stones using a lathe. I asked him if I could touch the blade whilst it was working. He

said “touch it and see what happens.” I chose not to touch it. Looking back I didn’t have any common sense then. I could well have touched the lathe and got injured.

Leisure time

79. When we came home from school we played or watched TV. I don’t remember any clubs or sporting activities.

Visits / leave

80. I think I had contact with my mum and I think I went home at weekends. I can’t remember having any contact with any external social workers whilst I was at Cruachan.

Healthcare

81. I don’t remember seeing any psychologists or psychiatrists. I don’t know whether any of the staff at Cruachan were trained in that area. As far as I know, I didn’t see a psychologist or psychiatrist throughout my whole time in care. I don’t ever remember seeing a doctor or dentist whilst I was in Cruachan.
82. One time I went into a toilet. It was about the time when I started to become aware of sex. I was touching myself. I wasn’t doing it right. I pulled on the skin too hard and there was blood. I was worried I did something wrong. I went to a staff member and told him what had happened because I thought I might need to go to hospital. The staff member talked to me calmly. He talked through what had happened and made sure I was alright.

Discipline / punishment

83. The staff all had good communication and people skills to deal with any problems. That made a big difference. You felt you were treated like a human being. If there were problems the staff would speak with the child. They would get to the root of the

problem and sort it out in a good way. I don't remember ever being naughty. I didn't misbehave. They didn't restrain the children.

Leaving Cruachan

84. Cruachan was always a temporary place for me. That had been explained to me so I realised that I would be moved on at some point.

Secondary Institutions - to be published later

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Secondary Institutions - to be published later

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Secondary Institutions - to be published later

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Secondary Institutions - to be published later

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Aberlour Trust, 44 Whytemans Brae, Kirkcaldy, Fife

100. Aberlour is a special home for young people who have suffered abuse or have emotional and behavioural problems. It was set up by a man from America called Tim Foley. I was there for about a year. It was based in the middle of a housing scheme. It was a small group of children who were there. There were five girls and one boy there. I was more independent there. It was good and I enjoyed it.

Staff

101. Tim Foley was the manager of the home. There was a member of staff called **BBB**. He was a care worker. I had a good relationship with him. He did weights and stuff. I can't remember whether he was my key worker. He used to go out with another member of staff at the home and they had a baby together.

Routine at Aberlour*Sleeping arrangements*

102. I shared a room with one other boy called **AJC**. He was from Aberdeen. He was a bit older than me.

Pocket money / possessions

103. I got pocket money. I had an electric guitar and a pedal. The staff bought that for me. I used to collect vinyl at that time. I collected picture disks.

School

104. I went to Balwearie High School when I was there. I went to a special unit that was attached to the mainstream classes. The children in the unit had behavioural problems and disabilities. There were children with down's syndrome, children in wheelchairs and children with behavioural problems. Some of the children could do certain subjects in the mainstream classes. They tried to integrate me into some mainstream classes. They tried to get me to go to the art class. I couldn't cope at that time. I had no foundation to understand what was going on. I couldn't get on with the other children. They knew I was from the special unit so I was treated differently. It wasn't a nice situation.

Leisure time

105. They encouraged me to go to clubs whilst I was in Aberlour. They paid for that. You could go to any club that you wanted. I wanted to join a boxing club. I did that for about a year. I also tried Thai boxing. As part of all of that I went jogging every day after school. I enjoyed it and I became very fit and strong. Aberlour also arranged for me to have guitar lessons.

Trips / holidays

106. I didn't go out on any trips or holidays with Aberlour. I just went out with my friends in the scheme.

Healthcare

107. I had an accident at Ravenscraig Castle. I fell off a sixty foot cliff. I had to go to Kirkcaldy hospital. I was only body bruised. My mum and step-father came to visit me in the hospital. The accident got mentioned in the newspaper. My name wasn't mentioned because I was in care.

Friends

108. I had some friends in the housing scheme. I just met them when I was out and about. They were older than me. They were in their twenties. At that time I was into heavy metal and they were too. I think they just saw the way I dressed, worked out that I was into heavy metal and said that I could hang about with them. They knew I was from the children's home. I played guitar with one of my friend's younger brothers. I would visit my friends, have some food and play scrabble with them. It was nice. The staff in the home allowed me to be friends with them.
109. The people I hung around with didn't do me any harm. They protected me. I remember there was a problem with football casuals back then. One of my friends, [REDACTED] would sort anyone out with a big chain if there were any problems.

110. At the age of about fifteen and a half I got a tattoo. It was a rude tattoo. The home weren't happy that that happened. They wanted to know who had done the tattoo. I wouldn't tell them. I couldn't tell them because the guy who did it was a member of the Hell's Angels. The last thing you want is a member of the Hell's Angels going after you.

Abuse at Aberlour

111. There was another resident called **AJC** who was bullying me. He shared my room with me. It wasn't a good situation. On one occasion I was going up the stairs in Aberlour. He was coming down the stairs in the opposite direction. **AJC** kicked me several times in the face. He burst my face. The staff didn't do anything. They spoke to me after that incident but not that much. Later on I tried out what I learnt at my boxing classes on **AJC**. **AJC** was then scared of me.
112. I remember being out in the scheme with **AJC**. We were in the street. I remember him pointing to a girl who was a friend of **AJC**'s and saying "right you, you're going to get shagged." **AJC** then took the girl behind some nurses flats across the road from the home and had sex with her. I can't remember whether she resisted. I don't think they were in a relationship. It could have been all just patter but I am not sure. I didn't think it was very nice.
113. I used to play fight with a staff member called **BBB**. There was one time, when I was about fifteen and a half, when **BBB** hit me on my arm. He hit me too hard and badly bruised my arm. He was just too rough.
114. The girl in the home was called **██████████**. I remember that all of the other boys in the home had sexual intercourse with her. I remember one of the boys being called **██████████**. She wouldn't have sexual intercourse with me because I had long hair and the way I dressed. She told me that she would have sex with me if I cut my hair. I refused to do that. There was one occasion when she invited me to her room to

have sex with her. When I got there she was asleep. I never had sex with her in the end.

Reporting of abuse at Aberlour

115. I reported what happened with **BBB** to the children's home manager, Tim Foley. The home in turn called my mum and step-father. In the end the people at the home told me that if I got the police involved **BBB** would lose his job. I was aware that **BBB** had a small baby and family at that time. I decided to take no further action.
116. It was a difficult situation to be in. I knew that if **BBB** lost his job it would affect his life and family. The home didn't do anything further and **BBB** got to keep his job. I didn't have contact with him after that whilst I was in the home. I wasn't in the home very long. I was due to leave so it would have only been a matter of months.
117. I do know that **BBB** worked in the home for a number of years after I left because I visited the home when I was about twenty four. I think I visited because I was thinking about moving back to Kirkcaldy at that time. I was offered some help to move back to the area and went to visit. **BBB** was still there.
118. I could hear **██████████** having sex. I heard her once having sex with two boys, **AJC** and **██████████**, in the bathroom. If I could hear her having sex then the staff must have been able to hear her having sex too. I don't know whether they did though. I can't remember the staff stopping the boys having sex with **██████████**. Looking back it was wrong. **██████████** was underage and she could have got pregnant.

Leaving Aberlour

119. I was told that I was going to leave in advance. I was told by Aberlour that they could help me get my own house and integrate me into society in Kirkcaldy. At that time I wanted to go back to Edinburgh and stay with my mum and my step-father. I

wasn't really having much contact with them at that time but that is what I wanted to do.

120. I left Aberlour when I was about fifteen and a half. There was no preparation before I left. I just left care. There was no social worker or support worker help after that. I was just left to come out of the system. I think I would have got support if I had stayed in Kirkcaldy but because I moved in with my parents that wasn't available.

Life after being in care

121. I went back to my mum and step-father's in West Pilton when I was fifteen and a half. By that time my mum and step-father had had [REDACTED]. My first job was in a fish factory called Kellys in Newhaven. They used to pay cash in hand. Just before I was eighteen I worked for a building company called JA Construction. They were doing the extension to The Royal Sick Kids Hospital in Edinburgh. I worked there for a year as a labourer. I helped all the tradesmen that were there. I helped the scaffolders, brick layers and stonemasons. I also remember being a banksman. I then had an accident which meant my shoulder would come out of its socket. I had to get an operation to fix my shoulder. The injury meant I couldn't do labouring any more. I then went into catering. I washed dishes before becoming a commis chef. After that I did various jobs through employment agencies. I worked for British Pipes. I also did other jobs.
122. I was getting bullied by gangs of casuals outside of the West Pilton area. There were gangs in places like Muirhouse, Drylaw and Granton. The gangs between the areas didn't get on. If the casuals from the other gangs saw me going into their areas they kicked my head in. The thing that made things worse was that the casuals knew that my uncle worked for the police. That didn't make things easy.
123. I got into drugs when I was about eighteen. Up until that point I had never been interested in drugs. The reason I got involved with drugs was because of pushers. They wanted to give me drugs for free. They kept on "in my face" all the time. They

kept on approaching me in the street. I couldn't get away from them. I ended up saying "yes" because the pushers wouldn't leave me alone. I found it difficult to say "no". Once I was into the drugs that was it. I took methamphetamines, acid, DF's, tablets, Valium, cocaine and smoked hash. I got into crime.

124. My time in West Pilton wasn't nice. My time with my family had been good but as soon as I got involved with drugs it tore the family apart. It was having an impact on other people. I ended up getting into trouble with the police once a year every year for ten years. People have said to me that I have a long criminal record but they don't realise that it was really only for things happening once or twice a year. I have a lot of convictions but they aren't all together and they're all for different offences.
125. When I was twenty I made myself homeless and went to London. I slept on the streets. I used to go to a day centre called New Horizons. It was a place set up for teenagers and young people. I now know that I am only one of two people who went to that centre who is still alive. All the other people died. Some were murdered, others died of drug overdoses and others ended up in prison. I also used to go to a day centre called London Connections. I ultimately got barred from there because I stole their guitar from their music room.
126. I eventually got off the streets through getting a live in job in a pub. I did the bar meals. It didn't pay very much. The manager of the bar was an alcoholic. He was a nice guy but when he was drunk he would swear at the customers. He was jealous of my guitar. One day, when I was about twenty one, the manager threw my guitar across a room. I threatened to beat him up. I decided to leave. I stole six bottles of beer from behind the bar and posted my keys through the letterbox. I then went back on the streets. I started going to a job centre. They were connected to an employment agency that allowed you to get jobs here and there for short periods. I worked in a few hotels and restaurants.
127. When I was about the age of twenty two I was homeless. I was contacted through London Connections by a German television production company called "Create

TV". London Connections had been receiving letters on my behalf from this production company.

128. I discovered the production company were making a TV show called Oliver Geissen. It was a show a bit like Jerry Springer. The TV production company had been in contact with my half-sister [REDACTED]. She had been adopted and was looking for her family. [REDACTED] had seen my name in her adoption paperwork. The production company wanted me to meet [REDACTED] on Oliver Geissen.
129. I agreed to become involved. The production company gave me some expenses and paid for me to fly to Cologne. I remember having to get a temporary passport because I had never had one before. All of a sudden I found myself on this TV show. It was very confusing because everybody was speaking German. There was a screen that I wasn't aware of. All of a sudden the screen went back. My half-sister was sitting there. She didn't know she was going to be seeing me. It was a surprise. She hadn't been aware that the production company had found me. That was the first time I ever saw her.
130. I decided to go to Nottingham. I wanted to start again. I was again homeless. I went to a day centre called Emmanuel House. I met a girl who was working there. We formed a relationship and we fell in love. I then got a job and a house. I was in a relationship with her for two years. I wanted to get married to her and have a family. I got on well with her parents. The problem was that the relationship became very "clingy". We couldn't do anything without each other. I decided to end the relationship. It took us six months to break up.
131. I then went down to Brighton. I was homeless again. At that time I wanted to meet someone to marry, have children and get a job. I had a relationship with another woman for six months. I ended that relationship. I then moved to Newcastle. I entered into a relationship with a married woman. Her husband was being abusive. I helped her get to a woman's refuge. I couldn't get a house in Newcastle. I stayed in homeless hostels. After that I went back up to Edinburgh. I was about twenty five when I came back to Scotland.

132. I was initially homeless when I was in Edinburgh. I remember feeling mentally ill and asking for a psychiatric intervention in the Grassmarket medical centre. I was refused that help. I should have gone to The Royal Edinburgh Hospital for help at that point. That didn't happen. I eventually got a house in Edinburgh. After that I moved around Scotland. I was homeless most of the time.
133. When I was twenty six I went on a one night stand with a woman. We had drinks together. She came on to me. We had consensual sexual intercourse. Afterwards I went to give her a kiss. She wouldn't give me a kiss. I asked her why she didn't want to kiss me. I panicked. I had it in my head that I was getting set up for something. I then hit her. I then went to the police. I gave them a statement. They wouldn't listen to what I was saying. The girl ended up telling the police a completely different story.
134. I ended up going to court. I got sent to the Royal Edinburgh Hospital for assessments. I was there for six months. I was locked up. I later on went back to court. I told my lawyer that I wanted to plead not guilty to the rape. I wanted to plead to guilty to the other charges. I wasn't guilty of what I was accused of. My lawyer then passed my plea on to the prosecutor. The prosecutor then refused my plea of not guilty in the way it was formed. The prosecutors told me that if I didn't plead guilty then they could change my charges to a more serious charge. My lawyer then told me that if I plead not guilty and lost my case I could be given a life sentence. He told me that he wanted to see me come out of prison. He encouraged me to plead guilty followed by a plea of insanity followed by a plea of diminished responsibility. He also advised me that I should ask to be placed in a permanent place under the mental health act. The QC then refused to take on my case if I pleaded not guilty. I ended up taking the advice from my lawyer. A plea bargain was then done and those pleas were then made to the judge. The judge refused my pleas and ruled just to send me to prison for nine years.
135. I regret making that decision because I later learnt from my appeal lawyer that most of the evidence against me was inadmissible. That was because the police had

interviewed me without a lawyer being present and whilst I was intoxicated. The police doctor had also told the interviewers that I appeared to be mentally ill and should see a psychiatrist before the interview. The arresting officers all ignored that and took me to the interview anyway. Another thing was that there were three confessions made by me. They were all different from one another and all different from the accuser's complaint. They also differed from the flatmate's statement. I don't know why I wrote the confessions. Looking back I don't think I could defend myself because of my mental illness and stress.

136. I ended up going to prison for a total of nine years. I initially went to Saughton Prison. It was very hard. The first four years of prison I would fight with the prison officers and other prisoners. I was put in solitary confinement a lot. My mental health got worse. The prisons' opinion was that I was in prison to be punished. They told me that I wasn't allowed to go to The State Hospital in Carstairs. I was then moved to Peterhead. I was then moved to Dumfries Prison during and after my failed appeal. I did education for five years whilst I was there. I gained qualifications. I studied art, computers, communications and some maths. I also got some cleaning qualifications. I was a model prisoner over the last five years of prison.
137. I came out of prison in 2011. I got my own flat in Gilmerton Village. I went to Edinburgh College and did an adult returners course to gain more qualifications. I did sociology, psychology, basic German, computer and sports and fitness. I had friends and socialised with them in town.
138. I had kept in contact with [REDACTED] in Germany whilst I was in prison. She knew everything about what had happened. She suggested I come to Germany to start a new life. I then asked the police permission to move and they said yes. I moved to Germany in 2014. I stayed with my [REDACTED] her five children and her boyfriend. I then moved out of [REDACTED]'s and moved to Bremen. Things didn't work out. I have done what they call a "one euro job" for the last ten months. It's a job you do that allows you to earn an extra one hundred and eighty euros on top of your benefits from the job centre. I worked in a kitchen followed by a place for ex-offenders. I

didn't like it because I didn't want to be around other ex-prisoners. I am now working in a bakery baking bread which I quite like.

Impact

139. Being in care hasn't been healthy for me. It has impacted my behaviour and personality. I didn't get much love or affection. That has had a very bad impact on me. It's lead to me being involved in crime, drugs and being homeless.
140. My time in care has affected my ability to form and keep relationships. You feel as if you are being rejected by society. People in care act differently to those who are in society. You don't get to go to work, school and grow up in a family when you are in care. You miss out on growing up with friends and peers. You don't learn certain social skills in care. Your social skills are different to those people have outside of care. When you don't grow up fully in society you interact differently from those around you. My behaviour can sometimes be viewed as inappropriate by those who don't know me. That is because I am different because I have not had the opportunity to have normal interactions in the past.
141. I think people find me strange because I grew up in children's homes and prison and because I have mild learning difficulties and bi polar affective disorder. People don't have an insight and understanding into my own personal experiences. I can't tell normal people the experiences I have had because I think they would be afraid of me if I did. My past is a heavy thing to talk about. Some people would never understand where I am coming from.
142. I can now reflect on my experiences. I understand that what happened in care has made me the person I am today. I realise that I am sensitive and don't like confrontation. I am better at keeping relationships. In the past, if I had an argument, I would just end the relationship.

143. I don't know whether my mental health problems have always been there or they have been affected or created by my time in care. It is hard to say when they started. It could be a bit of both. My mum and auntie believe that I had mental health problems when I was a child. They think that I had those problems long before I was diagnosed with them. My mum did ask my social workers for psychiatric intervention when I was in care. They wouldn't provide that. When I was a kid people just thought I was a bad kid. No one assessed me to see whether I had psychological problems.
144. In 2006 my mother paid for an independent psychologist to examine me and write a report. The psychologist diagnosed me with mild learning difficulties, bi polar affective disorder and trauma. I didn't have that diagnosis when I was a child.
145. Since moving to Bremen I have been in the psychiatric hospital three times because I was unwell. I now have periods of manic depression because of my bi polar affective disorder. I didn't have that back then. My mental health has changed since I was in care in that way. I have a psychiatrist. I have a support worker who helps me read my letters and documents as many of them are in German. The psychiatric hospital funds my support.
146. I do take medication to help me with my mental health. It helps me. It helps me avoid my manic episodes and manage my illness. I realise that it helps me for the better. I never feel suicidal. I don't know why people avoid taking medication because it has really helped me. People should take medication because it can improve their lives.

Reporting of Abuse

147. When I was young I didn't have an education. I didn't really go to school. I didn't understand how the system worked. I didn't know how to report things. There was no one who helped me understand how the system worked. You had to try and learn it yourself. That was not always a simple thing to do.

148. The problem with reporting what was happening back then was being believed. Back then society was very different. Things weren't so clear. There wasn't someone you could speak to if things went wrong. If something happened because of one member of staff and you reported it to another member of staff you would be told that you are talking nonsense. You just wouldn't be believed. People only believed things if they saw it with their own eyes. That's how a lot of things didn't get looked into.
149. In 2002, whilst I was in Saughton Prison, I told the prison officers that I wanted to speak to the police. They arranged for police from Lothian and Borders Police to come in. There was only one person there who interviewed me. It was a man. That is strange to me. Normally it is two officers or detectives who come out to interview you about things like this. I reported everything that had happened to me whilst I was in care. That was the first time I spoke to anyone about it all other than my mum. The man told me that some of the people who were involved in the abuse concerning me were old. He told me that they didn't want to send those people to prison because they thought that those people were too old. That was the last time I reported what had happened to anyone.
150. I think that the police didn't do anything when I reported the abuse because I had a criminal record. The problem in Scotland is that when you have a criminal past, and have been a victim of crime yourself, you get denied access to justice. In my experience the police will not press charges against anyone else. That is not fair. I think that is why the inquiry is a good thing for me. It allows me to be heard.

Records

151. I don't currently have copies of my records. I had a copy of my care records once but my mum threw them out. It was a big box. I would like to get a copy of those records in the future because I want to read them. It would give me a chance to

reflect on what happened and see other people's points of view. It would help me understand what went on in the past.

152. My mother paid for an independent psychological report from an expert while I was in Dumfries Prison. They got my records and looked through them. The report is dated August 2006. The consultant psychologist was called Dr Bruce Laurie. I still have a copy of that report. It has some useful points in it that are worth reading. It has some things about my childhood in it and some things that my mum has said.

Lessons to be Learned

153. I think the care system is different to what it was like thirty years ago. Nowadays they try to put children with families. They don't have these big boys homes. I think those places are a thing of the past.
154. I think that people from a very early age who were in my situation should have an assessment with a psychologist or a psychiatrist. I believe that there are children who have mental health problems who haven't had them diagnosed because there hasn't been an intervention at a very early age. I should have had an intervention as soon as, or before, I went into care because of the abuse I suffered. The abuse I suffered in the adventure play park in West Pilton was something that was very traumatic. I know that that sort of thing is why people develop behavioural problems.
155. I've maybe only had two years schooling during my whole childhood. My education in prison and at college has improved me. It has helped me develop. I think that if I had had a decent education earlier then I wouldn't have become a delinquent. I think I should have gone to a normal school in a normal class maybe with a little bit extra help. I realise that I had a mild learning difficulty but my main problem was that I had missed a lot of education through being in care and being moved around a lot.
156. I grew up in the system from a very early age. At times I felt that being in care was a punishment. It wasn't my fault that I was placed in care. I am angry at the system

for all the negative experiences. I hated the system when I left care. I hated it even more when I experienced what I did with the Scottish judicial system. I am very angry. There were no safeguards put in place as a child and adult, and people have taken advantage of that.

157. I have no objection to my witness statement being published as part of the evidence to the Inquiry. I believe the facts stated in this witness statement are true.

Signed.....



Dated.....

9/10/2018