

**Scottish Child Abuse Inquiry**

Witness Statement of FKO [REDACTED]

Support person present: Yes

1. My name is FKO [REDACTED] I was born on [REDACTED] 1970. I am 46 years old. My contact details are known to the inquiry.

**Background**

2. I am local to the Falkirk area where I have lived for most of my life although I was born in Edinburgh. The family moved from Edinburgh to Bo'ness when I was about 3 years old. I am the middle son of five children. My brother [REDACTED] and sister [REDACTED] are older and my brother [REDACTED] and sister [REDACTED] are younger. [REDACTED] is a step-sister whose birth parents are my mother and step-father. My mother remarried [REDACTED] who is my step-father. [REDACTED] is now deceased. My father is also deceased.

**Life before going into care**

3. My father worked in a bar and mother did not work. I don't remember much about my father. In 1977 I went to the train station in Falkirk and said goodbye to him. My mother and father had split up and my mother was with another man called [REDACTED] who would later become my step-father. I did not see my father for another 33 years. My sister traced him to Glasgow. I went through to see my natural father in Glasgow. I spoke to him for a few hours in the hope that he could fill in some of the gaps in my life. I recall that was a Thursday and unfortunately my father died the next Friday morning.
4. My mother and I have a strange relationship only because I choose to. She does not deserve to have her family round about her because of the way she

treated us when we were children. I have always been surprised at how much I could remember from my early life and so when I confront my mother with these memories she either denies it or can't remember it happening. I blame my mother for what happened to me in my childhood and early life. I have tried to discuss this with my mother but she just denies it ever happened

5. I had happy memories of my birth father even though I remember him smashing my face of a settee. I was only about 5 years old when that happened and it was one of a number of times I was assaulted at home. My mother always told me that my father was in jail most of the time during our childhood and that was the reason he was absent from the house when we were growing up. I am not sure if this is true or not.
6. My step-father was much worse than my father. He would regularly beat my mother up in front of us. I can remember running to the nearby phone box to call the police as we were unable to stop him. I recall being dressed in nothing more than a pair of underpants. These incidents usually ended up with us being put back into a care home somewhere.
7. I remember on one occasion when my mother and father were unable to look after us an old neighbour came to pick us up at the house. At that time we had a dog. She arrived in a red van. She told us she couldn't take the dog as well. When we drove away the dog chased after the van and after a while it collapsed exhausted in the street. I think that it died of exhaustion. I remember watching this out of the rear of the van.
8. We once tried to get away from my step-father [REDACTED] when my mother took us to Weedens Hall which was a children's home. We had to walk from Grangemouth to Polmont. On route [REDACTED] caught up with us in his car. He drove the car into my mother and pinned her against a tree. We ran to the home. When we came back my mother and [REDACTED] had gone and that was us back in care.

#### **Care homes before foster care**

### Care homes before foster care

9. At some time or other all of my brothers and sisters were in care during childhood. My father was very abusive towards my mother and physically assaulted her on numerous occasions. There was regular involvement with the authorities and we were put into temporary accommodation on a number of occasions. At one time I was in an institution in Edinburgh but I was only a toddler and I can't recall the name of the place. I can remember the smell and the fact that we were sleeping in cots. I think that I was there when my brother [REDACTED] was born as I recall someone saying that my mother was in hospital giving birth.
10. While we were at this institution in Edinburgh I remember waking up one of the mornings and noticed that [REDACTED] was not at breakfast. The staff told me that he had run away. [REDACTED] was with the older children. I think that the home could have been in Broxburn. I don't remember being abused there. My mother is adamant that I was only in care once in my entire life. My mother does not want to be the bad person so she denies a lot of the stuff that I remember.
11. My memory is very good and I can recall being in various homes and places during my early years. On occasions we were put into temporary accommodation as there were problems between my mother and father. We had a fair amount of dealings with Social Services in those days.

### Moving to foster care

12. My sister [REDACTED] and I spent most of our time in care and foster care together. There were a few occasions when [REDACTED] and [REDACTED] were with us but this was not very often. I do not recall ever being abused in any of the many children's homes we stayed in.
13. In [REDACTED] 1979, [REDACTED] and I were placed in the foster care of a family called [REDACTED] FKA-FKG [REDACTED] They owned a farm called [REDACTED] This was a sheep farm

consisting of 900 acres. It was situated between Stirling and Denny in Scotland. At this time I would be eight years old and [REDACTED] would be nine.

14. I did not know at the time but having consulted my records I have subsequently learned that the reason we were put into foster care was because we had been in various children's homes and my mother was asked if she wanted us back. She told the authorities that she wasn't ready for our return. As a result of this she lost her "Parental Duty of Care" and it was then taken over by the Social Work Department.
15. The Social Work Department at the time realised that it was not in our best interests to be moving from one children's home to another. They asked [REDACTED] and I if we would like to live on a farm. We could not believe our luck having been living from place to place. Being given the opportunity to live with animals on a farm in the countryside was wonderful. We thought that we would be riding horses and the like but instead all we were to find were sheep, cows and two monsters.

#### **FKA-FKG's Foster care**

16. Initially we were placed with FKA-FKG [REDACTED] for weekends only. It was to see if we would fit in. FKG [REDACTED] and FKA [REDACTED] had three children of their own. They were called [REDACTED] who was the same age as [REDACTED], [REDACTED] who was the same age as me and [REDACTED] who was about three. They had another foster child called [REDACTED] who was about three years old. [REDACTED] was there before we arrived
17. These initial weekends staying with FKA-FKG [REDACTED] family were great although I also saw a side to FKG [REDACTED] that made me slightly cautious. He would be very angry with us if we made too much noise in the morning. But FKA [REDACTED] was great she made home baking and we had plenty of cakes to keep us happy. On the whole I thought that it was a great place to stay.



I had slight reservations about FKG at this time. We were to remain with the FKA-FKG for about 16 months

### Routine

19. [REDACTED] and I shared a room at the farm. FKA and FKG had their own room and the other children were spread between the other bedrooms in the house. The routine was similar to any family at that time. At first everything seemed to be fine and [REDACTED] and I were treated well.

### Visits

20. At some time there was a complete breakdown of relationships between my mother and my foster parents. I don't know what exactly happened. We used to meet our mother once a week. We would tell her everything that had happened during the course of the week. I remember FKA-FKG wanted us to call them mother and father but I didn't like that it freaked me out. Every time my mother left the farm to go to her house we would all get very upset as I still loved my mother and couldn't understand why she was leaving without us. I was only a young boy.
21. When relationships broke down between my mother and FKA-FKG my mother was no longer allowed to go to the farm. We would meet my mother at a children's home called Cultenhove. My brother [REDACTED] was living at this home. The Social Worker would pick [REDACTED] and I up every Wednesday and we would meet with my mother for about an hour before the social worker took us back to the farm. Once again this was very upsetting.

### Schooling

22. Whilst I stayed with FKA-FKG I attended St Patricks School in Denny. All the FKA-FKG children also attended this school. The school was like any normal school.

### Food

23. The food provided by FKA-FKG was very good. FKA was a good cook and made lots of homemade food. We always sat down at a big long table to eat with the whole family present. FKA and FKG would sit at either end of the table.

#### Birthdays and Christmas

24. My birthday was the one day that I would be treated nicely and given a present. We were left alone that day and FKA-FKG family were very pleasant towards me. FKA actually said to me that this is the one day that you will be left alone nothing happens to you on your birthday. Christmas was another matter and no presents were passed out. They were spent at FKA-FKG house and not with my own family.

#### Running away

25. Both [REDACTED] and I ran away from the home on several occasions. We were usually caught nearby and brought back. This did not improve the mood of FKG and FKA and often made things worse and we would again be punished. We were caught and brought back by the Police on several occasions. Despite telling the police what was happening they always took us back and said that they would have a word with FKA-FKG. I don't know what was discussed between FKA-FKG and the police but it didn't seem to make any difference.

#### **Abuse**

26. My first recollection of abuse at the house happened one day we were all sitting at the dining table. [REDACTED] who don't forget was only three, was sitting on a pine stool at the table. On reflection this was not a clever thing because of her age. [REDACTED] couldn't eat a brussel sprout as she couldn't cut it up. She put the sprout into her mouth in one go and started to gag on it. I watched FKG looking at her. He then hit her with the back of his hand and knocked her off her stool. She fell to the floor and

continued to gag on the brussel sprout which was still in her mouth. I couldn't believe what I was seeing. I had not seen violence of this nature since my step-father had beaten up my mother. I thought I was in foster care and would be safe from violence. I was in shock at what I had seen.

27. I remember thinking that the mother of the house should be the person to help a child but she didn't do much to help. In fact as it turned out FKA would become the worst abuser. Both FKG and FKA were particularly cruel to [REDACTED]. I witnessed what they did to her on many occasions. I can remember FKG passing her door at night and knocking on it just to waken her up.
28. FKA-FKG children then started to get in on the act. They started leading us into traps where we would get the blame. I remember on one occasion when we got off the school bus at the road end. We had to walk about a mile up the road to get to the house. I must have been about 8 or 9 years old when [REDACTED] and [REDACTED] suggested that we swear all the way up the road. [REDACTED] and I joined in and when we got to the house we were punished for swearing while the FKA-FKG children got off 'scot free'. They knew that they could wind [REDACTED] and I up and deliberately did so to get us punished. We were like their play things. I never saw any of FKA-FKG children being punished.
29. One night we were all watching the film the Poseidon Adventure. Someone farted and FKG and FKA asked who it was. No one said anything. You could feel the tension in the room. I didn't want the film to end as I knew that someone was going to get it. [REDACTED] and I went to our room and FKG and FKA came in shortly after. They told us to take off our pants and let them inspect them. They also said that none of the other kids had been responsible as they had denied it. FKG then set about me while FKA set about [REDACTED]. They were hitting us all over our bodies. FKG was lying on top of me on the bed. [REDACTED] was the victim of a frenzied attack from FKA and even FKG had to stop her as [REDACTED] was cut and bleeding. She was thrown about like a rag doll.

30. We were punished every day usually with a slap on the head. FKA barred me from having any cakes or sweeties. I found this hard and tried to steal a cake. Of course I was caught and punished again. FKA was doing this quite deliberately knowing what would happen. We were too scared to do anything.
31. One time I was out in the field with FKG during the lambing season. I was fine helping till we came across a sheep that was having difficulties. There were two lamb's heads appearing and the sheep was struggling. FKG said that he would have to cut off one of the lamb's head so that the sheep and the other lamb would survive. I was horrified and tried to walk away. FKG brought me back and made me sit down and watch while he cut of one of the heads. I tried to look away but he wouldn't let me. I was traumatised by this.
32. During the winter there was a very heavy snow fall. There were snow drifts the height of the farm house. We were unable to get to school as the road was blocked. We were all confined to the house. I was wearing a pair of shorts and a polo neck sweater. It was nice and warm in the house. The front door of the house was not used as we always went in and out a side door. FKG and his son shouted for me to come to them at the front door. I was living on my nerves at this time and suspected that something was up. FKG grabbed me and threw me into the snow drift on at least three occasions. I tried to laugh it off but then they locked the door and wouldn't let me in. I was starting to feel the cold and was banging on the door. FKG then opened the door and threw a bucket of water over me and again closed the door. I remember passing out and that is when they let me back in. I had a very bad cold for weeks afterwards.
33. This led to another problem. When I was sitting at the dining table I couldn't breathe because of all the mucus. I was having to constantly blow my nose and was very embarrassed. As a result one day I came down to the table and my place was not set. I was told that because of all my snorting and blowing I would have to eat my dinner in the small toilet in the back of the house. It was a very old fashioned toilet and I was made to eat my dinner of the toilet seat. It was not even on a plate. It was because I was not fit to sit at the table. Strangely I liked being in



on a plate. It was because I was not fit to sit at the table. Strangely I liked being in the toilet because it meant that I was safe and away from the pressure being applied by FKG and FKA and I had peace to eat my food.

34. FKA-FKG children were not particularly friendly and could inflict more misery on us by telling tales. I recall one night camping out in a tent in the garden. In the morning [redacted] and I had a disagreement he stabbed me with a tent peg and I punched him in the face. I ran away and managed to avoid everyone for most of the day. I was eventually caught by the police and brought back.
35. During the search for me, the day I ran away after the camping incident, the FKA-FKG found a pile of dirty socks under my bed. I had put them there because I was getting a row for putting too many dirty socks into the wash. FKA confronted me about the socks and she made me give a full explanation as to why I had left the socks there. The real reason was she was a cruel bitch and had told me not to put the socks into the wash but I couldn't say that to her.
36. There was another occasion when I came into the kitchen and FKA was making the dinner for that night. I asked her what was for pudding and she told me it was chocolate mousse. I told her that it was one of my favourites. That night she gave me an extra helping but it tasted of bleach and I struggled to eat it. I don't know what was put into it but I couldn't leave the table until it was eaten. It took me three hours to eat it. It was just another episode of her cruelty.
37. We had to call FKA-FKG Uncle FKG and Auntie FKA which I did not like either. FKA was constantly leading us into a situation that she was manipulating to enable her to turn on us and punish us for our reactions to that situation. She would also try to turn [redacted] and I against each other.
38. FKG and FKA used to tell me to lower my eyes. I did not understand what they meant by this. FKA used to scream at us to lower our eyes and until she explained what she meant we were being constantly punished. She used to slap us and tell us not to look at her but to keep our head bowed looking at the ground.

39. FKG used to take me into to my bedroom to punish me. The curtains would be closed and the lights would be off. He would just be sitting there. He would ask me what I had done wrong that day and would say that I needed punished. He would tell me to feel his hand and explain to me that his hands were very hard as he had been working on the farm all day. He would tell me to take down my trousers and pants and tell me to lie across the bed. He would just sit there in the chair and watch me. Then he would hit me across the buttocks and punish me for something I may or may not have done.
40. Although I was not aware of any sexual assault on me I have since thought about these incidents. I now wonder what FKG was doing behind my back and why he behaved in this manner. I suspect that there was some sort of sexual implications but as I say I was not aware of any sexual assaults on me.
41. FKA-FKG were trying to cause trouble between [redacted] and I so the only person I could speak to was a teddy bear that I had brought from a children's home I had been in. I spent a lot of time speaking to that bear.
42. The only time that FKA was nice to me was on my birthday. She told me that nothing would happen to me that day. She was so nice I honestly felt I could have loved her. It was like the Christmas Day in the First World War when the soldiers stopped fighting and played football. But when it was over the battle started again.

### **Reporting of abuse**

43. I tried on several occasions to report the abuse we were suffering at the hands of FKA-FKG family. Every time I ran away and was brought back by the Police I told them what was happening. They just shrugged it off and told me that there was nothing they could do but would have a word with FKA-FKG [redacted]
44. On one occasion after having been at a meeting with my mother at Cultenhove Children's Home we were brought back to the farm by our social



44. On one occasion after having been at a meeting with my mother at Cultenhove Children's Home we were brought back to the farm by our social worker Jim Roberts. We sat with him at the road end to the farm and told him what was happening to us on a daily basis. [REDACTED] and I both pleaded with him not to tell [REDACTED] family what we had said but instead to try and get us away from the farm. We were with him for over an hour trying to explain.
45. After he had dropped us off Jim sat down with [REDACTED] and had a long conversation with them. We were now too terrified to say anything to anyone about what was happening because we knew that [REDACTED] would take it out on us. I could never trust Jim Roberts again.
46. On every visit with my mother we told her what was happening to us and she listened to what we had to say. She said that she was going to kill [REDACTED] but nothing ever happened and she didn't do anything to help us.
47. The result of us telling Jim Roberts seemed to have the desired effect but at a cost. The abuse didn't stop. On one evening [REDACTED] sat down with [REDACTED] and I and told us that we were to be moved to Weeding's Hall Children's Home. We were instantly happy but had to pretend to be sad. The worst part was that this was not going to happen for another six weeks. [REDACTED] told us that in our remaining six weeks we would be made to feel miserable. She added that "when we came back home it would be the worst six weeks of our life and we would be lucky to survive it". We couldn't understand why we were not being moved immediately. That night at the conclusion to a visit with my mother at Cultenhove Children's Home, [REDACTED] and I ran away. When we were caught we pleaded with the authorities not to take us back. At last someone listened and we never returned to the [REDACTED]
48. Because I was constantly running away I was also seeing a child guidance specialist called Miss Fox. I remember telling her that we were living under a constant threat at [REDACTED] and asked why they were waiting six weeks to move us. I think that Miss Fox managed to speed up the process and got us away from [REDACTED] family.

## Reporting to the Police

49. In later life I reported the abuse to the Police on more than one occasion. In 2002 both [REDACTED] and I reported the matter to the local police. I was informed that it would be investigated and that they would get back to us. After a year and a half I again contacted the police and was informed that the officer that was dealing with it had moved on and basically nothing further had been done.
50. In 2005 when my daughter was very ill the Police again came and took statements from both [REDACTED] and I. After the police enquiries were completed I was informed that FKA-FKG [REDACTED] had been charged with child abuse. I was dealing with my daughter's illness at this time and in honesty didn't pay much attention to what was going on.
51. In 2007 I again contacted the police and the Procurator Fiscal to find out what was happening. I wrote a lot of letters and made a lot of phone calls. I finally received a response from the Procurator Fiscal that stated that "no charges were being brought against me". I couldn't work out what that meant as my complaint was against the FKA-FKG [REDACTED]
52. On 19<sup>th</sup> February 2014, I tried to make a fresh complaint with the Police. They looked out my file and interestingly my first complaint was made on the 19<sup>th</sup> February 2005. The police officer told me that Procurator Fiscal had looked at the case and had marked it as no further action with no explanation. The police told me then that the Procurator Fiscal had decided that there would be no further action and that the only person who would be able to give them the reason why would be the Procurator Fiscal.
53. I again contacted the Procurator Fiscal and was informed that because the case was more than five years old they did not have a record of the reason behind the decision to mark the case as no further action. The police were of the opinion that there was sufficient evidence to bring the matter to court but explained that the final decision was in the hands of The Procurator Fiscal.

that there was sufficient evidence to bring the matter to court but explained that the final decision was in the hands of The Procurator Fiscal.

54. I have been trying to make a complaint to the authorities about the behaviour of FKA-FKG family since I was ten years old. It would appear to me that no one believes me or are prepared to deal with it. The legal system is not designed to deal with abusers and any time lapse between offences. Abusers are still getting away with it. I feel that I have been failed by everybody.

55. As a result of the Private Session I had with the Scottish Child Abuse Inquiry I again contacted the Procurator Fiscal and asked for a judicial review of my complaint. I have since spoken to Maria Kaczynski at the Procurator Fiscals Office in Camelon. She is heading up an investigation into cases like mine which were initially marked as no proceedings. She has told me that she will make further enquiries and will keep in touch.

#### Leaving FKA-FKG foster care

56. From FKA-FKG we went to Brucefield Children's Home and never looked back. In checking my social work notes in later times I learned that FKA had written to the Social Work Department to complain that FKA and I had been removed from their care at a time when we were both in a punishment period. There was no attempt at complaining about the Social Work action of removing us and I always found this strange that FKA-FKG did not try and defend themselves in any way.

57. I also read in my records that it was recommended that FKA-FKG family were not to be considered as foster parents again but could still at a push take on babies .

58. The last I heard about FKA-FKG was that they had split up. FKG was still living in the Falkirk area and FKA was now living in Spain. That was about eight years ago and I don't know if they are still alive.

### Life after foster care

59. After leaving foster care we went to Brucefield Children's Home in Stirling where we were treated very well. I had major anger problems along with other associated problems relating to the abuse I had suffered. I was seeing a child psychiatrist at age 10 and in the two years I was at Brucefield I was being medicated to keep me calm. [REDACTED] was to develop worse problems than me as she was diagnosed in later life as being bi-polar. I was very aware that my behaviour was causing problems at Brucefield.
60. After Brucefield we returned home to reside with my mother and step-father. It must have been about two years that we were in Brucefield. I was just about due to start the local school when we went back to live with my parents. To be honest it was a bit like out of the "frying pan into the fire". My step-father [REDACTED] was very abusive towards my mother and all of the family. I tried to stand up to him but he was an ex-miner and very strong. He would beat the living daylights out of my mother in front of us. I recall on one occasion he knocked out my teeth with a punch to the face.
61. I remember an occasion just before I was returned to my family from Brucefield. My mother and step-father took us to the Bo'ness fair. While at the fair my step-father picked a fight with one of the show people. My step-father was subsequently arrested by the police. My step-father did not like me and out of sight or hearing of my mother he used to tell me to "fuck off" and keep out of his way.
62. It was back to "trying to survive" in the best way I knew possible. I spent a lot of time trying to avoid [REDACTED] my step-father. My mother and [REDACTED] split up in 2005 and [REDACTED] died in [REDACTED] 2016.
63. At this time of my life I was having issues with my classmates and peers. I was the subject of bullying because of the way I was unable to form relationships or trust anyone.

64. When I spoke to my mother about my problems in foster care she just told me to forget about it and move on. She would not accept any responsibility for what had happened to me when I was in care. She kept saying that the only reason I was in care in the first place was because she was in hospital and couldn't look after me.
65. I learned from studying my records in later life that when I was at Brucefield the staff there did not seem qualified to deal with me and my issues. The social worker had recommended that I go to Dr Barnado's children's home and remain there till I was at least sixteen. Proper care and specialist help could be given to me there. It was also recommended that I did not return to my mother's care because of the on-going domestic issues. Of course this did not happen and I was back home with my mother and step-father with all the abuse.

### **Impact**

66. One of the things that I fail to understand is how can FKA-FKG family continue to beat two small children who had been subjected to watching their own mother being beaten up by their step-father. I feel that the child care system was responsible for destroying most of my early life.
67. On the whole I am very glad that I have been able to cope with the abuse I suffered. I still find it very hard to deal with some issues surrounding my own family. If I put my son in his car seat I have a feeling of dread and imagine him being in a car crash. I am always waiting for something to go wrong such as when I went to visit my birth father for the first time in 32 years. The next day he passed away.
68. In 2006 I had to cope with personal tragedy when my daughter [REDACTED] passed away after an illness. I found this particularly hard although I was being supported with trauma counselling. I also have been receiving Eye Movement Desensitisation and Reprocessing treatment, (EMDR) through In Care Survivor Service Scotland (ICSSS), which is helping me to deal with the parts of my life I have not been able to cope with.



## Records

69. I applied for and was subsequently given a copy of my records covering the period of my foster care with FKA-FKG family. The records were held by Falkirk Social Work Department. They run from February 1978 till the present day. Although the records are redacted to remove the names of the persons I was dealing with they are an accurate record except for the way that the incidents have been recorded. I have spent a lot of time reading the records and although I can recall the incidents, they did not happen as they have been described by the FKA-FKG or some of the social workers involved. I do not have any faith in the accuracy of the records.
70. I have handed over the complete file to the Scottish Child Abuse Inquiry today so that the Inquiry can read the details and will be able to authenticate the accuracy of my statement should it be required.

## Other information

71. I am very keen to provide oral evidence to the Inquiry about my time in foster care and other children's homes. I have no objection to my name being used and do not require anonymity.
72. I feel frustrated that I am unable to find out why no proceedings were taken against FKA-FKG. I feel that I have been let down and that I have nowhere else to go. I want to see FKA-FKG answer my allegations against them. Or do I just give up and call it a day knowing that nothing will ever come of it?



73. 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.....  
FKO

Dated..... 23/11/16