

Scottish Child Abuse Inquiry

Witness Statement of

EET

Support person present: No

1. My name is EET. My date of birth is 1944. My contact details are known to the Inquiry.

Life before going into care

2. My mother's name was . During the war she met an American soldier, a G.I and she became pregnant. He soon said goodbye. When my mother had me, my grandmother, put me in a home because it was a disgrace back then. My mother was nineteen, but it was a disgrace to have a child without being married and also my father was a black man. My mum went to work in Ireland after that. My gran came to see me for the first six months or so, in a home, which I believe was near the Tunnocks factory in Bothwell or Coatbridge. She stopped visiting me at some point and I think that's when I went into Dunclutha Children's Home.
3. My mum went to Ireland because my grandmother took me away from her. It was when I was in hospital that they took me away from my mum, straight away, and put me into care. But my grandmother used to see me then, as a baby. I wasn't in the first place long. My mother said my grandmother wouldn't tell her much in case she tried to get me back. My grandmother was probably right in a way, because that's how they behaved in those days. I was in that place for a couple of weeks, not long, I was just a baby.

4. I went to Dunclutha Children's Home, then Gryffe Castle until I was eleven, before I went into foster care in Stevenson, Ayrshire. I stayed there until I left school. They didn't tell me anything when I was leaving Dunclutha, they packed my bags and I was away. I remember going to Gryffe Castle when I was seven.

Dunclutha Children's Home, Dunoon

5. 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



Leaving Dunclutha Children's Home, Dunoon

14. I was about six or seven when I left Dunclutha. Nobody told me I was going beforehand, they just said, "We're going", and I was put in a car. They packed all my bags.

Gryffe Castle Children's Home, Bridge of Weir

Secondary Institutions - to be published later



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Leaving Gryffe Castle Children's Home, Bridge of Weir

31. When I left Gryffe, again I wasn't told I was going. We saw Mr Brough and Mr Meldrum a couple of days before, so that may have been them coming to tell the nurses I was going. I was quite happy in Gryffe. The foster parents never came up to visit me before I went there to stay.

Foster care – EER-SPO ██████████ ██████████ Stevenson, Ayrshire

32. Mr Brough and Mr Meldrum took me to my foster parents. I had never met them before. Their names were ██████████ and EER ██████████, they stayed in a three bedroomed detached house at ██████████ Stevenson, Ayrshire. I went there and didn't know what was going to happen. Mrs EER ██████████ showed me the bedroom, which I was sharing with two other girls. It wasn't that big, there were three single beds in the room. We all had a little cupboard each and a big wardrobe between us. I went to the house with one of the girls, ██████████ That's her married name, she was ██████████ then. She is three years younger than me. There was a girl already there, ██████████ We were all fostered. ██████████ left about a year after ██████████ and I arrived. I found her on Facebook about three years ago, she now lives in Saltcoats. I only got in touch with her that once. She was a drug addict, she's not very well actually. She is seventy-seven this year.
33. Across the road from where I moved three years ago, this woman approached me and asked if I was EET ██████████ I said I was. She was the niece of my foster mother. She said Mrs EER ██████████ was horrible too. She was horrible to everybody. She is still there, I still talk to her. She recognised me from back then. Her name was ██████████ she works as a school lady. Her father was my foster mother's brother.

First day

34. Everything was easy on the first day, then the ball started rolling. You just find out what school you would be going to, if you can go out to play. You had to get the housework done first, then you could go out to play.

Mornings and bedtime

35. In the mornings I had to go outside and muck out all the animals. Mrs EER was animal mad. She had hens, hamsters, guinea pigs and birds in a great big aviary place. I had to do this every morning and bring in the coal. I was eleven. The other girls had to clean the rooms, the stairs and the kitchen. Mrs EER done nothing. She did the washing but we hung it out. She did the cooking. She made soup, we always ate it, we were always hungry.
36. The foster father was a nice guy. He just sat back and took it all in. He had been married before and his son stayed there too. His name was he was about fifteen, because not too long after I was there he joined the army. He died two years ago, he was eighty-two then.
37. We were up about 7:00 am, we got ourselves up. Mrs EER would come downstairs when all the cleaning was done. I had the freezing job outside. I can't remember when bedtime was exactly, it was when we were ready, after our homework, but it wasn't late. We had a bath at night.
38. We done our chores, had breakfast then walked to school. It was a half hour walk down a hill then through a park. We then had to walk back home at lunch time, have lunch, then walk back. We had time for a bowl of soup before we had to walk back.
39. We wore wellies in the winter and you would have big hacks on the back of your feet, behind your heels. Sometimes they would bleed. Our foster mother would then tell us to get in the bath, but you shut the door and didn't go in because your heels would have stung. When we came in from school we used to wonder about walking

into the house first in case she slapped you. She tried to force you into the bath and hit you all the time.

Mealtimes

40. We didn't get to sit for meals, we stood round the table in the kitchen. Our foster mother gave us butter, which was Stork margarine, a little bag of sugar and a loaf of bread each and told us that was our food for the week. The family ate their meals in the living room. It was the same all year round, even Christmas.
41. At breakfast we got toast from our loaf. She always made soup, so we had plenty of soup. There were chairs in the house, we were just made to stand. Our foster father was very kind, he was a soft man, but he never stopped her doing what she done. It was his second marriage. Evening meals were tripe, tripe and more tripe. She had a collie dog and a Jack Russell and they lay under the table and we would feed them the tripe. We would get belted if she caught us feeding the tripe to the dogs, but she never caught us.
42. I can't ever remember a nice Christmas dinner. I had a friend called [REDACTED] her dad was a baker who worked for Greggs. I was up at their house and he would give me sandwiches, pies and cakes.

Schooling

43. The school was called Stevenson High. It was in the high street. I loved it. I got bullied by other pupils now and again, I was called, 'nigger'. But with me being a tomboy, I would stand up for myself and fight. [REDACTED] was called 'nigger' too and she would go into a corner and cry, so I would stick up for her. They called me [REDACTED], because I could fight like a lad. Even now I hate bullies and I would stand up for people being bullied.
44. They found out I was dyslexic at school. A teacher, Miss Clark, would say, "[REDACTED] go and get the milk", because she knew there was something wrong with me, because I

couldn't study. It was to save me from school work. I wasn't clever, I couldn't take things in, like science. They didn't know much about dyslexia in those days. Miss Clark was very nice.

45. I liked sport, but I couldn't do a lot of that because I was asthmatic. I may have got the belt a few times, for mischievous things, like throwing pieces of paper at people. I didn't get it often. Mr Mason gave me the belt. It wasn't abuse, it was discipline. It was my own fault. Mr ^{EJ} used to throw a duster at me, I would duck and it nearly hit my friend , it would hit her desk. Mr ^{EJ} taught . died when she was thirteen. She got a puppy and she was out with it and went into a derelict house. She picked the puppy up but picked up a loose wire too and was electrocuted.
46. I think it was just nice to get away from the house. We would walk there and back, twice a day.

Clothing

47. Mr Brough and Mr Meldrum would come and see us. They would ask us if we were alright, but she was sitting there, so you couldn't say anything. They brought lovely clothes, we would try them on and they gave us the clothes that fitted us. They were taken from us and given to Mrs ^{EER}'s family. We had nice clothes to put on when they came or if we were going somewhere, then it was back on with the rags later. People saw this and knew what was happening but didn't say anything. We had a school uniform. It was navy blue. This was provided by the welfare.

Chores

48. I had to clean out the aviary and the hen house, the guinea pig and hamster hutches. I brought in the coal. The coal man left it outside, I brought it in and shovelled it into the bunker. I've always said that it didn't help my asthma. When left I had to start scrubbing the outside stairs, that had been her job.

Leisure time

49. If we did the housework we could play outside the front of the house, as long as they knew where we were. We didn't have toys. There was snakes and ladders and ludo, things like that but they were Mrs EER's, you had to ask for them. There was a TV, but we couldn't watch it. We were upstairs or outside playing. We would watch it through the window. Nobody ever gave us anything for us to have personal possessions. We made our own good times. You would mix with your friends and go out and play. She would bring sweets in but we didn't get any pocket money.

Trips/holidays

50. We did go to a few places. We went to Helensburgh, there was Mrs EER her daughter and her daughter, I can't remember her name, and me. Mrs EER, and her daughter went into a place for high tea and we stood outside. This woman, a waitress, asked what we were waiting for and we told her we were waiting on them. She went in and came back out with cakes for us.
51. Mr worked in Ardrossan. He would take me with him sometimes. He was ok. We didn't go anywhere during the summer holidays, we had to play outside where she could see us.
52. Mrs EER was fishing mad. I would have to go down to the beach at Stevenson and dig up worms for her. She would go every Saturday afternoon with her daughter, We loved it. We would tidy up quickly and go out to play.

Christmases & birthdays

53. At Christmas we got a box of toffees, an orange and a pair of navy blue knickers for gym. We were chuffed. She was given a lot of presents for us but she gave them to her daughter who had a daughter. They got all the lovely clothes and we were dressed like gypsies. We didn't think anything of it, we just thought that's how life was. lived down the road from us, her surname was My foster

mother's surname was [REDACTED] before she married [REDACTED]. They had a Christmas tree and we would make the decorations.

54. I can't remember having a birthday, I never had a cake or anything. I was invited to friend's houses on their birthdays but couldn't stay more than ten minutes or she would go mad. She was probably frightened that we said something about how she treated us.

Religious Instruction

55. There was a little church place down the road from us. Tammy Meaney was the Baptist minister there. We had to go three times every Sunday. Morning, afternoon and evening. She put two ribbons in my hair and we had our smart clothes on. Tammy Meaney would keep saying, "Amen, praise the Lord". Mrs [REDACTED] would only go at night, it was only the three foster girls that went three times. Some of the local girls said Tammy Meaney was a pervert, but I didn't see anything like that.

Healthcare

56. I can't remember seeing a doctor much. All I needed was kaolin poultices for my asthma. You can still get it, but only online, because there's morphine in it. My foster mother heated up the kaolin poultice and put it on me. It's hot on your chest and back. She would probably get them from the welfare. There were no inhalers then. I did go to the dentist, this was through the family, not the school. [REDACTED] took me. That's what Mrs [REDACTED] was known as. The dentist was on the same street as the school. Everything was on that street. Stevenson wasn't a big place.
57. Our foster mother made sure sanitary towels were there. We didn't get any sex education. The first time we had a period all she said was, "No boys". We didn't have a clue what she was talking about.

Visits / Inspections

58. Mr Brough and Mr Meldrum came to see us in the summer and winter, twice a year. They brought new clothes and asked us how we were doing, but Mrs EER was there so we wouldn't say anything. We were nicely dressed when they came. They would sit in the living room. We would take the clothes upstairs while they sat there. We wouldn't see the two of them again for another six months or so.
59. Mr [REDACTED] had five children to his first wife. They were [REDACTED] [REDACTED] [REDACTED] [REDACTED] and someone else, but they didn't stay there. Some were in London and elsewhere.

Running away

60. I thought about running away when I was fourteen or fifteen, but I didn't have money and didn't know where to go. I did the best thing and waited until I could leave. I didn't want to get into trouble with the welfare. I was told that if I behaved myself I would be able to leave when I was sixteen. I was away like a shot when that happened.

Abuse at [REDACTED] Stevenson, Ayrshire – Foster care

61. Mrs EER would slap you and you wondered why. She would say your room was a tip, or clothes were lying about. But there was three of us sharing the room and we made sure it was tidy all the time.
62. My foster mother's niece, [REDACTED] stays down the road from me. She said one time she came to our house when she was a kid, to pick up something for her dad. She started walking away and said "Thank you very much", and Mrs EER said, "What did you say?", and slapped her across the ear. She was horrible to everyone.
63. Anything you did, whether it was wrong or not, she would hit you. She would try to throw you in the bath. Our foster father's son, [REDACTED] was good. When he came up

from the army she changed because he wouldn't stand for it. I didn't even come up to pay my respects when she died. I did for my foster father. I don't know why he was so chilled with her. He lost his first wife then married her.

64. We would come in from playing, wash our hands and stand at the table. She would never let any of our pals in. I went to my pals houses. Nobody would visit her. She was called [REDACTED]. Everybody called her [REDACTED], [REDACTED].
65. You always had to come in the back door and you never knew what mood she would be in. [REDACTED] walked in the door in front of me one time and I think she thought it was me. She just smacked her across the face with a belt and it marked her face. She would hit you with her open hand or the belt.
66. You never knew what you had done, she was just evil. It would be a slap across the face or the belt, the strap end of a trouser belt. You couldn't understand why she was doing it. You didn't know when you would get it, sometimes just whoever was first in the house. I would admit it if I deserved it. She would just give you one crack, she was at it all the time. It was always a slap on the face.
67. On [REDACTED] there was a small hill. One day all the newspapers were up there because my friend [REDACTED]'s mum bought a glass door and the virgin Mary was depicted when the sun shone on it. I went up there to see it and Mrs [REDACTED] came up and told me to get home. I said I just wanted to see it and she was going to hit me, she said, "Get down there or I'll smack you". Her niece [REDACTED] saw it and spoke about it to me a few years ago. She was going to hit me but everyone saw her. I eventually went down and she cracked me. She couldn't do it when they were all there. She was just evil, horrible.
68. I can't believe that my foster father didn't bother. Maybe he didn't want to lose her after losing his first wife. He saw her hitting me but never said a word. [REDACTED] would go mad and say, "Why don't you stop her?", and he would say, "Oh, I don't want to interfere". She wouldn't lift her hand when [REDACTED] was there. He stopped her a few times. He told her if she didn't stop it he would report her. Mr [REDACTED] was lovely, just

soft. [REDACTED] was sound, he was good that way and she never lifted her hand when he was about.

69. I didn't suffer any abuse from anyone else, just her. It was continuous until I left. I think the teachers knew what was happening. I don't think they would dare ask questions back then.

Leaving [REDACTED] Stevenson, Ayrshire – Foster care

70. When I turned sixteen Mrs EER [REDACTED] was waiting on another two children coming. I told her I was going to Blackpool to work. She said, "You will end up the biggest prostitute down there". I didn't know what Blackpool was like but I knew it had hotels. I wanted to work in hotels. My mum done hotels and my grandmother worked in hotels.
71. The welfare gave me my train fare down. I came out of the railway station, down Central Drive and there was a café with a sign saying 'Staff wanted'. I went in and asked for a job. It was two gay people that owned it. I didn't know what a gay person was. They said they could give me a job for two weeks until the end of the season. I told them I needed a live in job and they allowed me to stay there. The lads were lovely. I stayed there for two months.

Life after being in care

72. I met a girl called [REDACTED] and we got a job at the [REDACTED] Hotel, it was live-in. We didn't get paid for two weeks until we learned the job but we had a room and we got our meals. We did about nine months for [REDACTED] who was the head waiter. He was a smashing lad.
73. I then met my first husband, [REDACTED] and we got a flat together. We had two children. [REDACTED] was born in 1964 and we were married in 1966. [REDACTED] was born in 1967. I now have eight grandchildren and eight great grandchildren. My husband

was a very good head waiter but he drank too much. I married my second husband, [REDACTED] in 1987. Both of my husbands have passed away.

74. I worked in a number of hotels in Blackpool over the years. I did extra ducking. My first husband worked during the day and I'd go in at night and do banquets then late night breakfasts at two o'clock in the morning, after the dancing. This was extra money for us, because you didn't get taxed when your ^{HUSBAND} wife worked then, you do now. I wasn't an office person, I loved working in the hotels, I loved meeting people. I was in my fifties when I retired. I've had all sorts of cancer. I had pneumonia and pleurisy a couple of years ago and thought I was a goner.
75. I see my grandkids every day, well they're on the phone. My family all stay around Blackpool. They look after me. I had five grandchildren when I traced my mum. I tracked her down in 1990. My mum's surname is [REDACTED] I went to the Church of Scotland library and there were five [REDACTED] listed. I called a [REDACTED] his name was [REDACTED] I asked if he was the brother of [REDACTED] and he said he was but when I said I was her daughter he denied that she'd had any children. He came back to me two days later and asked if I was sure it was his [REDACTED] My mum was ten years older than the rest of her siblings and she was sworn not to mention it to them. He gave me her address. I wrote to her then went to Tenerife. When I returned there was a letter from her and I met her. We got on well. She is white but I am the image of her.
76. My mother's mum was still alive. We went up to see my grandmother, who was in a home, she had senile dementia. She just looked at everyone there but smiled at me. My mum was so kind-hearted and worried that I would tell her off for putting me in a home. I told her I would never have contacted her to do that.
77. I never visited Dunclutha again. I saw Gryffe fifteen years ago, it's now luxury flats. I visited Stevenson a couple of times, twenty years after Mrs ^{EER} [REDACTED] died. She was in her sixties when she fostered us. She died at sixty-eight. [REDACTED] was still staying with her. [REDACTED] lives in Blackpool too. We still get on well. We call each other step-sisters. We went to Benidorm about twelve years ago and these two women

approached us and asked if I was EET that stayed with the EER-SPO I told them I was. They remembered [REDACTED] and I from then. They were a bit younger than us.

[REDACTED]

Impact

78. In a way the abuse has bothered me but I put it to the back of my mind as I think I would have been a horrible person. I've put it behind me. I was asked if I was angry, but I would be angry if I thought about it. I've never spoken to my daughters about it. I've never had counselling, It happened so long ago now. I'm glad I don't think about it a lot because I might be bitter.
79. I've got two good daughters, that helps. I've always been close to my daughters and I have good friends. I've got a good friend in Glasgow called [REDACTED] and we go to Benidorm every year. [REDACTED] is great fun, her daughter has nine children. It was [REDACTED] who contacted me with the details of the National Confidential Forum when she saw it on a bus ticket. I wasn't sure whether to get in touch because I haven't told anyone, but she sent me the details down.

Reporting of Abuse

80. I have never reported the abuse I suffered to the police. I think a lot of years ago they wouldn't have listened. After my friend [REDACTED] sent me down the details from the bus ticket last year I went up to Glasgow. I went to an office there and they asked if I would tell them about my abuse. I gave a statement to them. I think it was the National Confidential Forum. I spoke to a girl called Morag. The main person I spoke to was Angela Ward. I spoke to her on the phone. They gave me the tickets to go up there and I gave a statement. I ring Angela now and again. She told me I might be eligible for compensation. I spoke to them in May last year. I was given £10,000 compensation in July.

Records


81. I have applied for my records but I got a letter from the NHS in Glasgow telling me they cannot find any record of me being in care. I have also spoken to a man called Stewart from Future Pathways, but he said they haven't been able to find anything either. Last year I received a phone call from a female, I can't remember her name, and she told me that she was aware I was in Dunclutha, Gryffe Castle and foster care. I did not receive any follow up letter, so I don't know what organisation she is from. I would like to know who rang me up. I should have taken the details.

Lessons to be Learned

82. Things should be noticed, abuse shouldn't happen. People should be more aware and tell the appropriate people if someone is getting abused. Nowadays it will be a lot better, you will still get abuse, but it is a lot better. They've learnt a lot.

Other information

83. 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..... 14 - 11 - 2020