

## Scottish Child Abuse Inquiry

Witness Statement of

FAK

Support person present: Yes

1. My full name is FAK. My name at birth was FAK. My date of birth is 1962. My contact details are known to the Inquiry.

### Life before going into care

2. My mother was mixed race. Her father was a black doctor who had gotten her mother pregnant and took off. A mixed race baby would have been a scandal for my mother's parents at the time, so they sent her away to Grangemouth when she was born to be brought up by an aunty and her husband. They were both alcoholics so my mother didn't have much of an upbringing.
3. My mother, whose name is on my birth certificate, was fourteen years old when she got pregnant with me. She was sent to a home for unmarried mothers in Dundee, which is where I was born. My birth father is not named on my birth certificate.
4. I was put up for adoption when I was born because my birth mother wasn't fit to look after me.
5. I first went to a couple in Alloa when I was a few weeks old. They intended to adopt me but the woman got leukaemia and I was placed back into care.
6. I was then fostered by the family when I was only three months old. I ended up staying with them and they adopted me when I was eight years old.

7. I learned some of these things from my foster mum, who later adopted me, but she had limited information. I picked up other things from seeing my adoption papers when I was forty years old. I found out the details about my birth mother quite recently, from her other kids.

### **Foster Care – The [REDACTED], [REDACTED]**

8. My foster parents were called [REDACTED]. They went through the fostering process and were vetted and everything. I initially went to them on a short term basis and I was the first child they ever fostered.
9. I later learned that their first placement was supposed to be a baby boy called [REDACTED] but when my dad and my brother went to collect him, the boy was ill. They weren't allowed to take the boy home and my foster brother, who was seven years old, had started to cry. Social services said they could pick another baby and my brother walked around and picked me. He said he wanted the brown baby because I was different. My dad said I had grabbed his finger so they brought me home that day.
10. My foster placement went from short term to long term as my birth mother was living a chaotic life and kept having children that were being taken into care.
11. I was made a ward of the court until it was decided that I definitely wasn't going back to my birth mother, which was when I was about eight years old. Then my foster parents started the process to adopt me, which they did when I was eight years old.
12. My earliest memories are growing up in a happy house. It was a child friendly house, which was probably why they wanted to foster as well as having five of their own kids.
13. I had four older foster sisters and a foster brother. [REDACTED] was my oldest sister, then it was [REDACTED] and then my brother was [REDACTED].

14. [REDACTED] was seven years older than me, and [REDACTED] was ten years older than me. My other sisters were even older and were teenagers when I was wee. I was the youngest and was very much spoiled and had a great time. I was part of the family.
15. We all lived at [REDACTED] in [REDACTED], which was a semidetached three bedroom house.
16. My dad was a manager at the [REDACTED] in Stirling. My mum, [REDACTED] had her hands full with running the house. I called them mum and dad but I always knew I was fostered as I was growing up. They were all white and I was black so they couldn't keep it from me even if they wanted to. They were always very open with me. I was told that my birth mother wasn't able to look after me so I was sent to live with them. I was happy where I was so I didn't ask a lot of questions.
17. I was the only black kid in the village. I never saw another black person until Stirling University opened and I saw black students in Stirling. I remember pointing them out to my parents because I was surprised to see someone like me.
18. [REDACTED] was a village then and everyone knew everyone else. My mum's dad was the organist in the local church and my family were teachers at Sunday School, Brownies, Guides and Boys Brigade.
19. My mum and dad were very community orientated and were well known in the village. People would always be chapping on my mum's door if they needed help. She delivered babies and would help to see people off when they died, and help people when they were unwell. My dad was one of the few people who had a car and he would always help people by getting their shopping or prescriptions, or bringing their relatives to see them if they were ill.
20. I was the only foster child for about six months, then my parents started fostering other kids and there was a revolving door of short term foster placements. They were usually small babies and it seemed like there was always one there. I loved it because I liked babies.

21. My parents stopped fostering when I was about twelve years old because my mum started babysitting her grandkids.

**Routine at the [REDACTED]**

22. The house was like old Mother Hubbard's cupboard, with six kids and two parents in a three bedroom house.
23. My mother kept an immaculate house and we all had chores and a job to do to keep everything ticking over.
24. At night, all the packed lunches were made and the clothes were ironed for the next day. All the shoes would be lined up at the door for the morning. Everything just ran with military precision but it was also a lot of fun. There was also laughter and music, and it was a happy place.
25. By the time I was five years old, the oldest two sisters were married and moved out and I shared a room with [REDACTED] for most of the time. My parents had their own bedroom and my brother had his.
26. [REDACTED] got married and moved out, but then her marriage broke down and she moved back with her little boy who was about two years old. We then shared a room again, with a bunk bed for me and my nephew and a single bed for [REDACTED].
27. My brother died when I was sixteen years old. After that, we moved things around and I got my own room.

### *School*

28. I started school when I was four and a half. I went to [REDACTED] Primary School. It was a small school and I was the only black kid there, but I was just treated like any other kid. There was about eighteen people in my class.
29. I was really bright when I started school, but after primary one, I didn't want to stand out and started to retreat. This is because the abuse had started.
30. We got sewing classes from an older woman called Mrs Strachan. When I got adopted and told her my name had changed, she said that a white family wouldn't adopt a black kid. I was upset and told my mum who marched to school and told the headmaster. Mrs Strachan was pulled up about it and had to apologise to my mum and to me. That was the first time a comment about race was made at school.
31. I started rebelling in primary seven, when I was twelve years old, and broke away from my group of friends that I had always hung around with. I started hanging around with high school kids and started smoking.
32. I went to [REDACTED] High School. It had been a posh school but had started taking local kids just before the time I started. It had a lot of older teachers from a different generation. I remember a teacher commenting on how I had a really good Scottish accent, and asking how it felt to be the only black kid in the school.
33. I was hanging out with older kids and I just wasted my time at high school.

### *Social work visits*

34. Social workers used to come to the house every other month. I knew they were coming because my mum and dad would tell me. I used to hate when they came because I was always worried that they would take me away from my family.

35. Whenever I saw the car pull up, I would get ready to go out and play to get away from them. My mum would tell me that I had to stay and say hello so I would. Whoever it was, would come in and look me up and down, and ask me how I was. I would say fine and go out to play. I never stayed to talk to them on my own.
36. My mum and dad adopted me when I was eight years old. I saw more of social work leading up to the adoption, but didn't see them at all after I was adopted.

*Contact with birth mother*

37. My birth mother, [REDACTED], had contact with me when I was little. She would visit very occasionally, between two to four times a year. I would be told when she was visiting.
38. I would go out to play whenever my birth mother came round and she would sit and talk to my mum and get life advice from her. I think [REDACTED] saw my mum as a mother figure because she'd never had one herself, so she'd tell her all her troubles.
39. I remember my birth mother having a son called [REDACTED], who was my wee half-brother. She would bring him when she came for visits and I have memories of playing with him when I was little.

*Healthcare*

40. I got bronchitis a lot when I was younger and I would see our family doctor, Dr Munn at Alan Park Surgery.
41. I got a general medical check done by my doctor when I was about eight years old, as part of the adoption process.

## *Religion*

42. My dad wasn't religious but my mum had been brought up to go to church. All the kids went with her to church every Sunday, dressed in our Sunday best, and we also went to Sunday school. It was just normal life to me.
43. I was baptised again when I was eight years old after being adopted, with my adopted name.

## **Abuse at the** [REDACTED]

44. My mum's dad, <sup>FHG</sup> [REDACTED] started abusing me before I had started school. He lived with his wife in [REDACTED] at the opposite end of the street from us.
45. I called them gran and grandad. My gran had dementia and leukaemia, so my mum used to go round to their house every morning to help my gran wash and dress, and to help them with chores. I hadn't started school yet so my mum would take me with her.
46. My mum and me would go back to our own house at lunch time and then back to my gran and grandfather's house in the afternoon.
47. If the weather was nice, my mum would take my gran out. I would usually go with them, but my mum would leave me behind with my grandfather if my gran was being challenging.
48. I get flashbacks of the abuse and remember specific things. I remember he used to bake scones and I was in the kitchen with him one day. I was standing on a stool or step washing dishes and he was standing behind me. I remember being aware of his breath being quite close and me wriggling to get away. It started when I was about four years old.

49. He then started trying to touch me and was rubbing against me. It then progressed from that.
50. He was in his bed and wasn't well one time and my mum had taken him a tray for his lunch. My mum then asked me to go upstairs to his bedroom and hand him the salt and pepper. When I went into the room, he had pulled his duvet down and lowered his jammie bottoms and had his penis out. I stopped and he started laughing. I dropped the things and ran away. I was really young but I knew it wasn't right.
51. Another memory is of him masturbating in his bed. I don't know if that was around the same time when he was in bed, ill, or another time. I ran away again.
52. I never mentioned anything to my mum or to anyone. I didn't really know what I was seeing, just that it was uncomfortable.
53. One time in the kitchen, he had held on to me and was rubbing himself against me. I remember a smell of body odour and stale beer as I was trying to wriggle away.
54. One time he had ejaculated and made a mess on the back of my clothes. I was wearing a yellow dress that I really liked and he made me take it off. He then took it into the living room, and took soot from the coal fire and put it on my dress. I just had my underwear on, and he made me sit on the sofa with a towel over me. When my mum came back with my gran, he'd washed and hung my dress on the washing line and told my mum that I had covered myself in soot when I was playing by the fire.
55. What started off as touching through my clothing, progressed to trying to remove my clothing. I think the first time I was raped was before I had started school. I was four years old. I had been to the toilet and was skipping downstairs and I saw him at the bottom of the stairs. I knew something was about to happen and I froze.
56. He lay me down on the stairs and took my pants off. He used his fingers and I felt a shooting pain as he penetrated me. He had his other hand over my mouth and it



covered my nose as well. I thought I was going to suffocate. I am guessing my virginity went that day.

57. My personality changed around that time. I used to be in the choir and liked performing, but I stopped all that. I stopped wanting to be centre of attention. Even though I was comfortable at home with my own family, I even stopped singing and performing at home with them, which I used to do a fair bit before then. My mum and sisters just thought it was because I was getting older and shy, and didn't want to do it anymore.
58. I started just going to my bedroom a lot. I was safe at home with my own family but something had changed. Life became different for me.
59. Once I started school, I didn't have to go over to my grandparent's with my mum anymore because I was at school. At the weekends, my sisters would be around so I could stay at home with them.
60. I still had to go to their house when I was off primary school and my sisters and brother were at high school.
61. When he started to have full sex with me, he would take me up to the bathroom and stand me in the bath. I would have my clothes on but he'd remove my undergarments. After he'd abused me, I'd have to hold my dress up as he washed me down in the bath.
62. I can't say the abuse happened every week or twice a week but it kept happening until I was about ten years old. He would say that I was a black girl, and this was the kind of thing black girls liked. That they wore make up and revealing clothes and this is what I'd be like when I grew up.
63. He would tell me that it was our secret and I was to say nothing. He said if I told anyone, it would cause a whole lot of trouble and I would be taken off my mum and dad, and go back into care. He would also say that I was black and nobody believed black people.

64. That was the only really negative reference to my race that I experienced when I was growing up. I had been very protected in the village from racial discrimination, otherwise.
65. I started my period when I was eight years old. Only two of us had started our period in the class and I remember kids talking about it, and saying it meant we could get pregnant. I remember being really scared and thinking that I could get pregnant because of what was happening to me.
66. I didn't go over to their house as much as I got older because I could go out to play with my friends by that age and find excuses not to go over. I was over there one day because my gran had been in hospital. It was the first time I had been alone with him for a while and he grabbed me. I tried to wriggle away and he laughed and tried to grab me again.
67. I kneed him and he jumped back. He went to hit me and I said if he hit me, I was telling my dad. He was taken aback by that. I told him that if he touched me again I was telling my dad and getting the police. I was ten years old at the time.
68. He never touched me again after that and I kicked myself for not fighting back sooner.
69. After the abuse stopped, he behaved as a grandfather should. Whenever I saw him, he would give me sweets. He did this right up until he died, which was when I was seventeen years old. He died of bowel cancer.

### **Adoption process**

70. I was adopted at eight years old. It went through quite quickly.
71. In the late 1960s and early 1970s people had started to question placements and think that children should be placed with families from a similar background. My mum told

me, when I was older, that the social worker at the time had suggested that if they wanted to adopt me then to make it known before questions about my race and placement arose.

72. As part of the adoption process, my parents had to go and get medical reports to see if they were healthy.
73. I had to go and see my family doctor, Doctor Munn at Alan Park Surgery, to get medical checks done. It was a general check to see if I was well nourished and healthy. He checked my height, weight and that my knees worked.
74. My understanding of adoption was that I would live with my parents forever and there would be no social work visits. I had more one to one and in depth contact with my female social worker over the period leading up to my adoption. She would talk to me alone in the living room and ask me if it was what I wanted.
75. I remember three men in suits who looked very official coming to the house to speak to me. My mum had told me that I was to stay in that day. I was left in the room alone with them. They asked me if I knew what it meant to be adopted and if it was what I wanted. I told them it was. They asked me if I had been told what to say, and I said I hadn't. They were very nice. I think one of them was from the court.
76. The social work got school reports to see how I was getting on at school. People also visited the house to check it was the right environment.
77. Once that was all done, it went through quite quickly.
78. I remember coming back from school one day and there was a surprise party for me because my parents had signed the adoption papers at court that day. There was party food, they had the guitars out and my sisters sang. I went to bed quite happy.

## Teenage years at the [REDACTED]

79. I was a rebellious teenager. I was smoking and drinking, spray painting and getting tattoos. I never got into any trouble with the police but I gave my parents a hard time as a teenager.
80. I was going out to parties and not coming home at the agreed time. My dad would ground me, but as soon as I was allowed out again, I was doing the same things. I must have given my parents sleepless nights.
81. I tried to get a job at the butchers in Stirling when I was fourteen years old. The manager said he couldn't give me a job because I would put his customers off because I was black. I told my dad what happened when I got home. He got straight in the car, drove to the butchers and shouted at him.
82. When I was sixteen years old, my brother, [REDACTED], died. He had a genetic heart condition, and had a pace maker and valves put in when he was in his teens. Then he was in a car accident and bumped his chest on the steering wheel. He was checked out and told he was fine at the time, but he developed flu like symptoms and it took months to realise it was connected to his heart. When they realised, they changed his valves, but he died of multiple organ failure. He was 23 years old at the time.
83. He was the only son and was really close to my dad. My dad was devastated. I became really aware then that my parents didn't need the aggro with me so I started behaving.
84. I went to visit my grandad after my brother died. He was very old and not mobile. I remember he was crying that it should have been him that died and not my brother. I had blocked the abuse away at that time, but I remember being aware that I didn't see much of my grandad. I felt good about going to see him then.
85. My dad was diagnosed with cancer shortly after my brother died.

86. I left school at sixteen and knew I wanted to go into nursing. I worked locally, before starting my nursing course. I got a job in a factory for a couple of years.

### **Reporting of abuse in foster care**

87. I didn't tell anybody about the abuse. My grandad had told me that I would be taken away from my family if I told anyone. I don't know if I would have told anybody even if I wasn't afraid of losing my family because I was only four when it started and wouldn't have been able to articulate it.
88. I didn't have a close relationship with the social workers because I never spent enough time with them. They only came about once a month and saw me for five minutes, in front of my mum, before I went out to play. I wouldn't have told them about the abuse even if they had asked me.
89. I may have told them when I got a bit older but they stopped coming when I was eight years old, after I was adopted.

### **Life as an adult**

90. I started my nurses training at Stirling Royal Infirmary when I was eighteen years old. My parents made me move into the nurses home at the hospital because they thought I was too pampered at home and needed to become independent.
91. I went down to Surrey to work after I finished my training, and then to London. I thought I would fit in more because there were more black people, but it was crazy down there. They all stuck to their own groups and they thought I was too white to fit in with them.
92. I was there for about a year and a half and worked as a nurse, then my dad got terminally ill so I moved back home. I lived with my parents and helped my mum out while I was working as a nurse in Stirling.

93. My dad died when I was 23 years old. About six months later, I moved out and lived with friends for a while until I moved in with my partner.
94. I got married and had my first child when I was 25 years old. We then had another two kids. It was when my eldest child was four weeks old, that I started having flashback about my abuse. I saw my husband's mother innocently kissing my son's belly after giving him a bath, and I freaked out and shouted at her. I felt guilty because she was a lovely woman. I apologised and wondered where it had come from.
95. After that, I started having flashbacks of the old man touching me and abusing me and how he smelled.
96. The flashbacks became more frequent after that and ruined my relationship with my husband. We split up when I was 35 years old.
97. About two years later, after we'd split up. My ex-husband asked me whether I'd been harmed when I was young. Nobody had ever asked me that before and I was taken aback. I told him about the abuse and that was the first time I had ever told anyone. I was about 37 years old at the time.
98. He suggested that I speak to my sister, [REDACTED] because we were close. He said I needed to talk to someone. I spoke to her months later. I was terrified of telling her because it was her real grandfather. When I told her, I found out that she had been abused by him too. She wasn't as young as I was when her abuse started.
99. [REDACTED] said she was always scared of him and that he didn't go as far as raping her, but he touched her. She had sisters and a brother around her own ages so she wasn't on her own around her grandad as much as I was, so it didn't happen as much.
100. We worked out that when her abuse stopped, was when it started with me. She felt really guilty for not protecting me. We decided not to say anything while our mum was still alive as she would have been devastated.

101. Six month after my mum died, I started getting pains in my hip. I have been diagnosed with fibromyalgia.
102. My birth mother had nine other children after me. They found me about two years ago on social media. It has been nothing but trouble since.
103. The only one I'm in contact with now is my younger half-brother, [REDACTED], who I remembered playing with when I was little. We are more like friends than siblings. I knew him as we had businesses on the same street, but we didn't realise we were brother and sister for long time.

### **Treatment and support**

104. After my flashbacks started, I tried to get help. This was when I was about 35 years old. I didn't want to go to my GP so I went to Rape Crisis in Stirling. The woman there knew me. I had to tell her why I was there but I never went back after that.
105. I didn't do anything else about it. In my head, I had come to terms with what he had done to me physically. It was when my physical health started to cause me problems that I realised I had to deal with what had happened.
106. Since my fibromyalgia was diagnosed, I visit a pain clinic in Falkirk and see an immunologist in Glasgow. I also see an endocrinologist in Forth Valley Hospital, and it was him that diagnosed that my pain was a functional disorder. He said the pain I was suffering was because of trauma I had suffered. I was amazed because I hadn't said anything about my abuse.
107. The endocrinologist sent me a link to functional disorders and how symptoms were triggered by something else. There were pages of examples and they included middle aged women who had been getting along fine, until pains started and when investigated, it was found there was a history of abuse.

108. I spoke to my GP and disclosed that I'd been abused. She referred me to the mental health unit in September 2018. Then I met a consultant psychologist called Dr Gortz at Forth Valley Royal Hospital. I saw him in January 2019 and told him about the abuse. He was interested in how much I could remember and wanted to do a study with me.
109. I spoke to the psychologist about the Fibromyalgia and he made the connection that my pains started after my mum died. He said that my subconscious brain had allowed me to start feeling things after my mum died, because it couldn't now harm her, and it was my body telling me it was time for me to deal with my past.
110. It was agreed that I would go for light therapy. Then he called me back to see him to tell me he was taking early retirement so I wouldn't see him again.
111. I am now awaiting light therapy treatment to start in 2020.
112. My records now show that I have mental health problems, but I don't feel that I do. I just want some help to get closure on what happened to me. There aren't enough services to help people in my position. I have phoned Open Secret multiple times over the last few years. They always say somebody will call me back and they never do.

### **Impact**

113. I feel like I could have achieved more at school if I hadn't started retreating into myself when the abuse started. I never wanted to be centre of attention after that.
114. I stopped hanging around with the friends that I had when I was really young in primary school and started hanging out with an older crowd and smoking. I don't think the abuse, which started when I was four years old, was on my mind at that time but I think my behaviour was the effects of the abuse. Then I was a rebellious teenager and drinking and missing school. I wasted high school.



115. I have had a very successful professional career, so I wonder how successful I could have been if I had been able to concentrate more on my studies.
116. I made bad boyfriend choices when I was younger. I didn't think I was good enough and this led me to make bad choices. This was from my grandad telling me that I was black and nobody would believe me, and making me feel bad about myself. That feeling stayed with me for a long time.
117. When I was a nurse, I would go out with the porters. Not that there was anything wrong with them, but my nursing colleagues would go out with doctors and I would say no if a doctor asked me out. I just didn't think I was good enough for that.
118. I went through a period of drinking too much in my mid-thirties, when I started to remember the abuse. There were also things going on in my personal life with my mum being ill and my daughter also had a health scare. I wasn't an alcoholic but I used alcohol regularly to sleep around that time.
119. My husband and I had a rocky relationship and my flashbacks of the abuse ultimately ruined my marriage.
120. My personal life has always been a bit rubbish. I got on with it and brought up three great kids, but the abuse did ultimately ruin my marriage. I feel guilty about bringing my kids up in a single parent household.
121. I have stayed single since I got divorced. I think that is because it is easier being by myself and not answering to anyone.
122. I was over protective with my kids and wouldn't let them stay overnight at friends' houses because I didn't want them to be in an unsafe position. I knew it only had to take one person and once incident to happen and things could go wrong for them. I'd let their friends stay at our house but wouldn't let them stay away. Even when I left my son with my own sister when he was three years old, I was up first thing in the morning to pick him up.

123. My pains started six months after my mum died. It was ultimately diagnosed as the start of Fibromyalgia. The consultant psychologist thinks that I have allowed myself to deal with my abuse and trauma now that my mum has died.
124. I loved the village I grew up in and would have had the perfect life if it wasn't for the abuse. I knew that I needed to get out of the village when I was younger, but I would like to live there now, but it is a part of Stirling and too expensive now. I wonder if I would have been so eager to leave if it wasn't for the abuse.

### **Reporting of Abuse**

125. I've never formally reported the abuse to the police or anyone. My grandfather is now dead.

### **Records**

126. I got my adoption file from Register House. It had all the information about the house and the family I was fostered to. There was also some information about my birth mother in it.
127. They allowed me to photocopy some parts, which I then took back and showed my mum. She was pleased with the nice things they had said about her.

### **Lessons to be learned**

128. I think social workers should spend more time with kids and build a relationship with them.

129. Young children are not likely to talk about their abuse, so psychologists should work with social workers. They would be able to pick up on non-verbal signs and any changes in a child. There should be a multi-disciplinary team working with children.

130. 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... 05, 03 2020 .....