

Scottish Child Abuse Inquiry

Witness Statement of

BCU

Support person present: Yes

1. My name is BCU My date of birth is 1950. My contact details are known to the Inquiry.

Background

2. I am divorced and have stayed with my partner for the last twenty years. I had two children. My daughter died in a car accident when she was sixteen. I'm quite emotional. It still affects me. My son stays in Kilmarnock. He is 45.

Life before going into care

3. I cannot remember going into care. All I know is that I went to Aberlour Orphanage in 1952. I was two years old. My two sisters, and were also there. - her real name is was born in 1939. was born in 1943 or 1944. There's eleven years between and I and it's either six or eight years between and I.
4. My parents were and I think we went into Aberlour Orphanage because they were alcoholics although I'm not sure how I ended up there. There was social work involvement. I also have a younger brother called I didn't know about him until he came to Aberlour later.

Aberlour Orphanage, Aberlour

5. Aberlour was huge. When I went there, there were about five hundred children in the place. I think everybody left when they were fifteen. I was there until I was fifteen and a half but nobody stayed beyond that. Nobody reached sixteen in there.
6. The three of us, my two sisters and I were in Aberlour. You leave care when you are fifteen and you usually went to the forces. Mostly it was the army, navy or the RAF. My two sisters obviously left before me then my brother appeared when I think I was thirteen or fourteen. I didn't even know I had a brother. That's the first time I knew. At some point this guy came to me and said that they had my brother there, in the medical wing. His name was [REDACTED] He was born on [REDACTED] 1952. He is dead now.
7. Dean Woolfe was in charge of Aberlour. Dean was his title. It changed to a Dean Charles Leslie. It was an Episcopalian place. I couldn't tell you how many staff were there.
8. Aberlour was split into eight or nine houses including the girls wing. I was in quite a few different houses while I was there. The first one was St Margaret's nursery, which was completely separate from the main home, about a mile away from it. This was for the kids from months old to five years old. Then I went to a house called M.S. and then I went to Jupp House. This was where the abuse happened. I then went to another house but I can't remember the name. It was White House or something like that.
9. There was one member of staff, the house master, for each house. They rotated them. I think they were off at the weekend, but there was only one per house. There were roughly thirty to forty kids in each house. I don't remember if they had help, I just remember the house masters or house mistresses.
10. There were two dormitories in Jupp House with about thirty in one and twenty in the other. White House, M.S and the girls wing were the same.

Routine at Aberlour Orphanage, Aberlour

First day

11. My first memory of Aberlour was when I was four. I banged my head and split it open against a grand piano. It was an accident.

Mornings and bedtime

12. I don't know what time we were wakened in the morning. Probably about half past seven. You had a wash, went for breakfast then went to school. I think you went to your house after school.
13. The girls and boys were in separate wings, which were separated by the school. The girls in the bottom, boys in the top and there were about eight or nine houses between these wings. So you only mixed with the girls at school. When we got older we did mix with the girls at the weekend. After school we done our homework, then out to play depending on the weather.

Mealtimes / Food

14. You were fed well. Breakfast, lunch and dinner I think. Dinner was at about five o'clock. I think you probably got a supper, I'm not sure. Lights out was about nine or half past nine, because in those days you didn't have a TV.
15. I liked the food, others didn't. When you're in a place from when you are two and that's what you know, you're going to eat that food. The food was good and varied. There were some things you couldn't eat. There wasn't much I wouldn't eat. I saw some that were forced to eat. If they didn't eat it, it was put down to them the next day. If they still didn't eat it I think they were punished. Basically, I was happy with the food.

Washing/Bathing

16. When you went for a bath there were about six to eight baths. You washed regularly. I don't think it was supervised and it was always clean water.

Clothing / uniform

17. They had a clothes place and all our clothes were supplied by Marks and Spencer. I'm almost sure the clothes were the best of clothes. We had school clothes, play clothes and kilts, the full rig out, for wearing on a Sunday, for church. You went to church in that until you were fourteen or fifteen then you changed. Everybody went to church on Sunday. I ended up the head choir boy. I liked singing. Every Sunday we went for a walk. No matter what the weather was like.

School

18. I found school alright. I think they could have done a lot better. My brother, who was particularly intelligent, ended up going to Aberlour High School. The name of the school in the orphanage was St Margaret's, primary and secondary. I would say I was bright. I wasn't as bright as [REDACTED]. The schooling was adequate, I did end up dux of the school. I was there from five years old until I left at fifteen and a half. I left the orphanage in [REDACTED], 1966.

Trips / Holidays

19. Every year, or most years, we went on holiday to Hopeman House. It's on the Moray Firth coast, not far from Aberlour. We went every summer for a week. Thirty to forty kids would go there. On top of that they used to take us a day trip to Lossiemouth, to the RAF. I loved that.
20. I was in the gym team, and the Highland dancing team. We would compete in different areas, Banffshire and round about Elgin. It was a day out. I enjoyed the gym work.

Birthdays and Christmas

21. Christmas was celebrated. Birthdays were too. They took you to a place that was full of toys. I forget the name of the place. I'm sure they took us on our birthday. At Christmas you got a toy, maybe a book, orange, apple and some sweets. I didn't know any different.

Visits / Inspections/ Review of Detention

22. This couple from Elgin, whose name I can't remember came and took me and a boy called [REDACTED] to their house with the intention of adopting us. I think that was the intention, but I put my foot in it. I robbed them. They had a jar of thrupenny bits and I started stealing them every time I went down and got a packet of fags. They were going down and down. So obviously that didn't work out.
23. I cannot remember any social worker coming to visit me. The only one I remember was when I was leaving. He was called Alex Coburn, and he was from Kilmarnock social work department. He came and took me from Aberlour to a place in Greenock. I can't remember any official visits.
24. I know Princess Margaret came to visit the nursery home. This was completely separate from Aberlour, at the other side of the village. I was in the nursery when she visited but I was only about two to four years old.

Healthcare

25. I don't think I saw a dentist. I never had a problem with my teeth until my wife was pregnant then I got pyrea in the gum and lost all my teeth.
26. I know I had jaundice when I was in Aberlour. I was at death's door with that because one particular house mistress told me that because they had me in a bed next to her room. I was seven or eight years old. There was a jaundice epidemic there. It was quite bad. I think my skin turned yellow. I was in the medical wing.

27. I probably had the immunisation jags but I can't remember that. I remember something about jags. There was one at the top of your arm, which was a particularly sore one. You got good medical care.

Bed Wetting

28. Bedwetting was a problem for others. I think I did it when I was about five years old. I don't know if those who had a problem with it were punished.

Religious Instruction

29. Religion wasn't thrown down your throat. I was not a bad boy in the home but I knew all the tricks. At fourteen or fifteen I was smoking. Maybe well before that. The collection plate went round at church, I was in the choir for about two to three years and I noticed the older ones helping themselves to two shillings or half a crown.

Work and play

30. We had to polish all the rooms, the bedrooms and the dining hall. It was all wooden floors. You didn't have the electric things to polish them up. We had to 'ronic' the floors and polish them with our feet, running up and down shining them up. I loved it. Other than that I can't remember doing anything else. We were sent potato picking but you got paid for it, just pennies but it meant you could get fags.
31. During the winter there were books, games, a record player and eventually a TV. In the summer you were outside. We had playing fields. We played football, built dens. When I was older I ran about with a couple of boys who kept fit. We were running up hills and lifting stones. I was in the gym team. That's where my love of weight lifting came in. I loved it in the summer.

32. I can't remember if we got pocket money. As I said, I wasn't a bad boy. I was a typical boy. They must have given us pocket money because we went to a wee wooden cabin in the Aberlour high street and spent money, so we must have got it.

Family

33. I saw my big sister [REDACTED] twice. I saw [REDACTED] on and off because we had a pantomime at Christmas and [REDACTED] was always the lead actress. So I always knew she was there, but there was very little communication between us. The reason for the lack of communication when you're in an orphanage is that you tended to just talk to the people of the same age group because that's all you know.
34. I remember [REDACTED] and [REDACTED] walked past me one day. I was called [REDACTED] in the home and I remember this guy saying to me, "There's your two sisters [REDACTED] That's the only time I saw [REDACTED]"
35. They kept families apart in the orphanage. This is a big issue with me. I don't know how old my big sister [REDACTED] is. I think she's eleven years older than me. I have never seen [REDACTED] all of my life. I have seen [REDACTED]. I blame Kilmarnock social work department, and partly the orphanage. I just find that totally out of order.
36. [REDACTED] came to the orphanage when he was about eleven or twelve. I met him in the hospital wing. They told me I had a brother and I had to come down and meet him. He was put in a different house from me too when he eventually integrated into the orphanage.
37. When I met [REDACTED] I had a different age band. I ran about with fourteen and fifteen year olds, he was younger. You tended to stick with your own age group. I was into dancing and gym, [REDACTED] wasn't into keeping fit. [REDACTED] was still there when I left. I was told he was sent to Oxford.

Discipline

38. The belt was the official punishment. I got it for smoking. Six of the best, but the belt was commonplace everywhere. I think I got the belt about three or four times. I remember one night, six of us had to stand in the main hall for most of the night. One boy had wandered down to the girl's wing and they wanted to find out who it was, so they picked six of us and they made us stand there all night. Nobody admitted it.

Abuse at Aberlour Orphanage

39. The first couple of houses I was in were fine. I was probably eleven years old when I went into Jupp House, which was run by [REDACTED] BBR [REDACTED] I don't know his real name. That's what he was called.
40. Jupp House was alright to begin with. One night I remember getting lifted out of my bed. I don't know how old I was. I got lifted out of my bed and put into [REDACTED] BBR [REDACTED] bed. He had a private room. He was lying in the bed. I knew in my heart there was something wrong so I pretended I was sleeping. He kept lifting my hand and putting it on his private parts and I kept pulling it away and kidding on I was sleeping. He eventually lifted me up and put me back in my bed. That is all the abuse I remember.
41. He probably did this with more boys because I actually saw one other boy getting lifted out of his bed. I don't know who it was. It must have happened to other boys.
42. About two or three weeks after that, there was a fire escape in the boy's bedroom and I was going to jump from the top. I was going to top myself and it was because of the abuse. I had to be talked down. I remember shouting out, "He's nothing but a poofy bastard". I was going off my head. I totally lost it.
43. I do remember when I was fourteen or fifteen they started mixing the boys and girls at Aberlour and I was down in the girl's wing. There was this boy called [REDACTED] [REDACTED] he went to the army, who got an absolute leathering. He was screaming

for his life. [BGX] was the house master who carried this out. He was a bastard. I was scared of him. I just avoided him. I don't remember the name of the house. I don't know what the girl's houses were called. It didn't start long before I left. There were still separate dormitories but we mixed with them.

44. There was a boy in the orphanage called [AJP] and he changed his name to [AJP]. He was staying with [BBR] in a house in [] after he retired from the orphanage. [BBR] was my nightmare in the orphanage. He was a bit of a lazy man. I didn't see much of him. Of what I remember, I didn't have much to do with the guy. He was about forty to fifty years old.

Leaving Aberlour Orphanage

45. The only time I had contact with the social work was when I left Aberlour Orphanage. In Aberlour most kids joined the forces. I wanted to join the army. I wanted to be a P.E. instructor but I failed the medical because I had perforated ear drums. I perforated one diving in and saving a woman in the Linn Falls in Aberlour. I went to hospital in Aberdeen to get it fixed, a skin graft, but it didn't work.
46. So in the January next thing I knew I was told I was going away the next day. Alex Coburn took me to Greenock working boy's home when I was fifteen or sixteen. I had about nine jobs there. It was in Finnart Street, Greenock. This is where I met [AJP] the guy who became [AJP]. He was there too. He left Greenock to go with this [BBR] I never liked him. I forget the name of the couple who ran the working boys home.
47. There was another boy in Finnart Street from Aberlour. I only remember his first name was [] but he left two to three months after I got there. There were also a couple of boys from the Highlands. They were always getting into bother.

Life after being in care

48. I think I got into trouble at Greenock or I wanted to leave and somebody took me to Bellsford House working boy's house in Kilmarnock for one night. I was then taken to a farm in [REDACTED] Kirkcudbrightshire. I was there a fortnight and crashed a tractor and ran away. I came back to Kilmarnock and stayed at Bellsford House for a couple of years. It was run by Mr and Mrs McCluskey. They were great. They sort of adopted me. She got me a job in [REDACTED] [REDACTED]. They were brilliant. They were really good to me. I got married from there. I met my first wife there. Her mother used to work in [REDACTED]. That's why I've stayed in Kilmarnock the rest of my life.
49. I worked in [REDACTED] for 36 years. I was married when I was 21 years old and separated after about 30 years. My wife's name was [REDACTED]. She died last year.
50. I began working in the taxis in 2004 or 2005. I left for a few months and worked at Scotia double glazing, but they had employed too many people and they paid me off after three months. I went back to the taxis.
51. I love fitness work. I fell away from it from when I left the orphanage until I was 25 years old. This is when I first started lifting weights. [REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
52. I loved the orphanage other than that incident. It was my home for thirteen years. That's all I knew. Overall it was a great experience. I couldn't imagine what it would be like being brought up by my mother and father.
53. I haven't a clue if my parents are dead. I believe they are. I have met my parents. The first time I met them, well my father in particular, was when [REDACTED] was born in 1973. There was a thing in the local paper called the 'Panda Corner', which printed

births and kids birthdays. My wife put [REDACTED]'s details in, name, date of birth and address. The next thing I know my father came to visit. My wife had met him and she said, "Here's your dad coming up the road". He came in, he was drunk, and the first words he said were, "I've come to see my grandson". I said, "Get lost. You're not coming anywhere near him".

54. I often wonder if [REDACTED] and I were born to a different dad. [REDACTED] was born to a [REDACTED] I think, who was a bus driver, because my right father was always getting into bother. He was always in jail. I don't know, I'm only presuming.
55. I look back on my life and to me Aberlour was a positive. That one incident is the only thing that blemishes it for me. When I look at my brother, who ended up the same as my mother and father, I think Aberlour must have been a life saver for me. [REDACTED] was with my parents until he was about twelve years old I think.
56. When I was in the home and [REDACTED] was there he used to get a parcel from his mother and father, apples and oranges, biscuits, sweets and things. I never got a parcel. I didn't exist to them.
57. I looked at my brother, who was intelligent but became an alcoholic. He was drinking a couple of bottles of vodka a day, and addicted to drugs. He killed himself with drink. I used to drink but it was just a few drinks on a Saturday night. I don't drink at all now. He must have been with my mother and father and he's either got into trouble or they have and they sent him to the orphanage. I was never told. I think a lot of what happened to him was down to his childhood.
58. I met [REDACTED] again in Kilmarnock when I was nineteen. We became friendly then, but not like brothers. He was a hippy then because he was mixing with folk in Oxford. He got up to all sorts. He was never out of trouble. He was breaking into chemists because he was after drugs. He had a criminal history, mostly drug crime. He then got himself a business refurbishing cookers, washing machines and hoovers. He and his wife were making about £400 a week but he snorted it away on cocaine. I never spoke to him about his time in Aberlour.

59. I met [REDACTED] 25 years after I left the orphanage. I got the Salvation Army involved in finding her. She came up to visit for a weekend but it didn't go well because I was staying in Kilmarnock. I left Kilmarnock when I was two, she left when she was eight and the memories of there were horrendous for her.
60. She wrote to me later and said she didn't want to keep in touch because of the memories she had in Kilmarnock. I wrote back to her but eventually I just sort of gave up. It was a bad idea splitting families up like that. When you're older you wonder why they didn't keep us together. I blame it on the social work. I basically don't know my big sister. I still don't know her.
61. I keep in touch with ex Aberlour kids. I have a page on Facebook [REDACTED] [REDACTED] where I keep in touch with them. I know a girl who has come forward to the Inquiry. She's already had a discussion with you. I know who she is. I spoke to [REDACTED] and [REDACTED] my son, before deciding to come forward to the Inquiry.
62. The biggest thing I think of was family. I always thought of my two sisters, then I'd run about with guys and it would fade away and I'd forget about it for a while. I don't know how I got in touch with the Salvation Army to find [REDACTED]
63. I have never received any counselling or been involved with support groups. I look at my partner [REDACTED]. I said to her I got fed three times a day, she was lucky to get fed once a day. She stayed in Kilmarnock. I got clothed by Marks and Spencer. That's the way I look at it. I think the orphanage saved my life.

Impact

64. [REDACTED] says I am a bit regimented and institutionalised. I work all shifts in a taxi, but lately since I turned sixty I get up at seven o'clock every morning. I'm in bed sleeping at ten thirty or eleven o'clock every night. I used to think that was the orphanage stuff. [REDACTED] says I'm a bit strict.

65. I can't put it into words. I've never met my sisters. I find that totally shocking. I met one sister, it didn't work. I've tried the internet. I've looked for [REDACTED] but never found her. I feel she's probably dead because she was eleven years older than me, but she might be alive.

Reporting of Abuse

66. I wouldn't discuss my abuse with anyone. I didn't report it. My partner and my son have only found out over the last two years.

Records

67. I got my records but they were very vague. I've wrote to Aberlour Trust twice. That's what it's called now. I asked for my brother's records but they replied saying I needed to provide a death certificate. How can I provide a death certificate? I wasn't even at his funeral. I've also asked for my sisters. I don't know whether they are alive or dead. [REDACTED] and I have been up to Aberlour about twelve times since 2000. I saw [REDACTED]'s name in the visitor's book and she wrote how much she loved it. [REDACTED] hasn't been up. I don't think Aberlour will provide any more.
68. I have never tried to get my social work records.

Lessons to be Learned

69. The family thing could have been better. We should have been kept together. Two sisters always kept apart and a brother I didn't even know existed. I think the social work done nothing for me. Absolutely nothing. Most of my life has been based on people trying to help me. Not the social work.

Other information

70. [REDACTED]
[REDACTED] About six weeks after I

gave a statement to the Inquiry, [REDACTED] sent me a personal friends request on [REDACTED]. A short time after that she sent me a private message telling me she was sure she was my sister.

71. Since then we have met up on three occasions, with her partner [REDACTED]. We get on really well, we have a lot in common. She gets on great with [REDACTED] too. She lives in Cambridgeshire and we are going down to see them sometime later this year. It has been fantastic meeting her after 65 years.

72. 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.

[REDACTED] BCU

Signed.....

Dated..... 24/7/2018.