

Scottish Child Abuse Inquiry

Witness Statement of

FDB
[REDACTED]

Support person present: Yes

1. My name is FDB [REDACTED] My date of birth is [REDACTED] 1953. My contact details are known to the Inquiry.

Life before going into care

2. My mum was called [REDACTED] and my dad was [REDACTED] I was born in Raploch, Stirling. I was one of ten children. I have older siblings FBS [REDACTED] FBV [REDACTED] FDA [REDACTED] and FCZ [REDACTED] After FCZ [REDACTED] there were me, [REDACTED] [REDACTED], [REDACTED] and [REDACTED] [REDACTED] and [REDACTED] are dead now. There is about one year between all of us. I don't remember a lot of my time with my parents.
3. My first recollection is when I was three and a half years old. It was Derby Day in 1956. My sister, FBS [REDACTED] was going over to my gran's house for a loaf of bread and I decided to follow her across the road without telling anyone. I was hit by a lorry crossing the road. The lorry had been on the wrong side of the road and the driver had tried to swerve to avoid me. I was trapped under the wheel. The driver panicked and reversed on top of me. I think one of the pit men picked me up [REDACTED] [REDACTED] An ambulance came and I was taken to hospital. [REDACTED]
4. I was probably four when I finally got out of hospital. After that I went back to my mum's. I always thought that my mum was being cruel to me because I was the only one in my family to have lace up shoes. My brothers and sisters all had slip on

shoes. I was made to tie my shoe laces up before I went out and my mum wouldn't allow any of them to help me. I think now that my mum was being cruel to be kind so that I could learn to do my shoes [REDACTED] I think she did the right thing because it made me independent.

5. My dad wasn't a very pleasant man especially when he had a drink. He liked to lift his hand, especially to my older sister, ^{FBS} [REDACTED] She wasn't his child. She was a [REDACTED] and not a [REDACTED] so I think she bore the brunt of the abuse.
6. My dad ended up settling out of court for my accident. He took the money and did a runner leaving my mum to look after ten of us. I think we were all taken into care not long after he left. I don't think my mum could cope with having ten of us. I doubt the money lasted long because he was an alcoholic.
7. I think we were taken into care when I was about six years old. We had moved to Dundee by then. I don't know why we had moved there. I can't remember my dad living with us in Dundee but I remember seeing him around sometimes.
8. I can't really remember any bad things happening to me at home. I maybe got a clip around the ear from time to time. I remember the bad parts of my childhood, I can't remember any good parts.
9. The first I knew about it I was in a new home with strangers with my brothers and sisters. I think it must have been the local authority who took us into care but I can't remember.

The ^{BGC} [REDACTED] - foster care

10. At first I thought it was going to be exciting, an adventure, living across from the beach in [REDACTED] We went to live with a woman called Mrs ^{BGC} [REDACTED]. We sometimes called her ^{BGC} [REDACTED]. She lived at [REDACTED] in [REDACTED] I

am sure that it was number [REDACTED] that sticks in my head. Mrs [REDACTED] had three grown up children called [REDACTED] [REDACTED] and [REDACTED]. I think Mrs [REDACTED] was in her fifties. [REDACTED] was in her twenties. [REDACTED] and [REDACTED] were horrible. I think [REDACTED] was the youngest and he was the good one out of them. I can't remember there being a Mr [REDACTED]

11. I vaguely remember arriving at the house. We were taken upstairs by Mrs [REDACTED] who then showed us lovely plush rooms. She said something like "this is where you'll be staying" and "this will be your room". I remember thinking how good it was that I would have my own room but things soon changed.
12. I think six of us went to the [REDACTED]s. The four youngest children didn't come with us. I think within weeks or days we were moved from those plush rooms. We had been shown them by Mrs [REDACTED] to impress whoever had taken us there because shortly after that we weren't in them anymore.
13. The house itself had a big living room on the left as you went in the front door. There was a big dining room with tables and chairs. The bedrooms were two flights upstairs but we were in a room at the back of the kitchen on the ground floor. It was like a cellar type of place with an outside toilet. We all slept in the same room, top and tailing in the bed. We used to fight amongst us to get in the middle to keep warm. The room was big enough for a double bed and that was all.
14. The nice rooms upstairs were rented out to other guests. There were four or five bedrooms upstairs. I think one of the rooms was Mrs [REDACTED]'s, another was for [REDACTED] [REDACTED] and [REDACTED] and the others were rented out. I think the other guests were workmen who were building the Tay Road Bridge at the time. I remember one of the men telling me lovely stories about "Billy Bunter". I used to sit there engrossed listening to them. The way he told them was magical, I loved hearing them.

Routine at The BGC's*Mornings*

15. I would wake up myself in the mornings and one of my brothers or sisters would be gone from the bed. I wouldn't know where they'd gone, they had just disappeared. We didn't know where they had gone, nobody told us anything. I think [REDACTED] might have been the first to leave. I don't know which order they left in.
16. In the morning if the bed was wet, I got the blame, whether it was me or not. My two sisters would put a coat on me and take me across the road to the sea. They would put me in the sea to wash me. Mrs BGC told my sisters to do it. It would happen in all seasons, winter or summer. It wouldn't matter. Her son and daughter would come too to make sure my sisters had done it. It happened regularly. I would either be put into the sea or an old tin bath full of cold water. The bath would be sitting on the floor outside the bedroom because she would empty the water out the back door.
17. I used to have put the bed sheets in the water. I would give them a quick swirl around in the tin bath or a bucket of water before I went to school. I think my sisters used to help me to wring it out. I would wash the sheet every time after I'd been in the sea or the tin bath.
18. I was never up the stairs in the house again. I was always in the cellar room. I can't remember any windows in the room. It was straight through from the kitchen so I think the door was always open. We had an old horse hair blanket. It was cold especially in the winter. We used to keep our coats on because there wasn't any heating. There weren't any pictures or photos on the wall. That was all that was in it.
19. We got up and got washed in the kitchen sink or in a bowl. We got ourselves washed and dressed. We looked after ourselves and each other. If anybody was in trouble, I might say that I would take the blame. I used to steal anything that I could from the shops, like crisps or sweets, to keep us going because I was rebellious. I would bring whatever I got back and show it my brothers and sisters.

Bedtime

20. We went to bed early after we had had our meal. I can't remember if it was Mrs BGC or FJP who would do the cooking. We would watch the television in the living room sitting in a row. If anyone made a sound Mrs BGC made them sit facing the plugs on the wall away from the television. We weren't allowed to speak.
21. After tea or supper, we knew it was time to go to bed. If you did anything wrong FJP or FCC would dish out the punishment. If you did something wrong, Mrs BGC would tell them to "sort us out". LAR was the opposite, he used to stick up for us.

Washing/Bathing

22. I used to get a bath in the morning in the sea. On other days, the bath was ready for us in the morning. The water was cold and it would be a case of one in and one out. I think the water was emptied once every week. FCC or FJP would be watching to make sure that I didn't fill the bath with hot water. I didn't ever have a bath with hot, soapy water. I remember having a shower with the hose outside sometimes.
23. If we had head lice my sisters would report it to Mrs BGC. My sister, FBS, would have to comb my hair and put treatment in it. Mrs BGC wouldn't ever do it.
24. We had to use an outside toilet. You turned right when you came out of the bedroom and it was outside the front door.

Food

25. The food wasn't much to write home about. It was basic. If you were lucky you got a bowl of cornflakes or porridge in the morning. We just ate our meal quietly in the kitchen. There was a dining room but that was only for the guests. When we did sit in there, we had to sit crossed legged on the floor. For dinner, we just got a sandwich

which would have been made by Mrs BGC or one of my sisters. We didn't sit around the table having a family meal.

Schooling

26. We went to school up a big hill near the biscuit factory. Mrs BGC gave us our bus fare because it was three miles away from [REDACTED]. My brother FBV used to run to school and home so that he could keep the pennies.
27. I got a decent meal at school. I think that was what we were surviving on. I used to go into the biscuit factory and ask for broken biscuits. While the man was going to get some we would steal some biscuits.
28. I used to enjoy school. I would stand up for the kids who were being bullied. The bullies didn't like me. I ended up being sent to a Catholic School when I was eight or nine because I was barred from every school in Glasgow. They were the only ones who would take me. I remember there were kids walking past me crossing themselves so I walked out after half an hour.
29. I remember another time at school I was due to go to hospital for [REDACTED]. [REDACTED] I was dressed up with a tie on. One of the teachers had grabbed me by the collar and ripped the top button off my shirt. I think I had been cheeky or standing up for someone else in a fight. I met my mum to go to the appointment and she asked what happened to my shirt. I told her so she came up to the school to speak to the head master and pushed him out the window. She was small, only four foot nine or ten. Fortunately it was on the ground floor. That was my mum she wouldn't see anybody speak against me because of my disability.

Chores

30. I can't remember having to do any chores except washing the wet bed sheet. Mrs BGC told me to do that.

31. The house wasn't clean in our section but the rest of it was clean. I think, looking back, my sisters were doing the cleaning in the rest of the house. I think that was how she kept the house clean. Thinking back our section wasn't fit for an animal to live in. It was cold and damp. It was just a square room. There were no windows so it was dull and dark. I think that most of the light came from the kitchen.

Clothing/Leisure Time

32. Our clothes were passed down. They were passed down from sister to sister. The only time I remember having anything decent to wear was when we went to Sunday school. Mrs BGC would bring the good clothes out and tell us to put them on. We had to give them back to her as soon as we got home. They would come with us but we used to have to sit at the front in the church. The BGC's were allowed to sit wherever they wanted. We didn't have to say prayers or anything like that in the house.
33. The only toys we had were ones that we had stolen from somewhere. We amused ourselves and played games like 'tig' with each other. We would be allowed across to the beach on Saturdays and sometimes after Sunday school. We would run about on the beach. Mrs BGC didn't come with us. Her son, LAR would stick up for us. He was a good guy in my eyes. I can remember him telling his brother and sister that they were wrong for punishing us. He would question them about it. We didn't go to any clubs or do activities.

Healthcare

34. I can't remember any hospital or doctor's appointments when I was at the BGC. I think we used to have dental check-ups at school. The nit nurse used to come around once a month to check certain classes. You would be given a little note from the nit nurse to give to your mum or dad. I would give it to Mrs BGC. I didn't get any extra help in the home.

Visits/inspections

35. I didn't have any visits from my mum. I remember Mrs **BGC** told us to make sure we behaved and wore clean clothes when people came to visit. I remember we would all be sitting cross-legged in the dining room and people would come in. I just remember seeing strange faces but I don't remember speaking to anyone. I think they were people looking to foster a child because one of us would disappear a week or two later.

Birthdays/Christmas

36. I can't really remember Christmas or Birthdays. I can't remember having a Christmas lunch or pulling crackers. The only presents I remember would be getting a clip around the ear. I can't remember Christmas decorations around the house.
37. I think the authorities gave Mrs **BGC** an allowance to give us pocket money but I don't think she could have been giving us it every week because I wouldn't have been stealing.

Holidays/Trips

38. The only time we went away was with the Sunday school. I think we went to the beach or up the coast to places like Monifeith. I remember **LAR** used to take us out on a canoe sometimes.
39. I didn't have any contact with my mother or any of my other siblings. I didn't even have contact with the ones who had come too but had disappeared.

Abuse at The **BGC**

40. I don't have any good memories of being at the **BGC**. My relationship with Mrs **BGC** was just part of life. At the time I accepted it. We were grateful to have a roof over our heads but we didn't want to be there.
41. Mrs **BGC** used to make cakes with soap powder. She had noticed that cakes had been disappearing so she must have decided to make them with soap powder to trick us. She was wicked, she had a sadistic sense of humour. She must have thought that she would find out who had been stealing them because they'd be sick. My sisters were clever so they would take them anyway and put them in the bin.
42. You couldn't let yourself go and enjoy being a child. The only time we could play as a family was on the beach. We used to run up and down and do things that you do as a child. We couldn't do that in the house. We had to sit up straight and not speak.
43. On one occasion pocket money was stolen from the cupboard. I had been out playing with my friend and he had given me a toy car. I came home with the toy car and Mrs **BGC** thought I must have stolen the money. She asked me where I got the car. She told my sister **FBS** to go to my friend's door to ask the boy's parents. I remember walking there with her and she told me to wait around the corner. She pretended to knock on the door and when we got back she told Mrs **BGC** that they hadn't given me the car. I got a few slaps on the head from **FCC** and **FJP** for that.
44. I remember another time **FCC** hit one of my brothers, **FBV** or on the back with a baseball bat. I can't remember if it was **FBV** or
45. In terms of discipline, Mrs **BGC** would give me a clip around the ear or a slap on the head sometimes, for no apparent reason, or she would instruct **FJP** and **FCC** to hit us. It could be that if something went wrong the nearest child to her was slapped in some way. It was something that would happen at least once a week to one of us.

46. I would see it happening to the others. We would get it if one of us had talked the wrong way, it was always for something and nothing. It was just an excuse for her to keep us in toe. My brothers, [REDACTED] and FBV [REDACTED] would get the worst beatings. I used to just get a slap or a clip around the ear. It was mainly FJP [REDACTED] and FCC [REDACTED] doing the physical punishments. I think she did that to keep her hands clean in case someone reported her at school or to anyone else. They did her dirty work for her.
47. Looking back, I don't think it was right for six of us to be in the same bed in the cellar room. She had us there to get money. If anyone from the authorities came she showed them upstairs. No one ever reported them to the police. I think we were all too frightened to tell anyone. I used to keep myself to myself out of fear of the repercussions. I have never told anyone else about it.
48. I remember Mrs BGC [REDACTED] had taken two watches from my sisters. I think they were gifts from my mother and she was going to sell them. She had put them in a cupboard. She must have done something to upset me so I went into the cupboard and took the watches. I smashed them up, even though they belonged to my sisters, and took them to the beach to bury them in the sand.
49. When she found out she got us all together and asked who had stolen the watches. She told us that if we didn't own up we would all suffer. I waited for a while until everybody had gone and then I told her that it was me. She marched me over to the beach. I remembered exactly where I had hidden them, near two concrete blocks, so I dug them up. I did that so that she couldn't sell them so she must have done something to really upset me to make me do that. I can't really remember what happened but I think she slapped or punched me. I made sure that no one else had got the blame for it.
50. I have tried to forget about that part of my life and I never talk about it. I don't even talk to my brothers or sisters about it.

Running away

51. I used to run away with my brother [REDACTED] sometimes. We would go to the beach. I knew when I got back that I would be hit. LAR [REDACTED] would come out on his motor bike because he knew where we all used to hide. I think, some of the time, that's why I ran away because I wanted to get on the back of his bike. I wouldn't really class it as running away, I think I did it for a bit of love and affection. Sometimes FJP [REDACTED] and FCC [REDACTED] would come to get us and would slap us the whole way home. If I was found a mile away I would be slapped until we got back in the house.
52. In the late fifties, early sixties, people didn't want to foster a child with a disability so I was sent to an Approved School. I was too much hard work for them. At the time a song had come out called 'Nobody's Child' and I used to think that song was about me. I think the local authority decided it was time for me to move on or Mrs BGC [REDACTED] had become fed up with me. I'm not sure. I was about eight at the time. I didn't know that I was leaving, I wasn't told where I was going. I was at the BGC [REDACTED]s for two to two and a half years.

Leaving foster care

53. I don't remember leaving or being taken to the Approved School, I just remember being in a massive building with lots of other boys. I thought that it was a boarding school at first because it was all boys but I asked one of the adults who told me that it was an Approved School. They told me that it was for bad boys and they were there to make me a good boy.

Approved School

54.

Secondary Institutions - to be published later

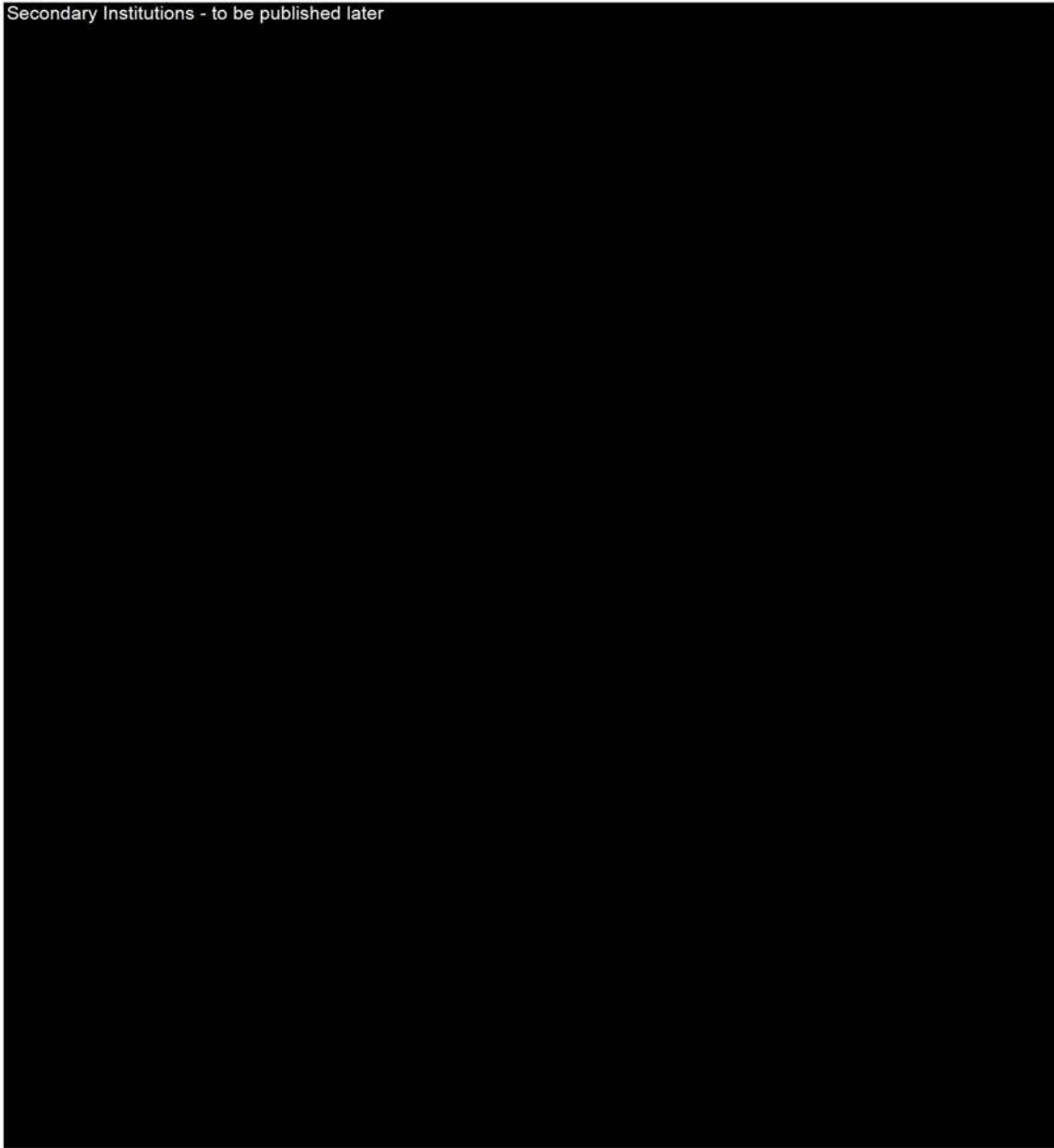
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Dale School, Arbroath

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73. I remember one of the teachers took me on the train and I met my mum under the clock in Central Station. I recognised her straight away.

74. I stayed with my mum. It was just the two of us. My mum was a bit strict but it was fine. We moved around Glasgow staying in Partick, Drumchapel and Knightswood.

We stayed in [REDACTED] in Partick for a while. We stayed in Glasgow for about six to nine months before moving to London. She had a job there looking after children. She was going out with a guy at the time.

75. I got a job helping out in a butcher's shop in London. I was about fifteen. I remember the actor who played Old Step Toe on television used to come in and show me tricks. He lived around the corner from the shop. I used to get paid five pound every week.
76. I then worked in a laundry in Morecambe when I was sixteen. It was my first proper job with a P45. I also worked on the stalls at the Pleasure Beach in Morecambe. I was there for three seasons. I moved to Dover because my sister ^{FBS} [REDACTED] was living there. I left there after a while.
77. I went to college in Leatherhead. I met a girl from Redhill in Surrey. We were together for about five years. She left me. I ended up working in a Psychiatric Hospital in Surrey near Croydon. I used to look after the patients, giving them tea and making sure they were alright. I worked for a charity called MacIntyres caring for young adults with learning difficulties.
78. I did a course at college in Bromley and got my qualifications. When I moved to Worcester I became a special needs carer in a school. I did that for six or seven years until I retired a few years ago.
79. My mum died in 1994. I kept in touch with her and would go to stay with her. My dad died long before her. When he died was put in a pauper's grave. I had no respect for him.

Reporting of abuse at The ^{BGC} [REDACTED]

80. I have never reported anything about my time in care to the police. ^{Secondary Institutions - to} [REDACTED]
^{Secondary Institutions - to be published later} [REDACTED]

Secondary Institutions - to be published later

Impact

81. I think my time in care has had a positive effect on me. I don't like bullies which I think stems from my dad and from FJP and FCC. I have always stood up for other people. I'm not an aggressive person but I feel strongly about standing up for people.
82. I try to take the positives out of my experience and want to make sure that it doesn't happen to anybody else. I don't think my relationship with my siblings has been affected by our time in care but I suppose we would be closer if we had been kept as a big unit. I take people at face value until they let me down.
83. I don't ever think about my time in care. I don't even talk about it with my brothers and sisters. It's history. I met some of my brothers and sisters again at my mum's funeral.
84. I decided to come forward to speak to the Inquiry because my sister FDA phoned me and told me about it. I wanted to give my history and to try to help provide an overall picture of the sixties and seventies and what it was like to be in foster care. I never felt the need for support. I got over that after my dad robbed me of my money from my accident.

Records

85. When I was living in Morecambe I tried to get my records. I think I was about eighteen or nineteen at the time. It was out of curiosity more than anything. I contacted a solicitor who tried to get them. The solicitor was told that there was no police or hospital records of my accident. He tried to get my social works too but was informed by the local authority that they couldn't find them.

Other information

- 86. If anybody takes a child on as a foster child they should treat the child like it's their own child. They shouldn't treat the child any differently. I think it's important to always be open and honest with the child. I think foster carers should help them find out about their own parents and families. I always wanted to know about my own brothers and sisters but I wasn't told. They should try to answer with honest explanations.

- 87. 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.

FDB


Signed.....

Dated..... 15/10/18.....