

1

Thursday, 14 July 2022

2

(10.00 am)

3

LADY SMITH: Good morning. Now, I don't even need to ask

4

whether the videolink has been successfully established.

5

I understand everything's running fine with the

6

videolink; is that right?

7

MS INNES: It was when we tested it a few moments ago, so

8

hopefully it should all be fine.

9

The first witness this morning is using the

10

pseudonym 'George'. He was a foster carer for Edinburgh

11

Corporation in the early 1970s. An applicant using the

12

pseudonym 'Denise' was placed with 'George' and his

13

wife, who has the pseudonym 'Betty', in Edinburgh from

14

██████████ 1971 until she was returned to the care of her

15

mother on ██████████ 1972.

16

'Denise' gave evidence on Day 301. That was 30 June

17

2022. The City of Edinburgh Council is the relevant

18

successor.

19

LADY SMITH: Thank you very much.

20

'George', I'm Lady Smith and I chair the Scottish

21

Child Abuse Inquiry here in Edinburgh. First of all,

22

thank you for joining us over the link today so that we

23

can take your evidence.

24

So far as the link is concerned, if there are any

25

problems at your end at any time, please don't hesitate

1 to let us know and we'll do what we can to deal with it.

2 First of all, I'd like to ask you either to take the
3 oath or affirm if you're not comfortable with taking the
4 oath.

5 'George' (sworn)

6 LADY SMITH: First of all, 'George', I think you do have the
7 hard copy of your statement in front of you there. Am
8 I right about that?

9 A. Yes.

10 LADY SMITH: So if you want to look at that at any time,
11 feel free to do so. If at any time you have any
12 concerns or questions or if you want a break at any
13 time, I do know that giving evidence at all is stressful
14 and that giving evidence on the subject matter we're
15 going to ask you to talk about may be particularly
16 difficult. So you let me know if there's anything we
17 can do to help you give the best evidence that you can
18 and the clearest evidence that you can for our purposes
19 here at the Inquiry.

20 Have you got that? I do get that you may feel
21 you're organised and ready to give evidence, but there
22 may be points at which you find it difficult. All
23 right?

24 A. Yes, thank you.

25 LADY SMITH: Now, before I hand over to Ms Innes, there's

1 something else I need to explain to you. You're linked
2 to us to give evidence at a public inquiry, not at
3 a court hearing. However, you are giving evidence in
4 public. A transcript is being made of your evidence,
5 and it's important that you understand it could be
6 relied on afterwards outwith the Inquiry setting.

7 So in these circumstances, I need to warn you that
8 if you're asked any questions, the answers to which
9 could incriminate you, you are not obliged to answer
10 them. Do you understand that?

11 A. Yes, I do.

12 LADY SMITH: If at any time you have any queries that relate
13 to that, feel free to ask and I'll deal with them or
14 Ms Innes will deal with them, so don't hesitate to speak
15 up if you want to.

16 Otherwise, if you have no other questions at the
17 moment, I'll hand over to Ms Innes and she'll take it
18 from there. Is that all right?

19 A. Yes, thank you.

20 LADY SMITH: Thank you. Ms Innes.

21 Questions from Ms Innes

22 MS INNES: 'George', we understand that you were born in
23 1943; is that right?

24 A. That is correct, yes.

25 Q. I'm going to refer first of all to the statement that

1 you gave to the Inquiry. We give it the reference
2 WIT-1-000000945. If we can look, please, at the final
3 page of that statement, page 14, and paragraph 62, we
4 see there it says:

5 "I have no objection to my witness statement being
6 published as part of the evidence to the Inquiry.
7 I believe the facts stated in this witness statement are
8 true."

9 And I think you signed this statement on 18 March of
10 this year, 2022; is that right?

11 A. That's correct, yes.

12 Q. If we can go back to the beginning of your statement,
13 please, at paragraph 2 you tell us a little bit about
14 your family life and we understand that you got married,
15 I think, in the late 1960s; is that correct?

16 A. As far as I know it is, yes.

17 Q. And I think you tell us later in your statement that you
18 subsequently separated from your wife. Is that correct?

19 A. That's correct, yes.

20 Q. I think you tell us about your family and you mention
21 that your oldest son -- I think you say at paragraph 4
22 of your statement that your son was about one in 1970?

23 A. Yes.

24 Q. Okay, so I think that would make him about 53 now; is
25 that right?

1 A. I think so, yes.

2 Q. If we can look at paragraph 4 of your statement, please,
3 you tell us there that you and your wife decided to
4 apply to be foster parents. Why was it that you decided
5 to apply to be foster parents?

6 A. Well, at the golf course at the time we didn't have any
7 neighbours or anything and [REDACTED] was a bit lost,
8 I think, he didn't quite know what to do with himself,
9 so I thought it would be nice for him to have some
10 friends.

11 Q. Was one of the reasons that you decided to do fostering
12 anything to do with it providing a source of income for
13 you?

14 A. It had nothing to do with it whatsoever.

15 Q. I think you say that you were working on the golf course
16 at the time. Were you a greenkeeper on the golf course,
17 was that your job?

18 A. Yes, it was.

19 Q. And was your wife working at that time or was she at
20 home?

21 A. She was at home. She didn't work.

22 Q. Okay. In terms of your hours of work, can you remember
23 roughly how many days a week you would have been
24 working?

25 A. It was five days every day, 8 o'clock until 5.

1 Q. And when you say it was five days, did that cover the
2 weekend or did you have days off during the week, can
3 you remember?

4 A. I can't remember but it would possibly be a Saturday
5 morning as well.

6 Q. Okay. At paragraph 5 you tell us about the application
7 process and you say there that you think it took you
8 about three years to become foster parents.

9 A. That's what I thought at the time, yes.

10 Q. And what do you think now?

11 A. Well, I'm still not sure but I do know that it took
12 quite a long time.

13 Q. Okay. What happened during the application process, can
14 you remember?

15 A. I just remember we had various visits from various
16 people and I think we obviously passed the test in the
17 end.

18 Q. And who were the people that were visiting?

19 A. The social workers.

20 Q. And what was the purpose of their visits?

21 A. They were just looking into your background and whether
22 the place would be suitable for children.

23 Q. At paragraph 6, you say that your wife dealt most with
24 the social workers and you say that they seemed to
25 change regularly.

1 A. Yes, as far as I know. I mean, I wasn't in during the
2 day but they mostly came down during the day.

3 Q. And your understanding was that there were different
4 social workers coming to the house?

5 A. Yes. Well, apparently there was a different social
6 worker for each of the girls.

7 Q. And you say that you rarely saw the same one more than
8 twice?

9 A. Not that I recall.

10 Q. In terms of training, at paragraph 7 you say that there
11 was no formal training. Was it --

12 A. Nothing -- sorry.

13 Q. Was there any kind of training at all?

14 A. No, there was nothing. Just the interviews.

15 Q. Were you given any advice by the social workers or
16 guidance about fostering children?

17 A. Well, I wouldn't -- I wouldn't know that because
18 I didn't speak to them very often except an odd time
19 when they came down at night so they could make sure
20 they saw me.

21 Q. You say at paragraph 8 that you were given no guidance
22 on how to discipline children that you fostered.

23 A. Well, we never disciplined children anyway, as far as
24 I know.

25 Q. Okay, we'll come back to that, but you're saying there

1 that you were given no guidance about what to do?

2 A. That's correct, yes.

3 Q. You also say that you weren't given any guidance about

4 how to deal with difficult children who had perhaps been

5 neglected or abused?

6 A. The only advice we were given was to get in touch with

7 the social worker again and they would either have them

8 moved somewhere else or try to sort out the problem.

9 Q. Okay. Who did that advice come from?

10 A. That would be from the social worker.

11 Q. You say in paragraph 8 that you think that the way that

12 you were taken on as foster parents was quite

13 appropriate and the way that the checks that were

14 carried out, you think those were necessary checks; is

15 that right?

16 A. I think so, yes.

17 Q. Do you think that it would have been beneficial for you

18 and your wife to have had some kind of training?

19 A. Well, it could have been, but I couldn't tell you that.

20 Q. Is there anything specifically that you think it might

21 have been helpful to have had some training about?

22 A. Not that I know of. I mean, it's really just growing

23 up.

24 Q. Do you think it would have been helpful to have guidance

25 on how to discipline children?

1 A. I don't know about that. I couldn't say.

2 Q. Do you think it would have been helpful to have guidance
3 about how to deal with difficult children who had been
4 neglected or abused?

5 A. Well, I think we were given the advice as such, we had
6 to go back to the social worker and it was their
7 problem.

8 Q. You say at paragraph 9 that you didn't receive any
9 written guidance but you think maybe your wife might
10 have been given verbal guidance?

11 A. That's possible, yes.

12 Q. If we go over the page, please, at paragraph 10, you say
13 there:

14 "I never thought of being a foster parent as a job
15 or as being employed to do it."

16 Is that right?

17 A. That's correct, yes.

18 Q. How did you view your role as a foster parent?

19 A. Well, I was -- I was in the background really. If there
20 was any slight problems with the children, I would speak
21 to them but that was as far as I would go.

22 Q. So beyond that, if there were problems, did you think
23 that you had any other role in looking after the
24 children?

25 A. Well, I think I was, you know, if we went out somewhere,

1 I was responsible for things like that, but I was
2 working during the day so I didn't see much of them
3 until I came in from work.

4 Q. You say at paragraph 10 that you felt that you were
5 looking after children who you saw as part of your
6 family for the short time that they were with you.

7 A. Yeah, they were definitely part of the family. They
8 were treated as part of our family.

9 LADY SMITH: 'George', you mentioned being away at work
10 during the day. What were your working hours?

11 A. They would be 8 till 5.

12 LADY SMITH: So when would you leave home in the morning?

13 A. About ten minutes to 8.

14 LADY SMITH: And you'd be home --

15 A. 5 past, 10 past 5.

16 LADY SMITH: Did you work at the weekends?

17 A. I can't remember, but I think we worked Saturday
18 mornings in those days, but I can't remember.

19 LADY SMITH: Okay. So you might have worked Saturday
20 mornings?

21 A. Possibly, yes.

22 LADY SMITH: Thank you.

23 MS INNES: Still at paragraph 10, you say there that you
24 thought your own experience of being parents helped
25 prepare you for looking after foster children. Am

1 I right in thinking that when the three girls came to
2 stay with you, you'd had your son, who we've mentioned,
3 he was about one, as you say, in 1970. Is that correct?
4 A. That's correct, yes.
5 Q. You say:
6 "I suppose being a foster parent was both
7 a profession and a vocation."
8 A. Yes, I would say so. Yes, it's a very important one as
9 well.
10 Q. And you say it was something that you enjoyed doing and
11 you both found it a positive experience?
12 A. Yes. We enjoyed every minute of it.
13 Q. Am I right in thinking that although you started
14 fostering in Edinburgh, there came a time that you moved
15 to England and you carried on fostering in England as
16 well?
17 A. We did, yes.
18 Q. At paragraph 11, you talk about your hopes when you
19 started to look after children and you say there that
20 your hope was to look after children who were of an age
21 with your son. Was that what you initially hoped would
22 happen?
23 A. Well, I couldn't answer. It was my wife -- my wife
24 liked babies but she liked all sort of ages so I was
25 happy about people that I could talk to.

1 Q. You say that you were asked to look after numerous
2 babies, sometimes just overnight.
3 A. Sometimes, yes.
4 LADY SMITH: How old was [REDACTED] when you had your first
5 foster child?
6 A. I can't answer that. Between -- I'm struggling.
7 I can't answer that. I'm struggling for that one.
8 LADY SMITH: Just think back. You said that the idea of
9 fostering emerged when he was little, he was, what,
10 about a year old?
11 A. Yes.
12 LADY SMITH: And then you had a lead-in time after you'd
13 applied to be foster carers and the gap was, what, a few
14 years?
15 A. So I think it would be about 25, maybe 24 or 25,
16 something like that.
17 LADY SMITH: Sorry, what's 24 or 25?
18 A. The year that I think we first started taking in foster
19 children.
20 LADY SMITH: No, it wouldn't be 1924 or 1925. That may be
21 my fault. I'm just trying to work out how old your
22 little boy was, your little boy who you hoped would have
23 a friend in house from a foster child, how old he was
24 when you first took on foster child.
25 A. I'm not very -- I'm not very good with ages of children.

1 I look at the size of them rather than their age.

2 LADY SMITH: Help me this way, 'George'. Had he started
3 school?

4 A. No.

5 LADY SMITH: Okay. So he's still pre-school.

6 A. Yes, he was, yes.

7 LADY SMITH: But he'd be, what, up and about and running
8 around?

9 A. Oh yes, he was -- he used to wait for you at the top of
10 the stairs for you coming in from work.

11 LADY SMITH: Okay, I've got the picture of the sort of stage
12 he was at. Thank you.

13 MS INNES: I think, 'George', you said that [REDACTED] was
14 about one in 1970 and we know that the girls came to
15 live with you in [REDACTED] 1971. So he'd maybe have been
16 about 18 months or two at the time that they came. Were
17 the girls the first foster children that came to live
18 with you, can you remember?

19 A. No, they weren't the first. We had various children
20 before that.

21 Q. Okay. At paragraph 11 you say you can't remember
22 a specific social worker being allocated to you?

23 A. No, I can't, no.

24 Q. So you've told us that different social workers came,
25 but you can't remember anyone specifically working

1 alongside you?

2 A. No. My wife may, but I don't.

3 Q. At paragraph 12, you say that you think you were given

4 financial support?

5 A. I couldn't answer that.

6 Q. Did your wife deal with that, did she?

7 A. Yes, she did, yes.

8 Q. And your impression was that you seemed to get by

9 adequately, you say?

10 A. Yes, the girls had everything that they wanted.

11 Q. Then you talk about your house. So your house was

12 essentially on the golf course, I think, above the

13 clubhouse; is that right?

14 A. It was, yes.

15 Q. And you tell us about the accommodation in the house.

16 Did you think that the accommodation that you had was

17 adequate for the foster children?

18 A. It certainly was, yes.

19 Q. Were they able to have a room of their own?

20 A. Yes. Well, I think there was two shared one room and

21 I think one had the other, but I can't remember.

22 Q. At paragraph 15, you tell us that you had various

23 children and for different periods of time, and the

24 three girls that you've been talking about you had for

25 a longer period of time, you say you think maybe two or

1 three years --

2 A. Yes.

3 Q. -- I think we know from the records that it was just

4 over a year that they were with you.

5 A. Okay.

6 Q. If we go down to the bottom of this page and

7 paragraph 18, you've been asked there about meeting the

8 children before fostering them. Can you remember

9 meeting children before they came to stay with you?

10 A. No, never. They just -- they just turned up at the door

11 with the social worker and that was it.

12 Q. Would you get warning from somebody calling ahead to say

13 that the children would be arriving, can you remember?

14 A. We did with the babies and I think we would have got

15 with the girls as well, but babies were usually just

16 a quick one-off thing.

17 LADY SMITH: 'George', I'm sorry to interrupt you. I don't

18 know whether you're getting any echo at your end, but on

19 the system at this end we're getting some quite

20 intrusive feedback. What I'd like to do, if you can

21 cope with this, is just break for five minutes and we'll

22 have a look at the technicalities and see if we can

23 quickly sort it out. Is that all right?

24 A. Thank you.

25 LADY SMITH: Sorry, but we need to do this. Thank you.

1 (10.28 am)

2 (A short break)

3 (10.33 am)

4 LADY SMITH: I understand that the feedback problem's been
5 solved; is that right, Ms Innes?

6 MS INNES: Yes, I think so, and that certainly sounds much
7 better.

8 LADY SMITH: Yes.

9 'George', I'm sorry about that but we're hopeful
10 we've now cured the problem we were having, because it's
11 so important that we can hear you properly.

12 Hang on. Is that as good as it gets?

13 All right. It's not perfect, 'George', but we'll
14 carry on and provided you're all right at your end,
15 we'll see if we can manage with the way it is just now.

16 Right, Ms Innes.

17 MS INNES: Thank you, my Lady.

18 Now, 'George', if we go back to paragraph 18 of your
19 statement at page 4, you say there:

20 "I have no idea how the children were matched with
21 us and I assumed it was just a case of they were put
22 with people who were able to take them."

23 Is that your impression of how it came to be that
24 children were placed with you?

25 A. Well, I think they were placed with us because we had

1 the room to take them, all three children at once.

2 Q. Okay. You say at paragraph 19, you don't know whether

3 the information you were given was adequate or not, but

4 you worked away with what you had and your impression

5 was that the children seemed to settle in quite quickly?

6 A. Yes, that was what I felt, yes.

7 Q. If we go on over the next page, please, you tell us

8 about the routine, and as you've said, you wouldn't see

9 them during the day but would you see them at teatime?

10 A. Yes, they were usually having their tea when I came in

11 from work, just finishing up and then going off to the

12 play room to play rather than be going out.

13 Q. Where would they be going out to?

14 A. Well, they did go out, we used to take them down to

15 [REDACTED] or, you know -- but other than that it was

16 playing in the -- you know, they had quite big rooms, we

17 usually walked down to [REDACTED] if it was nice.

18 Q. Did you do that in the evenings?

19 A. Yes.

20 Q. At paragraph 21, at the end of that paragraph, you say

21 that none of the children did chores about the house?

22 A. No, none of them did, no.

23 Q. How do you know that?

24 A. Well, I just know that -- well, as I say, when I came in

25 from work they would be having their tea and they'd be

1 going and playing or something.

2 Q. I suppose they might do things when you were out at
3 work?

4 A. It's possible, yes. But they were at school when I was
5 at work, usually.

6 Q. If we go on to paragraph 24, you talk about mealtimes
7 and you say that you don't remember any of the children
8 having a problem with food.

9 A. Well, we didn't really have a big enough table to have
10 everybody at one time but they were usually finishing
11 their meals when I came in and we would take their
12 place.

13 Q. So they would eat first and then did you and your wife
14 eat together later?

15 A. I think my wife ate with the kids and I got served up
16 what was left, I think.

17 Q. What about at the weekends? Did you eat together at the
18 weekends when you weren't at work?

19 A. I really can't remember, but as far as I know we always
20 ate together.

21 Q. Now, we might hear evidence from your wife that you used
22 to go out on a Saturday sometimes during the day?

23 A. Yes, we were always out on a Saturday morning.

24 Q. You were always out on a Saturday morning?

25 A. Yes.

1 Q. And was that at work or not?

2 A. Well, we used to go down to Stockport to go to the shops
3 and things like that and take the kids with us.

4 Q. Okay, you mentioned Stockport there. Did you do that
5 when you were in Edinburgh?

6 A. Not when we were in Edinburgh, no, no, sorry. Sorry,
7 I'm getting lost.

8 Q. Okay, so that's a bit later on. Okay.

9 A. Yeah.

10 Q. So when you were in Edinburgh, can you remember whether
11 you went out on a Saturday?

12 A. I'm trying to think back for a bit. There wasn't really
13 anywhere we could go on a Saturday unless we got them
14 into a car and take them somewhere, but that's all I can
15 recall.

16 Q. If we move on, please, to paragraph 25 and you say there
17 that you remember, as you've just mentioned, that
18 sometimes you would take them to [REDACTED], to the
19 promenade?

20 A. Yes, I distinctly remember as well that my brother used
21 to come to [REDACTED] on a Saturday afternoon there
22 and they used to spend the whole afternoon baking cakes
23 and that and the kids used to help with that as well.

24 Q. When you say the kids, did that include 'Denise' and her
25 sisters?

1 A. Yes, the three of them and 'Mary' and my son as well,
2 they all used to help around the table.

3 Q. So if we've heard evidence from 'Denise' that there was
4 some baking done in the house but she and her sisters
5 didn't get to share that, what's your response to that?

6 A. That is a -- that is a down right lie because they did
7 used to -- they did used to help. When I used to go and
8 see how they were getting on, there used to be a table
9 that used to be full of fairy cakes and pies and
10 everything under the sun they used to make.

11 Q. If I can move on, please, to page 7 of your statement
12 and to the topic of discipline at paragraph 32, you
13 mentioned this in your evidence earlier, did you ever
14 have to discipline any of the children?

15 A. I never ever once. The only discipline I can ever
16 recall is when, you know, my wife had said to me: oh
17 they've been playing up a bit, and I just went into the
18 kids' room or something and said to them, "Have you been
19 naughty?" and they would say to me, "Sorry, uncle", and
20 that was it, they just got on with their lives.

21 Q. You say in your statement that you would maybe give one
22 of them a row but you think that was rare?

23 A. It was rare, yes. And it wasn't even a raised voice or
24 anything. I just spoke to them and that was enough.

25 Q. When you're talking about the children there, are you

1 including within that 'Denise' and her sisters?

2 A. Yes. They were the family, weren't they, so.

3 Q. Did you ever use any physical discipline?

4 A. Never.

5 LADY SMITH: 'George', if your wife told you that children

6 had been playing up, how did that make you feel?

7 A. Nothing because it was an unusual thing. It was -- the

8 children were happy all the time. I don't remember them

9 being anything else.

10 LADY SMITH: Did it make you cross?

11 A. Not really. I was maybe a little bit disappointed for

12 a second, but the kids took it very well.

13 LADY SMITH: What sort of playing up might have happened?

14 A. Well, probably just -- well, "I'm not going to do this

15 and I'm not going to do that". Other than that, there

16 was nothing else. They were pretty obedient children.

17 LADY SMITH: Thank you.

18 MS INNES: And other than giving them these rows that you

19 mentioned, can you remember them ever being sent to

20 their room, for example, if they'd been naughty?

21 A. No. Never.

22 Q. If we go on to page 8 and paragraph 34, you say:

23 "I tended to be a bit aloof with the children."

24 Can you explain what you mean by that?

25 A. Well, I'm not the kind of person who plays. They were

1 three little girls and it's -- you know, it just doesn't
2 sort of play with me that -- to play games with the
3 girls, but my wife used to get books for them and things
4 like that and she carried on all that part.

5 Q. In the next section of your statement, beginning at
6 paragraph 35, you talk about some contact that the girls
7 had with their mother. Can you remember them having
8 contact with their mother?

9 A. Yes, very much so. The mother turned out to be a very
10 nice lady when she turned up. When she turned up. She
11 would come in and take the kid out some days and then
12 she would bring them back and say, "Well, I'll come and
13 see you next week or the week after". It could be two
14 or three weeks before she was ever seen again. We used
15 to get the children all dressed up on a Saturday because
16 they could see the bus stop from our window, we used get
17 the kids dressed on a Saturday waiting for their mum and
18 she wouldn't turn up, sometimes for weeks, sometimes.
19 So we've done that and the kids were very forgiving. So
20 they went out with their mum and she brought them back.
21 Very nice lady.

22 Q. We know that the girls had a brother who was in
23 a residential school, I think, at the time. Can you
24 remember them having a brother or having any contact
25 with their brother?

1 A. No, I don't remember him at all. I don't even remember
2 him being mentioned.

3 Q. At paragraph 38 at the bottom of page 8, you mention
4 again that the social workers changed constantly and you
5 say you think it was whoever was on duty came to the
6 house.

7 A. Yes.

8 Q. Can you remember seeing social workers at the house when
9 the girls were there?

10 A. Yes. I had been in -- you know, at 3 o'clock break and
11 things like that and the social workers would be --
12 that's if they was out of school time -- the social
13 worker would take them into their room to speak to them
14 in the room.

15 Q. So when you say the room, what room would the social
16 worker speak to the girls in?

17 A. Well, probably either of the two rooms that the girls
18 used.

19 Q. So a bedroom?

20 A. Yes.

21 Q. Do you know if the social worker ever took the girls out
22 of the house to speak to them?

23 A. They were allowed to speak to them in the house
24 privately but I don't know if they ever took them
25 outside.

1 Q. Did you know in advance if the social worker was coming
2 to visit?

3 A. No, they would just come up out of the blue.

4 Q. If we go on over the page, please, to paragraph 41, you
5 talk about moving to England and I think you suggest
6 that there was maybe some connection with you moving and
7 the girls leaving you? Is that right?

8 A. When we moved down to England to a new job, the social
9 work thought the best thing to do would be to try and
10 get the children to go back with their mother, so that's
11 just what they did.

12 Q. So 'Denise' and her sisters went back to their mother?

13 A. To live with the mother, yes.

14 Q. Then you tell us at paragraph 43 that you saw the girls
15 again. What can you tell us about that?

16 A. Yes. Well, we had a name and address from the mother,
17 I think she'd written to us, so we had an address, they
18 moved there, a few months afterwards we thought we'd go
19 through see them, so we went through to the house but
20 there was nobody there and a neighbour came out and
21 asked what we were -- you know, what we were doing, so
22 we said, well, "We've come to see the girls". "Oh", she
23 said, "they're in Dr Barnardo's home". And it was like
24 a quite a long way for us to go down and find that out.
25 That they were in a Dr Barnardo's home was really,

1 really hurtful.

2 Q. Why do you say that? Why was it hurtful that they were
3 in a Barnardo's home?

4 A. Well, we thought we'd given them a really nice life and
5 we thought they would have another nice life with their
6 mum and then to find out they ended up in
7 a Dr Barnardo's home was really, really -- it was
8 really, really sad.

9 Q. Did you go to the home to visit them?

10 A. As I said, we did go there, but that's when the
11 neighbour came in -- oh, the home, yeah. We went to the
12 Dr Barnardo's home and pulled up in the car park and
13 inside seconds the two oldest girls came running down
14 and they said, "Oh, uncle such-and-such, auntie
15 such-and-such, have you come to take us away? It's
16 horrible here", and we said, "We're really sorry, we
17 live in England now. When you lived with us, you were
18 under Scottish law, so there's no way that we can take
19 you away."

20 And we had probably half an hour talking to them and
21 then we went back home and they went back into the
22 house.

23 It was only the two older girls, the smallest one
24 was in a different home, so they'd been split up.

25 Q. At paragraph 45 of your statement, you refer to the

1 social workers there and you say:

2 "The social workers always seemed to be undermanned

3 and run off their feet."

4 How did you have that impression?

5 A. Well, just that -- I think we've seen so many things

6 happening and they never seemed to have the time to

7 carry something through and I think they were terribly

8 overworked.

9 Q. And you say:

10 "And I feel that in general, if the kids were happy,

11 the social workers just left us to our own devices."

12 A. That's correct. They came down, they came down at

13 a certain time to speak to the kids to make sure

14 everything's all right, then they left you to get on

15 with it.

16 Q. I'm going to return to some of the allegations that have

17 been made against you and you'll remember the warning

18 that Lady Smith gave you at the start of your evidence,

19 'George'.

20 A. Yes.

21 Q. I understand that at paragraph 51 and 52 you tell us

22 that you have given a statement to the police in

23 relation to some allegations that were made against you.

24 What was your reaction when you became aware that it was

25 'Denise' and her sisters who had spoken to the police?

1 A. It was devastating because they just -- we just couldn't
2 believe it, that they would have said something, made
3 allegations against us without -- such-and-such and
4 so-and-so. We never ever thought it would be the girls.
5 Never -- never had the slightest idea it would be from
6 them.

7 Q. If we go on to look at some of the allegations that were
8 made, at paragraph 53 you know that 'Denise' refers to
9 your wife and says she had the most terrible temper. Is
10 that a correct description of your wife or not?

11 A. My wife -- my wife loves children and I just cannot
12 envisage the fact that she would have been in any way
13 cruel to any child on this earth.

14 Q. So in terms of the description of her having a terrible
15 temper, is that a description of your wife that you
16 recognise or not?

17 A. One thing she did not have, she didn't have a temper.
18 That's one thing she didn't have.

19 LADY SMITH: Did your wife ever get cross?

20 A. Possibly she got a little bit cross, I would say that,
21 but I would say in all the years we were married I never
22 ever saw her losing her temper.

23 LADY SMITH: Did she ever get cross with children?

24 A. Not that I know. I never -- I never -- I never ever saw
25 it.

1 LADY SMITH: Thank you.

2 MS INNES: Did you ever see her shouting at children?

3 A. Never. My wife had the patience of a saint, as they
4 say, but I never ever saw her losing her temper at any
5 child ever.

6 Q. At this part of her statement, 'Denise' says that your
7 wife would put the children over her knee, "pull our
8 knickers down and hammer us with her hands". Did you
9 ever see your wife doing that?

10 A. I never ever saw my wife doing that and I could not
11 imagine it, ever.

12 Q. And 'Denise' says that you did this as well.

13 A. I -- I certainly -- I certainly -- I have no
14 recollection of it and it certainly never happened.

15 Q. You say at paragraph 54, at the end:
16 "I wonder if the allegations could be some ploy to
17 get something out of us."
18 What do you mean by that?

19 A. Well, there was so much going around in these last few
20 years about -- you know, about grammar schools and
21 Catholic schools and things like that, and I think they
22 might have thought a nice little scheme that they were
23 trying to get some money out of us but they picked the
24 wrong people because we haven't got any money to get out
25 of us.

1 Q. In her evidence to the Inquiry, 'Denise' told us about
2 an incident where she said one of her sisters was
3 grabbed by you to be beaten in the way that she's
4 described and she says her sister wet herself and then
5 you beat her because she did that.

6 A. Well, that is -- that is the product of a very vivid
7 imagination because it never ever happened and
8 I wouldn't even have liked to have tried to make it
9 happen, it would have been an impossibility.

10 Q. Why would it have been an impossibility?

11 A. Well, you don't -- I know who you're talking about and
12 trying to -- it would have been like trying to wrestle
13 an octopus to the ground or something and then put it in
14 a fishing net.

15 Q. Can you remember any of the girls ever wetting
16 themselves?

17 A. Never. I've never ever known that.

18 Q. I said this was one of 'Denise''s sisters and you said
19 you knew which one I was talking about, how did you know
20 which one I was talking about?

21 A. Well, when you said it wasn't 'Denise', it could only be
22 the middle one. She was like a -- she was like a bull
23 in a china shop. You know, if you'd ever tried to even
24 get a hold of her, you'd have been trying to catch
25 a raging bull I would think, I would think.

1 Q. You say it's the middle sister. How do you know it
2 wasn't the youngest one?

3 A. Well, she was -- she was so quiet and 'Denise' --
4 'Denise' always spoke for the three of them, but the
5 youngest one very rarely ever said anything. She was
6 a perky little -- perky little girl.

7 Q. At paragraph 55, there's a quote from 'Denise''s
8 statement there where there's a discussion about chores
9 and we've spoken about that already. But I want to ask
10 you specifically about shopping. 'Denise' says in her
11 statement that she and her sisters had to go and get
12 shopping, I think from Leith and bring the shopping
13 back. Can you remember that happening?

14 A. I cannot remember it happening because it didn't happen,
15 that's why. You could imagine it, if you know -- and
16 I know I'm asking a wee bit -- but if you know
17 [REDACTED] there's no way that we would send three
18 children to Leith. We'd never see them again. They'd
19 never find their way back.

20 Q. The next think that's covered in your statement is
21 a time that 'Denise' says that she ran away. Can you
22 remember 'Denise' running away?

23 A. We had a -- we had a child before 'Denise' came around,
24 a young lad about the same age. He was just leaving as
25 she arrived. Now, he was the one who did the running

1 away, and I think 'Denise' listened to his stories and
2 she -- she made them up herself, but she never ever ran
3 away.

4 Q. Okay. Then at paragraph 58 you quote another thing that
5 'Denise' said in her statement which was about her being
6 very hungry and sneaking into the kitchen to take some
7 bread and she put vinegar on it to make it taste of
8 something and then she says that your wife caught her.
9 Can you remember the girls being hungry when they were
10 with you?

11 A. That's one thing I do not remember. They were never
12 ever hungry. They were the most well-fed children
13 I think in the whole of the area.

14 Q. So 'Denise' says in her statement, and we've heard
15 evidence from her that she remembers a time when she and
16 her sisters went to a doctor and your wife was there and
17 the doctor said that they were underweight. Can you
18 remember anything about that?

19 A. I wouldn't remember that and I'm sure if it did happen
20 my wife would have told me, but I don't -- I can't say
21 it didn't happen, but as far as I'm concerned it didn't.

22 Q. Another thing that 'Denise' says in her statement is
23 that the girls weren't allowed to go into the living
24 room in the house and they had to stay in their own
25 room. Is that right?

1 A. No, that's -- no, that is rubbish.

2 Q. Can you remember them being in the living room?

3 A. Yes. Sometimes. They had all their toys and things

4 like that in their own room, so generally speaking --

5 you know, I mean, maybe up until bedtime or something

6 they could go into the living room, my wife would help

7 them with their homework and things like that, but other

8 than that, they played -- we had a huge corridor all the

9 way down the whole of the house and that's where the

10 kids played most of the time.

11 Q. Again we've heard evidence from 'Denise' that she felt

12 that they were treated differently, and I think the way

13 she described it was as though they were infected.

14 A. Affected? What does affected mean?

15 Q. Infected.

16 A. Infect?

17 Q. Yes. That they ate separately, that they weren't

18 allowed to use the same towels, for example, as you and

19 your family used, they weren't allowed into the living

20 room, as I've just mentioned.

21 A. Well, we had quite a big bathroom and I would imagine --

22 well, not imagine, I shouldn't imagine, but as far as

23 their own things, they had all their own towels and they

24 had everything like that that kids would normally have.

25 There was nothing taken away from them. They were given

1 the best that we could possibly give them.

2 Q. Another thing that 'Denise' said in her statement, and
3 she also spoke about in her evidence, was that sometimes
4 the girls would be left at [REDACTED] beach by you when
5 you would go away on a Saturday or at the weekend, for
6 example, with your son. Did that happen?

7 A. No, that never ever possibly happened. There's no way
8 any respectable person would go to [REDACTED] beach and
9 leave your kids there. It's just not on.

10 Q. If we look at paragraph 59 of your statement, you say
11 there that none of what is being alleged is true and
12 'Denise''s statement comes across like a novel. Why do
13 you say that?

14 A. Well, because everything -- everything that you've told
15 me and what I've heard up to now just did not happen.
16 It's all made up. If there's one person in the whole
17 family (unclear). Out of three kids, two of them had
18 very little to say about anything. 'Denise' was the one
19 who -- 'Denise' was the one who spoke for them all and
20 I think these are figments of her imagination that
21 happened.

22 Q. You say at paragraph 60 that of the three girls, you
23 would have said that 'Denise' was a "schemer". Why do
24 you say that?

25 A. Well, everything -- if you spoke to the girls together,

1 it was always 'Denise' who digested all the information
2 and 'Denise' would be the instigator of anything. If
3 she said it was to happen with the three girls, it
4 happened. If she said it wasn't, it wouldn't happen.
5 She was a different girl completely from the other two.
6 In fact, all three were completely different girls. But
7 she was the planner and the schemer and she knew exactly
8 what she was doing, exactly what she was doing.

9 Q. And you say that you could see she would be thinking if
10 you spoke to her. What do you mean by that?

11 A. Well, you could say -- you could -- I know it's
12 an impossibility, but you could see behind her eyes that
13 she was thinking -- well, you know, it's just one of
14 these things, you know that people are planning or
15 something. It's just -- it's just a thing that you get
16 yourself. You must have it in your job where you think,
17 well, people are thinking this and thinking that. But
18 she certainly did.

19 Q. I'm just trying to understand whether you mean if you're
20 speaking to somebody, somebody might be listening to
21 what you're saying and taking it on board? Is that the
22 sort of thing that you mean?

23 A. No. No, I'm meaning the fact that when you were telling
24 her something, you could see it clicking away in her --
25 I know it's an impossibility, but you could see it going

1 through her head that she was already digesting the
2 information you gave, despite the age she was, she was
3 a grown-up person for her age.

4 Q. Okay. If we move on to the end of your statement, in
5 the final paragraph, page 13, paragraph 61, you say that
6 you think most foster parents went down the same route
7 that your wife and you did and you're sure that they all
8 had good days and bad days. What do you mean by that?
9 What sort of good days and bad days?

10 A. I think most people just learn fostering by experience.
11 I know there must be good foster parents and bad foster
12 parents, but you learn as you go along and the kids
13 (unclear). We were very, very -- we were very happy
14 about what happened with the girls. In a way we thought
15 we'd really been good to them in the time we had them.
16 So it was a major surprise to find out what has happened
17 after all these years.

18 Q. And you say:

19 "As long as social workers keep in regular contact
20 with foster parents and the children, then things should
21 be fine."

22 Can you tell us what you're telling us about there?

23 A. Well, as I say, the fact that the social workers come --
24 when they came to the golf course and then they did what
25 you would ordinarily think. I mean, they spoke to the

1 girls, they spoke to the girls on their own, they were
2 allowed to speak to them, I think they did speak to
3 their mother as well and they had various people who
4 would come to the house and I think they were happy --
5 the social work was happy about them, how things were --
6 how things were progressing. We were sorry to see the
7 girls go, we really were. If it hadn't been for the
8 move to a job down in England, we'd probably still have
9 them yet. Well, we wouldn't have them yet but we could
10 have.

11 MS INNES: Right, thank you, 'George', I don't have any more
12 questions for you and there are no applications,
13 my Lady.

14 LADY SMITH: Thank you. Are there any outstanding
15 applications for questions of 'George'?

16 A. No, thank you.

17 LADY SMITH: And 'George', I don't have any other questions
18 for you. Thank you very much for joining us over the
19 link and bearing with us when we were having
20 difficulties with it. It's been very helpful to hear
21 you tell us about what it was like to be a foster carer
22 in the 1970s up here, north of the border, and to hear
23 what you have to say in response to what's been said by
24 another witness. I've listened carefully and of course
25 I have your statement as well which deals with

1 everything we needed to discuss with you. I of course
2 will reflect on all of it and have regard to all of it
3 as we go through the Inquiry.

4 I'm sure that's been a tough morning for you doing
5 something a bit different from your normal life, and
6 I hope when we switch off the link you're able to relax
7 and have a more restful day. Thank you very much.

8 A. Thank you, ma'am.

9 (The witness withdrew)

10 LADY SMITH: Well, Ms Innes.

11 MS INNES: My Lady, the next witness will be by WebEx as
12 well. I'm not sure if she might be able to start a bit
13 earlier.

14 LADY SMITH: Yes.

15 MS INNES: I'd need to speak to witness support about that,
16 to see if we could start at 11.30, for example, if she's
17 ready to start then.

18 LADY SMITH: Yes.

19 MS INNES: As her statement is a bit longer, I think it
20 might be helpful to have that additional time.

21 LADY SMITH: So you're suggesting we take the break now --

22 MS INNES: Yes.

23 LADY SMITH: -- pick up with the next videolink witness when
24 we can, and then we can take the rest of the day from
25 there.

1 MS INNES: Thank you, my Lady.

2 LADY SMITH: Very well. We'll stop now for the break.

3 I just mention in passing that the name of the last

4 witness's son was mentioned and at one point he

5 mentioned half of his own name. They're both protected

6 by my general restriction order and they can't be

7 identified outside this room. Thank you very much.

8 (11.11 am)

9 (A short break)

10 (11.32 am)

11 LADY SMITH: Do we have a working link with no feedback now?

12 MS INNES: My understanding is that improvements have been

13 made.

14 LADY SMITH: Good.

15 MS INNES: The next witness is using the pseudonym 'Betty'.

16 She was a foster carer for Edinburgh Corporation in the

17 early 1970s. An applicant using the pseudonym 'Denise'

18 was placed with 'Betty' and her husband, who has the

19 pseudonym 'George', in Edinburgh from [REDACTED] 1971 until

20 she returned to the care of her mother on [REDACTED] 1972.

21 She gave evidence on Day 301, 30 June 2022. The City of

22 Edinburgh Council is the relevant successor.

23 LADY SMITH: Thank you very much.

24 'Betty', good morning.

25 A. Good morning.

1 LADY SMITH: Can you hear me and can you see me all right?

2 A. Yes, I can.

3 LADY SMITH: Let me introduce myself. I'm Lady Smith,

4 I chair the Scottish Child Abuse Inquiry here in

5 Edinburgh and first of all I want to thank you for

6 joining us over the videolink this morning to give your

7 evidence to the Inquiry. It's very helpful that you're

8 able to do that.

9 Before we start, just let me check. I think you

10 have a copy of your statement with you; is that right?

11 A. Yes, I have.

12 LADY SMITH: Good. You may not need to refer to it, but

13 it's good that you have it there in case you do.

14 Separately from that, 'Betty', can I just assure you

15 that I do understand that giving evidence in any

16 circumstances is challenging and stressful and that it

17 becomes even more stressful when you're being asked

18 about personal matters, your own life and what happened

19 so long ago. So I do appreciate that you may find it

20 difficult at times and if there's anything I can do to

21 assist you, do let me know. For example, if you want

22 a break at any time, that's quite all right. If it

23 works for you, it works for me.

24 Separately from that, before you give your evidence,

25 I will be inviting you to take an oath or affirm in

1 a moment, but before you do that I want to explain
2 you're here to give evidence at a public inquiry. This
3 isn't a hearing in court. However, you are giving
4 evidence in public, a transcript is being made of your
5 evidence, and it's important that you understand that it
6 could be relied on outwith the Inquiry at a later date.

7 In these circumstances, I need to warn you that if
8 you're asked any questions the answers to which could
9 incriminate you, you're not obliged to answer them. Do
10 you understand that?

11 A. Yes. Yes, I do, ma'am.

12 LADY SMITH: Good. If at any point you have any queries in
13 relation to that, please do feel free to speak up. It's
14 important that I know if you have any doubts or you're
15 puzzled about anything to do with it.

16 Now, I'd like to start with you raising your right
17 hand but, before you do that, could you tell me whether
18 you would like to take the oath or whether you'd like to
19 affirm. By taking the oath, I mean you would swear by
20 God but if that's something you're not comfortable with,
21 I'll ask you to affirm.

22 A. No, I'm fine with that.

23 'Betty' (sworn)

24 LADY SMITH: Thank you, 'Betty'. I'll hand over to Ms Innes
25 if you're ready and she'll take it from there. Is that

1 okay?

2 A. Thank you, ma'am.

3 LADY SMITH: Ms Innes.

4 MS INNES: Thank you, my Lady.

5 Questions from Ms Innes

6 MS INNES: Good morning, 'Betty'.

7 I understand that you were born in 1941?

8 A. Oh, sorry. Yes. Yes.

9 Q. Are you not able to hear me?

10 A. Sorry, I didn't realise you were speaking to me because

11 you were looking in the opposite direction.

12 Q. It's the way that the cameras are, I'm afraid.

13 A. Yes, I understand that now. Yes.

14 Q. Okay. So we understand that you were born in 1941?

15 A. Yes.

16 Q. And your statement, if we look at it now, it's been

17 given the reference WIT-1-000001000.

18 I think a copy of your statement is there in front

19 of you and if we can look, please, on the final page,

20 page 23.

21 A. Yes. I've got that.

22 Q. It says there:

23 "I have no objection to my witness statement being

24 published as part of the evidence to the Inquiry.

25 I believe the facts stated in this witness statement are

1 true."

2 And I think you signed this statement on 27 May

3 2022.

4 A. I did, yes.

5 Q. Okay, thank you. Now, if we go back to the beginning of

6 your statement, you tell us a little bit of your family

7 life and I think at paragraph 2 you tell us that you got

8 married when you were 26, so I think --

9 A. I did.

10 Q. -- that would have been in 1967 or 1968?

11 A. 1968.

12 Q. And then you tell us, I think, that you had a son. When

13 was your oldest son born?

14 A. 1969.

15 Q. Okay.

16 A. [REDACTED] 1969.

17 Q. After that, I think you tell us that you decided that

18 you would look into fostering children. Why did you

19 decide to apply to become foster parents?

20 A. Well, I always loved children and years ago my best

21 friend was in care and she took me back to the -- the

22 children's home that she was in when we were at school

23 and I loved the children there and I always said: when

24 I grow up, I'm going to take all these children home,

25 I'm going to look after them.

1 And then my life just revolved around children.
2 I looked after my young brother and my two young cousins
3 from a very early age, and then my brother had six
4 children and I was very involved with them, and I just
5 loved the thought of a big family, lots of children
6 around. Especially children that needed to be cared
7 for.

8 Q. At paragraph 4 you tell us about the process of being
9 appointed as a foster carer, and you say that it took
10 quite a few months. What can you tell us about the
11 process of being appointed? What was it like?

12 A. Well, we had visits from a social worker talking about
13 our early life, how we -- how we were with our parents
14 and just generally about our childhood and the reasons
15 we had for wanting to have children.

16 Q. You say that you had to have references.

17 A. Yes. I can't remember where the references had to come
18 from, but ... I know we did when we fostered down here
19 in England, we had to have references, and I'm pretty
20 certain it was the same in Edinburgh.

21 Q. You say that you did get frustrated with the process.
22 What frustrated you with the process of being appointed?

23 A. Well, we expected it to be a bit quicker, really. We
24 were anxious to have children.

25 Q. At paragraph 5, you say that you didn't require any

1 qualifications or experience for the role and you
2 weren't given any training. And you say:
3 "On reflection, now I know what I know, that was not
4 adequate."
5 So, on reflection, what sort of training do you
6 think would have been necessary or helpful?
7 A. (Pause). I'm not quite sure about this, but I do think
8 there ought to have been more questions about how
9 capable we were of looking after children. If we knew
10 what children liked and disliked. Even how to feed
11 children. There weren't any questions like that asked.
12 Perhaps we could have fed them on cornflakes 24 hours
13 a day, but nobody -- nobody asked what we intended to do
14 or if we knew about nutrition for children.
15 I don't think we were really asked much about our
16 experience with children.
17 Q. You say, as you've already mentioned, that you had
18 experience with children, with your brother's children,
19 for example, and you say that people that hadn't been
20 used to children should have been offered some training
21 and help. You didn't think that you needed any at the
22 time. Is that how you felt at the time?
23 A. Yes. At the time I knew that I knew enough about
24 children to know how to look after them. But I think
25 generally people should have a bit of training. I think

1 they do nowadays. In Stockport I was offered a course
2 at the local college about children, caring for children
3 with learning difficulties or children with problems
4 coming into care. That sort of thing, I think, would be
5 quite useful.

6 Q. Okay. At paragraph 6 you say that:

7 "No child protection training was discussed. We had
8 no experience of looking after kids who had suffered
9 abuse, but we knew the type of kids we were liable to be
10 looking after."

11 Do you think that specific training on looking after
12 children who had perhaps suffered abuse at home would
13 have been helpful?

14 A. Yes, definitely, yeah.

15 Q. You mentioned a moment ago in your evidence about nobody
16 asking about nutrition for children. Was that something
17 that you felt that you knew enough about or not at the
18 time?

19 A. Yes, yes. I was very into cooking at the time. I knew
20 what children liked and disliked and what they needed
21 and didn't need.

22 LADY SMITH: What did they need, 'Betty'? Sorry, 'Betty',
23 it was me that was asking that.

24 A. Oh, sorry.

25 LADY SMITH: What did they need?

1 A. Well, they needed proper food. Proper home-cooked food
2 and vegetables and things. I made stews and bologneses
3 and all sorts of home-cooked stuff. Cottage pies and
4 things like that. I made sure the kids had plenty to
5 eat.

6 LADY SMITH: We may come back to that. That's helpful just
7 now. Thank you, 'Betty'.

8 MS INNES: Moving on in your statement, you talk about the
9 types of children that you would be fostering and you
10 say that it was short-term fostering that you applied to
11 do?

12 A. Yes.

13 Q. What did you think short-term fostering would mean?

14 A. Well, the social workers said perhaps a week at a time,
15 a couple of weeks at a time, maybe parents in hospital
16 or moving house or being homeless or -- but it -- it was
17 never going to be more than a few weeks at a time.

18 Q. Did you have any view about the age the children would
19 be when they came to you?

20 A. We had no idea.

21 Q. You say at paragraph 7 that you didn't give a maximum
22 number of children that you could take. You weren't
23 asked for that?

24 A. No, no one asked us.

25 Q. And you say that you understood the social worker who

1 have a list of short-term foster carers. They could
2 look at that to place a child and would ring to see if
3 anyone had space.

4 A. Yes.

5 Q. Is that the way in which you became aware that the
6 social work needed to place children?

7 A. Yes.

8 Q. So would they phone you up and ask you if you were able
9 to take a child, for example?

10 A. That's it, yeah. Sometimes late at night.

11 LADY SMITH: 'Betty', a few moments ago, you said that you
12 knew the type of children you were going to be asked to
13 look after. Tell me what type of children did you think
14 you were going to be asked to take in?

15 A. I thought they'd perhaps be upset being away from their
16 parents. I didn't really know a lot about child abuse.
17 I didn't know how much of it actually went on in the
18 community. But I knew some of the kids would be
19 affected with their family's lifestyle.

20 LADY SMITH: Thank you. Sorry, was there anything else you
21 wanted to add?

22 A. No. My mind's just going into overdrive.

23 LADY SMITH: Well, do try to relax because I'm just
24 interested to understand whether, for example, the Local
25 Authority or the social workers had explained to you

1 what to expect so far as the type of children that they
2 might be asking you to take into your home was
3 concerned.

4 A. No, we didn't know. We didn't know anything about the
5 children that they brought. It was just a case of, "Can
6 you have them?" The parents may have been evicted or the
7 father has been arrested and we've taken the children
8 into care and -- but not much about the actual children.

9 LADY SMITH: Thank you.

10 MS INNES: 'Betty', if we move on to paragraph 9 of your
11 statement, you talk about the accommodation that you had
12 for the children and the number that you had at any one
13 time, and you say:

14 "The most we ever fostered at the one time was
15 five."

16 A. Yes.

17 Q. And in addition, you had your own son at that point, is
18 that right?

19 A. Yes.

20 Q. So that would have been six children in the house in
21 total?

22 A. Yes.

23 Q. Was it for a short period that you had five or did that
24 last for a number of months?

25 A. Oh, that was just for a short period. That was

1 an emergency placement, the extra two.

2 Q. Then you say:

3 "Each child had a different social worker. You
4 never dealt with just one social worker, and we didn't
5 have our own like in England."

6 Can you explain that a bit further, please?

7 A. It was very difficult, actually, to contact social
8 workers. It was usually a duty social worker that was
9 on that didn't know much about the situation, but we
10 didn't have anyone that we could really talk to. We
11 didn't have a designated social worker for us, which on
12 reflection, I think we should have had. I think there
13 should have been someone keeping in contact. Nobody got
14 in touch with our children to see how we were managing.
15 They gave us children, but there was no follow-up to
16 say, "How is it going? Do you like fostering? Have you
17 any problems?" The sort of things that you would expect
18 now.

19 Q. Okay. Are you meaning there was no follow-up with you
20 to ask you how you were getting on?

21 A. Yes.

22 Q. Okay. But the children themselves had social workers
23 and you say that each child had their own social worker
24 and they were all different?

25 A. Yes.

1 Q. And did the social workers sometimes change as well?

2 A. I didn't really get to know the social workers because

3 they would come, drop off children, and pick them up,

4 and that was more or less all the contact with the

5 short-term placements.

6 With the longer ones, with the girls, they did have

7 a social worker who came to talk to them.

8 Q. And roughly how often did that social worker come to

9 talk to them?

10 A. I'm not really sure, but I think every few weeks, maybe

11 every couple of months. I don't really know.

12 Q. Did the social worker speak to the girls in the house or

13 somewhere else?

14 A. In the house, generally, on their own.

15 Q. Okay. Would that be in the living room or in their own

16 bedroom?

17 A. Probably in their own bedroom.

18 Q. Can you remember ever being there when the social worker

19 was speaking to the girls?

20 A. No, never. She had to speak to them privately, which

21 was only right.

22 Q. And did that social worker have any conversation with

23 you about how the girls were doing or how you were

24 getting on, can you remember?

25 A. Just briefly.

1 Q. Okay. If we move on, please, to page 3 of your
2 statement and paragraph 10, I think you were being asked
3 here whether you saw foster care as being a profession
4 or a vocation, and you say you didn't see it as either,
5 it was just a family thing. Can you explain that,
6 please?

7 A. Well, it's something you either want to do or you don't
8 want to do. You don't do it for money. And I don't
9 think it should really be a paid thing. Then it
10 becomes -- it becomes like a job. It shouldn't be like
11 a job. The kids should be part of the family. With
12 some expenses thrown in, which obviously you would need.

13 Q. You talk about financial support at paragraph 11, and
14 you say that you were given an allowance for the
15 children; is that right?

16 A. Yes.

17 Q. You say you weren't given any guidance as to what it
18 should be used for?

19 A. No, it was just meant to feed them, look after them.
20 Any expenses they might have. School things or pocket
21 money or ... outings, maybe.

22 Q. Would it cover things like clothing?

23 A. Not really. There was never enough to cover things like
24 that.

25 Q. Were you aware if you could ask the social work

1 department for more help if the money wasn't enough?

2 A. I don't think there was much money available at all.

3 Q. And you say that you weren't looking to make money from

4 fostering, you weren't doing it as an income stream?

5 A. No, certainly not.

6 Q. You then go on to talk about the accommodation that you

7 had and then the children that you fostered. At

8 paragraph 15 at the bottom of page 3 you say that you

9 fostered from about 1970 until 1973, 1974, when you

10 moved to England.

11 A. Yes.

12 Q. And I think you carried on fostering in England?

13 A. Yes.

14 Q. Okay. Were the girls the first children who had been

15 placed with you or did you have children before then?

16 A. Oh, we had some before then.

17 Q. Were these for short term --

18 A. Short term, yes.

19 Q. If we go to the top of page 4, you say there that you're

20 aware that you fostered 17 children in Edinburgh over

21 those three or four years.

22 A. Yes.

23 Q. You got that information, I think, when you moved to

24 England and you made an application there?

25 A. Yes.

1 Q. When you applied to be foster carers in England, did the
2 Local Authority there have to contact Edinburgh to ask
3 them for a reference or anything like that?
4 A. Oh yes, yes, definitely.
5 Q. Then if we move down the page on page 4 at paragraph 19,
6 you say that most of your placements were short term and
7 the longest placement was the one with the three girls.
8 A. Yes.
9 Q. They were with you, as you say, for just over a year?
10 A. Yes.
11 Q. In the next paragraph at paragraph 20 you say you don't
12 know why the placement lasted so long?
13 A. No, we had no idea. We thought it was only going to be
14 a short-term thing, but it just seemed to go on and on
15 and -- we didn't question it because we were quite happy
16 with the girls.
17 Q. You say you weren't told what was happening?
18 A. We got very little information from the social workers.
19 Q. Okay. So you had no idea how long the placement was
20 going to last. It just went from day to day --
21 A. No.
22 Q. -- I think you say.
23 A. Well, we knew that at any time they would ring up and
24 say, "We're coming to take the children away, they're
25 going home".

1 Q. When you say you knew that they could ring up at any
2 time and do that, how did you know that? Did that
3 happen with other children?

4 A. Well, that's how things happened. You know, they would
5 say, "Well, they're going home on Friday, we'll come and
6 pick the children up", and -- sometimes they'd say,
7 "They're coming for a week", and at other times it was,
8 "A few days, we'll let you know, we'll tell you when
9 we're coming to pick them up", so --

10 LADY SMITH: 'Betty', with 'Denise' and her sisters, that's
11 the three girls, were you told how long the placement
12 was going to be at the outset?

13 A. No.

14 LADY SMITH: But you had indicated that what you wanted to
15 do was give short-term foster care to children; is that
16 right?

17 A. Yes.

18 LADY SMITH: Did there come a time when you realised it was
19 not short term, the girls were still with you and it was
20 looking like longer term?

21 A. Well, it seemed to be, "Oh, we'll sort something out in
22 a week or two", or, "We don't really know what's
23 happening and their mother wants to do this or that",
24 and so we just weren't sure how long --

25 LADY SMITH: Did you ask how long it was going to be before

1 they were taken back?

2 A. Well, we weren't desperate to get rid of them. It

3 wasn't a case of, "Come and take them away". We were

4 happy having them. They just joined into the family.

5 They just became part of the -- our little family group.

6 LADY SMITH: Thank you.

7 MS INNES: At paragraph 24 of your statement, it says that

8 in relation to the three girls, they didn't settle in

9 quickly.

10 A. No, they didn't.

11 Q. Can you describe what that was like?

12 A. Well, when they turned up, they obviously didn't want to

13 be here. It was a case of, "We're here because we have

14 to be, and put us somewhere else". They had taken them

15 somewhere previously and they thought they were going to

16 be staying there, and then they were moved again and

17 they had been so used to looking after themselves they

18 just didn't want anyone else to be looking after them.

19 It was a case of, "We don't need you, we're okay, so

20 leave us alone".

21 Q. What did that mean in terms of "leave us alone"? What

22 were they doing?

23 A. Oh no, no, I don't mean that. It was sort of, "Let us

24 do our own thing, we can look after ourselves, we don't

25 need a babysitter". Which obviously they did. But

1 I know it was difficult for 'Denise' because she had
2 been like a mother figure to the younger ones. She
3 looked after them and they did everything she wanted
4 them to do.

5 Q. At paragraph 25, you talk about the daily routine being
6 your job and you talk about your husband going off to
7 work and you were a housewife.

8 A. Yes.

9 Q. What sort of hours did your husband work when you were
10 living in Edinburgh, can you remember?

11 A. Well, it was a full day job. We lived on the golf
12 course, so obviously he worked on the golf course. He
13 was head greenkeeper there. And he went out at
14 8 o'clock in the morning and came back maybe 4.30,
15 5 o'clock.

16 Q. Okay. How many days a week was he working, can you
17 remember?

18 A. Five. Sometimes a Saturday, I think, in the early
19 morning.

20 Q. So when you say five days, was it Monday to Friday?

21 A. Monday to Friday, yeah.

22 Q. Now, if we can move on from there to the bottom of
23 page 6 and mealtimes, and you say that:

24 "When they came home they had an evening meal."
25 You say:

1 "I can't remember if we all ate together, but
2 I presume we would have."

3 Would your husband have been at the mealtime as well
4 or did the girls eat separately? Did you eat with them
5 or with your husband, can you remember?

6 A. Well, I had the little one at the time and I would
7 presumably have fed him before I had a meal. Perhaps if
8 we had a few children it would be easier to feed the
9 children together, give them a meal, look after them.

10 Sometimes they -- especially with younger kids, they
11 would need help with feeding and cutting up food and
12 what not.

13 Q. You say --

14 A. So the -- yes?

15 Q. Sorry, no.

16 A. There would have been times, I think, when they ate
17 separately.

18 Q. You say in this paragraph at the top of page 7:

19 "They wouldn't have gone hungry."

20 We'll come onto it in a bit more detail, but I think
21 you know that 'Denise' in her statement to the Inquiry
22 said that the girls were hungry when they lived with
23 you.

24 A. That's absolute rubbish. We always had plenty food in
25 the house. There was always plenty to go around. More

1 than enough because we just never knew how many kids
2 were going to be there.

3 Q. At paragraph 32 you talk about baking a lot. We've
4 heard evidence from 'Denise' that you did that, but the
5 baking wasn't shared with the girls. What's your
6 response to that?

7 A. Of course it was. There wouldn't be much point baking
8 if it wasn't for the family.

9 Q. In the next section you go on to talk about leisure time
10 and at paragraph 34 you say that you sometimes used to
11 go to walk to [REDACTED] and walk along the promenade,
12 I think, at [REDACTED]? Did you do you that with the
13 girls, can you remember?

14 A. Oh yes. We did that often at night.

15 Q. So that was something that you would do after they came
16 home from school?

17 A. No, after tea.

18 Q. Oh, after tea, okay.

19 A. We'd all go together, FGK [REDACTED] and the kids.

20 Q. So if 'Denise' says that didn't happen, she's wrong
21 about that?

22 A. Yes, definitely.

23 Q. Okay.

24 A. She knows we did that, often.

25 Q. Okay. At paragraph 35 you mention pocket money. Again

1 in 'Denise''s statement she says that she and her
2 sisters never got pocket money when they lived with you.
3 A. Of course they did. All kids want to buy bags of sweets
4 and things. All children need a little bit money, don't
5 they, even from a young age they need to have something
6 they can call their own.
7 Q. On page 8 of your statement at paragraph 38, you talk
8 about doing fundraising and collecting jumble and doing
9 jumble sales.
10 A. Yes.
11 Q. Did the girls help collect jumble when they lived with
12 you?
13 A. Yes, they did sometimes. They liked to do things like
14 that.
15 Q. In 'Denise''s evidence, she told the Inquiry that you
16 would sort through what they collected and then keep
17 things for them or yourself and then the rest would be
18 put into the sale; is that right?
19 A. That's rubbish.
20 Q. What would you do with the jumble that they collected?
21 A. We'd keep it for the fundraising. For the jumble sales.
22 Q. I think you know that 'Denise' has said that you would
23 get second-hand clothes and shoes from jumble sales for
24 them; is that right?
25 A. I did get clothes from jumble sales, but not shoes.

1 I don't like second-hand shoes for children. But I had
2 a stock of clothes that I'd bought from jumble sales
3 because I hadn't realised that some of the children that
4 we were going to foster would come along with no
5 clothes, just the clothes they stood up in, so I knew
6 I had to have a stock of spare things. There was no way
7 I could have afforded to buy all new stuff, so right at
8 the beginning I went to jumble sales with my brother and
9 we bought all the nice children's clothes that we could
10 find, took them home, washed them and put them in a big
11 sideboard so that we had -- we had spares for the kids.

12 And when the girls came, I told them if they ran out
13 of things, there were spare things in the cupboard, and
14 the first thing they did was sort through everything to
15 see what fitted them and they were delighted with the
16 stuff.

17 Q. Okay. If we can move on, please, to the next page of
18 your statement, page 9 and paragraph 47. You have
19 a heading there, "Discipline", and you say:

20 "We didn't really have discipline as such."

21 Can you explain what you mean by that, please?

22 A. Well, you don't take children in and think: how am
23 I going to discipline? What are we going to do with
24 them? When you think of discipline in schools were
25 dreadful at the time, so there was nothing like that

1 involved. Most kids are reasonable. If you say to
2 them, "This behaviour is not acceptable", most of them
3 will toe the line.

4 We knew if we had any major problems we could tell
5 the social work people, tell the social worker, but
6 little things were little things. It was just a case
7 of, "Please don't do that, that's not acceptable in our
8 home". There was never, never any physical punishment.

9 Q. Did you ever shout at them if they did something wrong?

10 A. Well, there's always the case that you shout at a child.
11 If a child puts its hand on a hot cooker or something,
12 you wouldn't say, "Please don't do that", you would
13 shout, wouldn't you?

14 Q. Would you ever, for example, send children to their
15 rooms if they were misbehaving?

16 A. Not really. I don't think that's a thing that I ever
17 did. Even with my own children.

18 Q. And you say that you never used physical punishment.

19 A. Never.

20 Q. So if the children misbehaved, you might shout at them
21 or you might explain that their behaviour was
22 unacceptable?

23 A. Yes.

24 Q. Okay.

25 A. That works much better with children.

1 Q. At paragraph 48, you refer to your relationship with the
2 foster children and you say:
3 "Some needed a bit more support than others. No
4 support was offered from social work."
5 Can you explain that, please?
6 A. Well, obviously you get some children that are upset
7 because they're away from their parents and they need
8 a bit loving. Older children are -- tend not to want to
9 be loved, for some reason, not used to being loved.
10 But with the girls, we did have -- I thought we had
11 quite a loving relationship. Eventually we -- we seemed
12 to really gel as a family. We understood one another.
13 Especially 'Denise'. I got really fond of 'Denise' and
14 I just can't understand what life's done to her to make
15 her feel like this.
16 Q. If we can move on, please, to page 10 and to
17 paragraph 53, you talk there about contact between the
18 girls and their mother. And you say that she sometimes
19 visited them. She didn't always turn up when she said
20 she would. You say:
21 "It was just a casual thing and social work weren't
22 involved."
23 A. No, she would ring up and say she was coming and then
24 she wouldn't turn up on occasions.
25 Q. And it was just arranged directly between you and her,

1 it wasn't through the social work department at all?

2 A. No.

3 Q. Can you remember if the social work department told you

4 how often the girls should be seeing their mum or

5 anything like that?

6 A. No, not at all.

7 Q. Then at paragraph 54 on page 11, you say that you knew

8 that they had an older brother who was in a wheelchair,

9 but he never had any contact with the girls when they

10 lived with you?

11 A. No. I didn't know anything about the brother until they

12 were moving back to Yorkshire.

13 Q. So for the whole time that they lived with you, you

14 didn't know that they had an older brother?

15 A. No.

16 Q. Social work never told you that?

17 A. No.

18 Q. You say social work didn't really encourage any contact

19 between siblings?

20 A. Not at all, no.

21 Q. So is that your recollection as a generality, obviously

22 you didn't know about the girls having a brother, but

23 more generally in terms of your experience as a foster

24 carer in Scotland, you didn't find that social work

25 encouraged contact with siblings?

1 A. No. Not at all.

2 Q. You've already told us about visits from the social
3 worker, so if we can move on, please, to paragraph 57,
4 again I think you say there:

5 "Looking back, I think we should have had a social
6 worker ourselves or even just someone who checked in on
7 us. That's the system down in England. The Scottish
8 system was flawed in that way."

9 And I think you've dealt with that already in your
10 evidence. You say:

11 "One social worker didn't know what another one was
12 doing."

13 A. Yeah, that seemed to be the case.

14 Q. And how did you get that impression? Was it when you
15 phoned them to ask for assistance or was it when you had
16 different foster children in your home with different
17 social workers?

18 A. Yeah, nobody seemed to know what was happening.

19 Q. You say at paragraph 58 that:

20 "Often you could not get the social worker belonging
21 to the child when you called up."

22 So who would you speak to if you phoned the social
23 work department for help?

24 A. There was usually a duty social worker on that didn't
25 know anything about the case at all.

1 Q. You say that your impression was that you didn't think
2 there was any urgency on their part when you called?
3 A. No.
4 Q. How did that come across, can you remember? How did you
5 get that impression?
6 A. I got the impression it was quite lackadaisical. We did
7 have a boy who was a problem and when we -- when we
8 spoke to them about it, they said, "Oh, well, we ..."
9 They had known about it, about his problems, but hadn't
10 thought to tell us in case it influenced us and the way
11 that we treated him. But he was -- he did a little bit
12 of shoplifting, just sweets and bits.
13 And he stopped people in cars and asked them for
14 a lift, he said he had lost his bus fare home. And he
15 stole a couple of things from us and he kicked -- he
16 kicked all of our neighbours' bins over on bin day,
17 walked up the road, kicked them all into the middle of
18 the road, which didn't go down very well with the
19 neighbours.
20 But the social workers had known that he was
21 a problem beforehand and hadn't thought to tell us. But
22 when he started trying to get lifts from strangers, we
23 had to get in touch with the social work department and
24 tell them that we couldn't cope with this.
25 Q. And did you get help at that point from the social work

1 department?

2 A. Well, I think the children were just about due to go

3 home.

4 Q. Okay.

5 A. I don't know whether he went into any sort of

6 specialised accommodation, but he did have a big

7 problem.

8 LADY SMITH: Had you tried to deal with this boy's problems

9 and his behaviour in your household at all, 'Betty'?

10 A. Yes. We tried to speak to him and he would promise to

11 behave and then he wouldn't. He would do the same

12 things over again.

13 LADY SMITH: Did you punish him for any of these

14 misdemeanours?

15 A. No, no. We just didn't think of punishing children.

16 You can't punish children who've already been hurt in

17 the system.

18 LADY SMITH: No sanctions at all?

19 A. Well ... he would get a good talking to, but no physical

20 punishments or anything like that.

21 For us, we'd say, "Well, you can't go out to play,

22 you can't go out on your own if you're going to stop

23 cars and ask them for a lift".

24 LADY SMITH: I'm just wondering about -- take, for example,

25 him kicking over the neighbours' bins into the middle of

1 the road. What did you do about that?

2 A. Apologised to the neighbours profusely.

3 LADY SMITH: But what about the boy?

4 A. And he was told, "This will not do". We did threaten

5 him with the social worker, said, "We'll speak to your

6 social worker", because we felt if there was going to be

7 any -- any punishment, if you call it, it was up to

8 social worker to come and sort out what to do with him.

9 LADY SMITH: All right. Thank you.

10 MS INNES: On page 12 of your statement, 'Betty', at

11 paragraph 60, you say:

12 "No one asked us to keep any records and we didn't.

13 On reflection I wish I had."

14 Why do you say that on reflection you wish that

15 you'd kept records?

16 A. Partly because I can't fully remember everything that

17 happened 50 years ago. And if something like this turns

18 up with other people, I think they should have something

19 to fall back on, some sort of record.

20 But I do think foster parents should keep some sort

21 of diary and have meetings with social workers to

22 discuss what's in the diary and how they've coped with

23 the children they've had and get advice if need be.

24 I think it would help to protect the children and the

25 foster parents.

1 But I do think records ought to be kept properly.

2 Q. What sort of things would you think it relevant for
3 a foster parent to note down in a diary?

4 A. Well, perhaps children's behaviour or attitude. Any
5 problems at school. Any problems with the parents.
6 Even their likes and dislikes.

7 Q. And then what you're saying is you could review that
8 diary in discussions with your own social worker, with
9 the foster carer's own social worker?

10 A. Yes. Yes, I think so.

11 Q. You talk at paragraphs 61 and 62 about the girls leaving
12 your care. Did you get notice that the girls were going
13 to leave your care and go back to their mum?

14 A. Quite short notice, as I remember.

15 Q. Were you given any explanation as to why they were going
16 back to live with their mum at that point?

17 A. Well, the mother had family in Yorkshire, I think she
18 came from Yorkshire herself, and they were going back
19 there with family support. So I thought it -- we were
20 really sorry to lose the girls because we had got very
21 fond of them, but we were glad that the family was
22 getting some support down there and they were going to
23 have grandmas and aunties and people to look out for
24 them.

25 Q. Okay. You talk at paragraph 63 about taking them to the

1 train station to their mother, and is that when you
2 became aware that they had an older brother, when you
3 dropped the children off?

4 A. Yes. Yes, the mother was there with him in
5 a wheelchair.

6 Q. And you say that you don't remember social work being
7 there or involved when they left?

8 A. No, I'm sure they weren't at the station at all.

9 Q. Then if we go on to paragraph 64 of your statement, you
10 say that you thought everything was fine at the time
11 that the girls lived with you and you say:

12 "To be honest if we did try and speak to the social
13 work, I don't think they would have been interested.
14 They were overworked and I think just glad to have the
15 kids somewhere."

16 A. Yes.

17 Q. How did you get the impression that the social workers
18 were overworked?

19 A. They were always desperate to find placements for the
20 kids and it -- we just got the impression that they
21 couldn't get rid of them quick enough.

22 Q. You say:

23 "I think they were just glad to have the kids
24 somewhere."

25 A. Yes.

1 Q. At paragraph 65, you say that you weren't aware of how
2 you would have gone about raising any complaints or
3 concerns. You say:
4 "We didn't know a lot about the system back then."
5 So you weren't given any information about how to
6 complain about anything or raise issues with social
7 work?
8 A. No. We didn't know who was in charge. We didn't have
9 a social worker of our own that we could contact with
10 any problems that we had or any questions that we had.
11 Q. And then after the girls left your care, did you ever
12 see them again?
13 A. Yes. When we moved down here, we went to see them -- we
14 went to visit them in Knaresborough, they were living,
15 but I can't really remember a lot about the
16 circumstances but one of the neighbours told us that
17 they were in a children's home in -- somewhere, Skipton
18 or Shipton or something.
19 We went to visit them in Dr Barnardo's and the two
20 older girls were there. Little [REDACTED] was in another
21 home somewhere.
22 Q. What can you remember about seeing the girls or the
23 conversation that you had with them on that occasion?
24 A. Oh, it was lovely seeing them. My little boy was
25 pleased to see them. Yeah, we had a nice little time

1 with them and we said we'd come back, but when we
2 tried -- the next time we tried to contact them, they
3 had been moved on somewhere and we didn't manage to
4 contact them again.

5 Q. Okay. If we go on, please, to page 14 and paragraph 69,
6 you say there that:

7 "'Denise' was very streetwise and knew what was
8 right and wrong. If she thought anything untoward was
9 going on, she would have been right on the phone to the
10 social worker."

11 How would she have been able to contact the social
12 work department by phone?

13 A. She was very clever girl. She would have done it.
14 There is no way she would have kept anything to herself.

15 Q. How would she have had the phone number for the social
16 work department, for example?

17 A. Well, all you had to do at that time was ask the
18 operator to put you through to the social work
19 department.

20 Q. And did you have a phone in your house at the time, can
21 you remember?

22 A. Yes, we did, but only in the evenings. But she knew how
23 to work a telephone box because she had previously
24 called a foster parent that she had been living with at
25 some point.

1 Q. Where had she called them from, do you know?

2 A. From the phone box.

3 Q. And how do you know that she did that? Were you with

4 her at the time or not?

5 A. No, she told me. Because she had left something there,

6 a doll or something.

7 Q. You say that she would have had her pocket money to do

8 it, and as I think we've --

9 A. Yes.

10 Q. -- already seen, 'Denise' says she didn't get pocket

11 money and you say that she did.

12 A. Yes. Definitely.

13 Q. Okay. If we can look, please, at some of the specific

14 allegations that have been made to the Inquiry, and

15 you'll remember the warning that Lady Smith gave you at

16 the beginning of your evidence before I ask you about

17 this.

18 At page 15, you start dealing with some of the

19 allegations that were made and at paragraph 72 there's

20 an excerpt of 'Denise''s statement in which she says:

21 "We got the tiniest amount of food ..."

22 Is that correct or not?

23 A. That is absolutely rubbish.

24 Q. I think she said in her evidence to the Inquiry that she

25 and her sisters didn't feel that they were able to ask

1 for more food. Is that right?

2 A. Of course they did. Yeah. They weren't slow in asking

3 for food.

4 Q. And if they asked, what would your response be?

5 A. Well, there was always something to eat.

6 Q. At paragraph --

7 A. Nobody went hungry in our house. Ever.

8 Q. At paragraph 74, there's again a quote from 'Denise''s

9 statement and it says:

10 "We weren't allowed to take anything out of the

11 pantry or cupboards."

12 Is that right?

13 A. I don't know what she means about that. If they were

14 going to get some bread and butter out or something,

15 they could help themselves.

16 Q. They wouldn't have to ask you for permission in advance?

17 A. Well, they would probably say, "Can I go and make

18 a sandwich or make some toast", or something, and then

19 they did it on their own.

20 Q. In this part of 'Denise''s statement, she refers to one

21 time when she says she felt so hungry she sneaked into

22 the kitchen and took a slice of bread and put vinegar on

23 it to make it taste of something and she then says that

24 you caught her and slapped her across the face.

25 A. That is absolute rubbish. Nothing like that ever

1 happened.

2 Q. Can you remember her taking bread and you not being

3 happy about that?

4 A. Never. Never in a million years.

5 Q. Did you ever slap her across the face?

6 A. I never lifted a hand to any of them.

7 Q. She says again in this part of the statement that you

8 shouted and bawled at her, calling her a "thieving

9 little bitch' and screeching how dare I steal food from

10 them. Did that happen?

11 A. That is absolute rubbish. I think if I had lifted

12 a hand near her, she would have had me on the floor.

13 There is no way that girl would have stood there letting

14 me abuse her. No way on this earth.

15 Q. I think 'Denise' would have been about 11 or so at the

16 time that she lived with you.

17 A. Yes.

18 Q. So you're saying that if you tried to hit her, you would

19 have been on the floor because ...

20 A. She was quite a streetwise little madam. She would have

21 fought back if anybody had tried to harm her, she would

22 have fought back tooth and nail.

23 Q. You say in your response to this at paragraph 75, at the

24 end of that paragraph you say:

25 "I'm sorry, but is 'Denise' schizophrenic or

1 something?"

2 Why do you raise the issue of possible

3 schizophrenia?

4 A. Well, it seems so out of character, this lovely little

5 girl dreaming up things like this. I don't know whether

6 it's deliberate or if she's delusional. But there is

7 something wrong there. I feel really sad that these

8 lovely kids have had -- seem to have had such an unhappy

9 life that it's made them so bitter and angry and trying

10 to blame the system or just blame anyone for what's

11 happened to them in their lives.

12 Q. Can we go over the page to page 16 and paragraph 79.

13 You mention there that the room that the girls had, you

14 say it was:

15 "A cosy little room and they had a coal fire."

16 A. Yes.

17 Q. In 'Denise''s evidence to the Inquiry, she's described

18 the house as being:

19 "Really cold. It was a cold place."

20 She says she didn't remember there being much

21 heating.

22 "We had very few blankets."

23 Is that a description that you recognise?

24 A. Not in the slightest. We had a huge coal cellar full of

25 coal. We had coal fires in the living room, their

1 bedroom and my bedroom. And in the winter, we had fires
2 on all the time. With fireguards.

3 Q. And would that be in the girls' room as well?

4 A. Yes.

5 Q. At paragraph 80 --

6 LADY SMITH: Can I just check one thing, 'Betty'? What time
7 of day was the fire lit in the girls' bedroom?

8 A. Ah, I can't remember. But I would imagine we would have
9 had the fires lit some time during the day to keep the
10 place warm.

11 LADY SMITH: Who lit it? Who lit the girls' fire?

12 A. Oh, I would. I was responsible for that.

13 LADY SMITH: Do you actually remember doing it?

14 A. Oh yes, I lit all the fires. All the children were
15 never involved in anything like that.

16 LADY SMITH: Thank you.

17 MS INNES: If we can move on, please, to paragraph 80 of
18 your statement, there you're quoting from something
19 'Denise' says in her evidence and one of the things that
20 she speaks about there is that the girls were never
21 allowed in the lounge. Is that correct?

22 A. Not at all, no. Why wouldn't they be in the lounge?
23 The lounge is sort of the hub of the home, isn't it?

24 Q. I think she said in her evidence that the lounge was for
25 you and your guests, but not for them. Not for the

1 girls. Is that right?

2 A. Not at -- not at all.

3 Q. If we go on over the page, please, to page 17 at

4 paragraph 85 and following, you know that 'Denise' says

5 in her evidence that you used to take your son out for

6 a day somewhere and you would leave the girls on their

7 own in [REDACTED] wandering the streets.

8 A. That is absolute nonsense. They were never left on

9 their own anywhere.

10 Q. 'Denise' has said in her evidence that this memory of

11 being left on their own:

12 "It's an abiding memory, the fear of being there on

13 our own and not knowing what to do."

14 A. They were never -- never went to [REDACTED] on their

15 own. It was a very dangerous coast road to cross to go

16 across to the sea and so they never went on their own.

17 Ever.

18 Q. Would you ever have dropped them off at the beach on

19 their own?

20 A. No, no, no way. They were never left to their own

21 devices. They went out to play and they were free to go

22 and play, wander around, they had friends. 'Denise' had

23 a friend who lived up the road from us and, yeah, they

24 were free to go out for a while, but as long as we knew

25 when they were due back. They weren't out for hours on

1 end. They'd go out for a little while to play. But
2 never ever in [REDACTED] on their own.

3 Q. Okay, when you say --

4 A. And we never went out and left them.

5 Q. So when you say they went out to play and 'Denise' had
6 this friend up the road, sort of how far away was that
7 from your house?

8 A. It was only five minutes' walk away.

9 Q. Okay. At paragraph 89, you talk about how you don't
10 know why 'Denise' is saying these things now and you
11 think something has happened to her over the years that
12 has changed her. You say:

13 "I can't believe she is saying these things or
14 thinks them. I don't know if she is looking for some
15 sort of payout at the end of this."

16 Am I right in understanding that you're possibly
17 suggesting that she's making things up to get money?

18 A. Yes.

19 Q. Who from?

20 A. Criminal Injuries, is it? They call it?

21 Q. Okay. If we can move on again, please, to page 18 and
22 paragraph 94, there's a quote from 'Denise''s statement
23 there where she talked about a memory of a time that the
24 school doctor had identified that they were all very
25 underweight:

1 "He seemed quite concerned about this [and] it was
2 never followed up."
3 In her evidence, 'Denise' said:
4 "I remember a doctor being almost angry or hostile
5 towards [you], saying 'These children are really
6 underweight'."

7 Can you remember --

8 A. I don't think they ever had a school doctor? I don't
9 think they had school doctors. They had a nit nurse in
10 school, but they never had medical exams in schools.

11 Q. Can you remember them ever seeing any doctor and him
12 questioning you about them being underweight?

13 A. Never. The only one that went to the doctor was [REDACTED]
14 She had -- she had a condition. I think she had ulcers
15 or something in her mouth and I took her to the doctor
16 and they said -- they checked her out, said she had been
17 in contact with someone who had tuberculosis. We all
18 had to go and be checked out and be X-rayed. And
19 I think we had to have jabs. My little boy had to be
20 vaccinated.

21 LADY SMITH: 'Betty', what do you mean when you say you all
22 had to be checked out and X-rayed?

23 A. Oh, the whole family. Myself --

24 LADY SMITH: All the girls? Including all the girls?

25 A. Yes. The girls, my husband, my little boy, and my

1 mother, who spent a lot of time with us. She had a bit
2 of a cough and we thought, oh. Immediately she thought,
3 "Oh, it's me, I'm ill", but it wasn't any of us who were
4 carrying this tuberculosis thing.

5 LADY SMITH: Thank you.

6 MS INNES: In the context of that, can you remember the
7 doctor saying that the girls were underweight?

8 A. No way. No way. They were always healthy.

9 Q. If we go on to page 19, and at paragraph 100 there's
10 a quote from 'Denise''s statement about doing chores and
11 at paragraph 101 you say:

12 "If I had asked them to do anything, they would say
13 'That's what you get paid for'."

14 Is that what the girls said to you?

15 A. That was their attitude, yes. "Why would we have to do
16 it? You get money for it."

17 Q. So how did they know that you got money for looking
18 after them?

19 A. Oh, they were very streetwise kids. They knew how the
20 system worked. And they thought we were sort of paid
21 servants, if you like. So they wouldn't have done
22 any -- they wouldn't have been expected to do housework,
23 for a start. They would do little things. They might
24 help with the washing up or -- I don't really know what
25 they would have done. I can't imagine them doing

1 anything. No, it would have been a case of, "That's
2 your job".

3 Q. So when you say they had this attitude or they said to
4 you, "You're being paid to look after us", do you have
5 any recollection of the sort of thing that you were
6 asking them to do and then you would get that response?

7 A. Not really, no. I know they wouldn't have liked to help
8 with anything. Washing up or ... but yeah, they would
9 have done it reluctantly, I think.

10 Q. And then at the bottom of this page at paragraph 102,
11 'Denise' talks about being made to go for the shopping
12 and that she and her sisters would be sent to Leith and
13 you respond to that over the page at paragraph 103 and
14 you say, I think, that didn't happen. And you say that
15 you wouldn't even have known what direction to send them
16 in.

17 A. Do you have any idea how far Leith is from [REDACTED]?
18 I wouldn't know myself how to walk into Leith. I never
19 shopped in Leith. I don't know where they thought they
20 would be sent to, because I just didn't shop in Leith.
21 I wouldn't have known where to shop, send them to shop.
22 Wouldn't have expected them to walk. That's absolutely
23 ludicrous.

24 Q. Irrespective of where it was, can you remember ever
25 sending the girls to get shopping for you?

1 A. Not any major shopping at all. They might have brought
2 in a loaf of bread or a pound of carrots or something,
3 but they weren't expected to bring shopping in.
4 Q. Where would they have gone to get those things, like
5 a loaf of bread or carrots?
6 A. Just five minutes from the house there was a general
7 store and a butcher and a few little shops. I can't
8 remember what they were. But --
9 Q. And was that still in [REDACTED]?
10 A. That was in [REDACTED]. It was only five minutes'
11 walk. It was on their way to school.
12 Q. At paragraph 104, again you see a quote there from
13 'Denise''s statement and she describes you as having
14 "the most terrible temper". Do you recognise that
15 description of yourself?
16 A. Not really. No. I'm usually referred to as the boring
17 one. My mother used to say, "How can you stand -- how
18 can you stand this chaos with the kids?" and it just
19 washed over my head. I -- I think I'm a patient person.
20 I don't shout and scream at my own kids, never have
21 done. I can get angry, like anyone else, but I don't
22 shout and scream in people's faces.
23 Q. And -- sorry.
24 A. I just take life as it comes.
25 Q. She also says in this paragraph that you would put the

1 girls over your knee, pull their knickers down and
2 hammer them with your hands.

3 A. No way. No way at all.

4 Q. And it says you did this mostly, but your husband did
5 this too. Can you remember your husband doing that?

6 A. Never in a million years. No, no, no. He was quite
7 prudish, actually. If he saw them in their underwear he
8 would be embarrassed.

9 Q. And then at the bottom of page 20 and on to page 21,
10 'Denise' talks about an occasion when she ran away to
11 her friend's house and then she remembers the police
12 turning up and taking her back to your house. Can you
13 remember that happening?

14 A. Not at all. Not at all.

15 Q. Can you remember the police or anybody else ever
16 bringing 'Denise' back?

17 A. The police were never involved with her. She had no
18 reason to run away. And she would never have left the
19 girls, for a start. She was very protective towards
20 them. If she had ever had any thoughts of running away,
21 she would have taken the kids with them -- with her.

22 Q. Can you remember anybody other than the police bringing
23 her back? So a social worker, for example?

24 A. Not at all. No.

25 Q. In the next section at paragraph 110, 'Denise' talks

1 about being treated like they were "infected", and
2 I think she said in her evidence that she felt that they
3 were treated like lepers or that they were worthless.
4 Is that the way that you treated the girls?
5 A. Not at all. They were part of the family.
6 Q. And she talks here about being fed in tiny round plastic
7 margarine tubs and you tell us your response to that in
8 paragraph 111. What kind of plates did the girls get
9 their dinner in?
10 A. Oh, they would be proper dishes. Normal dishes. Normal
11 plates. Normal crockery. We didn't have special plates
12 or crockery for the kids.
13 The younger ones might have had plastic mugs, but
14 not kids of their age.
15 Q. Would you have given them, for example, their dinner in
16 a small bowl if it was pasta, for example?
17 A. No, I wouldn't have thought so. Certainly not margarine
18 tubs that she was talking about. I don't even know if
19 they did margarine in tubs 50 years ago.
20 Q. At the bottom of page 21 at paragraph 112 you say:
21 "You don't tell children you hate them. It's just
22 farcical. It's like some Victorian melodrama. I am
23 expecting her to say that they were sent up chimneys
24 next or down the coal mine."
25 Why do you say that? When you're saying "it's like

1 some Victorian melodrama", are you referring to
2 'Denise''s statement?

3 A. Yes. I think it's getting more ridiculous as it goes
4 on. I don't know where she's getting these ideas from
5 at all.

6 Q. If we go on over the page, please, to page 22, as you've
7 already told us you carried on fostering when you moved
8 to England. At paragraph 114 you say that the social
9 work in England were great, and I think you draw
10 a contrast between your experience with the social work
11 in Edinburgh and the social work support that you were
12 given in England. Can you tell us about that? How was
13 it different?

14 A. I think they took more interest in us as social
15 workers -- as foster parents. It was quite a long
16 drawn-out procedure as well, actually. We expected it
17 would be quite quick becoming foster parents down here
18 after we had already been foster parents in Edinburgh,
19 but we still had to go through the same procedure. The
20 quite long chats about our lifestyle and what not.
21 Yeah, they were generally, generally very helpful.

22 Q. You say:

23 "They were always at the end of the phone if you
24 needed help."

25 A. Yes. They were very good. I think possibly we were

1 a special case because we only had one foster child and
2 he had so many difficulties that we did need help. He's
3 got a degree of cerebral palsy and learning difficulties
4 and to begin with it was quite difficult to convince
5 anyone that there was something wrong because when
6 social workers placed him with us, I thought he -- he
7 was over two years old, so I was expecting this happy,
8 healthy little toddler. When he came, he was more
9 a baby than my one-year-old baby, and I knew straight
10 away there was something wrong. He just didn't seem to
11 be progressing the way a baby should.

12 So I had to do quite a lot of fighting to get him --
13 to get him into the system to get him properly
14 diagnosed.

15 Q. So you're saying, I think, that in terms of the social
16 work department in England, you needed more support but
17 they were more accessible, perhaps, than the social
18 workers had been in Edinburgh?

19 A. Yes, they were very, very helpful. Once -- once the
20 medical profession agreed with me that there was
21 something wrong with him, they were very helpful
22 because, as I say, I had a one-year-old baby at the time
23 as well so it was like having two little babies together
24 and they were very good taking me to hospital
25 appointments. We had to see various specialists in

1 different hospitals that were sometimes a good distance
2 away, and they were very good that way. To begin with.
3 Q. You tell us in paragraph 116 of your statement some of
4 the things that you've highlighted already in your
5 evidence. For example, foster parents having dedicated
6 social workers, records being kept, discussions
7 happening between foster parents and their social
8 worker.

9 Then at paragraph 117 you say:
10 "I think foster children should have free access to
11 social workers, on their own, and frequently."

12 A. Yes.

13 Q. Do you think that that's something that's important?

14 A. I do. Very important.

15 Q. Why is that?

16 A. I have met other foster parents in the past that I've
17 thought weren't adequate, if I can put it like that, and
18 I've thought perhaps they needed a bit more ... checking
19 up on.

20 Q. Okay. And one of the reflections that you've had from
21 that then is that the children should have free access
22 to social workers frequently and on their own?

23 A. Yes. Yeah, definitely.

24 MS INNES: Okay. Thank you very much, 'Betty'. I don't
25 have any more questions for you and there are no

1 applications, my Lady.

2 LADY SMITH: Are there any outstanding applications for
3 questions of 'Betty'?

4 'Betty', thank you so much for bearing with us for
5 quite a while this morning. You've provided really
6 helpful evidence to the Inquiry, both in terms of your
7 written statement and talking to us today and answering
8 questions both Ms Innes and I had for you. I'm very
9 grateful for you doing so.

10 I can see that you've tried to be thoughtful and
11 careful in all your answers, and of course you've
12 offered your reflections generally on the provision of
13 social work support to foster carers, which is very
14 helpful.

15 It's now lunchtime and I'm sure you're ready for
16 a break for the rest of today. You're able to go now.
17 The link can be switched off, but do remember you go
18 with my thanks.

19 A. Oh, thank you, my Lady.

20 (The witness withdrew)

21 LADY SMITH: Ms Innes.

22 MS INNES: I think that would take us to the lunchtime break
23 and we have read-ins this afternoon.

24 LADY SMITH: Thank you very much. I'll stop now for the
25 lunch break and we'll sit again at about 2 o'clock.

1 (1.09 pm)

2 (The luncheon adjournment)

3 (2.00 pm)

4 LADY SMITH: Ms Rattray.

5 MS RATTRAY: Thank you, my Lady.

6 My Lady, this afternoon we have two read-ins. They
7 are longer read-ins, and the second of which will
8 involve looking at records.

9 However, the first one this afternoon is in respect
10 of a statement of an applicant who wishes to remain
11 anonymous and has the pseudonym 'Mary'.

12 LADY SMITH: Thank you.

13 MS RATTRAY: 'Mary''s statement is at WIT-1-000000246.

14 By way of background, 'Mary' was born in 1969 and
15 lived with her family in Edinburgh before she was taken
16 into care. She was in secondary school at the time she
17 was taken into care. Her first placement was with [REDACTED]
18 and [REDACTED] or [REDACTED] in Musselburgh where 'Mary'
19 thinks she stayed for six months. She then moved to
20 FSC-SPO [REDACTED] in Edinburgh. She thinks she was there
21 for six months as well before being moved to Drylaw
22 Children's Home in Edinburgh. She recalls being aged 13
23 or 14 when she moved to Drylaw and aged 16 when she left
24 Drylaw.

25 The reason for this rather different introduction is

1 that we have no children's records for 'Mary'. Attempts
2 were made to recover records from the City of Edinburgh
3 Council, East Lothian Council and Midlothian Council.
4 The East Lothian and Midlothian Councils have no records
5 at all, the City of Edinburgh Council was able to
6 confirm that 'Mary''s surname and date of birth appears
7 in the Lothian Regional Council Children in Care Index,
8 but beyond that they have no records or other evidence.
9 Accordingly, from the information we do have, we know
10 that 'Mary' was a child in the care of Lothian Regional
11 Council and her period in care was most likely in the
12 1980s.

13 LADY SMITH: Thank you.

14 MS RATTRAY: The current responsible authority is more
15 likely to have been City of Edinburgh Council, given
16 where 'Mary''s family lived and the various settings she
17 lived herself in care.

18 LADY SMITH: Thanks.

19 'Mary' (read)

20 MS RATTRAY: "My name is 'Mary'. I was born in 1969.

21 I spent a lot of my childhood with my grandparents. My
22 mum split up from my dad when I was really young and
23 I don't think she could cope with my brother and me on
24 her own. My brother is about three years older than
25 I am. My grandparents lived in Edinburgh and I went to

1 primary school when I was living with them.

2 I also spent a lot of my childhood in hospital.
3 I had really bad eczema and asthma and was in and out of
4 the City Hospital. I then got a condition called
5 osteomyelitis in my hip and was in Leith Hospital for
6 a few months. I missed a huge part of my primary
7 education as a result.

8 After being in hospital, my mum insisted that I went
9 back home to live with her and my stepdad. My brother
10 was living there too. I went to primary school for
11 a little while and then went on to high school."

12 From paragraphs 6 to 14, 'Mary' describes her family
13 life with her mother and stepfather. She says her
14 stepfather was a heavy drinker and was violent to her
15 mum and sometimes to 'Mary' and her brother. Her mother
16 was also physically abusive to her.

17 She describes the violence in the home as
18 horrendous. She says the police used to come to the
19 house quite a lot. Sometimes she stayed with her
20 grandparents, who she says were amazing, but her mum
21 forced her back home. She started running away. One
22 night she slept on the streets. She went to her
23 friend's door early in the morning and her friend's mum
24 was asking where she'd been.

25 At school that day she was called into the guidance

1 teacher's office and the police were called.

2 Moving now to paragraph 15 on page 4:

3 "I remember sitting in the social work office and
4 they gave me juice. My mum was there and she was
5 shouting at me for causing all this trouble. I was
6 thinking that I hadn't done anything wrong, but at the
7 same time I felt that I was to blame for bringing
8 trouble to the door. I think my mum gave me a cuddle
9 and then she just left me in the office.

10 I sat in the office for a long time. I don't know
11 if I was there for so long because they couldn't find
12 anywhere for me to go. A woman in the office told me
13 that I was going to be moving out of my own house.
14 I was scared, but in a lot of ways I was happy that
15 I didn't have to go back to my mum's.

16 I remember being in a car with a social worker.
17 I think my social worker's name was Liz Myers and
18 I think it was her that took me to a foster care home in
19 Musselburgh. She talked to me in the car and told me
20 that I was going to this family who had children of
21 their own and also fostered children. She said that
22 I would be safe there. I was just wee and felt scared
23 because I didn't know what to expect. All I had was my
24 bag of clothes. My mum always used to buy my clothes
25 from a charity shop. I only ever had good stuff if my

1 grandparents bought it for me.

2 There had never opinion any social work involvement
3 with our family before I was taken into care.
4 Everything was hush-hush back in the day. You kept it
5 within the family. As far as I can remember, it was the
6 first time the school had taken any interest in my
7 welfare as well.

8 I remember going into the house and the foster
9 carers, [REDACTED] and [REDACTED] made me feel really welcome. They
10 had a big house in the corner of a cul de sac. I think
11 it had three or four bedrooms. It was like one of these
12 old-fashioned terraced houses.

13 They had a son. He was about the same age as me,
14 maybe a year older. He had his own bedroom. There was
15 a daughter staying at home as well. I shared a room
16 with her. She was lovely. She used to talk to me at
17 night. She was like a big sister, but I can't remember
18 her name. They had other kids as well, but they were
19 older and didn't live at home. I don't remember any of
20 their names either.

21 [REDACTED] and [REDACTED] were amazing. I was really well looked
22 after and I felt loved. They made me feel like part of
23 the family. They registered me at school and helped me
24 to fit in and make friends. I could go to both of them
25 and talk about things. I was a bit of a rogue at times.

1 I feel bad because I stole a couple of pounds off them
2 for fags one time. They didn't know I smoked. I would
3 get into mischief at school as well, just the usual
4 stuff. I got a boyfriend and used to go to the disco in
5 the Brunton Hall on a Friday or Saturday night.

6 One of their older daughters was a hairdresser and
7 I got a proper fashionable haircut for the first time in
8 my life. They had an older son as well and he had
9 a video shop so we would always get a video to watch at
10 the weekend. The whole family was great.

11 [REDACTED] and [REDACTED] just treated me like one of their own.
12 We'd go on outings on Saturdays and they bought me new
13 clothes. I used to get bullied all the time at school
14 when I lived at home because I was a total tramp. My
15 mum would send me to school in the most awful clothes.
16 I felt trendy in Musselburgh. I had the same clothes as
17 the other kids and the same style of hair. I felt
18 normal.

19 [REDACTED] and [REDACTED] taught me basic life skills. For
20 instance, you had to do normal chores like make your bed
21 in the morning and help out when they had visitors. [REDACTED]
22 and [REDACTED] were very sociable and knew lots of people.
23 They had parties sometimes or had loads of visitors
24 round to their house and I would help to make the
25 sandwiches with [REDACTED] in the kitchen. [REDACTED] was always

1 cooking and she'd talk to me in the kitchen while
2 standing cooking, showing me how to do it and getting me
3 to lay out the plates on the table, really making me
4 feel like part of the family.

5 Their son was like a big brother to me. He had been
6 brought up in the local area so he knew people and he
7 helped me to make friends really quickly. I would go to
8 his room and we'd just sit and talk a load of rubbish.
9 Sometimes he'd say that I was annoying him and he'd tell
10 me to get out of his room. We were just like a normal
11 brother and sister. I remember I got my haircut and
12 I had a wee fine pleated ponytail. It was really
13 fashionable at the time. I was lying on the couch
14 watching a video and I fell asleep and he cut my
15 ponytail off. My hair was short and it was only a tiny
16 ponytail. I remember going crazy, but it was just the
17 typical kind of thing a brother would do to a sister.

18 About two months before I left [REDACTED] and [REDACTED]'s, they
19 got a wee foster girl. She was only a baby. I remember
20 playing with her out in the garden. It was like having
21 a wee sister. It was great. We all fitted in well. It
22 was normal.

23 I can't explain it probably, but I felt like I had
24 always stayed with [REDACTED] and [REDACTED] because of the way they
25 made me feel. I felt like I was in a real home

1 environment and I felt safe.

2 I went to my mum's for weekend visits. I would go
3 on a Friday after school and go back to [REDACTED] and [REDACTED]'s
4 on a Sunday evening. My mum would be really nice and
5 she'd try to make me feel welcome, but my stepfather
6 would be sitting there getting drunk and the violence
7 was still going on. I used to take some of the things
8 that [REDACTED] and [REDACTED] had bought me, or I'd bought myself
9 with the pocket money they gave me, and my mum would be
10 raging and make me share my things with my stepsisters.
11 I think I only went home about six times. I hated it.
12 I used to feel really anxious, but at the same time it
13 was my family so I had mixed feelings.

14 My brother stayed with my mum when I went into care,
15 but he then moved down to London to do training for his
16 job. I kind of lost touch with him then. When we were
17 younger, we were inseparable but then he got to an age
18 where he was working and going out and seeing his pals
19 and getting girlfriends. He still checked in on me when
20 we were both living at home, though, and he'd chuck me
21 some money sometimes.

22 I think the social worker, Liz Myers, popped into
23 [REDACTED] and [REDACTED]'s now and again to see me. She'd take me
24 for something to eat. She would come in and chat with
25 me and ask me if everything was all right. Everything

1 was really good and I told her that.

2 My mum used to come to [REDACTED] and [REDACTED]'s for meetings
3 with the social worker. I don't remember what they
4 discussed.

5 I went home from school one day and the social
6 worker was there. I think it was Liz Myers. [REDACTED] and
7 [REDACTED] sat me down to tell me that I was moving.

8 I remember [REDACTED] saying to me that they could only keep me
9 for six months. I was distraught. I didn't want to
10 move. I thought they were amazing and I had friends and
11 I liked my school. I remember saying to them things
12 like, "Can I not just stay with you forever? Can you
13 not adopt me?" They said they wouldn't be allowed to.
14 I was hysterical.

15 This is something that I would never want to happen
16 to another child. I feel that this really affected me.
17 Even now I feel it. It was like rejection. I kept
18 asking what I had done wrong and [REDACTED] was nearly crying,
19 telling me that I hadn't done anything wrong and it was
20 just that they couldn't keep me any more and I had to
21 move on. I had not been told before then that I was
22 going to be moving to another set of foster parents.

23 [REDACTED] and [REDACTED] helped me to pack my bags and I think
24 it was the next day I was taken away. The only reason
25 I think I was with [REDACTED] and [REDACTED] for six months is

1 because I remember [REDACTED] saying that I could only stay
2 with them for six months. This has always stuck in my
3 head.

4 I'm not sure if I went straight from [REDACTED] and [REDACTED]'s
5 to the new foster carers or whether I went home to my
6 mum's overnight. I remember seeing my mum at some
7 point. She wanted me back with her but the social
8 workers wouldn't let me go back there. She was really
9 hurt because I was arguing with her and saying I wanted
10 to stay with [REDACTED] and [REDACTED] not her. I think I went
11 straight to the other foster carers, but it's a bit of
12 a blank.

13 The social worker didn't tell me how long I was
14 going to be staying with [REDACTED] FSC-SPO I was just told
15 that I was going there. I remember feeling upset and
16 angry that I had been taken away from [REDACTED] and [REDACTED] and
17 my pals. But I also felt that I just had to accept it.
18 My granddad, who had been in the army, had brought me up
19 to be clean, tidy and smart, and to be polite to people.
20 This was drummed into me from a young age. So I thought
21 I just had to be polite and accept that I was going to
22 this new place.

23 They lived in a house on the main road, which was
24 all on the one level. I think they were called Mr and
25 Mrs [REDACTED] FSC-SPO I don't remember their first names. They

1 were older than [REDACTED] and [REDACTED] in their 40s or 50s maybe.
2 The house was generally tidy, although the kitchen was
3 messy with stuff lying about, but everything had that
4 musty smell, damp and cold. And it smelt of dogs. They
5 had two dogs. I think one was an Alsatian. I am
6 allergic to dogs and cats. I tried to keep my distance
7 from the dogs but they were always there.

8 I don't really remember Mr [REDACTED] I just remember
9 Mrs FSC [REDACTED] and her daughter. I don't know if he worked
10 and maybe wasn't around very often. Mrs FSC [REDACTED] was there
11 all the time. She was a really hard-faced woman. The
12 daughter was about 20 and still lived at home. I don't
13 remember her name. She was vile. There was another
14 foster girl who I shared a bedroom with, but I think she
15 came after me.

16 I don't have a lot of memories of living with the
17 FSC-SPO [REDACTED] I think I've blocked a lot of it out.

18 The only memory I have of my first day there is that
19 Mrs FSC [REDACTED] put me into the bath and scrubbed me with
20 a hard brush. I can remember the smell of the horrible
21 shampoo she used and I have a memory of her scrubbing my
22 nails. I was naked in the bath and I just remember her
23 saying that I had to get clean because I was going to
24 see the doctor. I was then taken to the freezing cold
25 bedroom. I have no other memories of getting washed

1 during my time there so I think I've blocked it out.

2 I only remember Mrs FSC talking to me about having
3 to go for a medical at the doctors, but I don't remember
4 going there.

5 I shared a room with another foster girl whose name
6 I can't remember. She was about the same age as me.
7 There were bunk beds, a set of drawers and an old tiled
8 fireplace. There was a window on the wall opposite the
9 beds. It was so basic. They never put the fire on. It
10 was freezing. I had scratchy blankets on my bed, like
11 old army blankets. I just remember always being cold.
12 I remember moaning about the cold one night and
13 Mrs FSC told me to shut up and think myself lucky that
14 I had a roof over my head.

15 I took my clothes from [REDACTED] and [REDACTED]'s and other
16 things like bits of make-up, books, pens and diaries.
17 I was allowed to keep my things in a drawer in the
18 bedroom.

19 We had to get up in the morning at about 7.30 during
20 the week and 8 o'clock at the weekends, and go down and
21 set the table for breakfast. The other girl and
22 I washed the plates in the sink.

23 We had to be in bed before 9 o'clock every night.

24 We weren't allowed to talk. I can't remember where the
25 FSC-SPO or the daughter's rooms were in relation to ours,

1 but we were young girls and if we were talking or
2 giggling in bed, the daughter or Mrs FSC would burst
3 into the room and tell us to stop talking and get to
4 sleep. They'd put the light out and it was cold and
5 dark and I felt scared. It was a horrible place to
6 live. It was like a house of horrors.

7 There were set times for all the meals. Everything
8 was very structured. We got our dinner at either 5.00
9 or 5.30 every single day. They had a huge kitchen and
10 a big dining table. They were very old-fashioned so all
11 the meals were at the table. We got things like
12 porridge, toast and cereal for breakfast. The meals
13 were all proper home-cooked dinners like stews, mince
14 and tatties and vegetables. We always got boiled
15 tatties, pure white tatties with no skins on them.
16 I dreaded mealtimes because everything was so salty.
17 I struggled to eat because of the really potent taste of
18 salt. Mrs FSC would stand over you until you ate
19 mostly everything on your plate. The other foster girl
20 was treated the same. Mrs FSC daughter would just
21 eat her dinner as normal. I remember saying to
22 Mrs FSC once that she was trying to poison us and she
23 told me not to be ridiculous.

24 You were too scared not to eat the meals. I would
25 be gagging but would still eat it. When you were

1 finished, Mrs FSC would take your plate and put it
2 down to the dogs and they would lick it. The plate
3 would then get put back onto the table and you had to
4 take it and put it in the sink and wash it. The pot
5 would then go down to the dogs as well and she would let
6 them lick that. To this day I have a real phobia about
7 dogs licking. It really creeps me out.

8 I don't remember ever getting any new clothes.
9 I just wore what I'd been bought by [REDACTED] and [REDACTED] It
10 was so different from living with [REDACTED] and [REDACTED] The
11 FSC-SPO never took me to get a haircut or gave me any
12 pocket money.

13 I had to move schools. We started in the morning at
14 8.30. I started skiving school again. I know now that
15 I'm dyslexic but I didn't know it then. I couldn't
16 concentrate so I would only go to some classes.
17 A couple of us used to skive and we'd sit behind the
18 garage at the bottom of the drive at Liberton or if
19 someone had money we'd go to the museum and sit in the
20 toilets because it was warm.

21 You had to be straight home from school. I felt
22 really restricted. Once you were in that house it was
23 like you were a prisoner. I remember I was kept in
24 a lot and had to just sit in my room. It wasn't
25 a punishment, it was just what we did. I wanted to see

1 my old pals in Musselburgh and Mrs FSC told me that
2 I wasn't allowed to go back there because I lived with
3 them now. This really upset me. I don't think there
4 was a lock on the bedroom door but it felt like you were
5 locked in a prison.

6 We used to play cards sometimes at the table.
7 Mrs FSC made us do that. We played cards and did
8 jigsaw puzzles, nothing else. They were very
9 old-fashioned. They never took us out. We just sat in
10 our room on Saturdays and Sundays. We didn't have
11 a telly in the room. I have no memory of sitting in the
12 living room. We either sat in the kitchen at the table
13 or in our bedroom. I spent all my time in the house
14 with the other foster girl so I don't understand why
15 I can't remember her name.

16 The other girl and I had to do the dishes, put the
17 bins out and sweep the floors. Mrs FSC must have done
18 our laundry because I don't remember doing it. The
19 bedroom had to be immaculate. We didn't have that much
20 stuff but you weren't allowed to have anything out of
21 place. If you chucked anything, like your books or
22 personal diaries on the floor, you were told immediately
23 to get them picked up.

24 I remember my eyes and skin being really bad at the
25 FSC-SPO I think it was a mixture of my eczema and

1 asthma, made worse by the scratchy blankets and the
2 dogs. The social worker knew I had bad asthma and hay
3 fever, so I think she would have known that I was
4 allergic to dogs. As far as I know, there was never any
5 discussion about whether I should be living in a house
6 where there were dogs.

7 My eyes were always red and puffy and I was always
8 sneezing and using my inhaler. I got cream for my
9 eczema at [REDACTED] and [REDACTED]'s, but I never got anything at
10 FSC-SPO [REDACTED]. I had my blue and brown inhalers for my
11 asthma. Mrs FSC [REDACTED] used to say to me that I was using my
12 blue inhaler too much. The blue inhaler helps when
13 you're wheezy and I had to use it quite a lot. She
14 would give me a row for using it, so I got kind of
15 scared to use it. I don't remember being taken to
16 a doctor. I don't know if I went to the doctor to get
17 my inhalers or whether Mrs FSC [REDACTED] just picked them up for
18 me. She took me to the dentist once and that was fine.

19 I must have seen my nana and grandad for a day
20 because I remember my nana taking me to get my hair cut
21 and my grandad bought me new shoes and a winter coat.

22 I didn't get the same weekend visits to my mum's as
23 I'd had when I was at [REDACTED] and [REDACTED]'s. I don't really
24 remember seeing my mum. I have no memory of her coming
25 to the FSC-SPO [REDACTED] home. She had my wee brother when I was

1 with FSC-SPO and I remember wanting to go to the house
2 to see him but I wasn't allowed. I don't know who
3 stopped me or how I'd heard that he'd been born.
4 I never got the chance to see him as a baby and I don't
5 have a great relationship with him now.

6 You didn't dare not do what you were told, so
7 I don't know what the punishment would have been for
8 disobedience or misbehaving. Mrs FSC would raise her
9 voice and the other girl and I just did what we were
10 told. Mrs FSC was hard-faced so I was scared of her.
11 I only rebelled a few times about the food and was told
12 to be quiet and to think myself lucky that I had
13 something to eat.

14 I had a couple of visits from the social worker,
15 Liz Myers. I have no recollection of any official
16 person coming in to inspect the house or to see how
17 I was being looked after.

18 There was no love or affection. They were just cold
19 towards me and the other foster girl. I don't remember
20 any of them ever being nice to us or giving us any kind
21 of praise or encouragement. They never took an interest
22 in us. It was just a case of sending us off to school,
23 giving us our food and sending us to our room to sit or
24 off to bed. It was made clear to us that we were just
25 the foster children. I was told by Mrs FSC to be

1 grateful that I had a roof over my head and was getting
2 fed.

3 We got our three meals a day but never got any
4 snacks or treats so I was always hungry. I have no
5 memory of ever getting any puddings or treats. If you
6 asked for anything else, you were told that you'd had
7 your tea. We never got supper. We just got a hot drink
8 at night. I think we got cocoa or something like that,
9 and we never got a biscuit with it. I remember going to
10 bed hungry.

11 The daughter seemed to rule the house. If you asked
12 for something, the daughter would say, "No, you're not
13 getting that, you're the foster brats". For example, we
14 had to sit at the table and watch the daughter putting
15 Clearasil on her blackheads and doing her nails. It was
16 gross. We'd often ask her if we could paint our nails
17 and she'd tell us that we couldn't, as we were just the
18 foster brats and didn't get to do things like that. She
19 was horrible. She always referred to us as either 'the
20 foster children' or 'foster brats'. I can't remember
21 Mrs FSC saying that, but she and the daughter would
22 often say things like, 'Know your place. We're here to
23 look after you, so know your place".

24 The daughter would push us about a lot and tell us
25 to go to our room. She'd physically shove me and the

1 other girl into our room. I don't remember Mr or Mrs

2 FSC-SPO ever hitting me.

3 I believe that a lot more happened in FSC-SPO but
4 I've blocked it all out. I can't remember most of my
5 time there. The strongest memories I have are that the
6 house smelled damp and musty and I was always sitting in
7 the freezing cold bedroom.

8 I had a couple of visits from the social worker.
9 I remember saying to her that I hated it and that she
10 had to get me out of there. I think it was Liz Myers.
11 She was nice, but she said to me that they weren't so
12 bad and I just had to stick it out. I told her about
13 the salt in the food and she said that the food couldn't
14 be that bad and I was probably overreacting because
15 I was missing my friends in Musselburgh. What people
16 need to understand is that kids weren't listened to back
17 in the day. It was like you were telling tales if you
18 said anything. That's how I felt when I spoke to the
19 social worker.

20 I also have a memory of going to my grandparents and
21 asking my nana to get me out of there. I said to my
22 grandad that I would run away and he told me not to
23 dare. He was strict and I think they were worried that
24 something was going to happen to me. I think my nana
25 spoke to my mum and I have a memory of either my mum or

1 my nana arguing with the social worker about me going
2 back home, but they weren't allowed to take me home.

3 I think something must have happened to make me and
4 the other girl run away from FSC-SPO but I've
5 blocked it out. I must have been about 13 at the time.
6 I think it was something to do with the daughter. We
7 went to bed one night and waited until they were all
8 asleep and then we climbed out of the window. We put
9 our pillows under the covers to make it look like we
10 were in bed in case anyone checked. I remember walking
11 down the road for what seemed like forever. I think we
12 might have taken a few things with us in our school bags
13 but we had no money. I think I was going to my
14 grandparents but I didn't want to knock their door in
15 the middle of the night. We had nowhere to go and ended
16 up being picked up by the police and they took us back
17 to FSC-SPO

18 I told them about how I was being treated by
19 Mrs FSC and her daughter, but I don't think they
20 believed me. They weren't interested anyway. They told
21 FSC-SPO in front of me what I'd said. Mrs FSC was
22 really angry and I said to the police that they had to
23 get me out of there or I would just run away again.
24 I think something definitely happened to cause me to run
25 away, but I just can't remember what it was.

1 Mrs FSC said I was completely out of control and
2 the social work got called in. I think it was Liz
3 Myers, and there was a male social worker there as well.
4 I think he was a temporary worker. I don't know his
5 name. Mrs Myers told them to take me away if I didn't
6 want to be there any more and I ended up back in
7 a social work office being taken to Drylaw Children's
8 Home.

9 I don't know how long I lived at FSC-SPO It
10 felt like forever but I think it might only have been
11 for six months."

12 Secondary Institutions - to be published later
13
14
15
16

17 Move you now to paragraph 136 on page 31 where
18 'Mary' speaks about impact. The impact on 'Mary' has to
19 be understood in the context not only of foster care but
20 also her experiences of life before care and at
21 Drylaw Home.

22 LADY SMITH: And it sounds as though she spent at least the
23 first half of her childhood out of care with her mum and
24 stepfather.

25 MS RATTRAY: Yes.

1 "The way in which I was moved from one set of foster
2 parents to another made me feel so insecure. Even now,
3 I still find myself looking for reassurance all the
4 time. For example, when I cook something I'll ask
5 everybody if it's all right, if it's good enough and
6 tastes okay. I just always seem to need to be
7 reassured. I think it's got a lot to do with being so
8 insecure when I was a child.

9 When I lived with FSC-SPO and in Drylaw, I grew up
10 thinking that I was just the foster child or the child
11 in care and that I was nothing. Those thoughts
12 continued into my adult life. I've built up my
13 confidence through having kids, working in care and
14 through the friendships I have now. I have turned my
15 life around but not everyone can do that.

16 Before I got married, my relationships would always
17 break down because I was not very good at being in
18 a relationship. I am very private so I don't really
19 trust anybody, although I am getting better with this.
20 I am really independent and prefer to stand on my own
21 two feet. Even if I'm struggling, I don't ask for help.
22 I just get on with things myself, which is something
23 I learnt to do at a young age.

24 I believe that if I'd had proper guidance when
25 I left Drylaw, I would never have ended up living the

1 way I did when I came out of care. The system failed
2 me. I stayed in so many different bed and breakfasts,
3 bedsit rooms and hostels, and I slept on people's floors
4 even when I had some of my kids. It was horrific."

5 And from paragraphs 140 to 147, 'Mary' then
6 describes the impact of her childhood experiences on her
7 parenting, her health and her education.

8 Moving to paragraph 148 on page 34:

9 "One of my friends asked me recently if I had seen
10 my Social Services file, which made me think that
11 I would like to see my records. I'd never thought about
12 it before. Maybe things would come back to me if I read
13 them.

14 I had to get my medical records when I was fighting
15 to get benefits and I read in them that I was put into
16 care because I was a destructive child or something like
17 that. I can't remember the exact wording. That is so
18 wrong. It wasn't me that had a problem, it was because
19 of how I was being treated by my mum and stepdad.

20 I have never thought about reporting the abuse
21 I experienced to the police and I have never gone back
22 to Social Services to report anything. I have never
23 even thought about it. I just thought that if you'd not
24 been sexually abused, you hadn't been abused.

25 I want my story to be told so that lessons can be

1 learned. I don't want what happened to me to ever
2 happen to another child and I hope that telling my story
3 will help other children in care. Looking back to the
4 foster care situation I was in, it wasn't the fact that
5 I had to go from one set of foster parents to another,
6 that was just the circumstances, it was the way in which
7 it was done. It was horrible. I think a child needs to
8 be warned that they are being moved. At least three
9 weeks in advance they should be told so that they can
10 mentally prepare themselves and they won't feel so
11 insecure when it happens. Somebody needs to sit down
12 with them and tell them that they're moving, where
13 they're going and introduce them to the new people.
14 When I worked in an autism charity, we used something
15 called a social story. It's like a memory board to help
16 explain what's happening. I think something like this
17 would be useful to help to tell children about their
18 transition to a new place.

19 Another important message I want to get across is
20 that when a child in care goes to an adult and says that
21 there's something wrong with the place they're living
22 in, be it abuse or violence, they need to be listened
23 to. Too many times they're dismissed as talking rubbish
24 or the adults think they're making it up because they're
25 troublemakers. A lot of them are screaming out for

1 help. Even if they are making something up for a bit of
2 attention, they still need to be listened to.

3 There are a lot of kids whose behaviour is wild but
4 people need to look beyond the behaviour. There's
5 usually always something that's making them behave that
6 way. People need to take time to try and understand
7 what's going on in a child's life instead of writing
8 them off as a lost cause and labelling them. One of the
9 main problems is that when you're in care, people don't
10 consider that you might be there because of reasons
11 within the family, such as domestic violence or maybe
12 your mum has died. They automatically see you in
13 a children's home and think that you must be
14 a troublemaker. That is so wrong.

15 I think it would be a good idea to give kids
16 counselling as soon as they go into care to find out
17 what's happened to them and give them all the help they
18 need straight away. Another important point is that
19 every child has different needs and they need to be
20 treated as individuals. In children's homes they are
21 usually treated as part of a group and not as
22 individuals.

23 I think it would help to improve the foster care
24 system if they introduced a better system of vetting the
25 foster carers and monitoring the home environment more

1 once a child is placed there. Social workers need to go
2 in and inspect the actual houses to see where the kids
3 will be sleeping and make sure that there are proper
4 facilities. FSC-SPO home was damp and freezing and
5 I had asthma. Also, it's not enough to know that the
6 foster carers don't have a criminal record. They need
7 to find out what type of people they are and make sure
8 that they are doing it because they care about kids, not
9 just for the money. I never heard FSC-SPO say
10 anything about the money, but it was obvious that they
11 didn't care because to them we were just 'the foster
12 children'.

13 I think the most important thing that can be learned
14 from my experience is that when a child leaves care,
15 somebody needs to be responsible for making sure that
16 they are safe, that they have a proper home to go to and
17 that they have life skills, such as how to do the
18 shopping, cook and manage money. They need somewhere
19 safe to live and they need to be supported for quite
20 a long time, until they can find their feet and show
21 that they can pay their bills and manage their money
22 themselves.

23 The system totally failed me. For a bairn to be
24 abandoned by the system at 16 is so scary. I could
25 easily have gone down a different road. I could have

1 been a prostitute, full-blown drug addict or even dead.
2 I don't know why that didn't happen to me. Maybe it was
3 because of the influence my grandparents had had on my
4 upbringing and the six months I had with [REDACTED] and [REDACTED]
5 but not every child has that. I was left in situations
6 where I was vulnerable and there was peer pressure and
7 I could have picked up a needle and given it a try.
8 Children leaving care are vulnerable and could easily
9 give in to peer pressure and go down the wrong road if
10 they are not properly supervised and supported.

11 I know someone whose son was in care and he's ended
12 up in the prison system. He's only ever out of prison
13 for about two weeks at a time before he's back in again
14 because he's so institutionalised. This is another
15 example of what can happen to young people if they don't
16 get the right help when they go into care or any support
17 when they leave care.

18 I never saw [REDACTED] and [REDACTED] again after I was taken
19 away from them and I don't know if they are still alive
20 now. I would love to knock on their door and thank them
21 for what they did for me. Along with my grandparents,
22 they played a big part in me becoming the person I am
23 today. They were amazing. I have heard that they
24 fostered lots of other children. I think they deserve
25 an award for what they've done.

1 I have no objection to my witness statement being
2 published as part of the evidence to the Inquiry.
3 I believe the facts stated in this witness statement are
4 true."

5 And 'Mary' signed her statement on 21 January 2020.

6 LADY SMITH: Thank you.

7 MS RATTRAY: My Lady, if we can move on to the next read-in?

8 LADY SMITH: Yes, let's do that.

9 MS RATTRAY: This is a read-in of 'Brian', which is
10 a pseudonym, and his statement is at WIT.001.001.7464.
11 'Brian' was in the care of Tayside Regional Council. He
12 was in a foster placement with JBM/JBN (called
13 JBM JBM/JBN in from 1981
14 until 1987. The current responsible authority
15 is Dundee City Council.

16 'Brian' (read)

17 MS RATTRAY: "My name is 'Brian'. I was born in 1972. My
18 contact details are known to the Inquiry.

19 Our family home was in Dunbar at the back of Dundee.
20 There were four children and my mum and dad. My mum and
21 dad split up when we were young. My brother was the
22 eldest. He died in an accident in 2011. Then there's
23 my older sister, me and my younger sister.

24 I don't have a great recollection of being very
25 young. I do know my mum and dad split up and my mum was

1 an alcoholic. She kept getting drunk and the social
2 work kept a close eye on her with us. My mum also had
3 a breakdown. We were all in and out of the social work
4 place at Carolina House in Dundee and another couple of
5 children's homes in and around Dundee. That was the
6 shelter in Dundee and a nuns' place down in Roseangel
7 also in Dundee. I was in the shelter for about a year
8 and Roseangel for about six months. That would have
9 about from about the ages of five to eight. From what
10 I can remember that care was all okay but I could never
11 settle.

12 I do remember all four of us were in care at
13 Carolina House in Dundee and in the [REDACTED] of 1980 we
14 all went to stay with JBM/JBN [REDACTED] That was
15 a trial for foster care with JBM/JBN [REDACTED] and lasted for
16 four weeks. The intention was that all four of us would
17 stay with them and all four of us did go. It was all
18 okay with them at that time. It wasn't until my older
19 brother and sister were taken away that it got bad for
20 me and my younger sister.

21 The social work department were involved with all of
22 that and there were meetings at Carden House in
23 Aberdeen. The names of the social workers I remember
24 are David Reid, who was the one who put us in care, and
25 a Jim Dunsmuir. They basically left us to the dogs.

1 On [REDACTED] 1981, all four of us officially went
2 to stay with [JBM/JBN] as our foster
3 parents. I have no specific memories of us arriving at
4 the [JBM/JBN] but we called them [JBM] and [JBN]. I also
5 know that they had fostered a family before we went
6 there.

7 [JBM/JBN] had four kids, a daughter and
8 three sons. The daughter was the oldest and was about
9 eight years older than me. She was getting ready to go
10 off to university when we went there. Next was a son
11 who was about seven years older than me. He was getting
12 ready to leave school as well. He joined the RAF. The
13 second son was three years older than me, then the
14 youngest son, who was two years older than me.

15 We stayed there for about two months before my older
16 brother was taken away. He went for a football trial
17 with Dundee and just never came back. After about six
18 months, my older sister was also taken away. That was
19 because she'd been caught stealing and [JBM] and [JBN]
20 were rigid on stealing so she had to leave.

21 I think [JBM] and [JBN] and their family had only
22 been at that house for about a year when we went there.
23 It was a big farmhouse outside [REDACTED] in
24 Aberdeenshire. It sat on its own in the middle of
25 nowhere.

1 I remember JBM bred dogs and had big kennels at the
2 farm. We worked and maintained them every single day.
3 It was a horrible environment.

4 We were up early on school days, had breakfast, then
5 it was out to get the dogs fed and watered. We also had
6 to tend to the poultry, then we went to school. We did
7 that every day, even if it was cold: dogs, poultry, then
8 school.

9 When we got home from school we cleaned the dogs out
10 and did any other jobs that were going, usually digging
11 the garden. We went to bed about 8 pm or whenever
12 Coronation Street finished.

13 This sounds mad but at weekends they would sometimes
14 leave us in our beds until about 2 o'clock in the
15 afternoon, then change the clocks and say it was
16 10 o'clock in the morning. My bedroom was above the
17 kitchen and I could smell the cooked breakfast being
18 made. So JBM/JBN family would all be sitting eating
19 this brunch and my sister and I, we didn't get that. We
20 weren't allowed out of our bedrooms at all. We would be
21 called down, have a quick nibble of something, and JBM
22 would send us straight out to work. When they did that,
23 the days went really fast, then we'd be called in for
24 tea. So they didn't have to give us a cooked breakfast
25 and we were lying in our beds starving.

1 We just had to wash down for about a year and
2 a half. We had no showers or baths other than on
3 a Sunday. There was ten people, the four of us, JBM and
4 JBN and their four kids. JBM eventually built
5 a shower in the scullery but when you went in it you
6 would get an electric shock. We would never get
7 a shower anyway.

8 Initially when we first got there, I shared
9 a bedroom with the two younger sons. Then I went
10 upstairs and shared a room with the older son, and once
11 he left the house I had that room to myself for years.
12 I didn't have any possessions. I had a bed, a chest of
13 drawers and a wardrobe. The thing is we didn't have
14 many clothes.

15 I don't remember them ever buying us new clothes.
16 We only ever went out shopping for food, never clothes.
17 We just wore the same work clothes all the time. Money
18 was never spent on us. Any money they got for fostering
19 went to JBM and his kids. His kids were treated the
20 same as us for work and any money always went to him but
21 the difference was that he loved and provided for them.

22 We were fed, I'll not say that we weren't, but we
23 were hungry what with all the work we were doing. I can
24 remember being in my bed and being starving. We would
25 have two bits of toast in the morning, then we were out

1 working. We would get a sandwich at lunch and we'd have
2 a tea, sometimes it was nice, sometimes it wasn't.

3 JBN did most of the cooking. I do remember we were
4 always hungry.

5 We went to school. It was a primary and secondary
6 school. I have little memory of school. I just feel we
7 were always working. I was in rags at school and
8 I remember that wasn't nice. Everyone knew we were in
9 foster care. We just wore the same clothes day after
10 day. Me and my sister were also in the remedial class
11 at school because we were well behind.

12 One day when I was in Primary 5, my mum turned up at
13 the school with David Reid, our social worker.
14 I remember we went to the Mrs Andrews' house. She was
15 the remedial teacher. Me and my sister were sent out of
16 the room and my mum, David Reid and the remedial teacher
17 had words but I don't know what that was about.

18 We did wear the same clothes for days to school and
19 we wouldn't be washed and we'd smell. I was too scared
20 to say anything to any teachers at school and I wasn't
21 very good at school anyway. I never really worked and
22 I only got one O grade. I never really went to school
23 to learn, it was more just to be with other kids.

24 In Primary 5, 6 and 7, I remember the annual class
25 photographs that got taken with all the class together.

1 I will always remember that because me and my sister
2 were taken into the assembly hall and we had our two
3 photos taken separately, then we were put back into the
4 class. I'm not in any classroom photos. I've seen my
5 class photos and I'm not in any class photos from those
6 years. I only have one photograph from my childhood,
7 one from when I was at school there.

8 We never went on many trips, if we did go anywhere,
9 it was only now and again and it would be one of the
10 annual camps that I would go on with the cadets.
11 I remember we once went to Scarborough, I think it was,
12 and JBM gave me £20 for two weeks. After a few
13 days, one of the cadet instructors came up and asked me
14 where my money was and I showed him all I had. He just
15 shook his head and walked away.

16 We had three days off a year, Christmas Day, New
17 Year's Day and your birthday. They were the only days
18 off in the whole year. I'll tell you all the rest of
19 the time we worked, we worked constantly.

20 My sister and I got presents at Christmas and on our
21 birthdays but nothing compared to the JBM/JBN own kids,
22 they always got better. I remember at Christmas we
23 would get presents and a selection box then JBM would
24 gather them all up and put them in the front room and
25 you weren't allowed near them. One year my mum told me

1 she'd got me a present, I forget what it was, but the
2 youngest son ended up getting it, not me.

3 I remember when I was 13 I got a bike from the
4 social work when I joined the cadets. JBM then gave me
5 a bit more freedom but I was embarrassed to go anywhere
6 because I was always stinking and dirty. I got a radio
7 cassette box when I was 14 and we had some books and
8 toys but I never had a TV or a computer or nothing.

9 We didn't really have any time to ourselves and if
10 we did I would just be kicking a ball about with myself.
11 I was always playing on my own. I had nobody to muck
12 about with. JBM own children kept their
13 distance from me and my sister. We would just be put to
14 our bedrooms.

15 JBM/JBN organised all visits and it
16 was always through the social work department. There
17 were no spur-of-the-moment family visits allowed at all.
18 All visits were dictated by JBN and JBM. David Reid
19 very rarely visited us, maybe once a year, and he never
20 asked my opinion about anything. I don't think I saw
21 him at all from 1986 through to 1988 when I joined the
22 army and left foster care. There was no bond at all
23 between David Reid and my sister and me. Whenever he
24 was visiting, you could tell he couldn't wait to get out
25 of there.

1 My mum did try and do things to get us out but it
2 was never any good. Her man was bad and treated her
3 bad. I once saw him hang her out of the window of her
4 house by her feet. That was when I was wee and was
5 staying with her.

6 When I was at the foster home we only saw her now
7 and again and it was never at the JBM/JBN farmhouse or
8 at her house. There was a stop put on that. It was
9 always at the social work place at Carolina House in
10 Dundee. I only saw her about once every year to
11 18 months for a couple of hours. The last time I saw
12 her was in Primary 7. That was in 1983.

13 My mum died in 1985 and I remember that our social
14 worker, David Reid, picked my sister and me up from the
15 JBM/JBN house to take us to the funeral. His car broke
16 down and we were two hours late and mum had already been
17 buried and there was nobody there. He then took us back
18 to his house in Dundee. I remember sitting with his
19 daughter watching TV and his wife must have twigged
20 about me and my sister and she spoke to him. Next
21 thing, he took me and my sister to a female social
22 worker's house for some reason, then he took us back to
23 JBM.

24 When the middle son turned 17, he moved out the
25 house. He married young and had a child young as well.

1 His wife phoned Stonehaven social work department and
2 complained about the way JBM/JBN were
3 being with me and my sister. Stonehaven social work
4 phoned JBM and he told them it was a malicious phone
5 call because it was his son's wife and he was trying to
6 get away from her to get a divorce. The social work
7 just put it down to a malicious phone call.

8 We were seen now and again by a doctor. I think it
9 was an annual checkup. But I never remember seeing
10 a dentist. We never got any sweeties so I wouldn't need
11 to see a dentist. I once had a massive ringworm on my
12 backside and I was treated for that and it went away.
13 We always had cuts, bruises, stings and blisters from
14 all the work we were doing on the farm. Things like
15 that were always just left to heal.

16 I remember I used to feel sick when I was working,
17 just because I didn't have enough to eat.

18 All we did was work for JBM on that farm. I felt
19 like a slave, keeping his dog breeding business going.
20 We fed and watered the dogs, cleaned them out and built
21 runs for them as well. At one point he must have had
22 about a hundred dogs. That's why he got two more foster
23 kids and he got money for them and money for me and my
24 sister.

25 My sister and I fenced about three acres of JBM

1 land, caged his pheasants and peacocks, dug out his
2 gardens, did tattie and daffy picking, everything. We
3 were constantly working. Local farmers paid us to that
4 tattie and daffy picking. It was about £25 a day we got
5 for those jobs. JBM took all the money from us
6 and we got nothing in return.

7 I never felt we were ever made welcome. JBM
8 was always saying 'If it wasn't for the money you
9 wouldn't be here'. He shoved that in our faces all the
10 time. Even after my mum died, JBM would say 'Your mum
11 never loved you'.

12 He even used to try and teach us, like sums on
13 a chalk blackboard, in a room at the house. His wife
14 and the kids would all go away for the day and me and my
15 sister would have to sit with him for about three hours
16 getting lessons. His family would come back and we'd be
17 thrown out to do the dog kennels. I don't know why he
18 did that, it's just the way he was.

19 When I was in Primary 5 or 6, I was digging out the
20 trenches with spades and wheelbarrows one day and I saw
21 my mum with her man at the time. I remember I ran to my
22 mum but JBM came out and stopped me. He took
23 them into the house and put them in the front room.
24 They were in there for about five minutes before the
25 whole JBM/JBN family came in and said there was work to

1 do. My mum and her man were ushered out of the house
2 and taken away in the JBM/JBN car. They never came
3 back after that.

4 Me and my sister went to the JBM/JBN with £50 in our
5 TSB bank accounts and I remember JBM once gave us two
6 forks to go out and dig the garden. They were rotten
7 forks and the shafts broke on both of them and he went
8 off his rocker shouting at the two of us. Anyway, he
9 went to the bank and got two forms for my sister and
10 I to sign then he took the money out of our accounts to
11 cover the cost of the two broken forks.

12 Sometimes JBM and JBN were nice with you but we
13 were constantly stinking and working. I would say that
14 99 per cent of the time there wasn't any good times. We
15 were never shown any care or affection at all by them.

16 If you didn't do what JBM asked you to do,
17 you would get battered, you'd be hit by him. He also
18 wouldn't speak to you for about two months after he
19 battered you, which was such an awkward position.
20 Honestly, he just never spoke to you.

21 When it came to the foster children, JBN took the
22 back seat. She would shout at us but she didn't hit us.
23 She would tell JBM and he would do the damage to me and
24 my sister. That could be a slap, a shake or a smacking
25 on your backside.

1 My sister and I had been with JBM and JBN for
2 about a year when it got really bad. We were working in
3 the garden one day digging out a trench. JBM came
4 storming out of the house and hit my sister with a stick
5 on her backside and the back of her legs. He just lost
6 it for no reason and threw me into the trench. I peed
7 myself. Then he grabbed my sister, pulled her trousers
8 down and skelped her across her bare arse with his
9 stick.

10 It was constant after that. I remember once my
11 sister was peeling tatties in the kitchen and JBM went
12 up and hit her 'bam' on the top of her head and said she
13 was peeling them too thick. She could have stabbed
14 herself in the eye due to the force of him hitting her.

15 The amount of work my sister and I had to do was
16 abuse in itself. JBM had us killing and skinning birds
17 and animals when we were only about 11. I used an axe
18 to kill them. It was hard to start with but you got
19 used to it and then it kind of came natural.

20 We both used to skin cows, sheep, calves and all the
21 dead cattle from the fields. We would use a block and
22 tackle to hoist them up then we would skin, gut and chop
23 them up. Then we'd put them in the freezer for dog food
24 or sometimes he fed it to us. My sister did some of it
25 and JBM own children did it as well. It was horrible

1 at first but you did get used to it.

2 Between the ages of 16 and 18, my sister seemed to
3 disappear from the JBM/JBN foster home. The JBM/JBN
4 daughter got my sister a live-in job in a hotel near
5 Inverness. My sister since told me that she did that
6 for four months then moved to Montrose and then to
7 Bradford. It was in Bradford that she had a wee girl
8 and where she heard that I'd been badly injured in
9 a fall when I was in the army. That's why my sister
10 returned to the JBM/JBN farm and she was back there
11 from about 1992.

12 In 1989, after I'd left to join the army, two
13 further foster kids came to stay with the JBM/JBN two
14 boys. I was once told by one boy that JBM had
15 broken his arm because the boy had run away from the
16 house for two days. Karen Bowie, his social worker,
17 took him right back to the foster parents and JBM set
18 about him, breaking his arm.

19 JBM also assaulted the other foster boy once when
20 I was back at the foster home on sick leave from the
21 army. He'd been on the bus back from school and he'd
22 given a lassie a scare by pushing a lighter up against
23 her or something. The girl told her dad and the dad
24 came up to the house and spoke to JBM about it.
25 The foster boy was about 10 years old. He was in the

1 house with his brother, me, my sister, my sister's wee
2 girl and another new foster kid who had special needs
3 and went to a special school in Stonehaven.

4 So JBM was outside talking to the dad of the girl
5 and I remember he came back in and he just set about the
6 foster boy. He was smashing and punching him and
7 dragging him about on the ground in the living room.
8 Then he sent him upstairs to his room. Then JBM went
9 and got a walking stick from the porch and he went
10 upstairs with him. I didn't see what happened up there
11 but my sister followed him up and she seen it. JBM
12 started hitting him again in his room with the walking
13 stick.

14 The boy's brother reported it to a teacher at school
15 the following day and after school that day,
16 Karen Bowie, the social worker, another Polish social
17 worker and two Aberdeen CID came to the house. We all
18 got interviewed and JBM was charged with child abuse.
19 That was in September 1992 and that's when my sister and
20 I left that house for good.

21 When I turned 16, I joined the army. JBM
22 dropped me at the bus station, gave me £20 and said good
23 luck, that was it.

24 I was never informed that I wasn't under the care of
25 the social work department. I had two sets of clothes

1 and £20 in my pocket. I remember after my first eight
2 weeks basic training I spent my first pay cheque, which
3 was about £700, all on clothes. I had to.

4 See when it came to my older brother and sister,
5 they got given a flat and I think they got £4,000 each
6 to set themselves up. My younger sister and me got
7 nothing. Then when my younger sister came out of care
8 her social worker was Karen Bowie as David Reid had
9 moved on. She was blind to what my sister needed. JBM
10 JBM got his daughter to get my sister her live-in
11 job at the hotel in Inverness. My sister was ushered
12 away from the social work by JBM The two other
13 foster boys arrived at the farm about three months
14 before my sister left. That was in 1989.

15 I didn't say anything to anyone about anything.
16 I was too scared to speak out and to tell anyone. On
17 the few occasions when I saw my mum at Carolina House in
18 Dundee I would mumble bits to her but I didn't feel
19 I could say much more. I didn't want to upset her.

20 I eventually spoke of things to mum but I didn't
21 feel safe telling the social work department. It was in
22 1992 when I spoke to the police about JBM
23 assaulting the other foster boy and that was the first
24 time I talked about everything in full.

25 JBM was the one who sort of encouraged me to join

1 the army, he fought in the Second World War and was in
2 the Royal Scots. I was in the army for six years.
3 I doubt I would have joined the army if circumstances
4 had been different. It was really just to get away from
5 my foster care.

6 I started in the army as a junior leader. That led
7 on from being in the cadets. Then I had one year of
8 training. That took me away from the social work
9 department and foster care, who had only ever let me
10 down. I wanted nothing more to do with the social work
11 department and the army let me get on with my life.

12 While I was in the army, in 1992 I had an accident
13 abseiling in Germany when I fell off a rock-face with my
14 instructor. I broke my spine and smashed my heel.
15 I was in hospital for about nine weeks. Then I got sick
16 leave and I started that leave back with the JBM/JBN at
17 the foster home. It was during my first week of sick
18 leave that the incident occurred where JBM
19 assaulted the other foster boy.

20 I went on to live in Montrose after I left the army,
21 then I moved to London to see my brother. I never
22 really knew or got to know him. In fact, I never really
23 knew anyone, so I decided to pack my bags and go and see
24 him. I've never been close with my older sister,
25 probably because of the way I was brought up. I didn't

1 see her that much when I was in foster care. That'll be
2 why.

3 I get on okay with my younger sister but she has
4 a drug problem and I don't see her that much either.
5 She's actually coming forward to speak to the Inquiry.

6 I have a son, he's 23 this year and we get on good.
7 I see him now and again. When me and his mum split up
8 he was younger. She went on to get married and I didn't
9 want to interfere so I just stayed away and let her get
10 on with it. I still paid towards his support and have
11 done all his life but I didn't have a lot to do with him
12 then.

13 I'm very shy in relationships. I like to be on my
14 own. I tend to just accept things and take it as it
15 goes. My younger sister and I went our own ways after
16 care and there was a period of about ten years when we
17 didn't see each other.

18 Being in care didn't prepare me at all for anything
19 and my education was poor. It wasn't until I got in
20 contact with Future Pathways that I even knew what I was
21 entitled to in benefits. I tend not to question and
22 just accept things. That could be a bit of both the
23 army and my foster care.

24 The army did sort me with my war pension but it was
25 Future Pathways that recently helped me out with other

1 benefits that I would never have known I was entitled
2 to. As a result, my pension has now increased and
3 I have a mobility car.

4 I would never have known about seeing or needing any
5 mental health counselling. I started with counselling
6 last year, in 2017, and that was only after speaking
7 with Michelle at Future Pathways.

8 I was assessed by a clinical psychologist,
9 Dr Ian Connor, then I had 16 weeks of sessions with
10 their trauma counsellor Jackie Law. That's continuing
11 at present.

12 When I was younger and in my late teens I was very
13 angry about my time in care. In my 20s it wasn't
14 something I thought of much but I have thought about it
15 more as I've got older. Maybe for about the last ten
16 years I've thought about it more and the Inquiry has had
17 me thinking about it a lot more.

18 I feel loads better from the counselling though.
19 Jackie Law has helped me and i do feel better. I don't
20 think about it as much and it's not as severe as it used
21 to be.

22 I drink every day from about 4 or 5 o'clock. I have
23 about seven cans and it knocks me out. That gets me to
24 sleep and it helps me forget things. I'm not on any
25 medication from the doctor or anything like that.

1 Future Pathways have also helped me in getting
2 access to my social work records. I have copies of
3 those records and I can make them available if the
4 Inquiry needs them.

5 If you put children in foster care you've got to
6 keep an eye on them. Especially if they're in rural
7 places. The JBM/JBN just done what they wanted and
8 nobody was there to say anything about that.

9 Put it this way. When I joined the army, having
10 a shower every day was alien to me. The same with
11 changing clothes every day, that was alien too. I had
12 to get used to that.

13 I would like the Inquiry to make sure the things
14 that happened to me and my sister don't happen ever
15 again. The social work need to be dragged in and asked
16 why they let it happen. Why did they keep putting
17 foster children in care with JBM/JBN when
18 they knew they were unfit foster parents. Whoever's
19 responsible needs to be asked why JBM was ever
20 allowed to be a foster carer and left to look after
21 children.

22 What's more sickening as well is when the JBM/JBN
23 took the other two foster boys in, all the JBM/JBN
24 children and their friends who visited the farm all kept
25 their mouths shut. They were all educated and had jobs

1 and they saw how they were being treated physically and
2 they did nothing about that. It took me and my sister
3 physically to do something about it.

4 The other foster boy suffered at the hands of JBM
5 JBM He is in prison now for killing someone when
6 he was in 16 in 2000 and I condemn him for that, but
7 I know him and he isn't like that. His psychological
8 reports from the court case said he had flashbacks to
9 JBM He's been in prison for 18 years, he
10 hasn't had a very good life and he has no one out here
11 to speak for him. I hope it can be arranged for someone
12 to speak to him or for him to contact the Inquiry as
13 I think the Inquiry should hear from him.

14 I am aware of a social work enquiry from 1998 and
15 a report that was produced by Donal Giltinan, a social
16 worker who has since retired. I'm not even sure if he
17 is still alive. I think it came about as a result of my
18 sister pushing to have JBM investigated.
19 Donal Giltinan took evidence from me and my sister and
20 we told him about the assault on the other foster boy in
21 1992. There were still foster children staying at the
22 farm, but JBM had died by then. I know JBM
23 JBM was born in 1926 and died in 1996 or 1997.

24 That report condemned David Reid, the social work
25 department, the school, lots of people, and it was

1 because of that David Reid got disciplined. There's
2 a paragraph in that report where the female that vetted
3 JBM/JBN for fostering states that they
4 weren't even fit for bringing up their own family, let
5 alone a foster family. If it was known they were
6 inappropriate to be fostering, why were they allowed to
7 carry on with it.

8 I got a copy of that report and I gave it to
9 a solicitor but he died and I've lost it now. I tried
10 to get another copy in 2008 and Harriet Dempster, the
11 director of the social work for Highland Council, who
12 organised the whole enquiry, has been trying to get me
13 a copy. I'm still trying to obtain a copy of that
14 Donal Giltinan report but I can't seem to get anywhere.
15 It seems to be outstanding. It apparently included
16 details on what help was required for me and my sister
17 and there were recommendations included in that report.
18 I believe David Reid the social worker was disciplined
19 in connection with his report, so it may be that it will
20 be on his own personnel file within the Social Services.

21 A couple of weeks ago, purely out of curiosity,
22 I drove up there to the farm and it's now all totally
23 changed. There's been new parts built and all the dog
24 kennels, gardens and bird cages have all been ripped
25 down. I think it's owned by a man or his family, that's

1 who owned it back when the JBM/JBN rented it when my
2 sister and I were there.

3 When I first came to speak to the Inquiry, I was all
4 psyched up and I had a panic attack as I was so
5 stressed. Coming to give my statement got me quite
6 stressed. I now feel totally relieved and see it as
7 having been worthwhile.

8 I've since spoken to my sister and told her not to
9 get stressed out and I recommended that she get in touch
10 as well. She has the number and I'm sure she'll make
11 contact.

12 I have no objection to my witness statement being
13 published as part of the evidence to the Inquiry.
14 I believe the facts stated in this witness statement are
15 true."

16 And 'Brian' signed the statement on 16 March 2018.

17 LADY SMITH: Thank you.

18 MS RATTRAY: My Lady, there is more, simply because there's
19 quite a few records, but perhaps it would be time to
20 take a break and look at the records after.

21 LADY SMITH: We could take a break now and then get onto the
22 records for this witness?

23 MS RATTRAY: Yes.

24 LADY SMITH: Thank you very much. We'll take the afternoon
25 break now but before I do that, just names. Of course

1 this morning, [REDACTED] and [REDACTED] were mentioned I think by
2 'Betty' as being 'Denise''s sisters. Their names can't
3 be repeated outside this room. And likewise we've now
4 heard about [REDACTED] and [REDACTED] and the FSC-SPC in relation to
5 'Mary''s statement and JBM/JBN [REDACTED] in
6 relation to 'Brian''s statement. All these names are
7 protected by my general restriction order.

8 (3.07 pm)

9 (A short break)

10 (3.21 pm)

11 LADY SMITH: Ms Rattray.

12 MS RATTRAY: Thank you, my Lady. What we're now going to do
13 is look at some of the extracts of the children's
14 records of 'Brian'.

15 LADY SMITH: Thank you.

16 MS RATTRAY: Firstly a comment on the extent of the full
17 file of records which we recovered which were generally
18 fairly full but they didn't actually contain any records
19 of visits to the placement itself.

20 The purpose of looking at these records from
21 'Brian''s file is to draw to attention three matters
22 that arise from 'Brian''s evidence. First is the issues
23 he raises regarding the suitability of Mr and
24 Mrs JBM/JBN as foster parents.

25 He makes the comment why were they allowed to foster

1 in the first place.

2 The second is what is seen in the records regarding
3 the foster carers' attitude towards contact between
4 'Brian' and his birth family. And the third matter is
5 in relation to the complaint that 'Brian' said he made
6 after leaving foster care and in relation to a report
7 which he says was prepared at that time but suffice to
8 say the records do not contain a copy of that report and
9 we do not have a copy of that report.

10 LADY SMITH: He did say to us that he had a copy of some
11 records, I take it that they don't contain anything that
12 you haven't recovered in what we're about to look at?

13 MS RATTRAY: Off the top of my head I can't say whether
14 we've seen his copy records but we have had the full
15 copy records but his position is he used to have a copy
16 of that report but doesn't have it any longer. We'll
17 see there is however a reference to the existence of
18 that report in his records and I will take Your Ladyship
19 to that.

20 LADY SMITH: Thank you very much. Let's have a look.

21 MS RATTRAY: The first document that I'd like to look at are
22 in his records and the reference is DUN-000000730 and
23 page 21 of this document.

24 What we have here is a Form F, which is the
25 assessment of Mr and Mrs JBM/JBN as foster carers at the

1 time where they were applying to be foster carers. At
2 page 22, which is the second page of the Form F, we know
3 from the foot of that page that this application was
4 presented to the agencies, committee or panel on
5 22 September 1980. So that's the period we're looking
6 at at this assessment.

7 I think we have to accept that this is a longer
8 document and whilst I will be focusing on those aspects
9 within this document which might have raised concerns
10 about the JBM/JBN as potential foster carers, it is in
11 the context there are of course some very positive
12 comments about them as well. And obviously these
13 records are part of the bundle which are made available
14 to those with leave to appear and it's open to those
15 with leave to appear to read them in full.

16 What I'm going to do in the first instance is turn
17 to page 23. At the top of that page there is
18 a paragraph 10 which provides a picture and
19 a description and the overall impression of the
20 temperament firstly of the foster father. We start with
21 a description of Mr JBM who is then aged 54, his
22 physical appearance, and then in relation to his
23 character it says:

24 "A bluff and cheerful manner can change abruptly to
25 brusqueness or slight impatience. A forceful,

1 self-reliant and resourceful man."

2 Then the next matter is to move to the foot of this
3 page at paragraph 15, which is a reference to
4 personality and philosophy of life and religion. What
5 it says here is that:

6 "Religion does not play an important role in his
7 life. His personal philosophy is based on a belief in
8 the importance of the individual whose destiny lies in
9 his or her own hands. A man of physical courage,
10 determined, perhaps slightly selfish in pursuit of
11 personal satisfaction. An opportunist with the capacity
12 to welcome a challenge ..."

13 It then makes reference to his life in the army and
14 further down says:

15 "The independent attitudes of educated Africans in
16 Rhodesia were much less to his liking."

17 Then it goes on to say:

18 "Mr JBM [REDACTED] impresses as a man of sound common
19 sense, a good sense of humour, including the capacity
20 for laughing at himself, warm-hearted, perhaps a little
21 too rigid in outlook."

22 Then it goes on and unfortunately the copy we have
23 doesn't have the last sentence so we don't know what the
24 following "and" is about.

25 Turning now to page 24 of DUN-000000730 and I want

1 to move to the foot of that page which is paragraph 21
2 of the Form F. This is looking at the personality and
3 philosophy of Mrs JBN and here it says:
4 "On initial acquaintance Mrs JBN presents as
5 a charming, gay and outgoing woman who has firm views
6 which appear to be based on careful thought. Despite
7 an apparently open manner, she has chosen to conceal
8 certain aspects of her personal history (her previous
9 marriage) and to misrepresent certain facts (her account
10 of her stepson's problems was inaccurate). My
11 assessment of her personality is that she is a very
12 positive woman who is reluctant to face reality when
13 this contains a painful element; intelligent and
14 sensible but without deep insight; interested in her
15 children and involved in their development but with
16 little time for explanations based on child psychology;
17 determined, perhaps rather selfish and occasionally
18 intolerant of views which differ from her own."
19 LADY SMITH: The part we've got up there, we haven't got her
20 age but was it of a similar age to her husband's, early
21 50s?
22 MS RATTRAY: It doesn't say that but I can tell you, if we
23 turn to page 21, that ought to have her date of birth in
24 it.
25 LADY SMITH: Ah, it's there, paragraph 16:

1 "Her erect bearing makes her seem much younger than
2 48."

3 MS RATTRAY: 48, yes. We know from page 21 that the
4 Mr JBM was born in 1926 and Mrs JBN was born in
5 1932.

6 LADY SMITH: Thank you.

7 MS RATTRAY: Moving now to page 25 of this document, which
8 is further into the Form F. This is where they give
9 a background to the marital history and present
10 relationship. If we move halfway down that page, I'm
11 looking at the part of paragraph 22 towards the foot of
12 that paragraph which starts with "Mrs JBN
13 underlined. What that says:

14 "Mrs JBN says that she was married at the age of
15 20 to a man who was 16 years older than she was. This
16 fact was not entered on the fostering application form
17 and was only discovered when I saw the JBM/JBN marriage
18 certificate, a routine procedure carried out on my last
19 visit. Asked to elaborate on this marriage, which ended
20 in divorce after ten years, Mrs JBN seemed recollect
21 to discuss this freely."

22 She goes on to speak about it. But when we move to
23 paragraph 23 just underneath that and at the first
24 paragraph there the writer of this assessment says:

25 "I am concerned about the lack of honesty

1 surrounding this marriage and the generally defensive
2 manner which Mrs JBN seems to have adopted about it.
3 It leaves me with all kinds of suspicions about why she
4 has reacted this way and raises doubts about her
5 capacity to be open and frank in other ways. Due to the
6 need to complete this application, I have been unable to
7 pursue this aspect with Mrs JBN "

8 Now to move to the top of page 26 and this is
9 paragraph 24 in relation to parenting capacity and
10 looking at that of Mr JBM

11 "Mr JBM experiences of being parented by
12 elderly grandparents, who do not appear to have been
13 either emotionally close to him nor particularly
14 involved in his progress, appear to have influenced his
15 attitude to the children of his first marriage. Even in
16 retrospect there is little evidence that he really
17 understands that the basic needs of his oldest son were
18 not met by the frequent changes of carer - that simply
19 providing a home was not really sufficient to ensure the
20 boy's emotional security when an attachment figure was
21 absent or changing."

22 I won't read the following in any detail, but it
23 goes on to give information regarding Mr JBM had
24 a previous marriage in which he had two children and
25 throughout this assessment there are concerns about his

1 parenting or relationship in relation to his eldest son
2 of his previous marriage.

3 Moving down to the middle of that page, there is
4 a comment just above where it says "paragraph 25
5 parenting capacity" and it says:

6 "Like his wife, he is non-materialistic and a firm
7 believer that country life provides an ideal environment
8 for growing children. Neither has much tolerance or any
9 sympathy with the attitudes of city dwellers."

10 Then moving to the paragraph 25, parenting capacity
11 in relation to Mrs JBN and the second paragraph of
12 this section says:

13 "Mrs JBN has firm views on her role as a parent.
14 She understands her children and their different ways of
15 reacting to situations, though I do not think she would
16 tolerate moodiness or negative responses such as
17 complaints or self-pity."

18 And further to the second-last sentence on this
19 page:

20 "Punishments for younger children included the
21 occasional smack but as they have got older they have
22 been deprived of privileges or confined to their rooms
23 for a while."

24 Turning over the page to page 27, and moving to the
25 foot of this page. This is a section, paragraph 27,

1 which provides a picture of each child in the household
2 and is referring to the four children of both Mr and
3 Mrs JBM/JBN together.

4 It's a very positive description of the children but
5 the second-last paragraph towards the foot of the
6 page does say:

7 "The JBM/JBN children have also produced written
8 material for this section of this assessment although
9 I think this may have been censored by their mother to
10 some extent. On handing it to me, she commented that
11 each one had made a comment about food which 'made it
12 sound as though they never had a proper meal'. Yet none
13 of the children's efforts contain a word about eating or
14 food of any kind!"

15 Now moving to page 30 of this document, and
16 paragraph 32 which addresses the motivation and present
17 understanding of adoption/fostering tasks. Moving to
18 the third paragraph halfway down the page is a sentence
19 that starts, "The whole family ..." and it reads:

20 "The whole family expresses the hope that any foster
21 child will become a permanent member of the family after
22 successful introductions have taken place. Contact with
23 natural relatives would be tolerated only if the JBM/JBN
24 were convinced that this was in the best interests of
25 the foster child. As they are sceptical of the value of

1 some social work procedures and dismissive of what they
2 regard as the somewhat weak attitudes to children's
3 problems based on developmental psychology, it is not
4 surprising that the JBM/JBN have been barely tolerant of
5 the assessment process. At times their attitude,
6 particularly Mrs JBN has indicated that she
7 considered the whole exercise superfluous, expressing
8 her opinion that the only way to judge whether or not
9 a placement would work would be to introduce the
10 children to the family with minimum delay. Some of her
11 uncharacteristic lack of confidence may stem from
12 an earlier experience. The couple replied to
13 an advertisement for holiday homes for Carolina House
14 children some years ago. According to the JBM/JBN
15 account, several children were brought to 'view' their
16 home but refused to stay as they did not like the
17 isolated spot. Mrs JBN has expressed [there's
18 a continuation page on page 33 of this document so we'll
19 move there at this stage] criticism of the way this was
20 done and has needed reassurance that a foster child
21 would not be allowed to leave, for example, after
22 a disagreement or disciplinary action. I have explained
23 that we shall be encouraging both foster children and
24 foster parents to work through any such difficulties and
25 that there is no way that a child would be allowed to

1 manipulate his social worker and foster parents by
2 playing one-off against the other.

3 There is a reasonable understanding of the nature of
4 the task although I feel that the 'shared' nature of
5 foster care may be burdensome to individualists like
6 these. They are critical of bureaucracy in any form and
7 intolerant of official delays or investigations.

8 Mrs JBN only agreed to my asking the children to
9 write about themselves if I would guarantee that their
10 writings would not be 'put in a file somewhere'. Her
11 forthright approach and criticism might be difficult to
12 work with on occasion, but I do feel she has the
13 capacity to listen and learn about the tasks."

14 That's a continuation page. I now want to go back
15 to page 30, where we were last, and move to the foot of
16 that page. It's the last entry here under, "Tolerance
17 of contact with natural family/people from child's
18 past", and what it says here is:

19 "Links with natural family would be maintained if
20 appropriate for a long-term foster child. They would
21 question the relevance of visits which were of no
22 significance to a child. Difficult parental behaviour
23 would not be tolerated for fear of upsetting their own
24 children."

25 Now to move to page 35 of this extract. What we

1 have here is a list of three various issues that should
2 be noted in relation to the possible use of the JBM/JBN
3 as foster parents. The first is:
4 "1. Their failure to recognise and deal effectively
5 with [JBM] son from his first marriage, that
6 child's early problems] ...
7 2. Their questionable action and wisdom in allowing
8 a 15-year-old to emigrate with virtual strangers before
9 an introductory visit of some kind. There is also the
10 subtle ambivalent message which may have been conveyed
11 to the boy about his permanent home and family.
12 3. The implications for foster children of
13 association with a known offender in a small community."
14 And the known offender there is the child from the
15 previous marriage, and whilst I won't go to it, at page
16 34 there is a far more detailed discussion of that
17 child's history, which has been somewhat troubled.
18 LADY SMITH: Yes.
19 MS RATTRAY: And including offending, and the comment is
20 made there that they doubt this couple would have been
21 particularly sensitive to that child's needs and that
22 was during the period when the JBM/JBN were having their
23 own children.
24 That concludes a look at the assessment.
25 LADY SMITH: Thank you.

1 MS RATTRAY: But drawing to attention were these negative
2 comments, would they have been enough to flag up as to
3 whether this couple would have been able to manage the
4 care of foster children who were city dwellers from very
5 different experiences and perhaps with a different
6 outlook and also children who had ongoing relationships
7 with their birth family.

8 LADY SMITH: Of course.

9 MS RATTRAY: The next documents I'm going to look at are
10 extracts of case records of the placement. As I say, we
11 do not have any records of visits, but we do have some
12 case review meetings. Firstly now I'm going to go to
13 page 8. Page 8 is a summary of a review meeting that
14 was held on 23 November 1981. What we see here, it says
15 this is the situation after the older two siblings left
16 the placement and there was a placement breakdown in
17 respect of the older brother and sister.

18 At paragraph 2 of the summary of discussion and
19 goals for the future, it says:

20 "Mr and Mrs JBM/JBN agreed that they would be
21 receptive to [the children's mother] visiting 'Brian'
22 and his sister at [REDACTED] and it had in fact been
23 agreed prior to the review that the mother's contact
24 with the children would be maintained on approximately
25 a two-monthly level.

1 3. Mr and Mrs JBM/JBN indicated that they would be
2 unable to accept visits from the older siblings at
3 [REDACTED] because of the strength of feeling which
4 they and their family felt regarding the events
5 surrounding the breakdowns in the placement of both [of
6 these older children but particularly the oldest girl's]
7 breakdown. Mr and Mrs JBM/JBN indicated that they would
8 be willing to see 'Brian' and his younger sister
9 maintaining contact with [their older siblings] at
10 Carolina House or anywhere else in Dundee and it was
11 therefore agreed that this plan of action would be
12 pursued.

13 4. It was affirmed that the department has no
14 intention of placing any more children with Mr and Mrs
15 JBM/JBN for the foreseeable future. It was explained to
16 Mr and Mrs JBM/JBN that the principal reason behind this
17 was that it was considered of paramount importance that
18 'Brian' and his younger sister's place in the family
19 should be maintained and supported as much as
20 possible ..."

21 LADY SMITH: And that's in their birth family, is it, or in
22 the JBM/JBN family?

23 MS RATTRAY: No, in the foster family. Their place in the
24 foster family I think is the reference here.

25 " ... and it was considered that the addition of

1 other children would not serve to secure the children's
2 placement with them. It was considered that the
3 addition of further children would serve to increase any
4 feelings of insecurity on 'Brian' and his younger
5 sister's part. No unanimity was achieved on this
6 particular issue and Mr JBM indicated that he could
7 not accept the reasoning behind this decision."

8 LADY SMITH: So when on that page, in paragraph 2, there's
9 an indication that a placement had broken down, is that
10 in relation to a different child?

11 MS RATTRAY: That is in relation to there were four children
12 in the family and all four were placed, but then in the
13 statement 'Brian' refers to firstly his brother left and
14 then his sister left. Generally from the records the
15 understanding is that the older brother left of his own
16 volition, he wanted to leave, and the older sister left
17 because she'd stolen something and the JBM/JBN did not
18 tolerate stealing, therefore they required her to leave.

19 LADY SMITH: Thank you.

20 MS RATTRAY: So the issue was arising about how is contact
21 to be maintained between the siblings.

22 LADY SMITH: Thank you.

23 MS RATTRAY: I'm now turning to page 9, which is the second
24 page of this case review. At the top of page 9 what we
25 see is that the social worker Mr Dunsmuir was saying he

1 would like to start to help the children, that's the
2 younger children:

3 " ... build a scrapbook as it was considered that
4 this would be an important and useful way of preserving
5 for the children information about their past."

6 At this stage it says:

7 "There was considerable discussion on this
8 particular issue as Mr and Mrs JBM/JBN felt it would not
9 be advantageous for the children to be constantly
10 reminded about the negative aspects of their past."

11 And the social worker goes on to say:

12 "In discussion the point was made in response that
13 the children required to feel confident that they could
14 discuss their past and to have the feeling that it was
15 safe to raise their past whenever they wished to do so.
16 The point was also made that the children's experiences
17 could not be blocked out as this was considered to be
18 an unhealthy way of dealing with painful feelings. It
19 was felt that the compilation of scrapbooks for the
20 children would be a practical and concrete way of
21 demonstrating to the children that their past is a safe
22 area to discuss."

23 Moving on to another case review meeting and that's
24 on page 10, and that's on the first page. This is
25 a social worker's report in respect of a case review

1 meeting and it's on [REDACTED] 1982. The part I'm
2 going to look at is the second page, which is on
3 page 11.

4 LADY SMITH: So by this time 'Brian' had been there for
5 a 21 months or so, certainly 20 months?

6 MS RATTRAY: Yes. This is the part of the report at
7 paragraph 6 which deals with contact with natural
8 parents and what it says here is:

9 "Contact with mother is now formally on
10 a two-monthly basis."

11 It goes on to describe the issues. There are
12 reasons the children are in care and 'Brian' said his
13 mother was an alcoholic and it's recognised that:

14 "Mother continues to have chronic emotional problems
15 reflected in her frequent drug/alcohol abuse and
16 separations from [her then partner], her co-hab. When
17 sober she continues to present as caring and concerned
18 but bouts of drinking are fairly frequent. Difficult to
19 persuade foster parents of benefit of contact in these
20 circumstances and they have been very angry about this
21 recently. Children still happy to see their mother and
22 generally okay when she goes. Upset when mother not fit
23 for last visit. Children now seeing their older
24 siblings in Dundee on a two-monthly basis/separate from
25 their mother. This is a new arrangement."

1 If we look at paragraph 8 further down the page
2 here, my Lady, I would say these highlighter pens,
3 that's not us.

4 LADY SMITH: I appreciate that.

5 MS RATTRAY: Clearly somebody else has been reviewing these
6 records at one stage. The last page in "Future action"
7 expresses some concern. It says:

8 "I remain rather concerned about foster parents'
9 rather rigid outlooks about certain issues and how this
10 bodes should children present problems at a later stage.
11 Otherwise I am happy with placement."

12 The next document to look at is a transfer summary
13 on page 2, if we can turn to page 2. This document that
14 we'll be taken to parts of is a transfer summary from
15 the social worker J Dunsmuir when he transferred the
16 case to D Reid, I think that's the David Reid referred
17 to in 'Brian''s statement. We know from elsewhere in
18 this extract that that transfer took place on
19 7 September 1984.

20 If we could move to the bottom half of this page and
21 in this transfer summary which someone else previously
22 has highlighted and thought to be of relevance when
23 reviewing the records, it's the paragraph that's
24 highlighted which says:

25 "Following the children's return to Carolina House,

1 'Brian' and his sister continued with Mr and Mrs JBM/JBN
2 and have made excellent progress with them. They
3 present as quite secure in the care of their foster
4 family but I have continued to have some doubts about
5 the quality of the foster parents. They have
6 particularly strong views about families such as 'Brian'
7 and his sister come from, and are not sympathetic either
8 to these families with their problems or to social work
9 approaches to them. Mr and Mrs JBM/JBN are generally
10 not sympathetic towards social work intervention in the
11 children's lives but tolerate this as part of the price
12 to pay for fostering. Mr and Mrs JBM/JBN were upset by
13 the loss of the two older children and there was clearly
14 a financial implication in this for them. They have
15 requested on many occasions to be considered for the
16 placement of other children but I would feel
17 particularly strongly that this would not be
18 appropriate. Mr and Mrs JBM/JBN I do not think can see
19 how their own difficulties in dealing with problem
20 children and with difficult disrupted families would be
21 enlarged upon if they took other foster children into
22 their home as well. The isolation of the farmhouse does
23 not of itself lend itself to fostering, particularly
24 older children. Whatever my own misgivings about the
25 foster parents, they have managed extremely well with

1 'Brian' and his younger sister and I am generally very
2 happy with the children's progress. Interesting
3 a recent school report suggests that both children have
4 started to play up and this needs to be enquired into."

5 If we turn now to page 4, this is further on in this
6 transfer summary and moving further down the page and
7 starting at the second big paragraph on that page. It
8 starts:

9 "Access for ..."

10 This is coming back again to the sibling contact:

11 "Access for 'Brian' and his sister to Dundee will
12 become increasingly problematic."

13 There are issues around their birth mother. It
14 says:

15 "As an alternative, access visits have taken places
16 in Carolina House with the focus being on the children's
17 contact with their elder siblings."

18 Further down this paragraph it says:

19 "Mr and Mrs JBM/JBN attitude to contact is in one
20 sense positive but in another sense negative. They feel
21 very strongly that the children should continue to have
22 access to their mother, but unfortunately this is
23 because they feel that if the children see how awful
24 their mother is, this will reassure them in their
25 position."

1 It goes on to describe how the older brother now
2 remains at Carolina House but the older sister is
3 working so arrangements for access will become more
4 difficult.

5 "'Brian' and his sister are usually put on a bus
6 first thing in the morning and arrive at Dundee at the
7 back of 10. I have taken them home to [REDACTED] in
8 the evening following their visit. Carolina House have
9 been extremely helpful in allowing access to take place
10 at the children's home and providing meals. The
11 children's return home to [REDACTED] has given me
12 a good opportunity to see how the children are feeling
13 about their life in general, and access in particular,
14 which has just taken place. These contacts have been
15 valuable in sustaining a working relationship with the
16 children in the face of Mr and Mrs JBM/JBN, who do not
17 really approve of this."

18 Moving to another summary of a case review meeting
19 and that's on page 12 of this document. It's a summary
20 of a review meeting that was held on 23 September 1985,
21 so we're moving forward another year since this
22 handover. I'm looking at the last two paragraphs at the
23 foot of this. What it says is that:

24 "The older children were once placed themselves with
25 the younger children with the JBM/JBN in [REDACTED]

1 However, after difficult behaviour and disagreements,
2 both the older children left the placement and felt and
3 continue to feel acrimonious towards the JBM/JBN. This
4 feeling is mutual and Mr and Mrs JBM/JBN refuse to allow
5 the older children to come to the house.

6 "It is felt important for 'Brian' and his younger
7 sister to continue to have links with other members of
8 their family, ie their older siblings. It is important
9 for 'Brian' and his sister's sense of identity. These
10 access visits have proved problematic in the past not
11 only because they stir up old feelings concerning past
12 unresolved conflicts between Mr and Mrs JBM/JBN and the
13 older children, but also because of the feeling that the
14 older children have suggested that the younger children
15 should leave the JBM/JBN. They feel it is
16 an unsatisfactory placement."

17 Moving over to page 13, which is a continuation of
18 this page and there is some discussion and reference to
19 concerns that the older siblings' attitude might disrupt
20 or undermine the placement for the younger children and
21 the second paragraph there says:

22 "The last review was held on 18 March 1985 at
23 [REDACTED] At this review it was suggested that
24 parental rights could be considered with respect to
25 'Brian' and his younger sister. It was felt that there

1 was a need to safeguard their long-term welfare now that
2 they do not have parental figures. It was also
3 recognised at the review that the present fostering
4 placement was currently meeting the needs of 'Brian' and
5 his younger sister. However, it was accepted that it
6 was not an ideal placement given the strong feeling of
7 hostility between Mr and Mrs JBM/JBN and the younger
8 children's siblings."

9 Moving to page 14, which is not a direct
10 continuation of this document but appears to be related
11 to it in the records, I'm moving to the second large
12 paragraph, which is a paragraph that starts "It was
13 felt", but moving to in that paragraph where the
14 sentence starts:

15 "In the long term it was felt that contact should be
16 maintained [that's between siblings] and attempts will
17 be made to reduce the risk of unsettling 'Brian' and his
18 sister. Mr and Mrs JBM/JBN still hold some antipathy
19 towards the older siblings (increasingly so following
20 this latest situation)."

21 And that's the situation where the older siblings
22 say the younger ones shouldn't be there.

23 "They [the JBM/JBN are unwilling to meet with the
24 older siblings to resolve the conflict constructively.
25 They are not fully in agreement with the view that

1 'Brian' and his younger sister should continue to have
2 contact with their brother and sister. Mr JBM in
3 particular seems to hold a black and white view feeling
4 that 'Brian' and his younger sister have settled in
5 a different area from Dundee and now have very little in
6 common with their brother and sister and should not
7 return to the Dundee area in future."

8 And it goes on to say that:

9 "Although Mr and Mrs JBM/JBN do not wish for the
10 younger children to return to Dundee, they feel that
11 they will be preparing them for independence from their
12 present placement. They both indicated their continued
13 commitment towards the younger children but this
14 commitment does not go beyond a fostering arrangement.

15 "The younger children never mention access visits
16 but they like a day out. In the future, it was agreed
17 that the next visit should be arranged within three
18 months, ie pre-Christmas, and that the level of access
19 should be made in accordance with the younger children's
20 wishes, ie if they are requesting a visit this will be
21 discussed with the social worker and Mr and Mrs JBM/JBN.
22 However, in the future, they will not be encouraged to
23 develop increasing contact with the older siblings."

24 So I think what we see here is that the foster
25 parents' attitude and refusal to meet with the older

1 siblings to try and resolve the problem is impacting
2 upon decisions about the younger siblings maintaining
3 a relationship with their older brother and sister and
4 it's being left for the younger siblings to ask for
5 contact and one must reflect on how easy that would have
6 been to do in the context of a foster placement where
7 they're well aware of the disapproval of that
8 relationship.

9 LADY SMITH: Yes.

10 MS RATTRAY: And now, my Lady, moving to page 15. This is
11 a summary of a review meeting that was held on 12 May
12 1988 and the only point I wish to take from this further
13 down the page is the third paragraph of that review and
14 it's really simply that this is the point where it says:

15 "'Brian' has been accepted for junior service in the
16 army and will be going to Newcastle on 14 June 1988."

17 So that's really just to register this is the point
18 at which he's potentially moving away from the placement
19 to join the army.

20 LADY SMITH: So he's about 16 years old then nearly and I
21 think he was about to be 17 years or so when he was in
22 the army at first.

23 MS RATTRAY: Yes. So this is the point he's leaving and in
24 his statement he said he joined the army to get away
25 from the foster placement, essentially.

1 Against that background, if we turn to page 20, this
2 is a letter from Tayside Regional Council social work
3 department to Mr and Mrs JBM/JBN and it's dated 1 April
4 1988, so this is in advance of 'Brian' moving to the
5 army and what this tells us essentially is it's
6 a reference to an application by Mr and Mrs JBM/JBN to
7 foster more children. This is what's been referred to
8 throughout and I think 'Brian' refers to in his
9 statement that they must have known in advance he was
10 leaving because they were making plans to bring in more
11 foster children and from his perspective, his view, that
12 was basically to work on the farm. We see here, and
13 moving also to page 19 of this record --

14 LADY SMITH: Can you just give me the date again?

15 MS RATTRAY: Sorry, that's 1 April 1988.

16 LADY SMITH: Thank you.

17 MS RATTRAY: So it's just before the [REDACTED] 1988 where in
18 advance they know that 'Brian' is leaving.

19 LADY SMITH: Mm-hmm.

20 MS RATTRAY: If we turn to page 19, this is another letter
21 from the principal family placement officer to Mr and
22 Mrs JBM/JBN and it's dated 30 August 1988 and it's again
23 simply a reference to the fact there's a process that's
24 going to be undertaken for additional foster children to
25 be placed with them.

1 LADY SMITH: Thank you.

2 MS RATTRAY: That's in relation to the placement record
3 itself and I'm now going to move on to the issue of the
4 complaint that 'Brian' says in his statement that he
5 made after he left the foster placement.

6 LADY SMITH: Thank you.

7 MS RATTRAY: Turning now to page 39 of these extracts. What
8 this bears to be is a record of a police interview
9 between the police and 'Brian' and his younger sister on
10 2 May and that's 1993. What we see first of all is that
11 it appears that 'Brian' and his younger sister arrive
12 with a solicitor who at first was assumed to be their
13 solicitor but then was discovered is actually
14 Mr JBM' solicitor, a Mr Davidson. It says:
15 "Mr Davidson led me to believe that he was 'Brian'
16 and his younger sister's solicitor. However it later
17 transpired that Mr JBM had consulted Mr Davidson
18 regarding this matter. Mr Davidson was advised that it
19 was not appropriate for him to be present while we
20 interviewed 'Brian' and his younger sister and he agreed
21 to leave."

22 What follows is first of all a reference to the
23 interview with 'Brian', a bit of the background, the
24 fact that he was discharged from the army -- was being
25 discharged on medical grounds because of the serious

1 injuries and the accident he tells us, and then at that
2 second paragraph of "Interview with 'Brian'" it says:
3 "'Brian' said that in general he enjoyed staying
4 with the JBM/JBN while he was young although at times he
5 felt so unhappy he wanted to run away. What made him
6 unhappy was the way Mr JBM spoke to him, shouting so
7 loud that he remembers feeling scared of him.
8 Mr JBM used to hit him across the ears regularly if
9 he misbehaved or did not do the jobs properly.
10 According to 'Brian', Mr JBM never used a stick on
11 him and never locked him in the room. However at times
12 he was sent to bed with no food. He remembers having to
13 do a great deal of work when he was young, cleaning
14 kennels, digging trenches, building work, cementing,
15 et cetera. He received no pocket money and does not
16 remember ever being praised or rewarded for doing well.
17 "When he reached his teens he joined the army
18 cadets. This meant travelling once a week to
19 [REDACTED] Mr JBM transported him for the first
20 two months then stopped. 'Brian' had to go to the
21 'Berries' to start earning money and buy a bike so he
22 could cycle to the cadets (10 miles return journey).
23 'Brian' said he saw [and this is a reference to the two
24 additional foster boys referred to in the statement]
25 being hit on the head by Mr JBM He also saw

1 Mr JBM banging the stick on the floor and furniture
2 as a warning to the boys but he never witnessed
3 Mr JBM hitting any of the children with the stick.

4 "He continued that the boys were made to do
5 an incredible amount of work around the house and in the
6 grounds. He felt that the above was unacceptable and
7 that the boys were treated very harshly."

8 If we turn to page 38, this is the second page of
9 this document. This is a reference to the interview
10 with 'Brian''s younger sister. If we start from the
11 second paragraph there it says:

12 "After her separation from [and that was her
13 partner], she came to Montrose to visit a friend where
14 by chance she bumped into Mrs JBN in the street.
15 Mrs JBN invited her home for a coffee and on hearing
16 of her situation invited her to move back in with the
17 JBM/JBN. She did so two months later. She is now
18 awaiting the allocation of a house for herself and her
19 young daughter.

20 "The younger sister has mixed memories of her
21 childhood while in the care of the JBM/JBN. She
22 remembers feeling happy in school and at times contented
23 at home as well although she remembers on occasions
24 wanting to run away. When young she was told by
25 Mrs JBN that her mother did not love her because she

1 was sent to a home. When her mother died, the JBM/JBN
2 told her that it was for the best because of the way she
3 was living. She remembers being hit repeatedly on the
4 side of the face by Mr JBM but never with the stick.
5 She has seen [one of the other additional foster boys]
6 being hit by Mr JBM on the side of the face with his
7 hands but she has not seen the boys being hit with the
8 stick."

9 That conflicts. I think it was 'Brian''s
10 understanding that she had seen that. Brian hadn't seen
11 it but he thought his sister had, but perhaps not.

12 "She claims that while in the care of the JBM/JBN
13 she was made to work hard in the house and outside, ie
14 cleaning kennels, digging, et cetera. She was also sent
15 to bed with no food if she did not behave or did not
16 work well. She continued that the boys were locked in
17 their room in the evening but the doors were unlocked
18 before the JBM/JBN went to bed.

19 "She stressed that Mr JBM had never hit or
20 smacked her own daughter and that he is very fond of
21 her. However she confirmed that her own young daughter
22 has been in the room on various occasions when
23 Mr JBM has been shouting and hitting the boys."

24 I think that's a reference to the additional foster
25 boys.

1 "On those occasions the younger sister has taken her
2 own daughter out of the room."

3 Now, my Lady, to page 40 of this extract. What this
4 bears to be is a memo from Harriet Dempster, Head of
5 Children's Services Dundee City Council to Karen Bowie
6 and it's dated 1 May 1998 and it's a reference to
7 'Brian' and his younger sister:

8 "As you know these two young adults were previously
9 in the care of Tayside Region. They have requested
10 access to their files to try and find answers to
11 questions.

12 "As you also know Donal Giltinan has recently
13 undertaken an investigation into a complaint regarding
14 'Brian' and his younger sister's care while placed with
15 foster carers.

16 "One of Donal's conclusion it is that 'Brian' and
17 his younger sister should be given supported access to
18 their files and the opportunity to go through them with
19 a social worker. This should happen as soon as
20 possible ..."

21 And that's a request for this work to be undertaken.

22 Now moving to page 36, what this bears to be is
23 a letter from Harriet Dempster, who is now Director of
24 Social Work at Highland Council, and it's to Alan Baird,
25 the Director of Social Work at Dundee City Council dated

1 30 September 2008. It says:
2 "You may recall I spoke to you briefly about
3 'Brian'.
4 "'Brian' was a child in care in the 1970s and
5 I worked with him and his three siblings until I left to
6 work in Arbroath in 1979."
7 My Lady, we do have a chronology that
8 Harriet Dempster was his social worker for the period
9 before he went into foster care.
10 LADY SMITH: Thank you.
11 MS RATTRAY: So she didn't have any involvement in the
12 foster care.
13 LADY SMITH: But she did in the run-up to it?
14 MS RATTRAY: Yes.
15 "I had contact with him in 1998/1999 as he and his
16 sister made a complaint which was investigated by
17 Donal Giltinan. Donal produced a full report which was
18 shared with both 'Brian' and his sister, and as I recall
19 they received copies.
20 'Brian' left his with his solicitor, who has since
21 died, and the successor company would appear to have
22 lost the document.
23 "'Brian' is now seeking a further copy of the
24 report. I have explained to him that as I am no longer
25 in Dundee I do not have access to the report.

1 "He has asked that I write on his behalf seeking
2 a further copy of the report.

3 "I trust you will be able to help this young man, as
4 I appreciate how important the report is to him as
5 an account of his and his siblings' period in the care
6 of the Tayside Region."

7 I'm now turning to the final document that I'll be
8 looking at today and that's at page 37. What this is
9 bears to be the reply and it's a letter from Alan Baird,
10 Director of Social Work Dundee City Council to
11 Harriet Dempster, Director of Social Work at Highland,
12 dated 27 October 2008 and essentially they have made
13 a full search and they cannot find a copy of the report,
14 it's not present in the files.

15 "From the case files it is evident that both 'Brian'
16 and his sister came into the office to go through their
17 files in 1998 but no reference to the report was made in
18 the case recordings. I understand that the younger
19 sister has also requested the report earlier in the year
20 and she has been advised via Dundee North Law Centre by
21 our legal service that the report is not on file.

22 "We have also checked electronic records but there
23 was no record of the report on file."

24 So regrettably we don't have a copy of that report
25 but we do know that what 'Brian' says is correct, that

1 there was such a report.

2 LADY SMITH: Yes.

3 MS RATTRAY: My Lady, that concludes considering 'Brian''s

4 records and it concludes the evidence for today.

5 LADY SMITH: Thank you very much and thank you for the

6 analysis and explanations you've added to each report

7 we've looked at. That's very helpful.

8 So tomorrow?

9 MS RATTRAY: Tomorrow we resume at 10 o'clock and in the

10 morning we have two oral witnesses and we won't have any

11 read-ins, we have completed all our read-ins for this

12 section.

13 LADY SMITH: Well done. Thank you very much.

14 Until tomorrow morning, I'll rise.

15 (4.09 pm)

16 (The Inquiry adjourned until 10.00 am

17 on Friday, 15 July 2022)

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1		I N D E X	
2			
3	'George' (sworn)	2	
4	Questions from Ms Innes	3	
5	'Betty' (sworn)	40	
6	Questions from Ms Innes	41	
7	'Mary' (read)	90	
8	'Brian' (read)	116	
9			
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11			
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