

**Scottish Child Abuse Inquiry**

Witness Statement of

GCB

Support person present: Yes

1. My name is GCB. That was the name that I was known as in care. My confirmation name is GCB. I was also known by the nickname GCB whilst I was in care. My date of birth is 1951. My contact details are known to the Inquiry.

**Life before going into care**

2. My father's name was . My father's ancestors were Italian immigrants. My mother was called . She was Spanish. I am the oldest of nine siblings. I have four brothers and four sisters. In age order it goes myself, GDN, , , and . My parents just had one kid after another after I was born.
3. I was born in a military hospital in Gibraltar. My dad was in the Royal Artillery at that time. I was brought across to Scotland with my mother when I was about nine months old. My father was de-mobbed in Troon before we moved to The Gorbals in Glasgow. We lived right in the centre. We stayed in that area until I was about four years old. That's when we moved to Maryhill. The reason we moved was because my father's family were very hostile towards my mother. My father wanted to get my mother away from my paternal grandfather and my paternal auntie.
4. After being released from the armed forces my father worked as a landscape gardener. He was a heavy drinker, a real whisky man. He was alright when he was

sober but when he was drunk he was completely different. He would come in drunk at night time and batter my mother and me. I got the brunt of it all because I was the oldest son. That went on throughout all my young life. In amongst all of that going on my mother was almost permanently pregnant.

5. My father spoke Italian and my mother spoke Spanish in the house. The only people who my mother could speak to was my father and myself. I spoke Spanish up until the age of five or six years old. My father didn't like me speaking Spanish because he wanted me to speak solely English. He wanted me to speak English so that I wouldn't have problems at school. He kicked speaking Spanish out of me. He would call me a "Spanish bastard" or a "Gibraltarian bastard" when he was drunk. It all didn't make any sense because my English was actually very good. In fact I was the one who taught my mother to speak English.
  
6. The first school I went to was called St Mary's Primary School. That was in the Maryhill area. I enjoyed school until I was about eight or nine years of age. It was then that I got a rat for a teacher called Mr [REDACTED]. He was an army man who I think knew my dad. He would strap me with the belt all of the time. Looking back I don't know whether I got more torture at school or at home. I think it was the point where I got the bad teacher when everything changed. My whole educational prospects went. Before I had that teacher I was always near the top of the class in things like Maths and English. I think the thing that sticks in my mind was that I suddenly started getting failed in History. Something like that had never happened to me before.
  
7. My father couldn't afford to feed us all so I found myself having to be a sort of breadwinner in the household. I had to become that sort of person. I had to do various things in order to help the family survive. That really became my life. I was out and about trying to earn a few bob for my mother and my siblings. This just kind of snowballed. I got into a bit of trouble here and there with the police. It was never for violence it was just for things I did for survival.

8. I eventually ended up in a children's court. I remember that my mother and father were there with me and I had legal representation. I was then sent to Larchgrove for twenty eight days. I went there straight from the court. I think it was the police who took me.

#### **Larchgrove Remand Home, Glasgow**

9. I think I was between seven and nine years old when I first went to Larchgrove. I was in Larchgrove a number of times. Each time it was for periods of 28 days. I was eight or nine the first time I went there. I think I was there two or three times. Each time was for a minor offence.
10. Larchgrove was all boys. I think the age range of the boys was between eight and about fifteen or sixteen. I'd say there were maybe about 200 boys in there at any one time. There were a lot of orphans who were there through no fault of their own. However, Larchgrove was a basically a place where they put all of the juvenile delinquents together in one place. It was a place where they got them out of the way. It was a stopping off place before they sent boys off to other places like Longriggend. You were just put in there and that was it. That was your sentence and punishment.
11. It was strange because one minute boys would be there and all of a sudden they wouldn't. You would be looking around asking where they had gone. Looking back on it all there was no reason why they should be sending a kid like me to a place like that.

#### *Layout of Larchgrove*

12. I remember that Larchgrove had a square that was surrounded by big walls. On the other side of the walls was a main road. I think the road was called Edinburgh Road. On the other side of the road was St John's Approved School.

*Staff*

13. I don't remember any of the names of the staff who were at Larchgrove any of the times that I was there. I wouldn't be able to provide any descriptions of them.

**Routine at Larchgrove***First day*

14. The first thing they did to you when you went in there was that they de-loused you. They put this yellow stuff in your hair. You were then taken into the gym and told that you only spoke when you were spoken to. I don't remember anything more than that.

*Daily routine*

15. Larchgrove was much the same each and every time I was there. The routine and the set up didn't change. You got up in the morning about 7:00 am. We then got showered and dressed. We then went for breakfast. I think we then had an assembly. After that we had classes in the morning followed by lunch. In the afternoon we had more classes. We had exercise and break times in the yard during the day in-between all of that. We had our tea in the evening. I think there were activities or classes after tea. I think you had to go to bed at about 8:00 pm or something like that.
16. The weekend was much the same routine as during the week. I can't remember whether we had classes but I think it was just the same. The only real difference was that we went to mass at St John's on a Sunday.

*Sleeping arrangements*

17. We slept in dormitories. It wasn't like cells or anything like that. There were maybe about ten or twelve boys in each dormitory. I don't recall them splitting up the dorms by age groups of boys. It was all boys of all ages in the dorms I was in. There were boys up to the age of fifteen or sixteen in the same dorm as me.

*Washing / bathing*

18. I can't remember much about the washing routine but I do remember there were showers and everyone was quite clean.

*Mealtimes / food*

19. I remember always being hungry but the food was ok. I can't really remember what we had. I don't remember what happened if boys didn't eat their food.

*Chores*

20. We had to do cleaning whilst there. I remember using bumpers to polish and clean the floors. I remember one occasion where a staff member made me wash a car. That just happened on one random occasion.

*Clothing / uniform*

21. Larchgrove provided a uniform sort of thing. We were all dressed the same. We wore short trousers, a shirt, a jacket and pumps. I can't remember what happened if you damaged your clothes or grew out of them.

*School*

22. The stretches in Larchgrove affected my schooling because it was interrupted every time I went here. The schooling in Larchgrove itself was ok. I have no great memories surrounding the education I had there.

*Leisure time*

23. I think there were activities or classes after tea. I think it was doing Art and things like that. Playtime was spent out in the yard. It was just like in prison. You would just walk around and socialise with the other boys who were there. They used to make us play a game called "Murder Ball." I quite enjoyed it. You had to be good at it. There were no rules to it at all.

*Religious instruction*

24. There was a mix of Protestant and Catholic boys in Larchgrove. I remember speaking with other boys about that. On a Sunday we went across the road to St John's for mass. The Protestants went to a different church. You did see people from the clergy in and around the grounds at Larchgrove at other times during the week.

*Trips / holidays / leave home*

25. I didn't get out on any trips or anything like that.

*Birthdays / Christmas*

26. I don't remember anything surrounding Christmas or birthdays whilst I was there.

*Visits / Inspections*

27. My mother and father used to come and visit me whilst I was in Larchgrove. I remember being visited by them maybe a couple of times during the periods I was in there. I can't remember what happened when they came to visit. I don't remember any officials visiting me from the outside. There was no one like a social worker or anyone like that who came to visit me. I think if that had happened that would have stuck in my mind. I can't remember any inspections or inspectors coming in.

*Healthcare*

28. I don't remember seeing a doctor or a dentist on any of the occasions I was there. I don't remember having any medical treatment. I seem to remember you were checked over when you first went in but that was it.

*Running away*

29. I thought about running away when I was there but I never tried to do that. Every kid there thought about that. Anybody who is locked away wants out. I remember seeing kids who were traumatised trying to climb the walls or break windows because they were trying to escape. People were always trying to escape. There were lots of boys scheming to get out. I remember an incident during one of the classes at Larchgrove. The classroom was on the first floor. I remember one of the kids in the class getting up and screaming before throwing himself out of the window. He was trying to escape. I don't know what happened to the boys who were caught trying to run away. They probably put them into a segregation area or something like that.

*Bed-wetting*

30. Bed-wetting was never a problem for me. It was for other children though. That was a problem in all the institutions I was in. I think they gave the kids plastic sheets if they wet the bed. I think the kids tried to cover it all up. That's all I remember.

**Abuse at Larchgrove***From staff*

31. The discipline in Larchgrove was strict. You were locked up and ruled by a regime. It was a place of dread and fear. I don't remember them using the belt to discipline you there. I don't remember being punished whilst I was there. I think I was hardened up and used to things by the time I was there so I knew the score as to how to avoid those sort of things.
32. I never saw any sexual abuse there. There was physical and emotional abuse though. I remember seeing kids get hammered by the staff. I saw kids being dragged about by their hair and things like that. I remember it being like "survival of the fittest" when I was in there. There were a lot of kids in there who were traumatised by the experience. I remember seeing lots of kids crying in the yard saying that they wanted to go home.
33. By the time I started going to Larchgrove I had already got used to being traumatised because of the experiences I was having in home. I was used to not speaking unless I was spoken to and being battered by adults. I was used to blanking things out when things happened to me. I think I just felt I was there for twenty eight days and the staff could do what they like with me as long as they didn't interfere with me.

*Bullying between the boys*

34. I was never a bully but bullying did go on. I remember the other boys calling the boys who wet the bed names and things like that. There was fighting that went on between the boys.
35. I was never into anything like gangs or anything like that but there were various gangs in Glasgow back then. Boys would say "I am from the Southside" or from here or there. That was their identity. If a boy said they were from a particular gang you knew exactly what part of Glasgow they were from. I think that people had their



own separate little groups. I can't remember whether boys were picking on each other because they were or weren't part of a particular gang. There were a few idiots who picked on other boys but it wasn't because of gangs.

#### **Reporting of abuse whilst at Larchgrove**

36. I didn't report any of the things that happened whilst I was at Larchgrove. Looking back there was no point in me reporting things whilst I was there. Nobody would have believed me if I had.

#### **Leaving Larchgrove and the lead up to ending in St Mary's**

37. The times I left Larchgrove I just went back home and back to school in Maryhill. I remember being out and it being the lead up to my eleven plus. It was the same again with Mr [REDACTED] treating me like a no gooder. I remember just wanting to get out of his sight. This guy used to give you six of the best with the leather tawse for anything. He was an expert at it. It wasn't nice.
38. I remember that when I was about twelve, my brother, [REDACTED] GDN, was involved in an incident which ended with me being in court. In those days people used to chop up their own firewood and make their own fires. I was the one in the house who was responsible for that. My brother somehow got hold of the hatchet that belonged to the house. When I saw him playing with it outside I took it off him. I was then caught with the hatchet by a policeman who we called 'Wattie.' He was a policeman who just wouldn't leave me alone. I'd come across him a number of times as he had a dislike for me. Wattie got hold of me, took the hatchet off me and took me to a police box. He then charged me with being in possession of an offensive weapon.
39. It all ended up with me having to make a court appearance in Glasgow Sheriff Court on Groom Street. My father was with me. I was sentenced to three years in St Mary's at the end of that hearing by the judge. I remember that just before I was

taken away from the court my mother said to me that she thought it was for the best because I would be getting away from my father. She thought that it would be safer for me to be going to St Mary's than to be staying at home. I think I went straight to St Mary's after the court appearance. I don't remember being in Larchgrove or anywhere like that directly before I went there.

#### **Kenmure St Mary's Boys' School, Bishopbriggs**

40. I think I was about twelve when I went to St Mary's. The place was run by the De La Salle Order. It was all boys. I think the age range of the boys was between twelve and fifteen or sixteen. I think there were about 200 boys there or something like that.

#### *Layout of St Mary's*

41. St Mary's was like a big mansion. There was a big front door with a big set of stairs leading up to everywhere. It had everything in it. There were showers at the back. There was a dining hall. There was a chapel. There was an assembly hall where we used to play table tennis. In the front court there was a tailors, a woodwork shop, a cobblers and a bakery. At the back was a football pitch.

#### *Staff*

42. It is difficult for me to remember the names and details of the staff who worked in St Mary's whilst I was there. My brother, <sup>GDN</sup> [REDACTED] went to St Joseph's in Tranent. He has mentioned some of the names of the Brothers who were at St Joseph's. I don't know whether I may have mixed up some of the names of the Brothers he has told me with the names of the Brothers at St Mary's. It's difficult because so many of the Brothers seemed to have such similar names. It could be that some of the Brothers that <sup>GDN</sup> [REDACTED] talks about are the same ones that were at St Mary's and they have just moved between the two places.

43. I don't remember the headmaster's name. I hardly ever met the headmaster. The only times I met him was when I was given the belt and on one occasion when my father met with him. I think Brother Thomas, Brother Aloysius and Brother Fintan may have been three Brothers who worked at St Mary's. I could have heard those names though from my brother and I've given them to Brothers who were at St Mary's whilst I was there.
44. There were young Irish women who came in to do the cooking, washing and cleaning. There were quite a few who did that. I don't remember any of their names. They had their own quarters in the building. I remember that we all had to be respectful to the young Irish women who came in to do the cooking, washing and cleaning. There was something strange about the Brothers though when they were around them. They would show off when the women were around. They would flatter them and things like that. To my eyes that didn't seem right.

### **Routine at St Mary's**

#### *First day*

45. I arrived at St Mary's in the evening. I remember that after I arrived I was given some clothes to wear. I was then given my tea. After tea I was sent to the woodwork shop. That evening in the woodwork shop was my first encounter with the brutality of the place.

#### *Daily routine*

46. In the mornings you got up, made your bed then went for a shower downstairs. After that you went back up to your dorm and got dressed according to what you were going to do that day. It was your normal clothes if you weren't at work or your working clothes if you were. After you got dressed you had breakfast before going to work during the morning. I can't recall whether there may have been something like

an assembly before we went to work. You got a break at about 11:00 am after you had finished your morning's work. After break we had lunch.

47. After lunch there was an assembly held outside in the courtyard. I remember that we had to stand in one of four units during those assemblies. I remember that when I was older I ended up being one of the head boys of one of the units. They probably held those assemblies to check everyone was there and to see if anyone had run away.
48. After assembly you went back to work in the afternoon. You finished work at about 4:00 pm or so. After work there was another assembly held outside in the courtyard like you did after lunch. After that you got a bit of recreational time. You would either play football in the yard or play table tennis in the assembly hall. After that we had our tea in the dining hall. In the evening it was either recreational time or you could go to classes like woodwork and things like that. I think we had to go to bed at 8:00 pm. Everybody went to bed at the same time. It didn't get later the older you got
49. The weekends were different because we got to do recreation during the days instead of work. Sunday mornings we had mass in the morning and benediction in the afternoon.

*Sleeping arrangements*

50. I think there were two or three large dormitories and one or two smaller dormitories. They were all upstairs in the main building. I think the smaller dormitories were for the older boys. I think there were only two or three beds in those dormitories and you only got to go there if you were privileged. There were maybe between thirty and forty boys in my dorm. They were boys of all different ages. The dorms weren't split up by age groups. The Brothers supervised the dorms during night time. I think there was a night-watchman who helped out with that. He could have also been a Brother.

*Washing / bathing*

51. There was a big shower room with showers and sinks on the ground floor. All the showering times had to be organised by the Brothers. You couldn't just go when you wanted. It was all very open and there was no privacy. There were boys of all different ages showering together. There were some who hadn't started puberty and others who had. I don't think that caused a problem for me because I had been used to all of that from the time I was at Larchgrove.

*Mealtimes / food*

52. Mealtimes were very regimented. The food was bland. I remember big bowls of spuds being placed in the middle of the table at mealtimes. You weren't allowed to speak to anyone during mealtimes. If you spoke to someone when you shouldn't do you would get dragged out of the dinner hall by one of the Brothers and punished.
53. Those boys who refused to eat their food wouldn't get anything else instead. They ended up not getting fed. I sometimes saw boys being slapped by the Brothers when they didn't eat their food. I remember boys crying when that happened.

*Chores*

54. There were chores you had to do in St Mary's. I think there was a period in the morning when you had to do cleaning and things like that. The Brothers used us like a workforce. I don't remember doing that near any of the Irish woman who came in to help. We were never near them.

*Clothing / uniform*

55. St Mary's provided your clothes. We were given pumps, shoes, boots, short trousers, jackets and things like that. There were sports clothes as well. The clothes were changed along with the sheets once a week. There were no names or

numbers in the clothes. I don't know how they worked out which clothes were yours when they were returned. Everything was clean though.

*Possessions*

56. The only things we had were our clothes. We had nothing in terms of personal possessions. You didn't have photos of your family or anything like that. The only thing you had really was the skin that you were born in.

*School*

57. There weren't any classrooms in St Mary's. I don't recall there being any type of formal education whilst I was there. I just can't remember anything like that. I don't remember anyone checking my IQ or anything like that. Instead of formal education we learnt trades. I did things like working in the tailors, the cobblers, the woodwork shop and the bakery. I learnt skills but I wanted more of a formal education. In the end the skills I learnt prove to be of no practical use. They were of no value to me. I think they just made the boys do these trades to keep us occupied.

*Leisure time*

58. During recreation you could either play table tennis or football. None of that was formally organised by St Mary's though. They didn't put on competitions or anything like that. We didn't have access to a television but they used to put on films on Saturdays. It was films about cowboys and things like that. I've no recollection of there being toys, magazines or books.

*Religious instruction*

59. You followed suit when it came to religion in St Mary's. They told you what to do and you did it. We went to mass and benediction on Sundays. I remember that we had to say prayers by our bed in the mornings or at night time before going to bed. We had to say grace before meals.

60. The only book we had access to was the bible. You were encouraged to read it by the Brothers. They were very bible orientated. I remember Brothers clouting you and telling you to go away and read passages when you were caught doing certain things. They would say you had been blaspheming if you were caught swearing and things like that.

*Trips / holidays*

61. I was in the pipe band that St Mary's had. One of the civilian members of staff was the pipe major. I played the pipes. I remember that you had to learn the chanter before you progressed to the pipes. We did that in night classes. I always wanted to play the drums but they never let me. I think that was because I wasn't very tall. We were taken out to play places as a band. Events maybe came up about once a month or something like that. There would be about ten of us who would go. I remember on one occasion going to Clydebank and playing the pipes in front of Princess Alexandra.
62. I remember that we used to go camping in the Trossachs. We would do potato picking whilst we were away. We used to do that in the summer time. We would be out until the job was done. We didn't get paid for that. All we were given in return for doing the picking were cigarettes and sweets. I've no doubt that the Brothers were paid money for our work but all we got given were fags and toffee. They made you work hard. If you didn't work hard you wouldn't be given anything.

*Leave home*

63. I very rarely got home for weekends. I think boys got to get home if they had done a good deed or something like that. I think it was allowed as a reward. I think I only got home two or three times during the time I was there. I think that may have been a reward for the potato picking. I don't remember if any of the other boys got to go home. I found not getting home often all very frustrating because I always wanted to get home. I can't remember how I got home and back when I did get leave.

*Birthdays / Christmas*

64. I didn't get to go home for any of the Christmases whilst I was there. I think they gave you a Christmas dinner but I can't remember any celebrations or anything else like that. There were no presents or cards. Birthdays weren't marked in any way. I don't remember seeing anyone having their birthdays marked. There wasn't any home leave for your birthdays.

*Visits / Review of Detention / Inspections*

65. My mother and father used to come to visit me at St Mary's. They came to visit me once every six months or so. Nobody official like social workers came to visit me. There was nobody who ever came to visit me to ask how I was getting on or explain what was happening. I was never aware of there being any inspectors or inspections of St Mary's. That was not something that I was ever aware of.

*Healthcare*

66. I never saw a matron whilst I was there. I got the flu a few times when I was there. When that happened the Brothers segregated me from the other boys. They put me in a sick bay. I saw a doctor a few times when I got the flu. He came in to see me. I don't remember seeing a dentist whilst I was at St Mary's.

*Running away*

67. St Mary's was an easy place to escape from. If you wanted to you could just walk out of the place. I never ran away from St Mary's but I remember other boys doing that. There were a few boys who couldn't handle the regime who ran away. I don't know what the Brothers did by way of punishment to the boys who ran away and returned.
68. We used to do a lot of cross country running around the perimeter of St Mary's grounds. We went through the woods and things like that. I remember one boy who



was a very good competitive runner. One day, during one of the runs, this boy just disappeared. I have no idea where he went. About six months later he came back to St Mary's. He was a completely different boy when he returned. His personality had changed. He was quiet

#### *Bed-wetting*

69. Bed-wetting wasn't a problem for me in St Mary's but it was for other boys. There was a stigma back then surrounding bed-wetting. I haven't got a clue how the Brothers dealt with the boys who wet their beds. I don't know what happened because it wasn't something that happened to me. The boys who wet the bed were called names by the other boys though. They called the boys things like "piss the bed."

#### **Discipline at St Mary's**

70. As far as I am concerned all of the Brothers who were at St Mary's when I was there were involved in the discipline there. Talking was one of the things that the Brothers saw you as doing wrong. They didn't like it when boys were being boisterous. I remember occasions where boys were punished for crying or being emotionally upset. They wanted the boys to be able to "man up." They didn't like it when they were emotional. If you didn't make your bed properly then you would be punished by one of the Brothers. You had to conform.
71. The main way the Brothers punished you was by giving you a slap. I was slapped and hit by the Brothers for the first two years that I was there. It only stopped when my father made a complaint to the headmaster about one particular incident where I was dragged out of the dining hall by a Brother.
72. Sometimes, if you misbehaved you could be taken up to the headmaster's office and given the cane. That happened to me on a few occasions. That happened throughout the first two years I was there. That might have happened as much as

once a month. There were periods when things were quiet and periods when they weren't. I think it was only the headmaster who could give out the cane. I think that you got up to six strokes of the cane when he gave it to you. It was given to you on your bottom over your trousers. I think I remember other Brothers being present when you were given the cane. I have no recollection of the headmaster marking it down in a book or in records when you were given the cane.

73. Sometimes they took privileges from you. They would stop you from playing table tennis or something like that. Other times they segregated you and made you sit in your dorm. You very rarely got to go home so it wasn't something that they could really take away from you as a punishment.
74. Some chores were given to you more as a punishment. I remember cleaning floors with a great big bumper. I had to do that numerous times. A Brother would just tell you to do it and you had to do it. They would get you to scrub the floors and the showers. I ended up an expert at using the bumper. I remember Brothers coming in and saying you had not done this or that properly and making you do it again.
75. If you didn't conform then you were dragged about and hit. If you still didn't conform then you were "disappeared." There were a lot of boys who got out of control, were unruly or just wanted to constantly get back home. Sometimes those boys disappeared. There were times that those boys never came back. Other times they would go away for some time and come back some time later. Sometimes they were away for as long as six months. I remember that the boys who came back looked traumatised. They looked like different people. I found that strange. Something happened to them but I don't know what. I don't know where they went. I never asked them. I don't remember there being any rumours amongst the boys about where they had been

**Abuse at St Mary's**

76. You see pictures of Oliver Twist and it was all like that. It was a brutal regime that they ran. When I think back it was really like prison. Most of the time I was there I felt threatened. It was as if you were living in terror.

*From staff*

77. I tried not to associate with any of the Brothers. It is difficult for me to remember the names of any of the Brothers or what any of the Brother who were involved look like. I've tried but I can't remember anything. It is as if it has all been blocked out. I think you just forget the people who torment you. If they're no good why would you remember them?
78. The brutality all started on my first day. When I went into in the woodwork shop on my first day some of the boys in there tried to start on me. I had to try and defend myself. Two Brothers separated me from fighting one of the other boys and dragged me out of the shop into the square. It was then that they set about me. They smacked, punched and kicked me. I can't remember the details of all that. I don't remember the names of the Brothers involved. I was probably hyperactive at that point. I didn't know where I was and I was confused. I can't remember what injuries I got following that assault. All that was really my introduction to St Mary's.
79. I remember that the Brothers used to walk in and out of the shower room whilst you were showering. There were Brothers supervising you at all times. I felt uncomfortable when they were there. There was nothing inappropriate in terms of sexual abuse in the showers. It wasn't something that I saw. However, there were a couple of times when I was in the shower room and boys were fighting. I remember being involved in fights and Brothers coming in and slapping me about when they caught me.
80. On one occasion I spoke to someone during a mealtime in the dinner hall. That would have been about two years into my time at St Mary's. I was dragged out of

the dining hall by a Brother. I don't remember anything about the Brother who did that. I can't remember his name or describe him. The Brother battered me all over my body with a bunch of keys in the corridor. I was then thrown outside into the back court by him. I remember that it was snowing. I remember standing there in my shorts in the freezing cold. I stood outside for hours. I only recall something like that happening to me once.

81. Brothers would come into the dorms at night and check on the boys. You were always aware that the Brothers came into the dorms and that they might be there at any time. I remember boys being dragged out of their beds at night time and being taken down the corridor. There was one time when I was dragged out of my bed by a Brother into the corridor and given a few slaps. I wasn't sexually abused or anything like that but that did happen to me.
82. I never felt comfortable in my bed during night time. I always felt as if I was being watched when I was in bed. I remember being frightened when I went to sleep. I would be frightened that I would wake up and one of the Brothers would be leaning over the top of me. It terrified me. I remember that sometimes I used to cry because I was so scared.
83. I'm sure there was a night-watchman who might also have been a Brother. I don't remember his name or what he looked like. I remember at least two occasions when he got me out of my bed at night and took me into the corridor. I remember being made to strip naked, stand and open my legs. The night-watchman then examined my backside. He never actually physically touched me. There was never an explanation given to me as to why he was doing that. I found it all weird.

*From other boys*

84. Like Larchgrove there was a bit of the gang mentality in St Mary's. I remember that when new boys came in the other boys would ask where they had come from. There were boys from all different sorts of gangs put into that place together. Boys would

stick to their own particular gangs. You got to know all the different names of the gangs and their reputations.

85. You did get your bullies in St Mary's. There was a lot more bullying went on when I was younger. There were fights and older boys sticking their head into the back of yours. There were all sorts of "square goes." That happened loads of times. I remember having to stand up for myself. I always tried to fight back. I was never a bully myself but I did get bullied. I think I was never a bully because of what I had experienced with my father.
86. When I was about twelve or thirteen I was moved into a smaller dorm. In that dorm there were older boys. It was a nightmare. I was beaten up and they made me do what they wanted them to do. I remember older boys approaching me at night time. I remember them grabbing me around the chest so hard that it made me faint. The boys would make me breath in when they did that. I remember having black eyes and bruises because of the way the older boys were acting. I know the Brothers knew what was going on. They never clamped down when there was boisterousness and noises going on in the dorm. They were selective in the noises they came into the dorm for. You might be coughing and they came in but they wouldn't when there was loud boisterousness. They knew what was going on but they turned a blind eye. It's hard for me to remember any more detail other than that happening.

#### **Reporting of abuse whilst at St Mary's**

87. I occasionally got home for weekends whilst I was at St Mary's. About two years into my time there I was allowed home for a weekend. When I got home I told my father about the incident when I was dragged out of the dining hall, battered and put outside in the freezing cold by one of the Brothers. I don't recall specifically what I told him but that was generally what I told him.

88. After I told my father what had happened he came up to St Mary's to speak with the headmaster. He came to St Mary's after I returned separately before him. I remember being taken to see the headmaster in his office alongside my father. I remember my father told the headmaster that I had told him that the Brothers were using brutality against me. He then warned the headmaster that there would be consequences if the Brothers didn't leave me alone. He said that he would come for the headmaster if he heard that I was touched again. I can't remember whether the headmaster admitted that things had been going on but he did assure my father that everything would be alright. It did seem to me that the headmaster accepted what my father had said. After my father spoke to the headmaster things seemed to calm down. Things got better for me. The Brothers all then left me alone.

#### **Leaving St Mary's and life before ending up in care again**

89. I think I was told I was due to leave about six weeks before I left. I think in those six weeks my parents came up to see me. They knew I was going to be coming home before I came home. I remember that before I left St Mary's the staff made sure that a new suit was tailored for me in the tailors. I don't remember how I ultimately actually got home but I did. I was about fifteen when I left.
90. After I left St Mary's I got a job in a bakery. I did the night shift. I was ultimately made redundant from there. After that it was very difficult for me to get a job because I was a Catholic. That was what it was like back then. I eventually got a job in a brickworks. My time was cut short at the brickworks because I ended up in Longriggend for a fortnight when I was about sixteen. I can't remember what led to me ending up there. I don't know what happened. It wasn't for violence or anything like that though.

**Longriggend Young Offenders Institution, North Lanarkshire**

91. I went to Longriggend when I was about sixteen. I was only there for about a fortnight. I think I was there so that they could do a borstal report. There is nothing in particular I want to talk about concerning Longriggend. After my two weeks there I was transferred to Glenochil.

**HMP Glenochil, Tullibody, Clackmannanshire**

92. I ended up staying in Glenochil for about eight weeks when I was about seventeen. It was a three month sentence. It was a regimented place. I remember scrubbing tiles with toothbrushes when I was found to be out of order by the staff. The staff also made us go on marches. Glenochil was tough but in my mind, by that stage, I was an adult. The one thing I can say that was a positive about Glenochil is that when I left there I was fit. It meant that I was healthy enough to look after and defend myself.
93. One thing I remember from there that didn't seem right was that they used to inspect your backside in much the same way as St Mary's. That only happened on one occasion. I was taken out of my cell by two members of staff one night time. I don't remember the names or anything about the staff members. I was made to place my hands against a wall. They then pulled down my pants and both looked up my backside. It all lasted about a minute or two minutes. I don't know why they did that. I was given no explanation as to why they were doing what they were doing. I don't know whether they were looking for contraband or something.

**Life after leaving care**

94. There was no support from social workers or anything like that when I left Glenochil. I remember that when I came out of Glenochil I went back to the family home in Maryhill. When I got to the house I discovered that there was nobody there. Nobody

from Glenochil had checked or let me know that my family was no longer living there. I ended up living with my pals for a while. I can't remember how long that was for. I got my job back in the brickworks. I ended up being there in total on and off for about two years.

95. I then remembered that my father had taken me to Coventry to visit my Auntie [REDACTED] and that there had been talk about moving down there. I left my job at the brickworks and decided to go down to Coventry to see my Auntie [REDACTED] when I was about seventeen. It was then that I discovered that I was right and that my family had all moved down there. It turned out that my brother, [REDACTED] had got into trouble with the police. He has now sadly passed away. My family wanted to get away from Maryhill and that was why they ended up moving down there.
96. I wasn't exactly welcomed when I went to the family home in Coventry. My father asked me what I was doing there. I then went off for a bit. I spent some time in Margate, Scarborough and other places. I worked in hotels as a baker. After about a year I came back to Coventry. I ended up working for Jaguar. I was involved in the factory maintenance side of things. I ended up working there until I retired.
97. I met my wife in Coventry. She was a friend of my sister. I'd known her previously but we got together in about 1969 or 1970. We got married about a year later in 1972. We have been together ever since. We've had three daughters together. We have eight grandchildren. We've had our ups and downs. I had bowel and lung cancer in 2002. It was difficult financially but we survived that. I had my chemotherapy and got my all clear.

### **Impact**

98. I did learn skills whilst I was at St Mary's. However, looking back those weren't the things I wanted to learn about. I knew I was clever and that I wanted more of a formal education. I remember that when I was younger I wanted to go to university



to become an architect. My educational prospects were put an end to by the time I was in Larchgrove. It was further ruined by St Mary's.

99. I think that if I hadn't had a brutal father and not gone to Larchgrove and St Mary's things would have worked out differently. I think those places stopped me developing. I remember that in later life I wanted to join either the merchant navy or the RAF. A combination of my father stopping me and my record resulted in me not being able to do those things.
100. I think there has been a stigma attached to employing me because I have been in an approved school and have a record. There are times when I have just hit brick walls because of my background. There have been occasions when I have applied for jobs and I haven't been able to get them because of my record. I only managed to ultimately get my job at Jaguar because I was lucky. I initially had been taken on a casual basis before they decided to take me on permanently.
101. Sometimes I get nightmares and flashbacks about the Brothers. It doesn't happen very often. Sometimes when I am lying in bed at night time I think back on things. Sometimes I see the Brothers coming towards me in my dreams in their black cloaks.
102. I sometimes suffer from anxiety. There have been times when it has been difficult for me to go outside. I have ended up locking myself in. I have friends but sometimes I find it difficult to be in the company of other people. I find I have to take myself away and be by myself. I like to go and find space for myself.
103. When I was a boy going to church was part of my life. My experiences involving the Brothers in St Mary's has affected my faith. My experiences there took part of my belief away from me. It was as if the Brothers cut a piece out of me. The Catholic Church was never the same for me after leaving St Mary's. I have a belief in God but I don't practise Catholicism any more. I've been left with the belief that anyone involved with the Catholic Church, whether they are priests or Brothers or anything else, have things to hide.

**Treatment and support**

104. I've never been part of a survivors group or anything like that. I have had counselling in the past but it has been to do with my distress surrounding recovering from my cancer. When I had that counselling I didn't talk about my time in care. I am currently working with my doctor to get some counselling. I have set up an appointment to go and see someone.

**Reporting of abuse after leaving care**

105. Speaking to the Inquiry is really the first time I have ever spoken to anybody about my time in care. I haven't reported the things that happened to the police or anyone else after leaving care.

**Records**

106. I have never tried to get hold of my records from my time in care. I would like to see them if they are available.

**Lessons to be Learned**

107. I don't understand why they thought they should lock children up. The places I was in had people from all over the place locked up together. Some were orphans and some weren't. Looking back at my time in St Mary's there were so many boys from so many different gangs that the place fermented boys into getting involved in harder crime when they left.
108. I was disciplined with other boys and given corporal punishment. I was locked up and disciplined by Brothers who just didn't have the right mentality. It all felt different to being in a normal school. You had to really conform and do what the people in charge said. If you didn't conform you were chastised and slapped around. It wasn't the answer.

109. There was no aftercare or anything like that with any of the places I was in. There was no preparation for me. There was nobody after I left care who I could report what was happening to. When I left Glenochil there was nobody following up. If I hadn't had friends to stay with I could have been homeless. Nowadays a sixteen or seventeen year old would be classed as a minor.

**Hopes for the Inquiry**

110. I look at it from the perspective of someone taking my own children away. That would have been my worst nightmare if that happened. If the things that happened to me had still carried on, they wouldn't have been covered up. I would have hoped that I would have been made aware of what was happening so that something could be done.

111. Looking forward, children need to be educated about the way things were in the past. They have to be made aware that things can get better. People on the outside have to be able to look in and uncover the things that are happening. That was really why I got in touch with the Inquiry. I wanted the things that happened to me, and the people who were involved, to be brought into the open. I don't want them to hide any more. I don't want to hide things any more. Why should I continue telling lies about my time in care to protect myself?

112. I am sure that there are a hell of a lot of people who went through worse experiences than what I went through in care. I don't know why children were treated the way I was when I was in care. Maybe it was just what it was like at that period of time. However, to me all children are precious. I hope this Inquiry stops anything that happened to me happening to children in care in the future.

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

Signed..... GCB .....  
Dated..... 21-11-2019 .....