

Scottish Child Abuse Inquiry

Witness Statement of

GQI

Support person present: No

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

Life before going into care

2. I was born in a place called Kinning Park, near Govan in Glasgow. My dad was and my mother was. They split up when I was a baby. I stayed with my grandmother and my auntie who lived together. That was my mum's mum and my mum's oldest sister. I was only about eighteen months when that happened and I don't have many memories from that period. When I was about five or six we moved to a housing estate in Govan. It was quite a bad housing estate, quite notorious, and was known as the 'Wine Alley'.
3. My granny was like my mum and I was very close to her. I was an innocent wee boy and did everything she told me, I listened to her. She died when I was seven and I think it was after that that I went off the rails. My wee auntie brought me up after that. I was looked after and fed and had a safe, secure place to stay when I was with my gran and auntie.
4. I have two older brothers, who's about nine years older than me and who's about seven years older. They stayed with my mother most of the time, and she then met a new man, so I just saw them coming and going really. My mother was only living round the corner from us in a high rise flat but I didn't see her that much because

I found it uncomfortable with this other guy, my so called stepfather. I didn't really get on with him at the time. She helped out with money and I would see her but I just kind of kept away from them because of this stepfather guy.

5. One of my brothers went to Butlins on a holiday when I was about twelve and met a girl from Fort William. He went off there with her and has lived there ever since, so I don't see much of him. The other does a lot of travelling and I don't see much of him either.
6. I also have two younger brothers, [REDACTED] and [REDACTED], from the relationship between my mother and my step dad. They lived with them. [REDACTED] was in the other St. Ninian's Approved School in Falkland and had a similar story to tell as me but never got a chance because he died about eight years ago. I spoke with [REDACTED] about our time in care and we both suffered from similar abuse although we were in different places, but they were catholic. [REDACTED] wasn't in any approved schools but he did get into the drugs quite badly. He died when he was only twenty five from a heroin overdose.
7. I don't think there was any social work involvement with the family when I went to stay with my granny and my aunt as that was just arranged by the family. I don't think they got involved until I started getting into trouble. I started not going to school and I think that was one of the reasons I got sent away.
8. I was supposed to be going to St. Saviour's Primary School and I did quite like it. I liked football and was quite good at it, I played for the school team but that was the only thing that got me to go to school.
9. I remember going to a Children's Panel in Albion Street in Glasgow when I was about nine or ten. There will be records of that. It was because I wasn't going to school. I was getting into trouble, hanging about with older boys and selling scrap metal and things like that. I was stripping old houses before they got demolished and taking things like copper boilers, window weights and copper wire to the scrap man. I was getting money and I was more interested in that than going to school. I ended up getting into trouble with the school board and before I knew it I was sent away.

10. I remember my first social worker was a guy called McLeod and from what I remember he was notorious for recommending kids to go to approved schools. I feel now that a good kick up the arse would have sorted me. It's not like I was committing the crime of the century, as all I ever did then was sell scrap to the scrap man. We sometimes had a bit of bother with the police with that, but they never took it seriously, they would just take the scrap off us and chase us on our way. It wasn't a big deal as it was all from old tenement buildings that were getting demolished. It's not as if it was from someone's house or shop.
11. Not going to school was probably the issue. My auntie would give me pocket money for my lunch and I would get sent out as if I was going to school but I would skip it and meet up with some other like-minded characters. I was quite an innocent wee boy and I was just toying along with some of the older more street wise boys. It was great as I was getting money and I could buy things like shoes or trousers.
12. I seem to remember getting given a chance the first time I was in front of the Children's Panel, I'm sure I got a warning and I promised to go to school. My mum and the social worker McLeod would probably both have been there. They would both have been there second time as well, or perhaps my older brother was there. That's when I was told I was too unruly and I was being sent to a home. I think I was told it was to try and get me back on track and back to school but it was a punishment, it was a sentence in an approved school.
13. It was St. Ninian's that I went to and I went straight there as well in a big black chauffeur driven car. I had to say cheerio to my mum at the panel, I was only ten. I was absolutely terrified.

St. Ninian's, Gartmore

General

14. St. Ninian's is in a village called Gartmore near Aberfoyle. You go up this big long driveway and then come to this big house, like a big country mansion. It had two big lions either side of these massive front doors. It had turrets and it was a really massive building.
15. When you went in the main door there was a big reception area and I remember stairs that went down to a locker room area. There was a big stairway as well that went up to the different areas, the dorms and bathrooms and the monk's quarters. I remember there was an area that was meant to be haunted at the top of those stairs and that no one would go near. It was a creepy sort of place all dark and dank. We were never in the monk's quarters or in the turrets at the very top. Downstairs there was a big dining room where we all ate and the matron's bit, she had a place there as well.
16. The staff at St. Ninian's were De La Salle monks and civilian staff. The Brothers I remember are Brother **MJO**, Brother **HJS**, Brother **MBZ** and Brother **MJP** who was **SNR**. They all wore these big robe sort of things.
17. The civilian staff I remember are the mad night-watchman, **GJN** Greg Dougall, who taught guitar and Jimmy McKinstry. I'm not sure what Jimmy's job was he just went about throwing these caramels about all the time, and we would all fight for them like scavengers. There was also a matron woman who dealt with all the boys aches and pains and patching them all up. There was also a father and son that worked there, I'm sure their name was , the dad was a big bald heavy guy. The son might have been called **GQK**.
18. I know the mad Brother, Brother Benedict who was on trial recently in Edinburgh, was at St. Ninian's when I was there. They had him locked away and tucked away in a little cottage up a lane. By that time he wasn't working in the place but he was there and we would only see him at a distance pottering about. He was a notorious character and we all heard stories about him when we were there. He was like the 'bogie man' who went about electrocuting people and all kinds of things.

19. We addressed the staff as 'sir' and the staff all called us by our surnames, so I was just GQI'.
20. There were different houses that you got separated into at St. Ninian's, they were St. Andrews, St. Patricks or St. Pats, De La Salle and St. Georges. I think there was probably about thirty boys in each house, so there could have been as many as 120 boys, but I'm not 100% sure about that.
21. The age range was from about eight or nine up to fifteen, so you had wee innocent guys meeting up with guys who were almost hardened criminals and were into all sorts of crime. The dorms were all mixed age groups so you could be with boys of any age.

Routine at St. Ninian's

First day

22. I was taken straight to St. Ninian's from the Children's Panel. McLeod my social worker was with me and I remember I was absolutely terrified sitting in that car. I remember saying to myself as we drove up the driveway and got to the house that I was 'off', just as soon as that car door opened. That's actually a theme for everywhere I went, I was always 'off' whenever I got an opportunity. All that did was get me into more trouble but that's just how I was.
23. There were two monks, Brother MJO and Brother HJS standing waiting on the car with big long dresses on. To me, back then, it looked like they were wearing women's frocks, big long black women's dresses with two white things sticking out at the neck. All the monks wore those big robe things.
24. As soon as the car stopped and the door opened I jumped out and sprinted away up the drive. McLeod and the two monks chased me and when they caught me one of the monks, Brother MJO had his glasses broken in the struggle. I think I kicked them off his face but I didn't mean to I was just scared and wanting to get away from the

place. In any case he took a really bad attitude towards me because of that and I got a really hard time from him the whole time I was at St. Ninian's.

25. I was then taken into the main building and into a boot room kind of thing. I was processed and then all my hair was cut off. I had quite long hair back then too, so I wasn't too pleased about that. I think that was because I had fleas or nits or something as I was examined by a wee matron woman and she said I needed to have all my hair cut off.
26. There was also a bit with all the clothes for us to wear and I was taken to this locker room place where I had to take off my clothes and get all these new clothes.
27. I was put into De La Salle House and we were also all given numbers, I remember my number was [REDACTED]. You wrote that on your clothes or on anything that was to do with you. I remember being taken to my dormitory on that first day, mine was a big dorm.

Mornings and bedtime

28. One of the monks would wake us up in the morning, I think they rang a bell. I can't remember the time, maybe six or seven. We would get washed, brush our teeth and get ready for breakfast. After breakfast we had a big assembly thing where we did a couple of prayers or something like that. I think everyone was told what job they were doing that day when we were at the assembly.
29. After the assembly we all went off to different jobs for the day, you could go to school, work in the gardens or go to help with the horses with Brother ^{MJO} [REDACTED] things like that.
30. I think we went to bed quite early at about nine o'clock. Obviously in a dorm, with young boys, there was messing about and you would get up to stuff, causing mayhem really. A lot of the boys were proper delinquents, real nutcases so they're not just going to go to their beds.

31. When I was first there I was really scared at nights in the dorm. I was terrified and crying under my covers. Other boys were the same, you'd hear that a lot, it wasn't just me. People would try and put a brave face on it but we were just scared wee boys but there was also a lot of real toe rags in the dorms so it was a bad mix.

Mealtimes/Food

32. We all ate our meals together although I don't remember the monks or any of the staff eating when we had our meals though. The monks patrolled about when we were eating. If there was extra food, you could put your hand up and ask for more, but if it was Brother MJO that was patrolling about, he would never pick me. That's the sort of things he did to me, he picked on me, didn't let me have extra food or didn't let me go on outings, things like that.
33. I can't really remember what the food was like, it was probably adequate, but I do remember we were starving all the time. You got a bit of breakfast, a lunch and a dinner, but there were no things like sweeties or snacks or things like that.

Washing/bathing

34. We washed and cleaned ourselves every morning but I think we had showers or baths at certain other times. You could maybe have a shower in the evening, I can't really remember, but they were communal showers. There might have been the odd bath. There would be staff wandering about but I don't remember any actually being in the shower area.

Clothing/uniform

35. When I went in on day one I had all my clothes taken off me and I was given their clothing to wear. My clothing was taken away and I think it was washed and I got it back when I left.

36. I got a couple of different sets of clothes, I had jeans, shoes and boots, a jumper all that kind of stuff. The jumper was a different colour depending on which house you were in and I wrote my number, [REDACTED] on everything.

Leisure time

37. I remember there was this big air hall where we played football. It was a big dome with air blowing in to it, to keep it up, that was our gym and where we played football.
38. I remember Brother [REDACTED] HJS played football with us. He had a spectacular comb over and he would play football running along holding his hair with one hand and holding his dress up with the other. Every now and then his hair would fall down and we would all stop and give him a round of applause. He was like a big baby, as when we did that he would take the hump and take the ball away, just because we were laughing at him.
39. I don't really remember much more about that side of things. There was a snooker table and we played table tennis. There might have been other games and things.

Trips and holidays

40. I remember about ten of us being taken on a trip to a village hall by Mr Dougall. Mr Dougall taught us guitar and we had all learned the song 'Country Road' by John Denver. We were all on the stage and sang it to this group of old women. It sounds so funny now thinking about it, but we did go out and do the odd thing like that.
41. On occasion we went to the swimming pool in Callander and I think there was a camping expedition as well but I wasn't allowed to go on many of those trips in case I ran away, which I would have done.

Schooling/work

42. There was schooling in classrooms and all different jobs that you did every day at St. Ninian's. Brother **MBZ** Brother **HJS** and Mr Dougall were three teachers I remember. There was at least one more, but I can't remember his name.
43. I think there were four classrooms, they were these porta cabin things across from the big house. You went from one, to two, to three, to four as your time went on at St. Ninian's. I think it was by age and how much you were learning. We did maths and English, things like that.
44. You could also go and work in the gardens, help Brother **MJO** with the horses, go to joiners classes and then there was different cleaning jobs as well. There was a lot of things we had to do, cleaning out the toilets, sweeping the corridors and all that kind of stuff. There was some kind of rota of some kind, you did one job for a week or so and then you got another job and so on.
45. We would always be supervised by a monk or a civilian member of staff and if you didn't do it right you would get hit, like I did by Brother **MJO**, and told to do it again.
46. I think it was the younger ones that did the classes and the older ones that did the work and other jobs. I remember mostly doing classes and going to the joiners classes once or twice a week.

Healthcare

47. The matron was who you went to see if you weren't feeling well. There was always punch ups and things and she was always patching up the boys. She was alright, it could be from falling, or from football but she was good at patching you up.
48. I think there may have been one or two more serious injuries and they would have been taken to hospital. I went to see her when I had my head burst open and she fixed that, I never went to hospital. I don't remember ever seeing a doctor or a dentist myself.

Religious instruction

49. It was religious and they used to make you go to chapel, that's what put me off the whole religious thing. We wore different clothes, a little smart suit, not the usual working gear and it was rough material I remember that. I think it was a pair of trousers and a black jacket.
50. The chapel was attached to the main building and we all had to go there a lot, it could have been every day, and you just sat there while the monks went on and on and on. I didn't mind the singing, I like singing but everything else just put me off it for life. I've never been into the Catholic church and religion since then.

Birthdays and Christmas

51. I was at St. Ninian's for my birthday but it wasn't celebrated, there was nothing like that from the monks or staff. Some people maybe got cards or something from family but I don't remember getting anything from anyone.

Bed Wetting

52. I used to wet the bed because of the fear I had in that place. If you wet the bed you had to wear this gown, which was to humiliate you really, because you had to wear it instead of pyjamas, as they were wet.
53. GJN was the night watchman and he was one to watch. He would come into the dorm at night and feel about the beds while you were lying sleeping. It was to see if the bed was wet and if it was wet he would drag you out your bed, shout and bawl at you and whack you with this walking stick he always had with him.
54. He would take your pyjamas and put you in this gown thing and then have you standing or kneeling against the wall with your nose up against it. That was in the middle of the night and it was pitch black. He sometimes had you do that with books in your hands. You had your hands out and up at the sides holding on to these books. Every now and then he would walk by and give you a whack with his walking stick. Sometimes you

could be there for as long as a couple of hours before he eventually chased you back to your bed. He did that to me a lot of times and I saw him do that to other boys as well.

Culture

55. There was a lot of violence, fighting and bullying at St. Ninian's. The staff did nothing about it, in fact they encouraged it sometimes. If there was a fight between two boys, and no one else was bothered, sometimes they would just let the boys fight. I saw loads of fights in there but I don't ever remember seeing any staff doing anything to stop them. It was a mental place for a wee ten year old boy to be stuck in.
56. Boys from different areas would stick together, so eventually two or three of us from the Govan area would clique together. That gave us some protection and helped us, in a way, to get through it.

Running away

57. To start with I ran away from St. Ninian's every chance I got because I was scared and I hated the place. I was caught and punished for that but that's how I was, off any chance I got. I once sneaked inside a delivery lorry but I was caught in that before it left the grounds. I was just trying to get home to my wee auntie, that was my intention anyway.
58. After a while I settled down. I think I realised that if I didn't settle down I might never get out of the place. I'd been there for a year and there were some people in there for three and four years because of their behaviour in there, so I thought I'd better screw the nut and stop running away.

Family Contact

59. After I stopped running away, which was a good six months, I started to get weekend leave. A list was put up on a board on the Wednesday or Thursday saying who was

getting weekend leave and you knew that if you behaved and stuck to your classes you could go home on weekend leave. If you didn't behave it could be taken off the list so you would try and be good and keep your nose clean. You could get it every week after that provided you came back and kept behaving. It was down to certain teachers to decide so if you were seen fighting or not doing what you're told, you wouldn't get to go.

60. If you got weekend leave we would all be taken to Buchanan Street Bus Station in this old blue bus they had at St. Ninian's. We'd be dropped off on a Friday and then we would go home for the weekend. We would get picked up again on the Sunday night but there were some times I wouldn't go back. I would get caught at the house though so I wasn't ever away for very long. I did settle, as I said, and my brothers were also telling me to screw the nut or I'd be in there until I was fifteen.
61. It was quite sad now I think about it because some people didn't have anybody. People that were staying there under what was called 'care and protection' they didn't have any family or anything. We would all be happy about getting home for the weekend and then coming back with new clothes and bags of sweeties then you saw these wee guys with nobody. If you were half decent you would share things with them but I do remember that and it was quite sad really.
62. My dad's sister, my auntie [REDACTED] did come in to see me at St. Ninian's. She visited with her son, my wee cousin, and we went for a walk around the grounds, I remember that. I've spoken to him since and he triggered that memory.

Social work visits

63. I don't think I was ever visited by my social worker, McLeod, after the day he took me up there. I can't remember him having any dealings with me after I went to St. Ninian's but he was quite an old guy so he may have retired.

Discipline

64. I think I was told the rules of the place when I first went in during my first class by the teacher. The discipline for misbehaving was the belt, you would be sent to see the headmaster for anything like that and he would decide what the punishment would be. Usually the belt over the bare bum. I had that a couple of times anyway, and that's what happened to anyone who had been fighting or misbehaving. The person that caught you would tell the headmaster and you would go in front of him. Six of the best is what they used to call it.

Abuse at St. Ninian's

65. I mentioned Brother MJO taking a bad attitude towards me at St. Ninian's. I'd say he was middle aged back then but he probably looked older than he really was. He had greyish hair and wore old fashioned glasses. He dealt with the horses at St. Ninian's and he always had a horses whip with him. I don't know how many times I got laid into by him with that whip but I'm sure it was because of that incident on my first day when I ran off and his glasses were broken.
66. Whenever he saw me he would weigh in to me with that whip, he whacked me on the head, on the legs and on my backside. It was a proper riding whip and it hurt, it was painful, he wasn't a very nice man at all. He wouldn't do it in front of people but if he ever saw me on my own, getting boots or changing something in or around the locker room area he would give me a whack with that stick.
67. When I say 'weigh in' I mean a proper beating, setting about you with punches and kicks all over the body, it's just the expression I know.
68. That was regular from day one, sometimes three or four times a week and it happened the whole time I was at St. Ninian's. Sometimes he would just put the boot in and kick or punch me, he was just a bully. I knew he didn't like me because of that first day, he basically hated my guts because of it but there was loads of boys tried to keep away from him, he would weigh in to all the boys. He hit wee [REDACTED] and [REDACTED]

██████████, mates of mine, he hit loads of them, it was just standard because he was a bully.

69. Brother ^{MJO} ██████████ also whacked me across the head with a metal bucket once. That cut my head and I've still got the scar to this day. I was on my knees cleaning the floor, I maybe wasn't doing it right or maybe I'd been cheeky but he had a vendetta for me as I said ever since that first day. I think I should have gone to hospital really as it was a bad cut but I was sent to the matron and she patched it up for me. I didn't see a doctor or get any other treatment for that.
70. The father and son I mentioned, I'm sure it was ██████████, also both weighed in to me once at St. Ninian's. I was waiting to play snooker and I was getting bullied by this boy. When it came to my turn to play, I hit the boy with the cue and that father and son dragged me out the room and proper weighed in to me. They were both kicking and punching me. I think the son might have been married to a woman who also worked there.
71. There were some Brothers would interfere with the boys, sit them on their laps and interfere with them. That happened to me as well. ^{SNR} ██████████, Brother ^{MJP} ██████████ and Brother ^{MBZ} ██████████ both did that. With Brother ^{MBZ} ██████████ I would be in his class and he would hold me back for something after everybody else had gone. It would just be him and me and he would put me on his lap and mess about with me. He put his hand down my trousers and interfered with me while I was sitting on his lap. He was touching my genitals and rubbing me up against his private parts. He did that about four or five times to me and I'm sure he did it with other boys, as you would see other boys getting held back in his class. It was something we all talked about as well, we would question what he was doing.
72. After I'd been at St. Ninian's for a couple of months I ran away again. I remember it had been snowing and I had short trousers on. I ran for miles and I didn't know where I was, I was just running in circles. I ended up with borderline hypothermia, I remember I was freezing and my legs were blue. Eventually a family found me, then the police came and they took me back to St. Ninian's.

73. On that occasion Brother **MJP** gave me six skelps over my bare arse with a leather belt for running away. That was in his **SNR** office and I saw him on my own. It was the same kind of leather belt as you got in school with the two prong things. He was whacking my bare arse with that while I was still freezing from having been outside all that time.
74. Then he told me to go but come back the next day. That's when he started with the sitting on the lap thing as well. He had me sit on his lap and he started interfering with me. He had his hands inside my pants and was fondling me just the same as Brother **MBZ** did. He was saying stuff to me but I can't remember what he said. It lasted about ten or fifteen minutes and I just remember being scared. That was my feeling at St. Ninian's all the time, just being scared.
75. **GJN** the night-watchman would also tamper with the boys in their sleep. He did it to me a few times, feeling me up under the covers pretending to be checking to see if the bed was wet. **GJN** had a baldy head and he always had his walking stick with him. I only ever saw him work nights, but he didn't stay at St. Ninian's or have a room, not that I remember. The only other person I remember working nights was Jimmy McKinstry.
76. **GJN** would come into the dorm balancing the stick on his nose and as we all started to giggle he would start weighing into us with his stick. I don't think he needed the stick I think it was just a prop. He used it all the time to hit boys, if you were giggling, laughing or talking in your bed at night he would whack you with it. He would hit you anywhere while you were lying in your bed he didn't bother, legs, head, body and it would give you a fair bruise.
77. Eventually as I got used to St. Ninian's and got to know some of the other boys, the fear started to go and I started hitting back with all the bullies and abusers, I settled in and started stopping those things going on.

Reporting of abuse at St. Ninian's

78. I do think that other Brothers, and probably some of the staff members at St. Ninian's, would have known about the sexual abuse that was going on there. I think they knew what was going on and did nothing about it. Why else would they be destroying records? They knew it would all come back and bite them.
79. I told my family I hated it at St. Ninian's and that's why I was running away. A couple of times my brothers threatened to go there but it never happened. I even threatened Brother **MJO** with getting the Govan Team to come and sort him out, but that never really changed things either.
80. The police were more involved when I was on home leave and didn't return but I didn't ever tell them about the abuse or anything like that. I didn't see the point, they wouldn't have believed me and they saw all of us as a nuisance. The police just wanted to get rid of you.

Leaving St. Ninian's

81. I think I was given a date for me leaving St. Ninian's. It was sometime in early **[REDACTED]** not long after my 11th birthday. Once I was told that, I tried my best to behave myself and kept out the way of Brother **MJO**. I didn't get into any bother.
82. I remember being taken to Buchanan Street Bus Station in the minibus, I think there was one other guy with me, it was just the same as home leave at the weekends. I got some money for bus fares and I remember I was also given a pair of white football boots. I suppose that was some kind of going away gift. No one played in white boots back then but I could play so I could get away with it. I did actually like those boots and I had them for a long time. It was one of the only good things that happened from my time at St. Ninian's and I was chuffed with them.

83. I do remember it was quite sad saying cheerio to all my wee pals as you did befriend people and get to know and like some of them. There was some guys going to be there until they were sixteen and they might have only been ten, eleven or twelve then.
84. There was no farewell from the Brothers, but I was just glad to see the back of them. I felt great knowing I was going home and my mind-set at the time was to keep out of trouble but I ended up a hundred times worse.

Life back at home

85. I went back to my auntie's and I had another year at St. Saviour' School. I had a different teacher who was really good, he knew my situation and I did have quite a good year of going to school and quite enjoying it. I went on to St. Gerard's Secondary in Govan and managed the first two years there. I was enjoying the football and played for the school team but eventually I started not going again.
86. It was just me and my wee auntie, my brothers would come and go but it was about that time that both my brothers went to Butlins to work. They both went and came back and then the next season they both went but only one came back, because [REDACTED] met his wife there. He then ended up in Fort William, which is where I got my love of the mountains, from going up there and visiting them.
87. I did see my dad from time to time but he had his drink problems. He was a merchant seaman and then a barber. He would sometimes come round and cut my hair and give me a few bob. I didn't see a lot of him until he came to visit me when I was in St. Mary's. He was suited and booted and was off the drink then and I started to build a good relationship with him after that. Three years later he got cancer and he died when I was seventeen.
88. You had a choice when you were young, you hung about with the good boys or you hung about with the boys that were up to no good. I was in both camps as I had mates I played football with and I knew all these other characters that were up to no good.

89. Unfortunately I ended up drifting towards the ones that were up to no good and I started drinking wine and cider and just got in with the wrong crowd in the Govan area. We lived [REDACTED] and there were pubs and men drinking all around us. There were visiting fans coming from all over, so there was absolute mayhem with fighting and violence. It was quite a mad situation and was always fuelled by drink. There was also Orange Walks with Catholics and Protestants fighting all the time, it was such a mad place to grow up in.
90. I was going about with older guys, drinking wine and getting into trouble. I ended up getting into bother and having altercations with the law. Eventually when I was about thirteen or fourteen I ended up in the juvenile court in Glasgow for car thieving and breaking into places. I got two years in an approved school as it was quite a serious charge. The judge was a notorious guy, J. Irvine Smith, who was known to lock people up for things like that. That could have been any approved school, it just depended on vacancies so I was sent to a place called Larchgrove first, which was a remand home, until a vacancy came up at an approved school for someone my age.
91. I never had any contact with any social workers or anything to do with the social work department between leaving St. Ninian's and ending up at Larchgrove.

Larchgrove Assessment Centre

General

92. Larchgrove was on Edinburgh Road, along towards Easterhouse in Glasgow and it was a really brutal place. It was quite enclosed and was dead secure with bars on the windows and locked doors. It was difficult to get out of.
93. I was taken to Larchgrove in a court wagon that takes people to all these different places. I went straight from the juvenile court. I was handcuffed to the guy next to me

and it would probably have been the police that took me. I knew I would only be there until a place was found for me at an approved school.

94. I was there for about a week or two before I ran away. I was then on the run for two weeks and I was back at Larchgrove after that for about four weeks before a place was found for me at St. Mary's.
95. I was in a dorm at Larchgrove with another four boys. There was probably more than a hundred boys there and they were similar in age to the boys at St. Ninian's.
96. I can't really remember much about the staff at Larchgrove other than Mr ^{GQL} who was a teacher. He sticks in my mind as he was the bully. Most of the others were alright and were just doing their jobs.

Daily Routine

97. The daily routine was the same kind of thing as at St. Ninian's. We got up, made our beds, got washed and had breakfast. We then went to some sort of class during the day, there was education classes and crafts, stuff like that.
98. At night time we had recreation, snooker, pool, watch the tele, things like that.
99. We were allowed to smoke at Larchgrove even though we were only kids. We could smoke four fags a day and if you got a visit or had money you get yourself fags.

Running away

100. I was always looking for a chance to take off but Larchgrove was a secure place. I was in a crafts class once, with Mr ^{GQL}, and I stole a hacksaw and hid it inside a mattress. The whole place got turned upside down for days but they never found the hacksaw. I got up in the middle of the night, for four nights in a row and used it to cut into a bar on my window. I did a wee bit more every night and after the four nights I managed to bend the bar back enough to get out. The night I got out, the night

watchman guy heard me and came into my room. He was grabbing my feet as I was trying to get out the window. I cut my finger where I'd been cutting the bar, during that struggle, I still have the scar, but I did get out the window and fell down to the ground as I was one floor up.

101. Then I bolted and all I had on was a pair of pyjama bottoms and a vest. I was covered in blood as well from my cut finger. I went back to Govan and I was on the run for about two weeks after that. I was sleeping in bin rooms in the high rise flats, in derelict buildings or in old cars. I knew that if I slept in my own house I'd get caught.
102. I was eventually caught because I was drunk outside a local pub and a couple of CID who knew me captured me. I think someone from Larchgrove came and got me from the police station.

Abuse at Larchgrove

103. Larchgrove was a brutal place, the staff were bullies and there were other boys in there that were bullies as well. It was a difficult place to survive and that's why I ran away. I was always looking for the chance to take off because of that.
104. After running away, when I used the hacksaw I stole from Mr GQL class, he had it in for me. I suppose I just made a rod for my own back with that guy. He was always weighing into me, kicking me or punching me, every time he could. He would take me into a wee office cupboard thing and proper weigh me in to me.
105. He had been a bit of a bully before I ran away, he would stop boys having cigarettes and things like that but after I ran away he never left me alone. He was always battering me and setting right about me, he would hit me all over, he didn't care. That went on for all of the rest of the time I was at Larchgrove. That would have been about four weeks and he proper weighed into to me at least ten times during that period.

106. GQL was known for that and anyone that was in Larchgrove will tell you about the brutality in there. There was a documentary about Jimmy Boyle and he even spoke about the brutality in there.

Reporting of abuse at Larchgrove

107. I only told my brother about what was going on at Larchgrove. I think he'd experienced a similar type of treatment when he was once there the same as I was.

St. Mary's Approved School, Bishopbriggs

General

108. I was taken from Larchgrove to St. Mary's in a car by a driver, there was no one else with me. It was a big massive red sandstone building. It was probably bigger than St. Ninian's and was a big complex with a school building, a joiner's shop and things like that. At the back of it was a closed unit which was for the real criminals. Young murderers and really nasty people.

109. I was shattered that I had got myself in to a mess again and been sentenced to two years at St. Mary's but I just had to accept it. I was glad to see the back of Larchgrove and my older brother had been in St. Mary's so I'd heard things about the place. I'd heard about certain staff that were swines and some that were alright. It was quite a similar place to St. Ninian's in many ways.

110. SNR at St. Mary's was a Mr LNI who was a decent man. SNR was KDN who was a real bully. I also remember LYT, he was notorious, and HQL and Andy somebody who taught us woodwork, they were alright. My housemaster was HHG, who used to play football, he was great.

111. It was all boys at St. Mary's all aged between about thirteen to seventeen. There were four houses again, St. Andrew's, De La Salle, St. George's and St. Patricks. Each house had a housemaster, who was the top man for the house, but would have been [REDACTED] KDN and [REDACTED] LNI in the [REDACTED]. I was in St. Andrew's House at St. Mary's.

112. I think it was run by the De La Salle Brothers at one time, it was certainly a Catholic church place but it wasn't De La Salle monks when I got there, it was all civilians by then.

Routine

113. The routine was more or less the same as it was at St. Ninian's but there were more people in the dormitories. I think there were about twelve in my dorm and they were in different areas within the place.

114. [REDACTED] HHG was our housemaster and he would get us up in the morning. It was just the usual routine, getting washed and dressed and having breakfast. We had our meals in a big communal dining hall.

115. Then we went into a big assembly hall and the main man would come in and give us a little pep speech. We called him [REDACTED] LNI but his name was Mr [REDACTED] LNI. He would tell us any news or anything we needed to know, that sort of thing. It was Catholic so we said prayers and after that we all went to our different jobs or classes.

116. We did have a uniform to wear that was provided, but I can't remember what it was now.

117. We had some sort of schooling that we had to attend, just normal classes, like history or English, that sort of thing. We also did PE where we played things like football and hockey.

118. There were also classes like joinery that were taken by HQL and Andy and they were alright. LYT would also takes guys out to the fields where you could grow things and there was greenhouses and all that kind of thing.

119. In the evening after dinner we had recreation time and we played games, table tennis pool, things like that. I think we had to go to bed, or be back in our dorms for nine o'clock.

Culture

120. I had never done any kind of solvent abuse and it was in St. Mary's that I was first handed a crisp packet with glue in it. I tried it and the next thing I was addicted to it. That lasted about eighteen months to two years, all the time I was in there.

121. There was a gang culture in St. Mary's, it was no different from other places. There were notorious characters from all different places and there was bullying and all that kind of stuff. I was better at standing up for myself by then though and we had a good wee group of guys from Govan so that was good. It was all the same faces, it's always the same faces at these places, so you get to know all the different people and that kind of protects you a bit.

Family Contact

122. My brother, my auntie and my cousin on my dad's side all came and visited me at St. Mary's. We would have a cup of tea and go for a wee walk round the grounds. They would spend a couple of hours with me.

123. After maybe a year there I got a visit from my dad, completely out of the blue. That was my first visit from him and he had sorted himself out. He was off the drink and was barbering, he had a shop in a place called . My dad and my brothers told me to stop running away or I'd never get out of the place.

124. I did then get my nut down and I eventually started to get weekend leave. That would have taken months, so it would have been well into my second year at St. Mary's before I got the weekend leave.
125. When I did get leave I'd go straight to my dad's barber shop for a haircut. There were girls working there as well and they would give me all the 'in' haircuts, I was getting shaggy perms and streaks so I had all these different haircuts. My dad would give me some pocket money and I'd go down to Govan and stay with my wee auntie.
126. My dad had a place in Pollock and I could have stayed with him, but I was so attached to my wee auntie, she was like my mum and I wouldn't have left her.

Welfare

127. I don't remember having a social worker or getting visits from a social worker but I did have a welfare person at St. Mary's. Their job was just admin stuff, there was nothing like key workers or anything like that.
128. The only person that did anything that was encouraging was ^{HHG} my housemaster. He would always try to get me to screw the nut and would tell me to stick in at the football. He would go mad at me when I'd been out on the run and he'd tell me I was going to end up in borstal. He had a booming voice and he would shout at me to try and get me on the straight and narrow. He was a genuinely good guy. There were some staff like that, they weren't all crackpots.
129. I feel that by the time I was in St. Mary's I was immunised to being away from home and being in the company of nutters and everything I was going through. You learn to live with it, you become institutionalised, that kind of thing.
130. I was probably treated a bit more like an adult, there were some decent people but by the time I was at St. Mary's I was gone and the real madness was about to start in my life.

Running away

131. I was always looking to run away and it was the same at St. Mary's. I was constantly running away from the place. I would run away over the hill to a place called Milton where I could get a bus and I was away into town. I was just always on the run.
132. The building was locked up at night but you could climb out a window or say you were away to the toilet, when you were in a class, and run off, it wasn't difficult to sneak away as there were no fences or bars on the windows.
133. When I ran away I would be down at the river Clyde and would get mad on the glue, which I got addicted to in St. Mary's. Then I'd get caught and be taken back. That went on and on and there were some characters in St. Mary's that didn't like that kind of behaviour so I'd end up getting beatings.
134. Up until I was in St. Mary's I was running away through fear but by the time I got there it was more about wanting to be back with the guys I ran about with. There was quite a lot of guys from the Govan area who were in these places so there was a squad of us all running away at the same time from all those different places. We were living in old tenement buildings or old cars and we would be on the run for weeks or even months. My head was gone into that lifestyle and I was sniffing the glue a lot at that time as well.
135. It was a case of cat and mouse in Govan because every single policeman knew us. We had to travel without going on the street. We used railways and back streets, climbed over fences through factories, all that kind of stuff. Eventually you would get caught though and you were taken back.
136. It was a crazy mental thing but eventually the running away did come to an end, after I got that visit from my dad.

Discipline

137. We were belted at St. Mary's, **KDN** would belt the boys just like you would get at school. If you were messing about at night or in a class, any type of misbehaviour then the staff would send you to him and he would belt you. At St. Mary's any problems like that were dealt with by **KDN**.
138. I got that quite often but with me he was usually weighing into me. You could get the belt or get weighed in to, which is what he usually did with me.

Abuse at St. Mary's

139. There was no interfering or any of the dodgy stuff at St. Mary's. It was mostly bullying and humiliating and stuff like that.
140. **KDN** was a character that didn't like boys running away. He was **SNR** and was a big red haired, cock eyed fella who wore these thick glasses. He was a real bully, and when I'd been out on the run he would take me into his office and give me a good hiding. That would be punching, kicking proper setting about me, a big strong man setting about a young boy. He also used to put me in oversized clothes and big boots, nothing fitted me. He had me standing alone outside in those ill-fitting clothes when everyone was outside playing. He did that to try and stop me running away but I always found a way.
141. A character that sticks in my head is **LYT** he was the farm man or maintenance man. He grew vegetables and tatties and all that kind of stuff. He had this big massive key that he carried about with him and he used to smash it off the top of boy's heads. He did that to me and a lot of other boys. I saw him do it a lot and he must have hit me with it at least a dozen times. Boys might have been misbehaving or been up to something, being cheeky or whatever but it could be for no reason as well.
142. **LYT** was a notorious character and I'm sure people will have told you about him. He would bash boys with that key all the time. My brother told me about him

before I even went to St. Mary's. Anybody who was in St. Mary's would have something to say about [REDACTED].

143. [REDACTED] and [REDACTED] were the worst but there were a few others, who I just can't remember, that were handy with their hands and would stick one on your chin at the drop of a hat.

Reporting of abuse at St. Mary's

144. I talked about St. Mary's with my brother but he knew all about it, he'd had the same treatment. I didn't tell anyone else, not anyone in authority. I don't know why, I maybe saw it as grassing, which I know is stupid, but that would have been the way I was thinking back then.

Leaving St. Mary's

145. I seem to remember the day coming when I was just told I was done and I was leaving St. Mary's. I think it was around the same time I would have been leaving school so I think I was sixteen as I was there a good two years.
146. I don't have any real memory of leaving, I think I just went down to the bus stop and that was it. Some of the staff would have been as glad to see the back of me as I was to see the back of them. There were certain individuals that shouldn't have been in that game but you can't tar them all with the same brush as there were some decent people at St. Mary's.

Life back home

147. I went back to Govan to stay with my auntie and it was at that time that I decided to sign up and join the army. I did everything that you needed to do and I was just waiting

for the medical when one of my brothers, or somebody, told me I was mad as I'd end up in Ireland before I knew which end of a gun to shoot with. I'd never thought of that and I never went on and did it but I have always wondered if I'd gone on and taken that decision and tried it, what would life have been like for me.

148. I was still drinking the wine and sniffing the glue but it was around that time I also started getting into amphetamines. I got into that really badly, fairly strong stuff and I'd be wired for days on end.
149. It was also about this time that my wee auntie died and I found her too, lying in the hall in the house. My dad was also ill about that time. He had this sore throat and that's what he was being treated for with lozenges and things. It went on for about a year and it would be classed as neglect nowadays because next thing he was in hospital and he died of throat cancer. They both died within months of one another when I was about seventeen.
150. I went on self-destruct after that with the drugs and getting into trouble. A lot of the time I didn't have a place to stay but my brother did have a place and I stayed with him for a wee bit.
151. I got a job as an apprentice butcher which I liked but that was only about £30 a week. I then got work as a ganger through my brother in Fort William father-in-law and I was making £150 a week. I was doing alright and then I blew it all by getting involved in a robbery which I got caught for and I was sent to borstal.
152. I went to Fort William Sheriff Court for that. I was seventeen and I was sentenced to one to three years in borstal. I was told I could do nine months if I behaved myself but I ended up doing seventeen and a half months because after six months I escaped and ran away.
153. I went from Fort William Sheriff Court to Inverness jail and I was then take from there down to Perth Prison for a couple of days before I was transferred to Polmont.

154. When I was in Perth I remember I was taken to the medical block for some examination and I was in the same room as Robert Mone, at that time, the worst murderer in Scotland. He was handcuffed to two screws and another screw was standing behind him with this big stick. All that just to take him to the medical room. I was thinking what am I doing here with these kind of characters, I couldn't believe it.
155. I was paired up with someone in a cell at Perth Prison but everything was alright there and I was only there a couple of nights.

Polmont Young Offenders Institute

General

156. Polmont was the only closed borstal in Scotland when I went there. The other two were Noranside and Castle Huntly but they weren't closed so I stayed at Polmont as they thought I would run away from the other two.
157. When I arrived at Polmont from Inverness jail I was taken in to what was called the allocation wing, they called it the 'Alli Calli'. I was in there for the first six weeks and that was brutal.
158. It was just like the army in the 'Alli Calli' we were marching, making bed blocks, bulling up the floor and all that sort of thing.
159. The governor would come in every Saturday for inspection and he would search everywhere for dust. If he found any that was a bad mark against you. It was just like an army thing for those first six weeks.
160. After those first six weeks people were allocated to a wing, east, north, west or south. East was the worst one with all the worst screws, and I was sent to east. I'm not sure who made that decision and no one ever told me why. It was a tougher place to be so

they knew to put certain people in there. You didn't want that, but if you got it you just had to live with it.

Routine

161. Everything was contained in this one big block at Polmont. I was in a single cell. The routine wasn't as strict as it was in the 'Alli Calli' but you did still have to keep things clean and tidy and keep your floor bulled, that kind of thing. You did the bed blocks as well but it just wasn't quite as strict as the first six weeks.
162. Your cell door opened about seven in the morning and then we started getting ready. We had pots in our cells so first thing you did was go and slop out. It was much the same as other places with communal showers and all that.
163. Then we all had breakfast in this big hall, we had beans, bacon whatever, and I remember I was in charge of the tea. I had a big urn and gave out the tea to everyone. After we'd put everything away we went off to our various jobs.
164. I went on a specific joiner's course, it was called vocational training, and I asked for that as I did fancy doing it. There was also gardening, repairs, a sewing machine place and all sorts of things.
165. You got locked up in your cell for an hour after you'd had your lunch so the screws could get their meals and it was the same after dinner, from about five until six or half six. You then had recreation for a couple of hours after that. We could play snooker or pool or watch television.
166. At nine o'clock we would all be banged up in our cells for the night. Everyone would be shouting and bawling, throwing lines out the windows to get snout, all that kind of stuff, it was just nuts.

Education / work

167. I did the joiner's training for six months and passed all the things I needed to do, I did get a qualification from that. I then got a job with the work's joiner. His job was to go about doing repairs within Polmont.
168. You spent a lot of time keeping the place clean and spotless, we used these big bumper things to clean the floors all around Polmont.

Clothing

169. There was a uniform at Polmont. We wore black trousers and a black jacket and a certain colour of shirt. When you first went in you got a red striped shirt. If you behaved for the first six months then you got a blue striped shirt and if you then kept out of trouble for the next three months you could get out. So you could get out in nine months. I once got to the six month stage with a nice blue shirt but I couldn't help myself, and as soon as I got the chance I was out of there. There was just this part of me that always did that. I think it started at that moment when I first got out of that car at St. Ninian's and made a run for it.

Running away

170. Polmont was a proper secure youth prison and was a difficult place to get out. I got this job that got me out the place though. I did the six month joiner's course which got me the job with the work's joiner. That had me all over Polmont doing the on-site jobs. That was what I needed to get the freedom to get over the two walls to get out the place.
171. Once I got working with the work's joiner I said to my boss one day that I was away to the toilet and that was me, I was off over the two walls and away back to Glasgow. That was the day John Lennon got shot.
172. When the screws realised someone had escaped, they shut the whole place down, phoned the local police and everyone would come looking for you with dogs and everything. If you could get more than five miles away quickly then you'd probably be

okay and get away. I was as fast as Usain Bolt, what with all the training I'd been doing, so I was in Govan before they let the dogs out.

173. I was away on the run for about two weeks and I got seventeen days in the 'Digger' and about six months added to my sentence for that. I just went in front of the governor and he dealt with it. I think he could have made it an official charge but he could also add time to your sentence and he decided to add the maximum that he could, which was the six months and then gave me the seventeen days in the 'Digger' as well.

Culture

174. There was a lot of fighting and violence in Polmont. It was constant between the guys that were in there and there was violence from the screws as well. Things were always flaring up and they would usually be settled in the toilets after dinner. They could be over absolutely anything, sometimes no reason, it was absolutely mental.

Abuse at Polmont

175. The abuse at Polmont was just getting weighed in a few times by some of the characters. The main one was GIH, he was a guard but he was also the teacher and was in charge of [REDACTED]. He proper weighed me in a few times. He was the worst and was an absolute swine of a man.
176. There was also a wee baldy PTI guy with a moustache who would have been in his forties, that was the same, he would weigh into the boys and he set about me a few times. I can't remember his name.
177. GIH and the PTI were both bad and then there was GQJ, he was another screw, they would all proper beat up boys, punching kicking, all sorts. A lot of it was in the gym area or, for me, when I was down in the 'Digger'.

178. They had a punishment cell, which was called the 'Digger' at Polmont where you were sent if you'd been misbehaving. It was down these stairs underneath the North Wing and it was more or less a dungeon. It was a freezing cold, manky place, you could hear rats and cockroaches running about in there.
179. The 'Digger' had nothing in it at all and you would be in there on your own all day. There wasn't even a toilet, you just had a chantie pot which was a manky old thing. They brought you your food to the door of the cell, you couldn't get out, and about six at night they gave you a little mattress and a blanket.
180. The only time you got out was first thing in the morning when the PTI guy took you to do physical training. He made you bunny hop along the corridor then do all this hard training with medicine balls and that sort of thing. After that it was straight back to the digger cell.
181. I was once kept in there for seventeen days after I was away on the run at New Year. GQJ [REDACTED] came in to the cell a few times when I was in the Digger and weighed me in. The PTI guy as well, he did the same. They were the only two that would come in and set about me specifically because I had bolted.
182. One punishment they had was to get you up at 6 o'clock in the morning and have you doing these bunny hops right along the corridors. That was really punishing.
183. Whenever we [REDACTED] GIH used to give it out to me. I think a lot of it with me was because he hadn't liked my brother. My brother had been in Polmont and there was bad blood between them so he took it out on me.
184. He hit me and other people, he would just bang you with his fist. Everyone saw it, I saw him do it to others. We could be in the changing room and he would come up to you and lay into you. It could be one punch or half a dozen punches and it would often be for no reason at all. That's just what he did all the time.

185. GQJ once stuck the nut on me. I was in the 'Digger', he came into the cell, walked right up to me looking me right in the face and then 'bang' he put the nut on me. That floored me and I think I had two black eyes from that. I hadn't done a thing. I never got any medical treatment for that.
186. GQJ would have been in his forties. He ended up as a screw in Barlinnie but he didn't act the same in there. You couldn't act the way he did in Polmont to the guys in Barlinnie.

Reporting of abuse at Polmont

187. I think I told my brother and my auntie about the treatment in Polmont but nothing was ever done about it.

Leaving Polmont

188. I was in Polmont for seventeen and half months and left sometime around the end of of 1981. I was a fit as a fiddle when I came out and I'd cleaned myself of the drink and the drugs.

Life after being in care

189. I was seventeen and a half when I came out of Polmont and it wasn't long before I was back to square one with the drink and drugs. Things then got really bad with the addictions. I was on amphetamines and then I got introduced to heroin.
190. At one time in Scotland, at the end of the seventies you had to know a hippie that knew a hippie to get a wee bit of dope in the west end, as there was nothing, then all of a sudden the place was flooded with heroin, Glasgow especially.

191. I was just a daft young boy and I didn't have any knowledge about it at all, no one really did, not like we do now that we've learned about the effects of the drugs and withdrawal symptoms.
192. I went to my auntie's in East Kilbride for a while and then I got my own place through the council in Govan. My older brother always had his own businesses so I did always have work. I did industrial cleaning and sold ex-rental televisions and videos. That was all when the drugs were slowly drawing me in and I had a few good years of that.
193. During that time I got involved in a relationship with a girl when I was about eighteen and we had two daughters together. Then heroin got a grip of me big time. I was injecting it and I was stealing and robbing to pay for it. I was getting caught for the stealing and I had a couple of stints in Barlinnie. My relationship broke up and things did get pretty bad for me at that time.
194. I eventually ended up in rehab at Cardross when I was about twenty four and I did get off the heroin. That's when I started running, it was what I used to stay off the drugs, and I got right into it, I even ran a marathon. Things were okay for a bit after the rehab and doing the running but I slipped back into my old way of life and ended up back on the drugs. I realised then that the only way I was getting off it was to get away. I thought running away from it all was the only way.
195. After coming off the heroin during a spell at Barlinnie, I came out, got myself sorted and moved to Jersey in the Channel Islands. That worked out well for a while and I had a good job as a ganger man on a building site. Unfortunately about eleven months of my time in Jersey was in jail. I did get into bother a couple of times there.
196. After a couple of years I left Jersey and ended up in London. Things got even worse for me then with the drugs. I ended up living on the streets and I was injecting crack cocaine and heroin into myself. I was a complete scavenger and that went on for quite a long time.

197. I then went to a couple of Narcotics Anonymous meetings and I met this guy who had been ten years clean. He worked in a rehab place in a prison and told me his story. I then got sentenced in London for three years and nine months and it was during that sentence that I wrote to the people he told me about. I then applied for and was accepted on to a rehab course, in a 'C' category prison.
198. I was about thirty six then and I got myself off the drugs during my time in that nick. When I got out that nick I did a secondary rehab course in Bournemouth and I came off it completely. I was about forty by then.
199. My young brother [REDACTED] got out of Barlinnie in 1998 when he was only 25. He had a drugs hit which was too strong and he died. I was in the nick at that time and I went off my nut for a bit.
200. In the course of some of the sentences I did in London I did a couple of decorating courses so when I came out and was off everything I needed to get a job. I had met a woman in Bournemouth and I had a son so I needed to do something. I decided to work for myself and because of my gift of the gab I just got my own work and I've been doing that ever since.

Impact

201. I've suffered from addictions and loss of relationships with partners and kids. That all broke down because of the way my life went. Nothing ever lasted for me when it came to relationships. I didn't have the right mentality, I was too carefree and I had all this madness going on in my head. I think it all goes back to my childhood and what happened to me in all those places.
202. I'm too cold and not intimate and I'm always too fearful to get involved. I don't know if it's because I think it's going to backfire but I've had quite a few relationships. Some relationships have been short but a few have lasted, one was for seventeen years and her biggest gripe was that she never felt that close to me.

203. I see it as my fault, I just don't do well in relationships and that is down to me and the way I am. I've been affected over the years and I'm just not good at it.
204. I have a girlfriend just now and I've been with her for two years, but the difference is that I've told her everything. I wouldn't always go into the detail with other partners. They wouldn't really know and you don't tell a woman what's going on with you, as she's just going to get rid of you. I have been totally honest with this one and it's working a lot better.
205. My son is twenty one now, he's a plumber and I got him his apprenticeship through people I know and I've always insisted on him sticking to it constantly over the years. Now he's doing brilliant and he's fit and healthy. I also have a daughter who's fifteen and I have a good relationship with her as well. I made the effort to have that relationship with both my children, because I didn't have that myself. I lost that with my two other daughters, who are in Glasgow, when I ran away to Jersey so it was something I did feel strongly about having. The loss of that relationship is like an open wound and is the worst impact for me in my life.
206. My experiences have helped my son because there's no way I would ever allow what happened to me to happen to him or any of my children. The parenting has changed since back then, to allow your kid to be in places like I was back then, I just know I would never allow that. There's no way my son or daughter would be in any places like that.
207. I feel I let my two older brothers down badly, especially my brother in Fort William. Many times he got me up there and got me good jobs and I messed it up by getting locked up and things like that. My other brother was always there for me, always there to help pick me up, so I let them down. I do get on with them now and I can still sit and have a laugh but it would have affected them.
208. My behaviour with the drugs never helped either. I tried and tried to stop that over the years, I went to different rehabs, I went to Jersey and to London, I had help from

different friends, but once it gets you it's just not that easy. Most people don't stop and most end up with it killing them.

209. I had Hep C for about twenty years. My health got quite bad until I started this new treatment about eight years ago. I took one tablet every day for eight weeks and it cleared it all. I also overdosed accidentally about five times so I've been lucky. I also did my back in twice from car crashes when I was off my nut and getting chased by police.
210. I don't think I would have been on the drugs had I not been in care because I think I would have seriously stuck to the football road and tried to make it as a footballer. A couple of the wee guys that were in my group of good boys went on to make it, [REDACTED] and [REDACTED]. I was just attracted to the money I could get from the scrap metal when I was in school.
211. I've also wondered what might have happened if I'd gone on and joined the army when I was sixteen. I joined the Territorial Army years later when I came out of rehab and had moved to Castlemilk and I absolutely loved that. I loved the training and doing the courses and I even won them a tournament in Edinburgh at Redford Barracks. I do wonder, because of the TA and how I enjoyed that, what might have been. I could perhaps have avoided all that madness.
212. St. Ninian's is now a kind of spiritual place where people can go for knitting classes and yoga and things like that. I went back recently just because I was driving north and was near the area. I felt my memories when I was driving up to it and I asked the woman in charge if I could have a look round. She let me in but once she knew why I was there, she shunted me out the door. I told her the place should be razed to the ground and she wasn't happy and threw me out.
213. I did feel shit for a couple of days after that as the whole thing did come back to me. I felt like I was that wee boy again, being scared and having the same feelings and experiences I had back then. I remembered all the characters from back then. I know that place changed my life, it changed the course or direction I was to go on in my life.

214. A few years after I left Polmont I saw one of the screws from there at a football game. He was a little snide horrible guy, I forget his name, but we made eye contact. I did get this feeling of rage and I felt like hitting him but he ran off and nothing happened. I did have that feeling though.
215. I think I'm alright with authority now. I'm a massive reader of books now which was one of the good habits I picked up from being in borstal. I think that's given me a reasonable brain to process things, especially now at this age. Back in the day whenever I was done with anything I'd usually be done with a police assault as well and that usually ended up getting me more of a sentence than what I'd actually done. I was mad and wanted to fight but I wouldn't do anything like that now. I look back now and I can't believe it was me that did some of those things.
216. Likewise with crime, I wouldn't have had a record or got into the bother I did had I not been in those places. It all started in there, the influences all came from inside those places. I was just a daft wee boy when I first went into St. Ninian's I hadn't done anything at all. I dodged school and stripped a bit of lead, loads of guys done that and went on to do different things.
217. Nearly everyone that was in those places with me has ended up dead. I was up at my brother's grave last week at the graveyard at St. Conval's in Barrhead and that graveyard is just full of pals of mine. All of them ended up badly into the drugs and dead. I just feel so lucky that I'm still standing.
218. I don't think my life would have taken the road it took had I not gone into the approved schools at the age I did. Having a criminal record didn't help me at all. When I was screwing the nut and trying to get a job that always came back and bit me. Believe it or not, I once got a job delivering drugs to chemists. I had been given the job but just before I started they must have found out about my record as I was suddenly told they'd made a mistake so I didn't start that job because of my record. When doing CV's and things like that you have all these gaps as well, so it definitely affects you.

219. I never did anything at school so I didn't really ever have an education. I've no 'O' levels or nothing. The sad thing is I do have a good brain, I have an excellent memory and I've gone on and completed computer courses at colleges. When I put my mind to it I can do all these things but when I was young I never got the chance to do any of that.
220. I've thought more about my time in care since everything started with the Inquiry and I also thought about it whenever I was in rehab because part of the treatment was looking back at that time in your life and then talking about it. Most of the time I would put it in a box somewhere out of the way. What I do think about is how things might have been different.
221. I feel all I needed was a good boot up the arse but I never had a dad there to give me that. I was just sent into a mad house and I came out just as bad as the worst person in it.
222. I had a bad period after my seventeen year split up when I went to see the doctor and was prescribed anti-depressants. I didn't get on with them and because of my experience with drugs I don't like them but that was more to do with depression from my split up, it was a long relationship.
223. The main thing that helps me now is my walking, it's like meditation to me. I like to challenge myself and take on these hard walks and hikes. A few years ago I did ice climbing in Norway, that was challenging and difficult, but I loved it. I love mountains and all the time I was in the jail and all those places I used to read books all about mountains and stuff. I thought it was all great and I'm now doing all the stuff I read about and always wanted to do, so everything has turned around. I'm a different guy now.
224. I'm trying to make the most of it now because I've wasted loads of years on the drugs or stuck in jails. I travel as much as I can and I do as much as I can with the walking and climbing and that's it, because you don't know when you're 'tea's out'.

Treatment/support

225. I paid for some self-help counselling about twenty years ago. That was to try and look into some of the anger issues I had. I could lose the rag back then, I would go through all these emotions, being angry and sad, but eventually it all levelled out. I only did about six or seven sessions then my tightness around money stopped me doing any more.
226. I think it was helpful and it did point out a couple of things. The rehab and all these things I've done have helped. They've helped me go on and do things like this. If you'd asked me to do this twenty years ago I would never have done it the way I have. I would never have been this open and honest.
227. I have recently had contact with Future Pathways and they are helping me at the moment with arranging ongoing counselling.

Reporting of Abuse

228. About fifteen years ago I was dealing with a lawyer, Cameron Fyfe, and I can't remember the exact details of how it all came about but I think I gave statements to the police. I have a vague memory of doing that at Bournemouth Police Station and that it was just about St. Ninian's. I was given a certain amount of money, £3,300, in criminal compensation. That was then taken off me because I had previous criminal convictions but I did get a token payment of £700. By the time Cameron Fyfe had taken his whack I was lucky if I got a cup of tea.
229. That was the criminal compensation board, I never heard what the outcome was in court or whatever, I just got the letter saying I'd been awarded money and it was being taken away again. I've never done anything else through any other process.

Records

230. I don't have any records from any of my time in care. Cameron Fyfe told me all the records from St. Ninian's had been destroyed. I have spoken to Future Pathways about recovering records and they are still looking into that at the moment.
231. It should all be there, it should all be on record yet there doesn't seem to be many records from my time in care. You say 'in care' but it was punishments, St. Ninian's was an approved school and that has to be on record somewhere. I would have thought there would be some record kept of what was going on with these people.

Lessons to be Learned

232. Celibate monks shouldn't be allowed anywhere near the rehabilitation game. I don't know who came up with the idea of having places like St. Ninian's. It had to be the worst idea in the world. There was people from all the roughest parts of Glasgow and some from other areas of Scotland all put together in this big house to get rehabilitated by so called celibate monks. It was just a mad house with cliques of gangs fighting and bullying all the time.
233. I went in there a totally innocent little boy who had been dogging school and I came out knowing how to commit all sorts of crimes. I could hot wire cars, disable alarms, I knew all sorts of stuff, I came out a proper criminal. I would never have known any of that had I not gone there. Once you're in you can't help but mix with certain characters and they were nearly all nutcases, some of them went on to be murderers and some of Scotland's most notorious criminals.
234. A lot of the people that were responsible for me and other boys when I was in all these places, resorted to violence. I was weighed into and set about in all the places I ended up in which isn't the way to deal with anything. They should have been trying to talk to us. ^{HHG} [REDACTED] did that and I listened him and to anyone that did try that. If I could sense they had my best interests at heart then I would listen to them. The staff should

have been sitting boys down and having a wee chat and that hardly ever happened with me.

235. They have to make sure they keep records of everything. I'm sure that's the way it is now, as everything is all computerised.
236. Make sure people who work in these so called care communities are properly scrutinised and then watch them as well, as it's easy to make up fake references and get people to back you up. You need to watch them, as it even happens now in the nurseries with wee kids and in the old folks homes, people get into them and abuse people. That needs to be managed, there were people in those jobs when I was in care that should never have been in them.

Hopes for the Inquiry

237. People need to be properly scrutinised and records need to be kept. The abuse is still going on, it's on the television all the time so I don't know what the answer is. Its humans that are doing it, devious people, how can you legislate for that?
238. Having someone you can trust and talk to would have been something. I think I would probably have spoken to someone like that.
239. I felt so bad about a lot of the stuff that went on when I was a wee boy. It's strange because part of me felt like it was me who caused it. I don't know if that makes sense, it's quite difficult to explain.
240. I really don't know what the answer is apart from getting people like that and castrating them or putting them down. That might be the answer.
241. I do blame the system for all that happened to me. I believe it was state sponsored abuse as I think they knew about everything that was going on. Who would put these

young boys in those environments? They knew about that Brother Benedict as they were hiding him away. They still do that, they still hide these priests away.

242. My story isn't unique, I know loads of boys that have the exact same story from all the same places I was in. The way we were all treated was standard and that was the same for the generations before me as well, my older brother went through the exact same.

Other information

243. 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. GQI

Dated. 15/9/22