

Scottish Child Abuse Inquiry

Witness Statement of

GNV [REDACTED]

Support person present: No

1. My name is GNV [REDACTED] My date of birth is [REDACTED] 1982. My contact details are known to the Inquiry.

Life before going into care

2. My mum's name is [REDACTED] I think her date of birth was [REDACTED] 1961. She died two years ago. When I was born, my mum had a boyfriend called [REDACTED] [REDACTED] I believed for a number of years that he was my dad. I found out when I was around six or seven that my biological dad was actually [REDACTED] brother, [REDACTED] [REDACTED]
3. I was born at the Southern General Hospital in Glasgow. We were living at [REDACTED] [REDACTED] Pollock, Glasgow at the time. I lived with my mum, [REDACTED] and my siblings. I have an older brother called [REDACTED] who was born in 1981. My younger sister, [REDACTED] was born in 1983. [REDACTED] is [REDACTED]'s dad. [REDACTED] has a different dad. My biological dad, [REDACTED] has two daughters so they are my half-sisters.
4. I was really young when I first went into care. It was before I turned two so I have limited memories of life before care. I have one vivid memory of my mum burning beans that she was cooking. The other thing I remember about life at home was my mum and [REDACTED] arguing all the time. There was a lot of drink involved. My mum was an alcoholic. My mum and [REDACTED] were both in and out of jail. My mum would try to tell us that [REDACTED] was away working for a couple of months, but we knew he was in

jail. My bother [REDACTED] had cerebral palsy so he was taken into care before my sister and I. He was given a special needs placement. I know now that we were taken into care because of the neglect at home and my mum's alcohol and drug issues.

Foster Care – Priesthill, Glasgow

5. My sister and I were put into foster care in Priesthill, Glasgow just before I turned two. [REDACTED] was just a baby. I have no memories at all of that foster care placement. I only know about it as I asked my social worker, Lesley, for information about my early placements when I was around eight years old. Lesley gave me a timeline of my placements prior to 1990. She has told me that I was at the Priesthill placement for around six or seven months. I can't remember Lesley's surname, but I know she was based at the Social Work Department at 120 Langton Road, Glasgow.
6. When my sister and I left Priesthill we went back home to live with my mum. My mum had moved address to [REDACTED] Pollock. I was around three years old when I moved back home and I stayed with my mum until I was around five years old.

Family Home – [REDACTED] Pollock – 1985 to 1987

7. My memories of this period back home are constant arguing and fighting between my mum and her boyfriend, [REDACTED] and them drinking all the time. I didn't feel safe. It was a really volatile situation. We just scraped by day to day. The poverty in the eighties was bad, but it was much worse because my mum and her boyfriend weren't working. They just spent all their time arguing and drinking. We did get fed, but not like other kids got fed. I started going to St Monica's Primary School. It was a brilliant school and is really my only good memory, but life at home started to affect me at school. I started getting into trouble for fighting at school. I was just mirroring what I saw at home. I felt like I was in a bad situation and it was only going to get worse.

8. I don't remember a social worker visiting much while I was back living with my mum. My mum's boyfriend, [REDACTED] would batter me. One time, he hit me on the head with the claw end of a hammer. He claimed it was an accident. I actually phoned the social work department myself and told them what was going on at home and I asked to be removed from my mum's care. A couple of days after that phone call the police came to speak to me and [REDACTED] was removed from the house and ended up in prison. I don't know if he ended up in prison because of things that went on in the house or for a different reason. I know he was driving cars without a license and while under the influence of alcohol so it could have been for that. Then, a couple of weeks later, my sister and I were put into another foster care placement.

Foster Care – Renton, Glasgow

9. My sister and I were put into foster care in Renton, Glasgow when I was five years old. We were placed with a lady in her sixties. I was only there for a couple of weeks before I was moved to Alva Children's Home. The lady chose to keep my sister, [REDACTED] for around three months. I have no memories of this. I was given this information by my social worker, Lesley, when I was eight years old.

Alva Children's Home, Crookston Road, Pollock

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Secondary Institutions - to be published later

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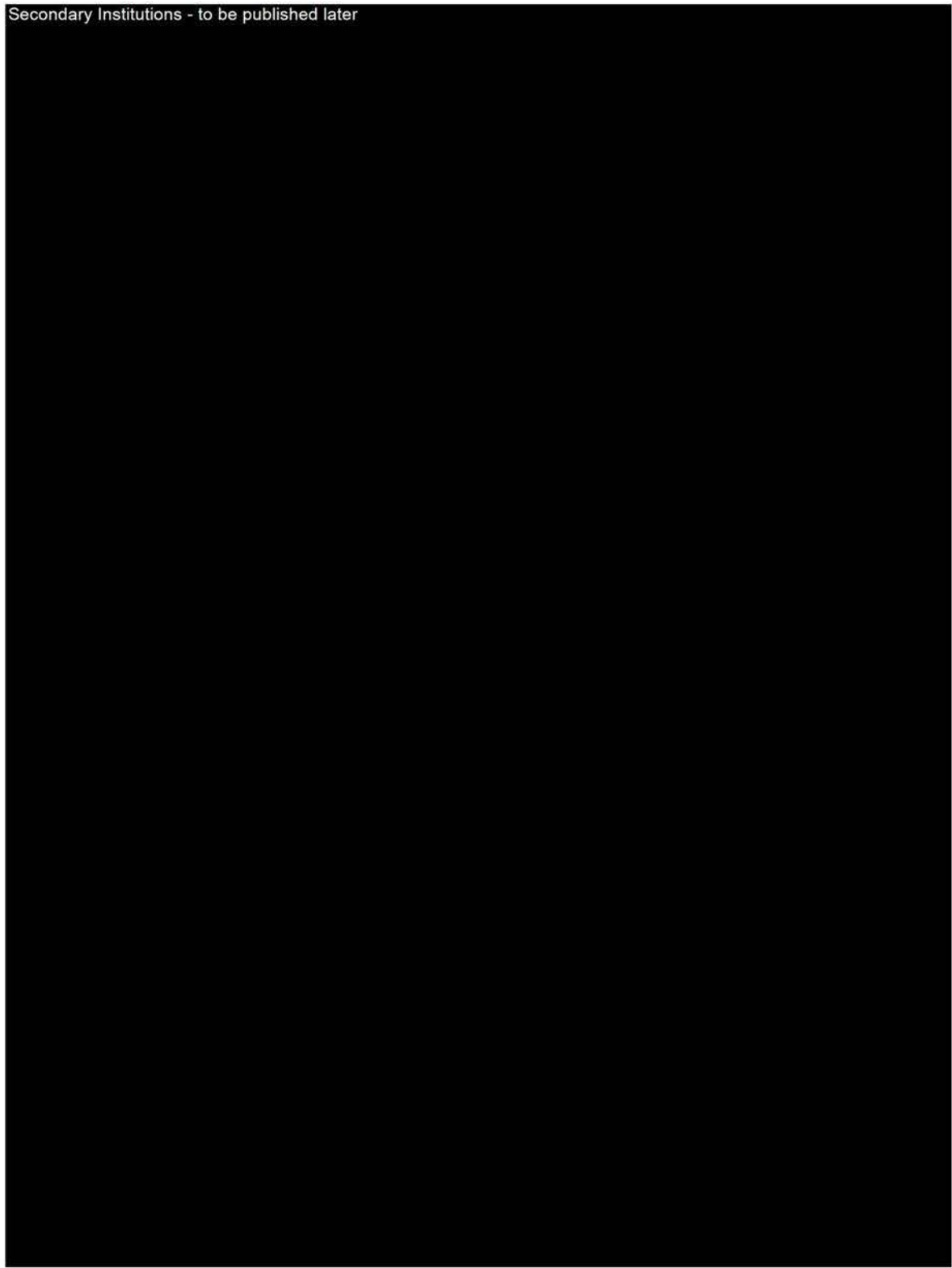
Secondary Institutions - to be published later

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Family Home - [REDACTED] **Pollock - 1991**

33. When I was nine years old and living in Alva Children's Home, I found out that my mum's boyfriend had moved out and wasn't on the scene anymore. I asked my social worker if I could go back home because I thought things would be a lot better. My

social worker arranged for my sister and I to move back home, but it didn't work out and we ended up back in Alva Children's home after a few months.

34. My mum got a new boyfriend after [REDACTED] and I moved back in with her. His name was [REDACTED]. He was another alcoholic. He used to threaten my sister and I and he would tell my mum that he was going to kill all of us. He said he was going to put a hit out on us. He would batter me and kick me about the place. No matter who my mum was with it was always an alcoholic and they would always batter me. I've got scars on the top of my head, my belly, legs and arms as a result of the abuse at home.
35. During all the periods I've been living with my mum, I must have spoken to police more than fifteen times about the abuse at home. During the short time I stayed with her in 1991, the police had to come out to the house every couple of weeks. It must have been around five or six times. Most of the time, the Police never did anything about it due to lack of evidence. Eventually, the police came and removed [REDACTED] and I from the house in the middle of the night. That was the last time I ever stayed with my mum. I was taken to Garfield Children's Home as a temporary placement before I went back to Alva Children's home just before my tenth birthday. I was at Garfield less than a month and don't have any memories of it.
36. I did see my mum once or twice after that, but I didn't live with her again. I remember going to have Christmas with my mum when I was eleven or twelve. I was still in Alva Children's Home at the time. My mum was still in a relationship with [REDACTED]. We went to his mum and dad's house in Paisley for Christmas dinner. I refused to eat my sprouts and he was arguing with me about it. I told him to shove the plate up his arse and he attacked me. I reported that to my social worker and he was charged.

Parkview Residential School - Dundee

37. [REDACTED]

Secondary Institutions - to be published later

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Weekend Foster Care Placement – [REDACTED] and [REDACTED] Fife

44. While I was at Parkview, I noticed that other kids were either going home at weekends or going to a foster care placement. I asked for a weekend foster care placement to give me some time away from Parkview. My keyworker, Mr Yeomen, took me to visit two different foster care families. The first one I wasn't too sure about, but the second one felt like it was a home.
45. After around seven or eight months, I started going to a weekend and holiday foster care placement with [REDACTED] and [REDACTED]. They lived at [REDACTED] Fife. The house was two stories and had three bedrooms. I had my own bedroom and they gave me money to go and buy what I wanted to decorate my room. They wanted me to feel at home with them. [REDACTED] and [REDACTED] had four boys of their own and one other foster child called [REDACTED] who was sometimes there when I visited.
46. [REDACTED] and [REDACTED] were both really loving people. I felt like they were people I could look up to and they were the role models I had been missing all my life. They made me feel safe and like I was one of the family. They explained their expectations of me. They gave me boundaries and chores and I was rewarded if I did my chores. They treated me like one of their own and after a few months I started calling them mum and dad because it felt natural. It really felt like I was at home at the weekends with them and during the week I went to school. It was a bit of normality.

Leaving Parkview Residential School

47. I left Parkview shortly after I turned sixteen years old. I left with six SVQ's in art, English, maths, science, history and social skills. I really wanted to live with [REDACTED] and [REDACTED] permanently, but I was told that the placement was just while I was staying at Parkview and that because I was now sixteen, they couldn't take me in on a permanent basis. I didn't care about leaving Parkview, but it was a wrench leaving [REDACTED] and [REDACTED]'s. I had been happy and settled there for a couple of years and I felt like my life was

being picked up and dropped somewhere else again. I was put straight into a foster care placement with a man called GOC on 1998. I had no idea who he was as I didn't have any settling in visits before going to live with him. That foster care placement didn't last very long.

Foster Care with GOC – Duntocher

48. GOC was a single man in his sixties. He lived in a two story building and his flat was on the ground floor. I had my own bedroom. GOC had three or four kids of his own, but they were in their thirties or forties and didn't live with him. It was just me and GOC I didn't get on with him.
49. I was studying catering at Clydebank College as I wanted to be a chef. I was bringing money back from college and GOC was taking every single penny off me. He wouldn't even let me use his house phone. If I wanted to make a phone call I had to go to the phone box. If there was a packet of biscuits in the house, I wasn't allowed to have one. GOC would tell me I had to buy my own stuff, but I couldn't because he was taking all my money off me. I got a backdated grant for college of £500. GOC took my bank card from me and went into the post office and took all the money out of my account. That was the nail in the coffin for me.
50. GOC was an alcoholic and a gambler. I'm sure that's what he was spending my money on. I did have a social worker at this point. It was a lady called Janine who worked for Through Care in Glasgow. She wasn't visiting me while I lived with GOC She would just call every so often, but she would speak to GOC and he would make it sound like I was doing ok when I wasn't.
51. After GOC took the £500 grant off me, I went to see Janine and I told her that I couldn't stay with GOC any more. I told her what he was doing. I ended up running away and stayed at a pal's house for a few days. Around one and a half months after I told Janine what was going on, I was moved to a foster care placement with and in

**Foster Care with [REDACTED] and [REDACTED] – [REDACTED]
Glasgow**

52. I think I was seventeen when I went to stay with [REDACTED] and [REDACTED]. They lived in a two storey building. Their flat was on the bottom floor. [REDACTED] and [REDACTED] were pretty decent people. They were down to earth and laid back. I felt like part of the family. They gave me my own house keys and I had my own space and freedom.
53. I finished my HNC in catering and one of my Through Care workers got me a job as a kitchen porter in Glasgow [REDACTED]. When I wasn't working I would hang about with my pals and get up to mischief. I was a bit boisterous in my late teens and [REDACTED] and [REDACTED] were a positive influence. They set boundaries and kept me in check because they wanted me to have a better life.
54. I feel like [REDACTED] and [REDACTED] helped prepare me for adulthood and for getting my own house. I lived with them for three years and left when I was leaving the care system at twenty-one. I wouldn't say I was fully prepared to live on my own and, although it was discussed, I wasn't given the option of a tenancy because social work thought I was still too immature. I left [REDACTED] and [REDACTED] and went straight to Glengowan House in Pollockshields which had been arranged by Through Care.

Glengowan House– Pollockshields, Glasgow

55. Glengowan was a big house with five bedrooms. I had my own room, but the cooking and bathroom facilities were shared. It was like supported living accommodation so there were some staff around. It was ok, but my bother passed away when I was living there and I snapped. I stopped working and I started getting in trouble again. I got kicked out of Glengowan House and from there I went to a hostel.

Life after being in care

56. Once I left Glengowan House I was out of the care system and I was on my own. I moved from hostel to hostel for the next three years of my life. I was in Peter McCann House, Bell Street in the Gallowgate, the James Shields Project on Pollockshaws Road, Hope House and Bellgrove. It was a big wakeup call for me and I saw things in these hostels that I'd never seen before, like grown men injecting certain drugs. It really did scare the heebie jeebies out of me. I felt like I was still a young boy, but I had to go into survival mode. It was fight or flight. I ended up in the Hamish Allan Centre and then moved between pals houses until I got my own house.
57. After I was out of the care system I met the mother of my kid. We're not together now, but I see my boy every weekend or I get him every two weeks for a week. We bring him up together. I want to make sure my boy has stability and a better life than I did. I work in security at football games, concerts and festivals. I've been doing that since 2014. I've had my own tenancy for the last three years. Nothing in life comes easy or just falls into your lap. You have to work hard for it and that's what I've done.
58. I don't have any relationship with my sister now. I did try to see my mum again. I looked for her on and off for fifteen years, but I couldn't find her. I visited [REDACTED] and [REDACTED] [REDACTED] a couple of times over the last ten years. [REDACTED] passed away on my son's fourth birthday and [REDACTED] has now passed away too. My boy is everything to me and he's all I need. I try to base my parenting on what [REDACTED] and [REDACTED] taught me.

Secondary Institutions - to be published later

59.

Records

60. I don't have any of my records from my time in care, but I have been in touch with Birthlink to try to get a hold of them. I think I first contacted Birthlink in February or March last year. I heard from them just before Christmas and they said they were still waiting on information from Glasgow City Council. I do find it weird how it takes so long to get records that I've requested, but if I was in trouble with the police and had to go to court they would easily get a hold of any records they wanted.

Impact

61. The biggest impact of my time in care is my lack of trust. I find it difficult to trust people and communicate with them because I always think I'm being lied to. I feel that by being moved from pillar to post I wasn't brought up, I was dragged up. Then once I turned twenty-one I was on my own whether I was ready or not. There was no effort by social work to set me up for later in life. In recent years, I did some volunteer work with Big Step which is a charity that helps support care leavers. I found it quite therapeutic to help kids that were going through the same thing I did.
62. I believe I have PTSD from my time in care. I have nightmares and wake up in sweats. There are times I shut myself away and just don't want to be around anyone. I still suffer from the nervous condition I developed when I was a child which affects my bowels. I've previously spoken to my doctor about having suicidal thoughts, but I've not had any for a good few months now. I was referred to the Adelphi Centre, but I didn't find that helpful. I just want to move forward with my life now and that's why I'm speaking to the Inquiry.

Lessons to be Learned

- 63. No matter how bad your time in care is, leaving care can still be scary and stressful. There has to be proper after care put in place for care leavers because it's not fair to expect kids to leave care and deal with that big learning curve on their own.

- 64. 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..... 

Dated..... 08 June 2022