

Scottish Child Abuse Inquiry

Witness Statement of

GAT

Support person present: No.

1. My name is GAT I think my surname when I was born was GAT
My date of birth is 1987. My contact details are known to the Inquiry.

Background

2. I was born in Glasgow. I think it was in the Southern General Hospital. Apparently, my biological parents were looking for money for drugs from my granny. They were trying to bribe her with me. Their names were and . My wee sister was abandoned in hospital and she ended up in care with me. She's two and a half years younger than me. She's changed her name, but I don't know whether she's done that legally or whether she just prefers to be known by her middle name. When she was young, I knew her as . I don't really talk to her anymore. She's different from me. She's very much like my adoptive parents. She was younger than me when she was taken in by them.
3. I have no memories of being with my biological parents. I was in care before the age of four. There must have been homes and things involved before I got adopted, but my first memories are of being in foster care with GAU-GAW

4. I went into foster care before the age of four. I think my sister was in foster care with me but I don't know. I don't know how long I was with GAU-GAW I was too wee to be able to say what the timescale was. GAW worked in the local prison. I know that they had a daughter called She was alright with me. I have memories of being with them. I know that my memories are of that period of time, but I don't know which order they happened in.
5. I'm not sure whether I was on a top bunk or whether I was climbing on something, but I remember that I fell. I think it was a top bunk. I fell off and burst my head. My foster sister looked after me when I split my head. I also have a memory of being put in a cupboard. They used to get the dog to sit outside the cupboard. I can't remember why that was happening. I just remember that it was happening. I had no concept of time at that age so I could have been in the cupboard for five minutes or for hours.
6. I have no other memories of being with GAU-GAW I just know that their daughter was good to me. She used to get me to be quiet and things. I think she was a teenager, but she was a lot older than me anyway. I don't know if anything else was happening there because I don't have memories. I was in another home as well but I have no memory of being in that home. My sister and I then got adopted. I was four. My sister was born in 1990 so she was one or two. She was in a buggy anyway.

Living with adoptive parents

7. My adoptive parents were called My surname was changed when they adopted me. They lived at in Glasgow. It was only me and my sister living with and Life was pretty boring. It was church constantly. Church overruled everything else. I wanted to play football so I had to go to Boys' Brigade and play for the Boys' Brigade team. I couldn't join the school football team. Everything had to have something to do with their religion. Instead of my

interests being taken on board, their religion was taken on board first. They would always try to find a way if they could do things through their religion.

8. I went to Braidbar Primary School. I hated that as well. I used to get excluded a lot at school. They thought that I was a bad person and that I was nuts. I was just acting out a bit because I wasn't getting out to do general childhood things at home. I didn't get to do anything outside the house. When I came home from school, I had to stay in my room for an hour. I then had to go down for dinner and say Grace before every meal. I had to be quiet when [REDACTED] and [REDACTED] were reading the bible. They read the bible every single day. I found that quite weird because children should be children. I think they took their religion more seriously than they took being parents. I went against the grain and I used to flip my lid. How is a wee boy meant to find things if he's not getting out to swing off trees and hit things with sticks? That's what wee boys do.
9. I wasn't trusted to go to school. They took me to and from school. I wasn't trusted with tuck money for tuck at lunchtime. I was always given a play piece or I was taken home for lunch. I didn't have any freedom or any choice. They picked a school for me to go to. They picked an area where everyone had money. I don't think the [REDACTED] were short of money either, but I can remember walking about with a pair of football boots because I didn't have a pair of trainers to wear. I would get the piss taken out of me at school because of the way I was dressed. I was obviously going to take it out on the people who were dressing me.
10. If I didn't want to go to church, I still had to go to church. Our best clothes were kept for a Sunday. My Sunday clothes were picked out for me and I wore them every Sunday. I can't even remember what they were. I remember having to go to Boys' Brigade with a uniform so I don't think church would have been much different from that.
11. I can remember my dad smacked my sister. I think I was about six, but that's a guess. I think that happened to me as well, but I can't be sure. I wouldn't have inflicted pain on someone if they hadn't done something to me. I believe that if someone does something to me, I can do it back. I was protective of my sister. I saw my dad smack

my sister one day. I was greeting. I flung a cup of tea at my dad. The way I saw it, I had more to do with my sister than he did. They all ran out of the conservatory and I flung marmalade over the walls. They were destroying me so I felt like I could destroy them.

12. [REDACTED] and [REDACTED] were constantly taking me to child psychologists and therapists. They thought something was wrong with me because of the way that I was acting. They said that I was boisterous. If they'd just let me out to play it would have been brand new. I would fling everything down the stairs. Asperger's Syndrome got mentioned. There was a diagnosis, but it got retracted after I'd been in a couple of special needs placements. It should have been quite easy to tell that I just had Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD) or something. I don't know who made the diagnosis. I wasn't old enough to know who my mum and dad, [REDACTED] and [REDACTED] were talking to.
13. Social work would have been involved when I was put into care at a young age. They were involved at the start, but I can't remember who were social workers and who were other people when I was with [REDACTED] and [REDACTED]. Nothing was making sense to me. I think [REDACTED] and [REDACTED] phoned social work because I was sleeping on my floor. I found it quite comfy on the floor. I wasn't sleeping on the floor for any reason, I was just sleeping on the floor. [REDACTED] and [REDACTED] made a big deal out of it and phoned the social work. I don't really see it as being an issue. A social worker came out to the house. I can't remember who came, but I remember them coming into my bedroom. I woke up a wee bit but I didn't open my eyes.
14. [REDACTED] and [REDACTED] definitely didn't want me. My little sister was young enough to be mouldable. I was older and I'd developed a wee character. They didn't like that. They didn't like me being a normal child who wasn't going to get down on my knees and pray halleluiah to the almighty God. I asked [REDACTED] why he adopted weans. He said, "Because we couldn't have any, it was God's way of telling us to adopt." I find that answer tripping. Just because you've prayed that you should adopt a wean doesn't mean that you should adopt a wean. Maybe they should have adopted babies but not a child who was running about the way a child should.

15. I went to a special unit at Hillpark Secondary School. One day, I flipped my lid in the house. I can't remember what triggered it. I flung my mattress down the stairs so nobody could get up the stairs. I sat and played my music really loudly and then I went to school. When I came out of school, the social worker was there. I was taken to East Park.

East Park School, Maryhill Road, Glasgow

16. Secondary Institutions - to be published later
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Leaving East Park

23. I don't know how long I was in East Park for. I might have been in there for about three months. I just know I came out and went to Daldorch.

Daldorch House School, Catrine, Ayrshire

24. Secondary Institutions - to be published later

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32. Secondary Institutions - to be published later

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Hillside School, Aberdour, Fife

35. Secondary Institutions - to be published later

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Leaving care

54. I was in Hillside until I was fifteen. I got moved in with a carer before I turned sixteen. It was the [REDACTED] before my sixteenth birthday. The carer was arranged by leaving care services. My carer's name was [REDACTED] but she passed away. I was then with another carer for a short time. It broke down because she wasn't actually a carer. She was just doing emergency placements. The carer placements were a bit like foster placements, but it was arranged by leaving care services.
55. Leaving care services were supposed to give me £2500 when I got a house, but that never happened. My leaving care services worker got cancer and I don't think anybody took up my case. Apparently, I should have got a house and been set up. When my placement with the carer broke down, I was put into Hope House in Glasgow. It was a hostel for drug addicts. I was seventeen, turning eighteen. I met my best pal in there. He was in the same situation as me. He came from a broken home. We got on well. He passed away in 2021.

Life after leaving care

56. I didn't want to settle down when I left care. I still had to run about and cause mayhem. I was still a teenager and I wanted to be a teenager. I hadn't been able to be a teenager when I was younger. I wanted to chase lassies about and do the normal things. I would run about hostels. The hostels had to see you settled enough before you were allowed to get a house. Do you need to be settled to get a house? Can you not still be running about but have a set of keys to go back to a house? I only got a furnished flat a couple of years ago and then I moved to my disability house in January of 2021. Before I got my furnished flat I was in hostels, jail, hostels, jail, hostels, jail.
57. I've never managed to work. If you got a wage, you had to pay the hostels from it in order to stay there. It was impossible to make a wage and pay that. I also had an extensive criminal record, which made finding work difficult. I used to be able to do painting and decorating, but I've not been able to work properly.
58. I've been limping since I was nineteen. I was tackled when I was playing football in Polmont. My knee was on one side and the ball was on the other. His foot came in and my knee swelled up. I couldn't move. It was agony. I saw the doctor and he told me to take ibuprofen. I told him that I'd broken my knee and he said it was just bad swelling. I wasn't sent for an x-ray. I think it was medical negligence, but my lawyer hasn't been able to get my medical records from the prison. When I was thirty, I collapsed in the city centre. I ended up in hospital for about six weeks. I saw a neurologist and he thought that I had multiple sclerosis (MS).
59. I never found out my real mum and dad's names until my sister raided my adoptive parents' room. She found paperwork in their room when she was rummaging through it. After that, my sister [REDACTED] ended up in Leverndale Hospital. I don't even know if my sister had been told that she was adopted. I never told my sister. I don't think I was told, but I knew because I was older than her when we were adopted. My wee sister was in a pram. I was 21 when I found out my real parents' names. I'm sure I should have known that earlier. I found my mother and father when I got out of prison. My mother passed away a couple of months after I met her. My real dad also

passed away. He said that he had liver cancer but I think he actually had hepatitis C. He was a former drug user. He was raking the bins for needles back in the 1980s. My sister never met our biological parents.

60. I had a brother and I didn't find out until I bumped into him in prison. We started talking and his mother was [REDACTED]. She had received a letter and it contained the adoptive mother and father's names and where they stayed. My brother said my name and I realised it was me.
61. I have an eleven year old daughter, but I don't get to see her. I made a remark to a social worker when my girlfriend was pregnant. They asked me what I would do if someone harmed my child. I said if someone took my eye out, I'd take their eye out. They took that to mean that I was a threat to my wean and they put her under a supervision order. I went off my nut because of that. It could have been avoided. I don't get to see my daughter now. I feel like I was set up. They purposefully asked me that.
62. My relationship with my adoptive parents broke down. Until this year, they were still sending me birthday and Christmas money. There was very little contact and trust was non-existent. I phoned them and told them to stop sending me things for Christmas and birthdays. I asked them to stay away from me. I told them that all they did was send me a birthday card, a Christmas card and meet with me about once a year. I'm disabled. I should have more contact. If my daughter showed up at my door disabled I would give her my bed. That's what parents should be doing.
63. My adoptive parents ruined my sister. She turned out exactly like them. I know my adoptive parents' home phone, but I've never known their mobile numbers. My sister has their mobile numbers. I don't know her mobile number. I don't even know where she stays, but she would want to know my business and where I stay. She's had a wedding and I wasn't there.
64. My sister came to one of my hospital appointments with me. She practiced to become a nurse so I thought she would have known a bit more about my condition. Because

she didn't understand it, she wanted to put me in a home. My sister has turned out just like my adoptive parents. That hurts me. I know when the time comes and I'm messed up, she's my next of kin. My adoptive parents thought praying would make everything better. I've obviously not turned out the way that they wanted me to. I wasn't going to be a choir boy who went to Sunday school. I think that's what it all stemmed from. In fact, it all stemmed from my biological parents taking drugs.

Impact

65. My parents put me into these institutions because they didn't understand me. Because they didn't understand, they didn't take the time to understand or pay attention to it. They just decided to give me away. They could understand the bible and I find that confusing because that's the most confusing book. I thought adoption was like a marriage, in sickness and in health and all that. I was put into homes voluntarily by my adoptive parents. I don't think they should have been allowed to adopt weans.
66. Being in care left me institutionalised. I first went into prison when I was seventeen. I've done umpteen prison sentences. It's been a revolving door. I have 47 previous convictions. I'd still be in prison today if I didn't have MS. In recent years, I've been diagnosed with anti-social behaviour disorder. If certain people got in my way, I would have moved them out of my way. I won't do it now because I'm disabled. I used to go to lengths to do that. I was very defensive of myself.
67. Social workers and doctors haven't given me the respect I was due in the past. Doctors wouldn't do anything for me because I smoked cannabis and took drugs. In my mid-twenties, I was waking up with what felt like an iceberg on my leg. I needed it to melt before I could move. I should have been sent for scans and things. It could have been my MS. The doctor just gave me painkillers. I was supposed to get a mental health assessment recently. I need to talk to my social worker about it. The social worker I have just now is brand new and he'll sort something out for me. I'm on all sorts of medication. I'm prescribed pregabalin, baclofen, diazepam, mirtazapine, omeprazole and senna tablets.

68. I think I've got post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) because I've been through quite a lot. I've been through more than I've spoken about to the Inquiry. I've never been diagnosed with PTSD, but I get tearful, angry and shaky. There are certain words that I can't say. If I'm describing something, I feel like I might blow up and take off like Superman. My body all tenses up. I can just feel it.
69. I hate the care system. I hated the police and didn't trust them for years. I thought they were very much like the care system. I hated anybody who was in authority or had a badge or a sign to say that they were a part of something. I distrusted them. It's left me with heavy trust issues. I have a key safe for my house but I don't put keys in it. I think someone will break into it. I don't trust anybody. If anybody comes to my door, I don't answer it. I don't answer my door unless you phone me first. Being in care has left me with a lot of trust issues.

Records

70. I don't have my social work records. I've never asked for them.

Lessons to be learned

71. They should take time to know the child before they move them. They shouldn't just move them on the grounds of what the so-called parents say. If I had been with my biological mother she would have had a mothering instinct. My adoptive parents did not have that instinct. That was very obvious for me to see at the time and it's very obvious to me looking back. I was just put somewhere and people said, "Call me mum, call me dad." I didn't know them. It was confusing. I was confused and I couldn't understand anything they were talking about. They were always talking about the bible. I was four. I couldn't say that we weren't on the right wavelength and we needed to part ways. I think they put their religion ahead of their children, but my sister might say something different.

72. The care system is meant to have improved now. You get care until the age of eighteen. I was let down after leaving care as well. It wasn't purposeful, but my worker got cancer and I moved to a different worker. I had very little contact with leaving care services. I would be there about once a month. I think there should have been more involvement. I had come from Fife to Glasgow. I didn't know Glasgow.
73. 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... 24/01/22