

Scottish Child Abuse Inquiry

Witness Statement of

EZQ

Support person present: No

1. My name is EZQ I am the partner of Richard Tracey who has given evidence to the inquiry. My contact details are known to the inquiry.

Background

2. I have known Richard for 22 years. We met in 1994. We met at a hotel in Torquay, where Richard was staying. We went to a party and he was staring at me across the room. There were about twelve people there and everybody went silent, wondering what was going on. Then Richard just nodded his head and we both got up and walked out the room. We became a couple that night. He moved out of the hotel and into my parent's house. We got a flat together six weeks later.

Impact of Abuse

Alcohol

3. Things were good for a while, then Richard's drinking increased. I realised he had a drink problem. It got worse and worse. I tried to stay with him, then I tried to leave him. It just got really messy.

4. Richard went to Huddersfield to go to university. I followed him there and started working in a casino. He started drinking. We had a huge row and he smashed a window by putting his arm through it. He also stole and crashed our car, so I sent off an application for a job on a cruise ship. My first contract was six months

We stayed together and spoke a lot on the phone. Then I went away on another contract, which was eleven months.

5. When I returned from the cruise ship, Richard carried on drinking. I moved back to Torquay. Richard then moved to Bristol. We split up for about eighteen months. I received a phone call saying he'd been hit by a car and that he was in a coma. He had had three operations on his brain. I left everything here and went up to nurse him. He pulled through. We got back together. It took him about eight months to recover from the haemorrhage.

6. I was working in a bar in Bristol called the [REDACTED]. Something happened to the landlord and the owner of the pub offered it to me. It wasn't a great decision, but I took the pub on. It was a good wage and it was a live in job. Richard promised me he would stop drinking, but he didn't. I sacked him on his first shift.

7. We had the pub for about a year and a half. The drinking just got worse and worse at the [REDACTED] because he had drink on tap. His night terrors used to be really bad, especially when he was drinking. He would lash out in his bed. He would be screaming really badly and sweating. I would wake him. He would know that he had a bad dream, but I don't know if he necessarily remembered what he was dreaming of. It was horrendous. I just wanted him to get better really.

8. I had a birthday party at the [REDACTED] and my parents were there. Richard was really drunk and being really loud. I was trying to calm him down. He started dragging me down the corridor by the hair. My father opened the bedroom door and saw what was going on. He pinned Richard against the bedroom door.

9. The next morning Richard couldn't remember anything but he remembered my dad pinning him against the wall. He said he couldn't believe my father had done that. I asked him: "what would you do if you saw someone dragging your son by his hair, past your bedroom door?" Richard just broke down because he didn't remember it. I never drag the past up with Richard so he probably doesn't

know a lot of it. Many other incidents have occurred, but these are just a few of them. He knows he was bad but I don't think he recalls a lot of it.

10. Once he got drunk and smashed my head against a wall. He knocked me unconscious. I was in Bristol Royal Infirmary and I was absolutely terrified because I knew he would try and find me. I escaped from the hospital and hid in a little doorway. He found me and I freaked. My head was covered in blood and I was a mess.

11. The next day I went to the walk in centre because my vision was blurry. I fainted and stopped breathing. A nurse had to resuscitate me. I don't know if Richard remembers that.

12. I spent a few nights on the street when I was in Bristol because Richard was too much. I don't know if Richard remembers that. I walked past an alcohol advisory place that was open through the night. I walked in to try and get Richard some help. I spoke to this Counsellor, who was really good. She said it was me that needed counselling. She told me that if I kept rescuing him, he was always going to be the victim, and that I needed to walk away. That was what made me leave. I didn't even pack any clothes; I just got on a train and came home. This was in 2003. I then didn't take him back for about two years.

13. He is not a very nice drunk at all, which is why he doesn't get drunk anymore. He has been really good. I have not seen Richard very drunk for about seven years, maybe more.

14. I was mugged in Bristol before I left and it was quite a bad beating. When I came back to Torquay, I studied hairdressing. I used to get the shakes, which was called benign essential tremor. My tutor spotted it straight away and I got a counsellor through the college, which really helped. That was over about two years and we talked about everything.

15. I shared a house with some friends when I came home. Richard was phoning me every day. We never fell out. We always stayed friends, even when we had split up. He kept asking me to come back. He promised me he had stopped drinking. It was really an ultimatum, and I did have him back. That was twelve years ago and it has been good since.

16. His abuse has consumed him. He hasn't enjoyed his life, which I feel sad about. I don't think there is anything I can do to make that better apart from care for him. Richard has never gone into depth with me about what happened. I know about the family life and what he went through, but only little bits about the sexual abuse.

17. Richard and I don't have a close physical relationship. I don't feel that's important really because when you love somebody, you understand. We have never had intercourse or anything like that. I believe that is because of the sexual abuse he suffered. My fear, and I don't know if Richard knows this, is that I wouldn't want him to feel like he was being abused again. This is a part of the relationship that I just accepted.

18. He finds emotions hard. He isn't overly affectionate, but he has his little ways. Richard comes across as quite confident, but he's not at all. He sometimes gets changed two or three times before leaving the house. Sometimes we will be out and he will go back to change. It used to be really bad, to the point that he would be physically sweating. That has improved in the last three or four years and he has gradually got a lot better. I think the issues are beneath the surface, but he is just dealing with it a bit better. It's nice to see Richard coming across as more confident. I am sure he is a bit more confident. He still has a lot of hang ups.

19. He is still not that confident. He couldn't walk into a pub on his own to meet someone. He is sometimes really conscious about the way he walks. Up until recently, he used to carry a bag all the time. He would put clothes in it so it looked full. He would carry that around all the time, which I never really understood.

20. There are things that irritate him, such as the noise of people eating or drinking. It doesn't even have to be noise he is just very conscious of it. He'll tut or sometimes he will snap. He won't even go to the cinema because there is always somebody there with a big tub of popcorn. I am aware of this when I eat or sometimes I won't eat in front of him at all, depending on what it is.

Depression

21. Depression has been a feature. The last time he was really bad was when he went up to Scotland, after giving evidence at the National Confidential Forum (NCF), in 2015. He was very disappointed. That was the first time he'd opened up and talked about his abuse in detail. He came back a broken man, and he had no after care. He asked for counselling and they told him to go to the citizens advice bureau. He had no counselling at all and was in a right state. He was suicidal and drove his car to [REDACTED] a few times. He went very distant.

22. He's always had dips and been suicidal. When he was drinking, and he would realise afterwards that he has done something wrong, he would get depressed. He would get agitated and be very snappy, then take off in the car. It is almost like he is picking a fight. It can last quite a while sometimes. It lasted a while after NCF.

Panic Attacks and Seizures

23. He used to have what we thought were panic attacks, after the brain haemorrhage. He was taken into hospital one time for appendicitis and had one of these attacks. A doctor, who was walking past, saw it and said it was a neurological seizure. He was having six or more a day and lived with it, then he had a huge one a couple of years ago. He was diagnosed with epilepsy and put on medication, and they stopped completely.

24. He has tried to [REDACTED] two or three times. This has been when he has been depressed. I think it is associated with his past. He hated himself at times and didn't like what he had become.

Flashbacks

25. I know Richard has flashbacks. He used to have terrible ones before he woke up, of the guy actually abusing him. He'd wake up really sweating. That has died off a bit. It is not as bad as it used to be. The night terrors used to be really bad. They still happen now and then but are less frequent. The last one was about two or three months ago.

26. Richard won't tolerate any abuse whatsoever. If he sees anything wrong happening, whether physical or mental, he will report it. He often reports care homes. This obviously effects his employment. He is doing the right thing in not letting it go. He won't see anybody being abused.

27. I feel that what has happened to Richard has always been damaging to him. When I first met him, he didn't know how to cuddle. He wouldn't cuddle at all. He would never go near any children at all. I have a nephew, who is almost nineteen. He was the first child that Richard got used to being around.

28. I know that he thinks about his abuse all the time. He talks about it and he is in touch with his foster sister. He was also in touch with his brother, and met his father a few years ago. His father died shortly after they met. His past is brought up all the time. He is never going to forget it. It has affected his quality of life.

Counselling

29. I think counselling has helped. I think he would be happier in a job that he enjoys more. Helen Holland has helped him a lot. She has been a really good support for him. I have spoken to her too and she hits on so many issues.

30. I am a little worried about him not getting the result that he wants from this process, when it is finished. I am prepared for a downward spiral. Richard is at his best when someone is very sick or poorly, and the last couple of years my mother has had bowel cancer. Richard is the first one there. This is why I love him so much. He does all the right things and he gets things done. He will get the doctors to see her and won't take no for an answer.

31. When my dad got ill a couple of years ago, he was given twelve weeks to live. Richard was absolutely fantastic. He was there every day and helped nurse my dad until his last hours. He is very good in times of trouble, but that is now over. My dad died, and Richard has been involved with the inquiry. I am worried what will happen when this is finished, and if he doesn't have a purpose. I think that is one of the reasons we started talking about getting married. It will be something for him to look forward to.

32. I am not sure what he hopes to get out of this process. I don't know if he will get any justice, but he needs to tell his story and that's what he's doing. I was worried about him after he gave his evidence to the inquiry, but he was alright.

33. Richard has got a good heart. Whenever my parents have been ill, he is the first there, whether we are together or not. The day I realised I really loved him was when I got the phone call about his brain haemorrhage. They told me it was a head injury so I knew it was very serious. I had a good job in Torquay and I dropped everything, and rushed up to nurse him. It was only when he came out of the coma that I thought about how I left everything to nurse him even though we weren't together. That was the big turning point for me, but I know he would have done the same for me.

34. I don't talk to anybody about Richard's business or when he is having a bad time. He hasn't been happy in the past when I have spoken to anyone about it. Things are good at the moment though and I feel very close to him. I just want him to get closure. At least people are listening to him now and that is helping. I think counselling helps him. He needs someone to talk to.

35. 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.

EZQ


Signed.....

Dated 30.11.16.....