

Scottish Child Abuse Inquiry

Witness Statement of

EKW
[REDACTED]

Support person present: Yes

1. My name is ^{EKW} [REDACTED] My date of birth is [REDACTED] 1969. My contact details are known to the Inquiry.
2. My name as a child in care was ^{EKW} [REDACTED] When I was about ten years old, my mum met a man called [REDACTED] and I took on his name when he became her partner.

Life before going into care

3. My mum was called [REDACTED] and my dad was called [REDACTED] My dad was a paint sprayer and he had his own garage. My mum's mum had a shop in [REDACTED] Aberdeen and that is where my parents met before they got married. I was born in [REDACTED] and my parents were very young when they had me. My brother was called [REDACTED] and he was eleven months older than me. My dad had an affair and my parents subsequently separated.
4. My dad started a new relationship and moved to England. His partner had two children from her previous relationship and they had three further children together. My dad got on with his life and didn't have anything to do with us. My mum started a new relationship with this woman's husband, [REDACTED] and he abused my brother and me. My mum started a relationship with him and she didn't care about us. She wasn't maternal and she didn't protect us. I used to cry all the time at home.

5. We moved to a caravan park outside Kintore, and [REDACTED] lived with us. I have horrendous memories of this when I must have been about five years old. [REDACTED] used to hit my brother, smash plates over his head, tell him to say things and then made him watch while he sexually abused me. [REDACTED] used to go and get sweets and he would give me these to eat while he interfered with me down below. He hurt me with his hands. My mum was never there when I was being sexually abused and I felt my mum had gone away to let the abuse happen.
6. My brother and I were frightened to come in to the caravan sometimes and we would hide in a barn for hours because [REDACTED] would batter us. We were neglected and my mother was never there. Social work got involved with the family and I can remember my grandfather being there. [REDACTED] was a heavy drinker and he and my mum were always arguing. He always looked at me in a sexual way. What he did to me was beyond a joke. It was sickening and he made my brother watch.
7. My mum got a new build house [REDACTED] near Inverurie and [REDACTED] abused us there too. He put us in the cupboards and locked us in them overnight. He would fight with my mother and she would put him out and then we would be alright for a while.
8. My brother and I were taken to Nazareth House from the caravan in [REDACTED]. I think Gladys Main, the social worker, knew what was going on with [REDACTED] and my mum and she wanted us in care to protect us. My mum signed us over into the care of the social work department so that she could get on with her life.
9. I think I was about six or seven when I went into care and I don't remember getting dropped off at Nazareth House because I was so young. My brother and I were very scared. I thought when I went into care that I would be protected from abuse so I had mixed emotions.

EKW
[REDACTED]

Nazareth House, Aberdeen

10. Nazareth House had a huge, beautiful stairway and there were three dormitories upstairs. Boys and girls were in separate dormitories and there were about eight beds in each dormitory. There were just beds in the dormitories, no lockers and no toys.
11. There was a kitchen, dining room, a hall downstairs and a corner where a woman cleaned about thirty pairs of shoes. I used to sit and speak to her while she did this. She wasn't a nun she just cleaned shoes and tidied up.
12. Nazareth House was mainly run by nuns but there were a few civilians there too who cooked the food and tidied up. The nuns wore robes. Some of them were dressed in blue and some of them were dressed in black. There was one man who used to come and he was important but you didn't see a lot of men there. The man who came wore normal clothes sometimes and religious clothes sometimes. Another man came now and again and he was a bit higher up.
13. Nazareth House was so strict and dull. There was no playing. I had a doll which I had brought with me and I kept it with me all the time. I used to ask the nuns if I could see my brother but they wouldn't listen.
14. I think Gladys Main and Mr Hunter were my social workers when I was in Nazareth House. I remember going to a panel in Albyn Place in Aberdeen and Gladys Main was there. These panels were to see where the future was going to be for me and my brother, and my brother attended the panels with me.

Routine at Nazareth House, Aberdeen

Mornings and bedtime

15. I remember getting up and getting dressed. I think the nuns shouted at us to get us up. We were just put to bed at night and nobody read us a story.

Mealtimes / Food

16. The food was alright but you got into trouble with the nuns if you didn't eat everything on your plate. If you didn't eat it, they would tell you to eat it. I used to start crying and then I would get slapped across the face.

Clothing / uniform

17. We were dressed up for church and praying all the time. I had a beautiful long dress with puffy sleeves. It was yellow and blue stripes. I wore the same one all the time I went to church. I remember going to church and praying all the time. The church was attached to Nazareth House.

School

18. I can't remember anything about school when I was in Nazareth House.

Religion

19. We went to church every day after school, not for long, just to pray. We went to church on a Sunday morning and this was a longer service and we also went in the evening time.

Birthdays and Christmas

20. My birthday wasn't recognised at Nazareth House. I can't remember what happened at Christmas.

Visits / Inspections

21. I didn't have any visits from my mum and I didn't see her for about two years. She went away and never came back.

Bed Wetting

22. I didn't wet the bed every night but it happened to me a few times. I wet the bed when I was upset or sad. The nuns used to put me into a freezing cold bath at night time and they told me this would stop me wetting the bed. I didn't wet the bed before I went into Nazareth House and I had never had a cold bath before I went into care. A lot of people tried to hide the fact that they had wet the bed because the nuns would go off their heads. They would slap us across the face and give us a row

Foster Care Placement

23. We were supposed to be put up for adoption when we were in Nazareth House but this didn't happen. I think it was the nuns who told us we were going into foster care. We were sent to live with a man and woman who owned a farm when I was about seven or eight. I never met them before I was sent to live with them. I remember being driven there in a car, probably by a social worker. I shared a room with my brother. They didn't have any children of their own and they were in their thirties. The lady was very strict.
24. They didn't want children to look after. They wanted workers. They told us we had to be up at five or six in the morning and they told us all the jobs we had to do like

looking after the chickens and the cows. I said I was too small to do jobs like that and my brother stuck up for me. The woman slapped me across the face.

25. The foster mother slapped me a few times when I was there because I couldn't do what she told me to do and then they sent us both back to Nazareth House because we were too young to work. I don't think we were there for long, maybe a week or two and we never attended school.

26. I think we were sent to another foster care placement but I can't remember anything about it. I have either read about this or else my brother has told me. In those days social workers made up their minds about what to do with you and you didn't have a say. No social workers came to see us in Nazareth House and to ask if we were alright or to ask us what we wanted to do next. We were just hit with a bombshell and I was confused. I was an unhappy child and I was always crying.

Abduction from Nazareth House

27. My brother and I were sitting on a dyke outside Nazareth House and I was swinging my dolly. All of a sudden a taxi pulled up and out got my mother and [REDACTED]. They pushed us into the taxi and took us to Dundee. I think we were in Dundee for a little while because we started getting used to the place.

28. I was on a mattress in a flat in Dundee watching television and it was on the news that two children had been abducted from Nazareth House and there was an appeal for information. I said to my mother that was us and she quickly changed the channel on the television. I was sexually abused again by [REDACTED]. The nuns weren't looking after us properly and we were abducted. We were eventually returned to Nazareth House.

Abuse at Nazareth House, Aberdeen

29. I was slapped across the face quite a lot because I was quite a miserable child and I was always looking for my brother. I didn't see him as much as I should have seen him and sometimes I didn't see him at all. One of the nuns that used to slap me had a big mole on the left hand side of her face, on her cheek near her mouth and she had dark hair. It was just one hard slap. This made me upset and confused and I used to cry.

30. In Nazareth House you used to be made to stand in corners until you dropped. You had to face the wall and you stood there for half the night if you were naughty or cheeky or had wet the bed. Your knees would go and you would drop to the floor. This happened to me twice and I saw it happen to other children. When I fell down I was told to get up and face the corner again and eventually I was allowed to go to bed.

31. My brother was always getting into trouble and he used to get slapped in the face too. He also used to be put into cold baths.

32. One of the nuns made my brother do sexual things to me. We didn't have full sex, he just touched my chest underneath my t-shirt and down below over my clothes. Before he did this the nun took off her nun hat, placed it underneath her arm and then told him to start. It lasted about five minutes. She didn't make me do anything to my brother, she just wanted him to do things to me. She told him to lie on top of me. I think we were lying on a single dormitory bed. She put her hat back on when it was finished. The nun had dark hair and wore a blue habit. It just happened once that I can remember and I felt disgusting and hurt. My brother and I had been through so much sexual abuse so it hurt me and this is what messed up the relationship between us.

Leaving Nazareth House, Aberdeen

33. I'm not sure why we left Nazareth House but we must have said something to the social worker about not liking it because they decided to put us in Seafield. Mr Hunter, a social worker, along with my mum, picked us up. They dropped us off at the gates of Seafield and told us to go to the door.

Seafield Children's Home, Aberdeen

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Secondary Institutions - to be published later

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Leaving Seafield

49. One day we came back from school and we saw our massive trunk at the bottom of the stairs. We had this trunk when we were in Nazareth House as well. The day we left I saw it and I thought 'Oh no we are going to go through all this again' because home wasn't happy. I wasn't told that I was leaving Seafield but I thought the teacher was behaving a bit strangely on my last day of school and was quite clingy. My mum collected us in a taxi and we carried the trunk out. There was a man standing behind the door and my mum introduced him to us as her new boyfriend, [REDACTED].
50. Mrs Rothnay said we were going home because mum had a new house, she had met a new partner and they were going to see if it would work out. She said we would be well looked after. I don't think Seafield would have let us go home until they had checked the house in [REDACTED] Aberdeen and made sure my mother wasn't with [REDACTED] but I didn't want to leave.

Life after being in care

51. I took my mum's new partner's name. He was a worker and he was a grand guy. He never once looked at me sexually. My mother was a cold person. When I was living at home I used to shoplift clothes and my mother encouraged me to steal things for

her too. This when I was twelve years old. I started smoking and my mother didn't try to stop me. Things at home were alright and my stepdad was good.

52. [REDACTED] turned up at my mum's when we had been home for six or eight months and my stepdad, who worked as a builder, was at work. I saw him looking at me in a sexual way so I hid outside the house for a couple of hours. He battered my mum but that was the last time I ever saw him and I was about eleven then.
53. Social workers were involved with us for a long time after we left Seafield. I think my mum attended the panels. We had to go back and forward to children's panels at Albyn Place approximately every six months to make sure everything was alright. I think we were involved with social workers until I was twelve or thirteen. Gladys Main, our social worker wanted to be involved with us until we were sixteen but my mother wasn't having it. I can't remember Gladys Main coming to the house but I know she was heavily involved with us for ages. She and my mum didn't get on at all.
54. My brother [REDACTED] did something bad and ended up getting sent to Brimmond for a year so we were separated then.
55. I attended Aberdeen Grammar School but I didn't get any qualifications because I didn't get any support at home. I enjoyed school and I had nice friends.
56. My brother left home at sixteen and never turned back. I left home when I was sixteen as well. I had a baby when I was sixteen, [REDACTED] who is thirty four now and I had [REDACTED] who is thirty two, with the same father. I have a daughter called [REDACTED] who is twenty nine and I have seven grandchildren.
57. My children all work. I do with my children what my mother didn't do with me. My partner's mother taught me how to run a house. I tell my children that I love them when I phone them at night. If they have appointments to go to or they are not keeping well, I am there. I have had a lot of jobs. I have worked in bakers, bars and had cleaning jobs.

Impact

58. When I attended Woodside School they said that I wasn't a normal child. I had deep thoughts and I was always crying. I blame this on what happened to me when I was young and not having a relationship with my brother. My brother and I were let down by the system big time. I saw a psychologist from a young age after I left care. I attended the Sick Kids in Aberdeen and you needed to be under fourteen to be seen there. I went there regularly.
59. I was diagnosed as being bipolar when I was 22 as a result of the abuse in my childhood. I suffer with severe mental health issues which started when I was very young but I didn't start taking medication until I was 30 and I am on anti-psychotics. Some days I am really bad and some days I am not. I was eventually diagnosed with chronic bipolar in 2001 when I was 32 after being admitted to hospital a lot, having suicidal thoughts, being depressed and having mood swings.
60. I was close to my brother when I was in care but because of what happened with [REDACTED] and in care, my brother finds it very difficult now. Being in care destroyed my relationship with my brother for the rest of my life. I haven't seen him for three years and we are not in contact now. It is the breakdown of the relationship with my brother which affects me the most because we stuck together when we were children. My brother says what happened to us was barbaric.
61. I have been in relationships with men and I made sure that none of my children were sexually abused. I went through bad times but my children always came first.
62. If a nun walks down the road, I cross over to the other side. I hate nuns. I attend a non-denominational Christian church. I helped with giving people their supper and I worked with homeless people.
63. I phoned the Inquiry in the hope of putting things behind me. Before that I lived with what happened to me for thirty five years. I think about what happened now and again and then it goes away.

EKW



64. The sexual abuse by [REDACTED] affected the relationships I was in.
65. I will be on medication for the rest of my life and the doctors have told me that my life will be cut short because I have been on medication for so long. I haven't had counselling but I have a psychiatric nurse who I see regularly whenever I need her. She won't leave me if I am feeling stressed. I see a psychiatrist every six to eight weeks.
66. I have been feeling alright lately because I knew I was coming to meet with the Inquiry. I was getting really anxious while I was waiting to meet with the Inquiry and I was having suicidal thoughts.
67. Future Pathways have been really good with me. They have arranged for me to see a psychologist in Glasgow after I have met with the Inquiry and Scott from Future Pathways phones me every week to make sure I am alright, sometimes more frequently if I am in a bad place. He is at the end of the phone if I need to speak to him.

Reporting of Abuse

68. I didn't tell anybody about the abuse because nobody would have believed me in those days. I have never reported what happened to me to the police and [REDACTED] [REDACTED] died around the year 2000. I told one of my boyfriends about the things that had happened to me but I never spoke about it again. It was too personal to speak about.

Records

69. I have never tried to get my records but Future Pathways are going to help me recover them.

Lessons to be Learned

70. People should be background checked before they are allowed to work with children. There should be inspections and more supervision and not letting you go to places where you can be used as slaves.

Other information

71. The police contacted my brother about Nazareth House but he refused to speak about it. The police have never spoken to me. They were probably looking for me but couldn't trace me because I changed my name to EKW.
72. My parents are still alive. My mum is seventy and my dad is almost seventy. My dad lives in England and my mum lives in Aberdeen. My mother still says and does things she shouldn't do as a parent.
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.....

EKW

Dated.....

25/9/20

EKW

