

**Scottish Child Abuse Inquiry**

Witness Statement of GFF [REDACTED]

GFF [REDACTED]

Support person present: No

1. My name is GFF [REDACTED]. My date of birth is [REDACTED] 1954. My contact details are known to the Inquiry.

**Life before going into care**

2. I was born in West Calder. My father's name was [REDACTED]. My mother's name was [REDACTED]. After I was born, my parents moved to Edinburgh. We lived in the smack centre of Edinburgh on [REDACTED]. Our home was just off of the Cowgate. I lived there with my older sister and two older brothers. My older sister was called [REDACTED]. My older brothers are called [REDACTED] and [REDACTED]. I have a younger brother who came along, later. His name was [REDACTED].
3. It was a bit overcrowded in the house. I was more or less fostered off to my Uncle [REDACTED] because the house on [REDACTED] only had two bedrooms. I was about three years old when I went to my Uncle [REDACTED]. I think it was an informal arrangement. I think I went there when my mother was pregnant with [REDACTED]. My uncle stayed in [REDACTED] near Loch Leven in Kinross. It was a small village. I vaguely remember the cottage. I stayed with my uncle for about two years. At the age of about five, I went back to my parents. A few years later, my parents split up. My dad went for a packet of cigarettes and didn't come back. I didn't see him until thirty years later. When I saw him again, I asked him where the cigarettes were.

4. My mother was a waitress in a posh restaurant on Princes Street. She never had it easy. After my father left, she was left on her own to bring up five of us. I remember stealing apples and rhubarb for her to help feed us all.
5. I went to St Anne's infant school in the Cowgate. It was opposite where the mortuary was. Later on, I went to St Patrick's on the Pleasance. I was frightened of spelling. I started skipping school because my English was abysmal. I got landed with a "skipping book" that had to be signed on a daily basis. I couldn't handle school.
6. When I was nine years old I got caught stealing a bar of chocolate from Woolworths. I ended up being taken to a court because of that. The court I was taken to was the old Edinburgh Sheriff Court on the High Street. There was no social work involvement. There were background reports done. I think that's what brought to light the fact that I had been skipping school. The reports said that my education level was abysmal. A court order was made that I should be sent to St Ninian's.
7. I was crying when I was in the cells after the court hearing. The judge actually got me back up after everything was finished to tell me why I was getting sent to St Ninian's. I ended up in Gilmerton Remand Centre. I was there for a couple of nights. A social worker, probation officer or someone like that then picked me up. He drove me to Stirling in his car. I then went from Stirling to Aberfoyle. It was a civvy guy who took me to St Ninian's.

#### **St Ninian's, Gartmore, Stirlingshire**

8. St Ninian's was run by the De La Salle brothers. I was there between the ages of nine and about eleven years old. It was all boys. There were a lot of boys in St Ninian's. The place was a nightmare. It was sheer hell.
9. St Ninian's was a beautiful building, but it was scary. I can remember every single nook and cranny of that place. There was a walk up to the building. It was called the "butler's walk." The dormitories were all over the building, at the sides. There

was a chapel located on the right hand side of the main building. There was a great big door into the main hallway. On the right hand side, was a room where you could watch television. On the left hand side, was a massive staircase that took you up to the second level. That is where I stayed. There was a big gym there. I don't remember the heating being on at any time. I'd imagine it must have cost a fortune to heat that building.

10. There was a house system. There were four houses. The houses were called St George's, St Patrick's, De La Salle and St Andrew's. I was in St Andrew's. I would say there were about twenty to twenty-five boys to each house. You used to have to stand in your houses. I think the houses were there to encourage competition.

*Staff*

11. There were quite a lot of staff in the building. There were staff who were De La Salle brothers and then there were others who were "civvy" staff. The civvy staff were the teachers. The civvy staff sometimes covered for the brothers. Some of the brothers were also teachers. The brothers lived inside the home. Some of the civvy staff had rooms in the home as well.
12. I'm sure that the name of the brother **SNR** was Brother **MCA**. He was like **SNR**. There was a Brother **MBU** and a Brother Tharius. There was also a Brother **LOJ**. There was a joinery teacher and a PE teacher who were both civvy staff. Brother **MBZ** was a teacher. He was a young guy. He was quite good.
13. One of the civvy staff members was called Mr **MCK**. He had a room in the home. He was both a teacher and looked after the children in the home. Mr **MCK** could have been in his thirties when I was there. He was an evil bastard.

## **Routine at St Ninian's**

### *First day*

14. It was scary and daunting when I first went up to St Ninian's. I had never been in one of those big mansion type of things. I didn't know what was going on. There was no-one there to direct me when I arrived. Later on in the day, they gave me my sheets and took me up to my bedroom. They showed me where my bed was. They showed me where to put my clothes. In the evening, I was taken to the dining room for the evening meal. It was probably about four thirty in the afternoon. There were three other boys there. I befriended them and they told me what to do in the place. They were the ones who told me the routine of the place. Nobody else there told me anything about the routine of the place, other than those boys.

### *Sleeping arrangements*

15. There were a series of bedrooms. All of the bedrooms in my part of the building constituted St Andrew's house. There was a corridor which all of the rooms came off. There were no doors on the rooms. They were all open to the corridor. It was a mixture of ages in each room. There were six beds in one room and four beds in others. There were five beds in my bedroom. Where my bed was, I could look out of the window and see the Wallace Monument and Stirling Castle in the distance.

### *Mornings and bedtime*

16. Somebody would walk up the corridor ringing a bell to tell you that you should be up. I was always awake at that point anyway. I would be looking out at the view from the bedroom window. You would then have to go and brush your teeth. Mr MCK stood over you as you did that. You had a tin of toothpaste powder to brush your teeth with. You weren't allowed to leave the sink until your gums were bleeding. Mr MCK would inspect you to make sure that there was a froth. He would slap you on the head if you were fine to rinse. I sometimes saw boys brushing their teeth for up to

twenty minutes. There was no need for that. After brushing your teeth, you got dressed. You then went down for breakfast, house by house.

17. Bedtime was about nine o'clock. I remember hearing the theme tune to the Nine O'clock News on the television as I went up the stairs to my bed. You went up the stairs, brushed your teeth then went to bed. Lights out must have been about nine thirty.

*Washing, bathing and toilets*

18. There were no baths for us. I do remember that the brothers had their own baths. You got a shower a couple of times a week. It depended on what the weather was like. There were about nine or ten showers in the bathroom. You had to go in, get washed and get out quick. If you weren't going quick enough you got hit with a stick to get your arse moving. Your towel only got changed once a week. You kept that by your bed.
19. You used to have to stand in your houses and be given toilet paper. They gave you two pieces of that shiny stuff to use. It was rough and tough paper like tracing paper. Mr MCK room was right next door to the toilet. He was on the same corridor as St Andrew's house. You would hate going to the toilet because you had to pass his door.

*Clothes*

20. There was a uniform. It was a jaggy shirt and shorts. You had boots and socks. The socks had your house colours on them. Those were the clothes that you wore all of the time. I can't remember whether we wore jammies. When your clothes were dirty, you put your clothes into a big basket. There was a number on your clothes.

*Possessions*

21. I didn't have any personal possessions. I had nothing. One Christmas, my mother bought me a watch. I took it back to St Ninian's. I think it was stolen.

*Pocket money*

22. My mum used to send me a postal order, so I could buy things there. There was a tuck shop and I used to spend the money in there. You were also given about a shilling a month by the school. It was like pocket money really. When you went on leave, they gave you your bus fare out of that to get to Edinburgh.

*Friends*

23. You got to know some of the kids. By the time you were a year in, you felt as if you were in there. You had your wee clique or gang. You had your best mates. There were a set of twins who I became quite friendly with. I can't remember their names.

*Leisure time and activities*

24. There was nothing like toys to play with. There were just chairs. It was a room full of chairs and a television. We were allowed to watch television in the evenings. I remember watching 'The Man from Uncle'. If you didn't want to watch the television, there was another room, like a library type thing, that had books, comics and board games. Most of the guys used to watch the television though.
25. After your tea, you were allowed outside for about an hour's playtime. Inside of the grounds there were trees. You could snap straight branches off of them. We had competitions throwing the sticks. We also used to play, "five stones". During the winter time, you never really got out at all.
26. I joined something called the "Haylofters". The name came about after Mr MCK decided to put a play on. He decided to convert the hayloft of an old stable. The old

stable was by the school. It was converted so that we could put plays on there. I joined the Haylofters for an easy life. I thought that if I was good enough, Mr MCK might leave me alone. I got the second lead role in the play. There were about seven or eight of us in the play. We took the play and performed it for one night in a big theatre in Perth. My mum came to see it.

27. There were Shetland ponies there. I remember one time, Brother MBZ trying to teach me cricket. I'm sure I went swimming once in Glasgow.
28. We got to go to Stirling cinema. We got taken there by one of the brothers. They went in their civvies. We were taken by the house. One house would go one week, then the next house would go the following week.
29. One time, I joined St Ninian's football team. I think the football pitch belonged to Gartmore village. It could have belonged to the school there. It was a bad move. It was wintertime. It was freezing and the pitch was rock solid. My knees were all skinned and everything.

#### *Food*

30. You had to sit down in silence when you went down for meals. If anyone made any noise, you would get thrown out. You had a designated table for your house.
31. Breakfast was crap. I never really ate it. There were cornflakes and watered down milk or porridge. I ate toast and butter. That's about it. You never got a bit of bacon or a sausage or anything like that. You were lucky if you saw an egg. Lunchtime was disgusting. Dinner time wasn't too bad because you got two slices of bread. I always wanted the heel of the bread because it was thicker. In the evening, the food wasn't too bad.
32. I hated butterbeans. I used to get one of the other boys to eat my butterbeans. The boy who did that left. After that, I tried packing them up underneath the lip of the table. Mr MCK caught me doing that. He tried to make me eat the butterbeans. I

just could not eat them. I tried to mix them in with the black pudding but I couldn't do it. They were disgusting. I was then put over Mr MCK knee and smacked on my bare buttocks. I also ended up losing a weekend's leave.

### *School*

33. The school building was in a separate building from the main building. School started at nine o'clock. The lessons were organised like a timetable. You went from class to class. We got taught woodwork and things like that. We never got any homework. Both the brothers and civilians were teachers. It was mainly brothers. A lot of the teachers were fine, but some of the brothers were bastards. The schooling varied at St Ninian's. It all depended on what class you were in.
34. Brother MBZ class was always a good class. I'm sure he taught maths. He was just an everyday guy. He was good. He had a wee pretend shop in the school where you were taught how to use money.
35. I used to hate going to Mr MCK class. He taught English. I wasn't very good at spelling. I was terrified of him. Everybody hated him.

### *Religious instruction*

36. We always had to say prayers before mealtimes and bedtime. St Ninian's was quite strict religious-wise. By the time I went to St Ninian's, I had been to a Catholic school and had my first holy communion. I had been brought up with religion.
37. I started going to early morning mass. I chose to do that. I did that because I realised that if you went to mass, it used up three quarters of an hour of the morning routine. You avoided doing chores if you did mass.
38. After about seven or eight months, I became an altar boy. I did that until I left St Ninian's. The priest asked me to become an altar boy because I had been going to mass. I agreed to become an altar boy because it allowed me to escape more of the



rigmarole of the mornings. Being an altar boy made my life easier. I was fed up of being abused. The drawback was that some evenings there was benediction. Going to that meant you lost out on your "play hour". There were swings and roundabouts to being an altar boy.

#### *Chores*

39. After you had your breakfast in the dining room, you went through to the conservatory for your chores. They went right on until about nine o'clock. Everybody did chores every morning of the week. There was no way to get away with it. You would be made to sweep, mop, dust and use the bumpers to polish the floors. I used to have to burn Brother MBZ rubbish. I used to love that. I knew he smoked and I could pull out the fag ends.

#### *Visits home*

40. When I first went to St Ninian's, I didn't get to go home. You had to prove that you were settled in and all the rest of it. After about three months, I got out once a month to go home for the weekend. You would leave on a Friday afternoon. It was quite a long journey. I remember having to walk into Aberfoyle to get a bus to Stirling. Nobody from the staff walked with you. Sometimes there were other kids walking into town with you to get the bus. After getting into Stirling, you then had to pick up a different bus to Edinburgh. You were away for two nights.

#### *Writing home*

41. There were no materials available to write home.

#### *Holidays*

42. I do remember one weekend where we stayed in a barn on a farm near Carnoustie. That was for a long weekend. We got a shilling each. I remember that we went to

the shows near there. It was possibly the whole of St Ninian's that went. There were quite a lot of us there. I don't remember going anywhere else.

#### *Birthdays and Christmas*

43. If it was your weekend on your birthday, then you were at home anyway. You didn't get anything for your birthday if you weren't home. You just got your "birthday dunks" off of the guys and that was about it. There were no presents or cake or anything like that. It was just another day.
44. I can't remember going home for Christmas. I don't remember anything about Christmas. I must have gone home once because I remember getting a watch off of my mother.

#### *Visits / Inspections*

45. I didn't get visits whilst I was there. Some kids did get visits. Their parents lived nearer. My mother lived in Edinburgh. She was a single parent. My mother never had the money to come all the way out to see me.
46. I never saw a social worker when I was there. I did see other social workers dropping other kids off, but that was about it. I never saw any inspections of the place.

#### *Healthcare*

47. I never saw a doctor when I was there. There was a nurse on site. I don't know whether she lived there. I'm sure the nurse used to deal with the kitchen side of things too. We saw her serving out food quite a lot. We used to call her the "nit nurse". You had your hair checked once a week. She would use a bone comb. She stuck it into your head.

48. There was a dentist who came in. It was an outside dentist. There was a room with a dentist chair in it. When I was about ten, I went to see the dentist at St Ninian's. I sat down in the chair. Before I knew it, the dentist was rattling teeth out of me. No gas or anaesthetic was given to me. He just put me into a chair and pulled them out. He ended up taking the wrong teeth out. I never expected to lose teeth. There was nothing wrong with my teeth. I reckon the dentist must have been on commission for every tooth he removed.

### **Abuse at St Ninian's**

49. The staff at St Ninian's didn't show any sympathy towards any of the kids there. Kids were crying. I would be crying. I don't know whether that would happen nowadays.
50. If someone did something wrong, they got a beating. The abuse didn't happen on a daily basis but you would see it happening. It was a regular occurrence. I saw the stick being used on other people. There were a few brothers and civilians who used the stick and belt. They weren't just wee sticks. Some of the sticks had like a ball on the end. They were like walking sticks. The kids who ran away would go through hell when they came back. Their life was miserable. They were given more time when they came back. I didn't run away.
51. I can't remember the name of the brother who was the worst perpetrator. I think it might be Brother **LOJ**. That name rings a bell. My older brother, **██████████** **██████████**, was in St Joseph's school near Tranent. He got many a beating from the same guy. It was a De La Salle brother. I think that the brother was transferred there. My brother said he was abused by this brother.
52. If there was a fight, the kids who were fighting would be dragged away by their hair. They were dragged across the floor. They were kicked and hit with a stick then thrown into a room. You would end up with big black marks on your legs from being hit by a stick or a belt.

53. When you had a shower, Brother **LOJ** would come in with a big stick. I can't remember his name for sure but I think was Brother **LOJ**. He and Mr **MCK** used to hit us in the shower. They would start smacking you. You used to get booted up the arse regularly when they tried to get you out of the shower. They didn't give a crap who they hit. They were just pure evil. You were naked. You just had to get out.
54. Sometimes, when we were watching television, someone would move. If anyone moved, Mr **MCK** used to get everybody up. You would have to put your shorts, boots and a stupid wee coat on. You were then made to go on walks through the woods. You were forced to walk for miles. We would do that in pitch back. You could be made to walk six miles at any time of the day or night. That also happened if anybody misbehaved in the dining room or during playtime.
55. Mr **MCK** had a stick. He used to batter you with it. He also used his hands. He would do that for no apparent reason. He used to put you over his knee. He would pull down your shorts. He would really "give you it" on whatever cheek was available. He would hit you so hard he would leave finger marks. It was painful.
56. The evening after I had my teeth removed, I was made to brush my teeth by Mr **MCK**. I couldn't brush my teeth. I refused to do it because my gums were sore. Mr **MCK** made me strip naked. He told me to stand naked facing a wall on the stairs in the dark. I was scared. There were ghost stories about a white lady. It was a creepy place. I must have stood there for about three or four hours. It could have been less than that but that's how long it felt. When I went back to my bed, the lights were out and the other boys were sleeping. Lights out was about nine o'clock so it must have been after then that I went to bed. If Mr **MCK** was on duty at night he would pace the corridors. When he was on duty, you could guarantee that there would be some kids standing naked in the corridor.
57. There were three of us. I must have been about ten. I'd been in St Ninian's for about a year. We were picked to go on walks by this French brother. I don't

remember the brother's name but he was a De La Salle brother. He had come over from France. He was probably in his thirties. He looked a bit older than Mr MCK. He was quite heavy. He wasn't a teacher. He was just visiting. He was staying in a room within the school building, opposite the main house. After we came back from the walk, he asked me if I wanted a biscuit. I went into his room on my own. The door was open and he gave me a biscuit. Then he got up and he quietly closed the door. He then joked about and gave me another biscuit. Then he started being forceful. He sexually abused me in that room. It wasn't just playing around. It was full penetration. It was sore. I was crying. Once he had finished, he told me to pull my trousers up and told me to get out. I didn't see him again after that.

58. The brothers used to go crazy when one of the boys wet their bed. Fortunately, I was never a bed-wetter. I saw others who did. One of the twins from Stirling I was friendly with, used to wet the bed. The boys who wet the bed had to chap the brother's or Mr MCK door to tell them. You would hear the boys who wet the beds screaming because they were getting hurt after telling the brothers. You would hear them getting dragged out and thrown against a door or thrown down the stairs. You learnt to just turn over and not look. That didn't happen every night, but it happened from time to time.
59. I once saw one of the brothers rubbing a boy who had wet the bed's face in his wet sheets. They would humiliate them. I don't know whether they got clean sheets or a clean mattress.

### **Leaving St Ninian's**

60. The headmaster came up to me one morning. I was walking across the car park between school buildings. He told me to get my stuff and that I was leaving. I was eleven. I wasn't given any notice. I left that day. I didn't have a clue I was going to be leaving. My mum didn't know I was coming home. There was no reason given to me why I was leaving. It must have just been my time. I just went home on my own.

I got the bus home. It was just as if I was going home for a weekend. I was over the moon that I was going home.

### **Time in between St Ninian's and St Mary's**

61. After I went home, I went to St Anthony's Secondary School in Lochend. There was an annex there where I did a prep year.
62. When I was thirteen, I went into the Scotsman's building with my cousin. It was about six or seven in the evening. I was looking for the office where the Scotsman did their "spot the ball" competition. We went in to try and find the picture with the ball in it. I went in and raked through some drawers. I got caught by a security guard who was walking through the building. My cousin got away. I was taken up to the police station on the High Street. I was kept there overnight. I was then taken to Edinburgh Sheriff Court. The court said that I needed to be kept in the new remand centre in Liberton whilst people got background reports. I went back to the court after about a week. I was then sent, under a court order to St Mary's. I was sent there for house breaking. I can't remember how I was taken to St Mary's.

### **St Mary's Boys School, Bishopbriggs, Glasgow, Lanarkshire**

63. I was in St Mary's between the ages of thirteen and fifteen. There were about sixty and seventy guys there. It was all boys. The kids there were aged between twelve and fifteen and a half. It was for older boys. It was an open place. You could walk out the gates at any time. You were within walking distance of Bishopbriggs.
64. We were all put in houses. The house names were St George's, St Patrick's, St Andrew's and De La Salle.
65. I was bit older and a bit more wiser when I went to St Mary's. I tried to wise up pretty quickly when I went there. My objective there was to get in with the older guys who

had been there longer. I wanted to blend in a bit easier to make life easier for myself. That was just life.

66. The day to day life in St Mary's was a lot easier than St Ninian's. You could have a laugh at St Mary's. There was a dark side though. You heard of things that happened.

#### *Staff*

67. I think the headmaster's name might have been Turner but I am not sure. The headmaster was a really nice guy. He was very pleasant. Mr <sup>KDN</sup> [REDACTED] was the <sup>SNR</sup> [REDACTED]. There was a baker called <sup>zHHF</sup> [REDACTED].
68. There was a guy called <sup>LYT</sup> [REDACTED]. All the lads used to call him <sup>LYT</sup> [REDACTED]. I don't know why. He had a house on the grounds. He lived with his mother. He was [REDACTED]. He was like a quartermaster. He had a storeroom. He was an all-round good engineer type of guy. He was involved in general maintenance.
69. There were De La Salle brothers there but there were more civilian staff. One of the brothers did all the gardening side of things. There was a nun there who was the nurse. The brothers and the sister stayed in the home. The civilian staff had houses nearby.

#### **Routine at St Mary's**

##### *First day*

70. I remember going in through the gates at St Mary's. There was a red gravel chip drive around the building. The building was a funny shape. When I arrived I was taken right away into the headmaster's office. I quite liked him. He wasn't a bad bloke. He gave me the ground rules. He told me that if I walked off the grounds I

would just add time onto the time I was there. He said to keep my nose clean, do as I was told and everything would be ok. I'm sure it was Mr KDN who then showed me where I would be sleeping. It could have been him.

#### *Sleeping arrangements*

71. We slept in dorms. There must have been between fifteen and twenty guys sleeping in each dorm.

#### *Routine*

72. In the mornings you got up, went to the toilet and did your ablutions. There was no pressure. You then went back to your dorm and made your bed into a bed block. You then went to have your breakfast. After breakfast, you went to your work groups. You then worked with your group all day. You went to bed at about half past eight. You had half an hour to do your ablutions. You were never forced to do that. Lights out was at nine o'clock.

#### *Clothes*

73. I can't remember what you wore. I remember there being jeans and dungarees and wearing them when we worked. There were wellies for the guys who worked in the fields. The bakery guys wore whites. I think what you wore was dependent on what you did.

#### *Leisure time and activities*

74. We used to go swimming quite a lot at Springburn Baths. There was a projector in the place where we could watch movies. They allowed you to smoke. I remember buying tobacco from the tuck shop in there.



75. There was a wood at St Mary's. You could run riot in those woods. You could take out your frustrations there. That's where you went if you wanted a fight. You went up as a group. The headmaster turned a blind eye to that.

*Food*

76. You had your meals in the dining room. It was a big room. It was quite long. There was a hot plate where the chef served you your meals. The whole school ate together. There were staff there. They didn't eat there. They had a separate staff room next to the assembly hall. You weren't forced to eat anything.
77. Breakfast wasn't too bad. You got a choice of cereals. There was porridge. There was a big pot of tea on each table. There was plenty of bread. There was sausage and egg available for breakfast. You sometimes got a bit of black pudding or bacon.

*School / work*

78. It was all servile work there. There was no classroom work. You never went into a classroom and did any proper schooling as such. I can't remember doing anything like that. It was all joinery and painting and things like that. There was a "young farmers" section there. You could go out in the fields and work on growing things. There was a joinery and a woodwork shop. They told you what you were doing. You didn't get to pick what type of work you did.
79. I worked with LYT He only ever had four lads who worked with him at any one time. It was a hard group to get into. There were a lot of skills to be learnt off of him. You had to have a bit of knowledge of everything. He taught me all about the school's oil burner. I used to wake up in the middle of the night for the oil deliveries for the oil burner. I did that because, at fourteen fifteen, I was the only one who knew what to do when there was a delivery.
80. I got work when I was fifteen. I was allowed to go out and work at that time. I got a job in a carwash. St Mary's organised that job for me. I don't know who it was

organised through. You didn't have a choice where to go. I think I got about two or three pounds a day. I was ill when I started work. I only worked there a couple of months before I was released.

#### *Money*

81. We used to get paid for our work. Exactly how much, I don't know. You never got a great deal of money when you started. Any money accrued to you was put somewhere. You would have to go to an office and get your train fares to go home out of that. I used to get some money off my mother to buy things in the school. I used to buy tobacco and things like that.

#### *Religious instruction*

82. You weren't forced to go to mass. You weren't forced to go to church.

#### *Visits home*

83. When you first went there, you got leave once a month. After about six months, you were allowed to go home every three weeks. Later, you went home every fortnight. You knew you were getting close to the time that you would be getting released when you got home every weekend.
84. When you got home for the weekend you went on the Friday and came back on the Sunday. You had to be back in the home by seven thirty on the Sunday night. To get home, you walked into Bishopbriggs. You then got a bus to Glasgow, then a train back to Edinburgh.

#### *Holidays and trips*

85. We went "tattie howking". That was a great laugh. About fifteen or twenty of us would go to do that. You earned money doing that. It wasn't a great deal of money.

I don't know whether they taxed us at source but we didn't get everything we earned. I don't remember going on any other trips or holidays at St Mary's.

#### *Birthdays and Christmas*

86. At Christmas, they took you to the Kelvin Hall for the fair. There was a bit of a Christmas party in the home. There was a Christmas dinner. It wasn't very good. Birthdays were just another day. Your group might put something on.

#### *Visits / Inspections*

87. My mother did come through to visit on one of the parents' days. I think I'd been there a good year and a half before she visited.
88. I never saw a social worker or a probation officer when I was there. Nobody came to me and asked me what I would like to do next or how I was. I got "hee haw" like that.
89. I don't think that they encouraged people to come and visit. I think that was in case the visitors saw the bruises from all the beatings. I think that's why they didn't get social workers in.

#### *Healthcare*

90. The dentist didn't come into the school. You were taken in to Kirkintilloch to see the dentist. If you needed an appointment with a doctor, they took you into Kirkintilloch as well.

#### **Abuse at St Mary's**

91. Discipline was kept through the cane. They gave lads the cane on the back of their legs. They would be put up against the wall and smacked. Mr <sup>KDN</sup> [REDACTED] was the

one who did that. I saw him do that to a couple of people. He never gave the cane to me.

92. One time I got called in to see Mr **KDN** after being caught taking a swig from the priest's wine. I got taken into his office and slapped across the face. It was more than a skelp. I was pushed against the wall. He sat me down and paced up and down. He smacked me across my mouth. He said "Why did you steal the priests wine?" I said it was because I was thirsty. He then smacked me again for making a sarcastic remark. He then took me outside and made me clean his car. He told me to wash, wax and polish it. I was four hours at that car.
93. I later on cleaned Mr **KDN** car quite a few times. I got wise. I would sometimes ask him whether I could do that. I was spending three hours doing that. It meant that I avoided doing all of the other servile work. I was just plodding along carrying buckets and things like that. I used to hate it when he said "no". I did that to survive.
94. You did see kids getting beaten with sticks and being battered over the head. One time I did see one young lad get punched in the stomach because he had run away. That happened in the corridor. It was dark. I could see them kicking him whilst he was down. **KDN** was there. I couldn't see who the other person there was. I could hear him screaming. I could hear him swearing at them. The more he complained, the more he got a beating. I honestly thought the laddie wasn't going to come out of there. They beat the shit out of that laddie. His eye was all over the place when he came out. I asked the laddie what happened and he told me. He ran away again two weeks later.
95. I had been working in **LYT** squad for a year and a few months. I was about fourteen. The other three guys in the group were in the yard. I was in the storeroom. I had been in the storeroom many, many times. I had been there both with the lads and on my own. We would check the stores and everything like that. **LYT** stripped me from the waist down and forced me to put his penis in my mouth. I was on the floor. I couldn't get up. Afterwards, he threatened me big style.

He said "You tell anyone and it will get worse. I will kill you." He never opened his mouth afterwards. He just carried on as if nothing had happened.

96. I never thought that **LYT** would have done that to me. I never expected that to happen. When you work with someone like him, you just don't expect them to do what he did. It felt totally out of character for him. I don't know what drove him to believe that that was an ok thing. When he did do what he did, I was mortified. I was shaken. I was scared. I was devastated. I just fell silent for a long time. I didn't want to go near him. I don't know if he did what he did to me, to other people.
97. In the end I didn't tell anybody about it. I didn't open my mouth. I tried to get out of his squad. I couldn't find a justified reason to give to the headmaster though.

### **Leaving St Mary's**

98. A couple of months after my fifteenth birthday, I was taken into the headmaster's office. He told me that I was going to be released that weekend. I was told that my time was up. I think I got told on a Tuesday or something that I would be leaving on the Friday. I was highly delighted. I was walking around with a grin like the Cheshire cat.
99. I never said goodbye to anyone when I left. I just wanted to get out of there. On the day I left, I was straight down the road getting a bus into Glasgow. I then got a train home. I went back to my mum's.

### **Life after being in care**

100. I wasn't given any support when I left St Mary's. The social work didn't help me in any way at all. My first job after leaving St Mary's was as an apprentice sugar boiler. I got the sack from that. I was eating too many sweeties. After that, I got into catering. I worked in the George Hotel. I married my wife in 1973. I joined the army

in the early eighties. We were living in Chorley at the time. In later life, I wanted to go back to St Mary's to investigate things. I discovered then that LYT had died.

### Reporting of abuse

101. I didn't want anyone to know about it. Who do you tell? You couldn't tell anybody. When the story broke about St Ninian's and the abuse there, I thought to myself that it was all coming out. I didn't know whether I wanted to come forward and report things or keep shtum.
102. I kept it in for forty years before I told my wife. My wife was the first person I told. After my young brother had died, we gathered after his funeral. The whole family was there. We were all having a good old family get together. The topic of St Ninian's came up. My family was talking about what was being said the media. Someone said "You were in St Ninian's, weren't you GFF?" That's when I turned round to the lot of them and said "I am not going to tell you a lie. I was one of these kids who was abused in St Ninian's. I was abused quite a bit." At first, my sister didn't believe me. Later on they believed me. My brother was very sympathetic. After I told my family, my brother got his wife to help me type out everything that had happened. It wasn't easy to tell them.
103. The next person I spoke to was a solicitor. The solicitor's name was Cameron Fyfe. He was the one who recommended that I gave a statement to the police. I then spoke to two female police officers. I told them about what happened with LYT at St Mary's when they were making their enquiries into abuse at St Ninian's. They didn't want to know. They were only interested in St Ninian's. It seemed as if they swept all of the stuff I told them about St Mary's under the carpet.
104. I later learnt that there were some people being brought forward to give evidence in court. I am not sure whether I was too late to give evidence in whatever court proceeding was going on. I believe that the court proceeding was a criminal one and

some people got prosecuted and sent to prison. Who got sent down, I don't know. I know it wasn't Mr MCK because I saw him in later life. The police never got in touch with me to tell me the outcome of the court case. If they had, then perhaps I might have got more closure.

105. Two years after the court case, I was contacted by Cameron Fyfe. He told me that I had managed to gain compensation off of the Criminal Injuries Compensation Board. I think I got something like £17,500. It was neither here nor there. It was the principal of the thing. To me, it was just the Government saying that they had done their bit. Money isn't the be all and end all of everything. What happened to me is still there all the time.

### **Impact**

106. Every time I see abuse being discussed on the television, it brings everything back. Just when you are trying to crack on with life, there is something else covered. It comes back to haunt you. My wife will ask me whether I'm ok and I just say "I'm fine". I don't watch the news. I don't read the newspapers. If it's for you, it won't go by you.
107. Education-wise it has affected me. My reading and writing was abysmal. My total span of education was really just the secondary school at St Anthony's. I've had to adapt to everything in life. I've had challenges. After I got married, I got a private tutor to come to my house. He tutored me for spelling. My spelling came on leaps and bounds. I still felt behind those around me. Nowadays, I can use the computers to help with my spelling.
108. I'm not a practising Catholic now. I don't discuss religion. Every war in this world has been caused through religion.
109. My son and my daughter don't know. How do you tell them? You just don't tell them. These things are best left alone.

110. I've never sought any support or treatment elsewhere. The embarrassment of the thing was too much. Going back to the sixties and seventies people just didn't talk about these things. My support has come from my wife and my family.

### **Records**

111. I've never asked for my records. I didn't know you could. I'm not sure whether I want to. I don't know. It's not going to give me any closure. What do you with them anyway?
112. Having said that, when you got punished at St Ninian's it went on report with the headmaster. I'm sure it would have been noted there. I'd be curious to find out whether those reports are still kicking about.

### **Other information**

113. What gets me is why Mr MCK didn't get sent to prison. St Ninian's was one of the first schools that broke as being somewhere where abuse happened. I don't know why they didn't prosecute him.
114. There were lessons to be learnt in the seventies, eighties, nineties and the noughties. Nobody gave a damn. What lesson did St Ninian's learn when they were prosecuted? The government says that we need to take stock and learn lessons, but they don't. The Government just brush it under the carpet.
115. I think providing evidence to the Inquiry has helped me get some sort of closure. It might help my brother to.



116. 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.. GFF .....

Dated.. 26/09/2018 .....