

Scottish Child Abuse Inquiry

Witness Statement of

HKA [REDACTED]

Support person present: Yes

1. My full name is HKA [REDACTED] and my nickname is HKA [REDACTED]. My contact details are known to the Inquiry. My date of birth is [REDACTED] 1971. I am 44 years of age.

2. I have 2 brothers, [REDACTED] and [REDACTED]. I am the youngest. They are 3 years and 6 years older than me.

3. I am single and live alone. I have two children.

Background

4. From birth, I lived on my own with my parents. My mother was going blind from when I was about 6 years old. I have 2 brothers, [REDACTED] and [REDACTED]. I am the youngest. They are 3 years and 6 years older than me. Both of my brothers stayed at my grandparents' house.

5. My family were not Catholic. We didn't have any religion at home.

Before being put into care

6. I was brought up in [REDACTED] Tranent, East Lothian and went to the infant's school and the primary school, then to Ross High School. My brothers went to Ross High and neither went to St Josephs.

7. I got bullied a lot at school, however when I was in Primary 5, I'd had enough of being bullied, and I battered the bullies. I got into trouble because of this. I stopped going to school when I was in primary 6. I got into trouble at night hanging about with the older boys. I wasn't really that badly behaved in the primary school. I did the whole of first year at Ross High School and a couple of months in second year. However when I was 13/14 I was sent to St Josephs, Tranent.

Life at St Josephs

8. I was sent to St Josephs, a Catholic boys school, Tranent in second year and I stayed there until I left school in 1986. I boarded from my first day. I thought I would be a day boy because it was close to where I lived but I was residential.

9. There were no school years at St Josephs, you just went to class one and class two, three, four, five and six were for leaving. We were all put into one or two at the beginning. It was an all-boys school with about 300 to 400 boys at it. There were about 90 boys boarding, 30 to each cottage.

10. The cottages had names, Ogilvie, Sinclair and Benauld's. I stayed in Ogilvie Cottage the whole time but went to Sinclair Cottage for the last few months before I left school. At Sinclair Cottage they taught you all different things for leaving, like life skills. There was more freedom in there and you could go and make a sandwich when you wanted.

11. The main school building was just across the road from Ogilvie Cottage.

Routine

Mornings and bedtime

12. My bedroom was upstairs at Ogilvie Cottage; there were no bedrooms downstairs, except for Mrs [REDACTED]. Mrs [REDACTED] was the cooking lady, she was downstairs, she never came upstairs. She had a house at the side. There was also a TV room, computer room, dining room, boot room and a toilet and upstairs were the bedrooms and shower and toilets.

13. At the start I thought the routine was alright in Ogilvie. You got woke up for your breakfast, you went away and got showered, brushed your teeth then went downstairs and sat about for 20 minutes then you had breakfast then went to registration for school.

14. There were 4 beds in my bedroom, but when I first went in it was just me and [REDACTED]. His real name was [REDACTED] but in the bedroom I actually called him [REDACTED].

15. Brother Ben was in charge of Ogilvie Cottage. I didn't know where the brothers lived but they always woke us up. Brother [IVB] came to Ogilvie Cottage too as I was getting a wee bit older.

16. Everybody in my cottage looked up to me to help them, because I was the biggest out of us all. I tried to see if Brother [IVB] was like Brother Ben. You weren't allowed to make chip butties up, so I would make up a chip piece to see if Brother [IVB] would do anything. He would say 'stop making chip pieces' and would send me to the boot room to eat my dinner. I tried hundreds of times to argue with him. I don't know if that's when Brother Ben started hitting me a couple more times for doing that to Brother Bill. Brother [IVB] never did anything to me. Brother [IVB] jacked it in after I left.

17. Brother Ben was there the whole time I was in Ogilvie Cottage. I would see him about but he didn't come into Sinclair Cottage at all when I went there.

18. I got on with a few of the teachers. I liked Mrs [REDACTED] She didn't know what was going on. When she was there I knew nothing would happen to me but she was never upstairs.

19. I had my own room in Sinclair Cottage when I moved there. Sinclair was okay, it was brilliant.

Medical Care

20. There was a nurse, a woman in the old building at the school. You only went if you had something wrong. I had to go when I had tonsillitis. I never had to get any treatment for any of the injuries I got.

Abuse

21. I used to fall asleep about 3-4 in the morning and I would hear Brother Ben coming upstairs the following morning, and I was awake for him coming. I used to lay under the duvet waiting; sometimes he would chuck the duvet up. He used a cane and whacked my feet a couple of times. He didn't always lift the duvet up, he just whacked the bed with a cane. I don't know what he did with the cane, I think he chucked it out the window. When I got up he would punch me in the ribs and called me "the anti-Christ, and a fucking bastard."

22. Brother Ben wore a dog collar, a black jacket, blue jersey, black trousers and boots.

23. Brother Ben woke me up every morning, practically. Once in a blue moon, maybe twice a week, if I was lucky, he would just waken me up. Most of the time, he would say "little bastard", and punch me and say "get up, get through there, washed and teeth cleaned, get back and get your breakfast, don't be doing anything bad today or you will be getting it worse tomorrow"

24. The abuse mainly happened in the morning time but if I passed Brother Ben in the hall, I would get a punch in the ribs. Sometimes if I was upstairs he would come up and punch me and say something. It started getting more when [REDACTED] moved out. Every morning punch, punch, punch, "you're the anti-Christ", and hit with the cane, whatever he decided that morning. It was a cane you put in the ground to hold plants. I have scars on my back which were caused by the cane. Nothing happened to me when [REDACTED] [REDACTED] was in the room.

25. [REDACTED] and I didn't share a room the whole time I was in Ogilvie, because [REDACTED] [REDACTED] left and went to Wellington Farm. After he left I was the only person in that bedroom. There were other rooms with 4 beds in it, but there were 2 or 3 folk in those rooms, but I never ever got anyone else in my room. It was Ogilvie Cottage where everything happened.

26. I had a shower at night time so no one would have seen my injuries. It was up to you when you showered, as long as it was before bedtime.

27. When Brother Ben used to lift the duvet up and slap the soles of my feet with the cane, I would wear socks with cut out cardboard in so it wouldn't sting so much. After getting hit I would have to sit in my room for 5 minutes to try and stop crying. I would then have to walk through to get washed and I was in agony. Then I would go back and get dressed, go downstairs, get our breakfast and walk across and it was stinging all the time. He did that a few times, more than I like to remember.

28. Sometimes when I put the cardboard in, it wasn't so bad. He would say I was "a useless piece of scum and I shouldn't have been [REDACTED] and I was the anti-Christ, and an evil little bastard".

29. I got into a few fights with other boys, and it seemed to be worse then. A boy in my cottage called [REDACTED], was going to hit a smaller boy [REDACTED], and he tried to punch me so I punched him and burst his nose and lip. I got kicked out of the room for doing it. The following morning, Brother Ben gave me a couple of digs to the ribs and hit me with the cane on my back 3 or 4 times. He used to come straight

to my room first to get me up. I knew how many steps there were until he got to my door.

30. I was sick of getting hit all the time. I was even trying to get kicked out the school.

31. I tried to kill myself once, when I was 17 or 18 and still at St. Joe's. I was going [REDACTED]. I had been sniffing glue, and had enough of it. I had a bottle of whisky with me which I had brought from home. I drank that and did a bunk from the St Josephs. [REDACTED] [REDACTED], and it was raining. [REDACTED] [REDACTED] but I wanted to do myself in that day. I was about 15 then, and I'd had 8 or 9 months of being battered.

32. I saw other folk crying in front of Brother Ben, but never caught him doing anything to them. I heard people shouting and screaming but he said they were trying to do a bunk and escape.

33. I was off school ill once for 2 weeks with swollen glands. I was playing the computer and 2 boys came in for their dinner and asked for some time on the computer. I asked them to wait a few minutes until I got to the end of my game. The door was ajar, and Brother Ben heard it and came storming in and he grabbed me. He grabbed my hand whilst I was still playing the computer and pulled me, and my head cracked the corner of the door. I had a big swollen egg out on my head. I wasn't seen by a doctor.

34. I don't know why he did that to me just like I don't know why he punched me in the ribs and called me all the evil bastards. I don't know if he was in a bad mood at that time. He didn't say anything. I was allowed to play the computer as I was off ill. He didn't seem bothered about what happened. The nurse only came in during school hours so out with that it would have been Mrs [REDACTED] we would see if we got hurt. She asked if I was alright and if I felt dizzy. Mrs [REDACTED] put ice on it to bring the swelling down.

35. When I went to St Joes everybody was smoking and I said "ma can I smoke?" and my mother said "yes he smokes" and that's why I was allowed to smoke in St Joes. I thought the guys in the boiler room were alright but it was them that were getting the wee laddies to hold the hot magnets.

36. You could get up to thirty folk in the boiler room. I was in the boiler room with younger boys when they were asked to hold the magnets. There were six or seven boys. The magnets were like bolts and you had to take them off the hot boiler and put them on the palms of your hand. I have no feeling in the tips of my fingers so I didn't bother about it. If they didn't do it they didn't get their cigarette. When I saw a tear coming from [REDACTED] eye, I realised it wasn't a game.

37. When I was in St Josephs, I was friends with [REDACTED]. He stayed along from my house at [REDACTED] he was in Ogilvie Cottage. He was a very small lad. I was there before him, and I kept my eye out for him. When I was getting battered in Ogilvie I was trying to keep it away from everybody else.

38. One day Brother Ben came through to the kitchen and I was ready to stab him with the knife because he said "what's taking your time with the dishes? I was drying them. I was just taking my time until Mrs [REDACTED] came and I could go through and watch the telly. He came through and I had a big sharp knife and I was going to get him with that but Mrs [REDACTED] came out her door and he went away.

39. Brother Ben had an electricity game; he said it was a game. It was a machine that you have to wind up. A wind up machine that made electricity. Your hands held onto brass handles and once it was wound up you get a shock and you can't let go because your muscles were contracting. You had to hold hands with other boys. Every time we were going away he would say "have a shot of this before you go". It wasn't a punishment for boys who were in trouble. He would just do it and then wouldn't stop when he was down to one person, until he was knackered. I think the boys thought it was a game, at first. But after that I don't think a lot of them tried it again.

40. I took part a few times when I saw folk doing it. I would join in too and hold on and I would go the longest I could, even though I knew that he wouldn't stop when I told him to stop. He kept doing it. Some of the boys weren't very tall. Once the game was finished you were allowed to go to the cottage but you had to wait on the last person.

41. I saw [REDACTED] holding onto the brass handles. The redness in Brother Bens face, it was that red and he was trying to go that fast that the sweat was dripping off him and the wee laddie's arm was jumping about because he was getting shocks. When they were telling him (Brother Ben) to stop he wouldn't stop.

42. He kept going faster, faster and faster. I don't know what the machine was actually used for, but that's what he used it for. He wouldn't stop, he just kept smiling and I called him a bastard. He told everybody to go out and he kicked me on the shins and punched me on the ribs and said "don't you ever call me that again" and "you shouldn't even be here!" He would say "you anti-Christ little bastard", because I [REDACTED]. I didn't know why he just picked on me because I [REDACTED].

43. This happened in his work house where his computers were, air hockey table and that. He didn't live there, he lived beside all the other brothers, they all had their own rooms.

44. A couple of times my pals would ask to go into Brother Bens, to play air hockey. This was half six to half eight, Monday to a Thursday, after you went to school. You got your dinner and play football or go to the swimming, or watch the telly if you wanted to stay in. But everyone went out to different things. Sometimes there wasn't enough room to go to the football or swimming pool and all that was left was to go to Brother Bens. So you had to go to Brother Bens, even if you didn't want to.

45. I never once let Brother Ben see me cry, never once let him see anything. I thought that would be a sign of weakness to him. I hated him and didn't want to satisfy him. I thought I was protecting everybody and I was only a young lad

because I know what it was like getting bullied. I thought I was doing the right thing, making sure everybody else was safe. Everything else started getting worse.

46. GFJ [REDACTED] was the Outdoor Pursuits teacher at St. Josephs, and he was at the school every day. We did canoeing and sailing and things like that. He used to bet children to jump a gorge, up to 20 feet deep. He would bet you to see who could go and do the furthest jump or see who could swing out the furthest on the rope. He would put on bets to see boys doing things that were quite dangerous. At first I got on with him but then I didn't want to do half the things he wanted us to do. I loved canoeing and sailing but a lot of the times he was betting you a fag or ten fags, to do things weren't so good. Sometimes I did the things to get fags, sometimes I didn't. It depended if there were other folk there, older than me. I didn't see anyone get injured.

47. I remember we were to run across the harbour wall, and the waves were coming. Another pupil called [REDACTED] got caught by a wave and landed on the ground which could have put him into the other side of the harbour. He had a box of matches in his pocket and when he landed the matches went off and he had a big burn mark on his leg.

Reporting of abuse

48. I never discussed what happened at St. Joes with anyone whilst I was there. I just kept it all to myself. Who could I go to?

Social Worker

49. The social worker lady came to see me and check if everything was alright. She seemed more interested in getting a cup of tea or coffee and a biscuit from whoever was in. She would ask how I was but I couldn't get to say anything most of the time.

50. I went to tell her one day but she said " I am in a hurry, you can tell me the next time I come back" I never told her the next time she came back, as she came back the same, and sat there and was more interested in a cup of tea and a biscuit and a

break. Her name was Angela Shade. She came once in a blue moon to see me, but I think it was meant to be every 2/3 weeks.

51. When she came to see me we never spoke in private, it was usually in the living room where everybody sat and watched the telly. She was my social worker the whole time I was there. Nobody would believe me. They would say I was just a "trouble making little bastard".

52. I used to go home at the weekends unless I got kept in for doing something wrong. My parent's house was just up the road from the school. I couldn't tell my father what was going on, my father would have killed Brother Ben. Who was going to believe me although I know my father would have believed me.

53. I have never spoken to anyone else who has said they were abused by Brother Ben.

Leaving institution

54. After I left St Josephs I went to stay at my father's house and got into trouble. I was put on probation by the time I was 18. It was all through drink and fighting with people from Prestonpans and general stuff. I was working on and off when I met my former partner [REDACTED]. The building trade was my first job and I started working on fork lift trucks.

55. I drove forklifts, laboured to brickies, joiners, picked tatties, but as soon as I got home I drank to get a sleep. Because of drink I would be going to work shattered and I couldn't use the forklift properly and put folk's lives in danger. If I was at tatties or field work or whatever, I would be falling asleep.

56. I went to prison, when I was 20 for breach of the peace, and was on a 10 and half weeks remand. I got a 4 month sentence. That was my only time in prison. I have had no recent contact with police and courts.

Life after institution

57. After I left St Josephs I went to live with my father and I started drinking every night to help me sleep. When I came out of St Joe's I would go straight and buy a tube of glue. Me and a couple of others would sniff it, go and get a carry out and drink that till I was drunk and go straight upstairs to my bed and then I would get a good sleep. That's what I done every night.

58. I have not had a job since my father died 4 years ago. Before he died he took diabetic hypos, he had a stroke and had brain damage. I was his main carer and helped him with his housework, generally making sure he was taking his insulin. I didn't sleep much anyway and I just slept on the couch instead of going to my bed.

59. I have thought a few times about reporting what happened to me to the police but didn't know what to do. I was tempted a couple of months ago but bottled out when I got near the door. [REDACTED] my former partner said there had been something on the telly. There was a phone number so I phoned it up and the woman sent me some details

Relationships and family

60. My mother is still alive but my father died 4 years ago. My mother and father were split up and I was mostly at my fathers.

61. I told my father what happened to me about 9 years ago. My mother knows I got abused, battered and that but I hardly see my mother, hardly see her at all. Don't know what my mother thinks about it. She doesn't like me and barred me from the house.

Impact

62. I do not keep good health or sleep well. I take Valium, sleeping tablets and Methadone. I usually take 6 Valium tablets each day, but I have only taken one and

a half tablets today. I am under the care of a psychiatrist and psychologist. I am also an alcoholic and former heroin user.

63. Before I went to St Josephs, I didn't drink, and I never wanted to drink or smoke. Sniffing glue never came into my mind. I saw people in Tranent sniffing glue and they asked if I wanted a shot before I went to the Joes but I said no. I was happy go lucky, but when I went to Joes, it all went downhill, drink, drugs, and glue.

64. My psychiatrist has known what happened to me for about 11 years. I had stopped drinking and I couldn't sleep. I had tried cannabis and then heroin to help me sleep but got hooked addicted. I went to see the doctor about my problems and I just burst out and told her. She set me up with the psychiatrist. I hadn't told anyone before this, not even my former partner [REDACTED]. I kept it all to myself.

65. When I was in St Josephs I hated the police, I just couldn't stand any authority. I couldn't stand being told what to do because of what was happening to me. I did the opposite of what they told me to do, and thought what was the point of keeping to the rules? I was getting battered anyway and I took my anger out on the police and other people.

66. I don't trust many people now and it's because of St Joes and what happened to me.

67. I have had sleeping problems since I was at St Josephs. I can close my eyes for only a short time during the day. Sometimes I fall asleep and I see Brother Ben's face and I waken up, or I can smell aftershave. I've walked down the street and I have smelled an aftershave and I have stopped and looked across the road. I think about it a lot and can't get it to stop. I am scared to go to sleep.

68. I just started drinking to help me sleep. I went to the doctor about my drinking and he gave me tablets and I took them and stopped drinking for a bit. But everything started coming back and I started drinking again. I had to stop. The last time I drank I fell off a bus and split my head open and got staples in it.

69. I now smoke a bit of cannabis to help me sleep but I am mainly on my Diazepam, and Methadone. I have been on Methadone for ten years since I have been seeing the psychiatrist. I take my Methadone daily and I took some today. I usually take 6 tablets but I have only taken one and a half tablets today.

70. I am going to be a grandfather soon, and I don't want to do anything stupid. My daughter is having her first child so I need to try and get myself better and it could be a way of getting it out my mind and get on with life to come. It's just hard.

71. As a result of coming here today, I would like to see no children getting abused. If they do the crime, they should do the time and it should be a good bit of time like a couple of years.

72. My aim at present is just to tell the Inquiry about my abuse, not the police. I did go once to tell them but there were no police officers available at Tranent Police Station to speak to me. I went to Prestonpans too. There was nobody in. No available policemen as they were part time. I was homeless at the time.

73. I heard that my friend [REDACTED] [REDACTED] from my time at St Joseph's killed himself. I heard he had been looking for me, then a few months later I heard he had [REDACTED] and stuck a [REDACTED]. He wanted to see me about something to do with St Joe's. I had only seen him a couple of times after leaving school. I stayed in Tranent and he stayed in Prestonpans. He never mentioned anything about St Joe's to me but we were always with people. But then I found out 8/9 years ago he was looking for me, and it was something about St. Joe's. Then I found out he had killed himself.

74. 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.

HKA

Signed...



Dated...

24 9.16