

Scottish Child Abuse Inquiry

Witness Statement of

IJB

Support person present: Yes

1. My name is IJB. My date of birth is 1983. My contact details are known to the Inquiry. My name before I got adopted was IJB and they kept it as my middle name so I always knew who I was. When I was put into care I was known as IJB.

Life before going into care

2. I was born in Maryhill, Glasgow. I don't want to give my mum's name and my dad was called . I have a sister who is two years older. I prefer not to give her name. Quite a lot of my early life scars me from growing up. I was abused when I was younger. When I think I was three or four my natural dad went to jail for murder. I don't have any memories of living with him, but I can remember going to prison to see him. Then I lived with my mum and her boyfriend, . They weren't married. My mum was bad with heroin and Glasgow got flooded with it back then.
3. used to batter me and my sister and would fling me down the stairs. Social work got involved. I remember a social worker called Margaret Patterson being involved with us at some time later on in my life. That's as much as I know. I'm waiting on getting my records from that time in my life. I remember him battering us and him putting us in cupboards. I was eating spiders because I was starving. I've marks all down my back and I remember being flung down the stairs. I think I've a birthmark on my leg and when I was growing up I thought it was a burn. I remember a wee lassie getting burnt by a kettle and I don't know if it's me blocking it out. There's stuff in my

social work paperwork that's been kept back from me because it's too sensitive for me to read.

4. I remember getting taken away and I was snatched by the social work. They had their reasons and I just remember the abuse side of things. In the records it says my mum gave me up. I got a text message from my cousin very recently and she said that they snatched me and my sister off the street. My cousin was the same age as my sister and she was looking out of the window at the time. They came in a van and my mum was crying. To me that's not someone handing their wean in. That's like snatching two weans off the street. My sister was punching and kicking.
5. At that time social work kept me and my sister together. I also had a little brother, but he was my mum's boyfriend's kid. He got adopted into the family and me and my sister got fostered out.

Foster care in Whitburn

6. We ended up getting fostered. My sister was with me. I remember a place called Whitburn and living with foster parents. I was there for a little while. I just remember there was an older woman and I called her [REDACTED]. They looked after us and gave us food.
7. I can't remember what the sleeping arrangements were in Whitburn. I think the woman [REDACTED] had her own two daughters and they were older and one stayed somewhere else. After I got adopted I thought of her as 'granny [REDACTED]' as she seemed older.
8. I don't have many memories of living in Whitburn. I just remember running to sit in a puddle and when they asked me why I did that I said the puddle shouted me in. I remember getting cheeky to a boy who was older than me and running away. It's just snippets of memories.

9. I was wetting the bed because I was scared to go to the toilet when I was younger. Every time I went to the toilet I was getting battered by my mum's boyfriend. I used to get my arse skelped for wetting the bed because I was scared of going to the toilet and I was having nightmares. They didn't have a clue what was happening. [REDACTED] was getting angry with me.
10. I think I was in Whitburn for about six months. I was still going to nursery.

Adoption in Irvine, Ayrshire

11. I was still living in Whitburn and I can remember going to a meeting place and there was a big table. I had a skate board and that's all I can remember from then. Then they asked me and my sister if we wanted to go with our new family and stay with them. We said yes, but we didn't know what was going on or what it meant. We didn't really know what to say. We'd met the adoptive family a few times before, but we were wee kids and didn't know what was happening. Then I was saying bye to my natural mum and she was crying. That was when I noticed social work were in my life a lot.
12. I was adopted at the age of four or five. I remember going into Primary one and the adoption was taking place.
13. The couple who adopted us were married and they were a lovely couple. I don't want to give their names. They couldn't have their own weans. It was just me and my sister they adopted. I called them mum and dad to fit in and make everyone else happy. Every time I got angry I'd shout at them they weren't my real mum and dad even though they were lovely people. I was just lost and I was hurting inside.
14. Everyone knew we were from the outskirts, me and my sister. My adopted family was massive and my mum had seven brothers and sisters and me and my sister didn't feel as if we were a part of it. I felt more a part of my adopted dad's side and a couple of the cousins are still in contact with me. Other than that we felt no part of it. None of them could understand why me and my sister were the way we were. We were just

the bad kids. I felt even more like I was labelled a bad kid later on when I was a teenager in Kerelaw.

15. They didn't understand how to cope with us. I still refer to my adopted mum as my mum. She wrote down everything that happened, like me running away, from day one. I don't know why she did it, but I've got it in a big file of papers at home. I think she did it to keep tabs on me. I was an angry wee guy shouting abuse at her and him, saying things like 'you're not my real mum and dad'.
16. I didn't see my natural mum after I was adopted. As far as I know she was still on heroin. She was meant to have sorted her life out later on and met somebody and was happy, but I don't know. I've just heard bits and pieces from different aunties and I've tried to put the pieces together.

School

17. It was when I went to live in Irvine I started to get into a routine with school. I went to Woodlands primary school. I was good at primary school. I was good at sports and played on the football team for the Boy's Brigade and was winning medals. I wasn't having behavioural problems at primary. School then was more about play and I was more interested in my sports.
18. I was struggling with maths and English, but it didn't really affect me until I went on to the Academy later on and I didn't know much. I looked as if I was a wee happy guy and I was always nice to everybody. But sometimes I would snap and the violent side of me would come out and I'd get really angry. That started when I was a bit older and a teenager.

Bed wetting

19. Bed wetting was getting to be a problem. When I was with the adoptive family I got taken to the doctors and I ended up on Amitriptyline at a young age because of it. It was embarrassing, I had to get up in the morning to get a shower before I went to

school. That was because I was having these dreams and I got into a frequent pattern of me just lying in bed because I was scared to move.

20. I tried to explain it to my adoptive parents and they still skelped my arse for it. Then I'd run away and tell social work I was getting battered at home because I thought they'd take me away from there and put me with my sister. My adoptive parents denied it. Back then skelping your child's arse was a normal thing, but I was getting black and blue. I remember my mum arguing and shouting at my dad because my arse was so bad. I was shouting at them 'you're not my real mum and dad' so of course he was going to get angry, but you can't batter a wean.
21. The bed wetting stopped when I was about ten or eleven.

Running away

22. I was always running away. I've always wanted to be by myself whenever I've felt stressed and if I felt trapped. I think it's to do with being locked in the cupboard. I ran to my pals' homes. I was surviving and telling folk I couldn't go home 'cause my dad was going to batter me and I would get my arse skelped by my adopted dad. I called him dad but sometimes I said he was my adopted dad. It depended on what kind of mood I was in.

Relationship with sister

23. They tried to keep me and my sister together but she ended up leaving the house and going into a children's home. I don't know why it happened. That messed my head up as well. I started playing up a bit. I think I was ten or eleven when we were separated. She was about thirteen. When she went to a children's home I was left behind with my adopted parents. I wanted to be with my sister but they wouldn't keep me and her together for some reason. Keeping us together was meant to be part of the deal.

Involvement with social work

24. From when I was about twelve or thirteen I had weekly group work with different challenging kids. We all went there and played with model cars and had a fag and got something to eat. There wasn't any individual help. You didn't want to talk about your problems anyway. You were going there because you felt like you were a bad kid. I didn't know I had issues. There was nothing else done to try to understand why I behaved in the way I did. It was always the group work and not any individual work. I was always sat with the same boys who I hung about with afterwards. The way I saw it they had normal lives compared to mine.
25. I was at children's panels quite a lot, there was one every month or something like that. In the panels everyone was sitting there and judging me. They were telling me how my life was going to be and it was always in wee sections and wee boxes. I'd be sitting there telling them I'd do this and that and making agreements and as soon as the door was open I was off. No one explained anything to me on a one to one basis to talk about what would happen at the panel. I just went to them with my mum and I was told my behaviour was terrible and I needed to deal with it. I felt judged.

Leaving adoption

26. I just remember running away a lot. The police were always looking for me. I've always just wanted my freedom. I ended up going into Dalrymple children's home. I remember it being discussed at panels. I thought the children's home was just a stepping stone for me to get to my sister.

Dalrymple Place children's home, Irvine

27. I was twelve or thirteen when I went into Dalrymple Place. That's in Irvine and close to where my adoptive mum and dad lived. I was there for about a year and a half. [REDACTED]

Secondary Institutions - to be published later

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Leaving Dalrymple Place children's home

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62. I got put into Kerelaw in 1996. I got that date from my records. I had to have a tutor in the children's home until a place came free at Kerelaw. I had to get a taxi to go and meet him outside of the children's home. He didn't teach me anything formally and he ended up asking me what I wanted to do. I thought he was quite good because he did help me. I really wanted play guitar and that's what he let me do and I was interested in that.

63. I knew I was just waiting for my placement at Kerelaw. I was worried about going because I knew it had a bad reputation and my behaviour was getting worse as a result.

Kerelaw residential school, Stevenston, Ayrshire

64. I'd heard about Kerelaw growing up as it was in one of the next villages.

65. There were two units with forty girls in each unit and two units for forty boys each. Everyone was mixed and you could jump about with each other. That was the open part of Kerelaw. There was Baird unit, Wilson unit, Fleming unit and Millerston where I was. Fleming and Millerston were the units for boys.

66. In the unit, there were stairs walking up to the top landing and the top landing had all the bedrooms. There was a dining area in the middle and a wee lane from both sides

that led into the two boys' sections. At meal times everyone from the two sections would meet in the one dining area. It was the same up at the girls' units and they'd meet up in their dining area. When it wasn't locked up we could all just run about and do what we wanted.

67. There were maybe seventeen years old in the flats, but mostly the kids were from ten years old up to seventeen. So from late primary school age and into secondary school age. There was more secondary school people.
68. The secure unit was up the back and we used to go up and play them at football. That was the only contact we had with them. We didn't really know what anybody was in there for. I knew there was a few bad people in there. All of us were classed as bad. We were just the bad kids. We went in their unit and walked in through their wee sections. Theirs section was more like a prison where the doors locked behind you. We'd have to go through that section to get to the football park to play.
69. Millerston unit had mixed staff. Some of the staff were teachers. If they were short of staff on the unit they would come down to help. You didn't know who was in charge really, except they were all these adults. Some were managers and some weren't. To me they were all just adults.
70. Staff that stick in my mind were FSL [REDACTED] KBS [REDACTED] Matt George, KBW [REDACTED] who I think was a manager on Millerston. Matt George was the art teacher but he also covered as staff on my unit and was a key worker. He was too involved with everybody. There was another [REDACTED] called KBL [REDACTED] from Fleming unit and he used to punch us for fags and stuff. He was a big gingered-haired guy. The staff laughed and joked about things. It was the same staff all the time on Millerston and Fleming.
71. There was a woman who worked on the day unit, Sandra, she was lovely and I remember when I was stressed and getting into shit I'd go to see her and lay my head on her lap. She'd stroke my hair and to me it was like soothing. I respected that woman for that.

72. That was the day unit. I was going there from the locked up bit in Millerston and spending time in the day unit. She'd phone the staff to say I was there and I was fine. It was my wee get-away. The day unit where Sandra was, was for people coming into the school in taxis just for the school day and leaving afterwards. I'd go and sit with Sandra. If I was stressed I didn't talk to anyone about it and go and sit with her and she could just tell there was something up with me and I couldn't tell her because I'd be a grass.
73. On Millerston unit my keyworker was alright. He was called HRW I feel he was one of the staff who actually cared and went out of his way. He didn't seem to like what was going on. He couldn't do anything because there was so many other staff doing bad things, but he still went out of his way to make sure you were alright. To me he was the only nice guy. I don't know if he did anything to anyone else, but to me he was alright.

Routine at Kerelaw open unit

First day

74. I remember the first day driving up. I can't remember who took me but I remember looking at it and it was like four big sections and all these kids running about. There was no fence around about where I was, so everybody was running about and doing their own thing and when you walked up all the eyes were on you. It gave me a bad feeling.
75. I went into my own wee room and all the staff were stood there. I got the health and safety chat and was told about fire doors. Then I was shown to my room. I was praying that I didn't have anyone sharing with me. I didn't have many possessions, but anything I did have I guarded. I just brought my clothes with me and I think that was it. I probably had some paperwork with me too. I feel I've always had that wherever I've been. I did get my own room.

Mornings and bedtime

76. If the staff didn't get us up in the morning they were sending other boys in to get us up. You had no choice. In the morning you were wakening up crabbit because you were forced to get up to walk 300 yards to go to school. I didn't want to go to school so it was a battle. The staff sent folk in to roll you up in your mattress and batter you. If you didn't get up you'd also getting buckets of water flung over you.
77. You were waking up to that every morning and you've got to get out of your bed. The staff would be telling other boys to do it. Everyone was laughing and joking about it, but you're rolled up in a mattress with folk kicking you. It didn't just happen to me, it happened to anyone if they didn't get out of their bed. It was a ritual. If that had happened to you, you wouldn't want your breakfast as you'd be too angry.

Mealtimes / Food

78. You'd get breakfast in the communal area. I'd eat with boys from the Fleming unit. Some staff that belonged on Fleming came to work on our unit. It was a different atmosphere depending on who was on. The staff on Fleming were just like the ones on Millerston. I could sit where I wanted to at mealtimes. Most of the time the atmosphere wasn't good and you wouldn't want to be there for long. You'd eat your dinner and go. Secondary Institutions - to be published later
79. The food was just normal institutional stuff. It was always the cheap stuff. If you didn't like what they gave you, you didn't get any food. I was always getting fruit and taking it back to my room. There wasn't anywhere on the unit to make your own meals. There wasn't any food for snacking between meals.

Washing / bathing

80. I can't really remember what the arrangements were for taking a shower in the unit. I think there were individual pods for the showers and it wasn't all shared like in a prison. So there was some privacy.

School

81. We just watched videos in the classroom. None of us wanted to learn and they put on videos just to keep us quiet. We had to watch Braveheart in history lessons. I watched it so many times. We had maths, English and the sciences. I struggled with maths and I wasn't really interested in it. If they gave me art I would happily do it. I'd get art materials and take it back to my room to do the work and then take it back to the art room. That was in my time, but when it was in their time I didn't want to do it.
82. Classes were mixed with boys and girls. All the teachers were same and none were going out of their way to teach us. I did do my standard grade exams there but I ended up copying the lass beside me. I did pass them, but only because I copied.
83. They didn't diagnose people with ADHD in general until I was already in Kerelaw. I didn't get diagnosed until after Kerelaw when I was an adult.

Work/chores

84. We didn't really have chores, you were just expected to keep your room tidy. They had cleaners who came in.

Trips / Holidays

85. There weren't any organised trips.

Leisure time

86. There were pool tables to play on in the rec room. There was football out in the main park. We'd arrange the teams with other boys and the staff agreed it. I think there were

other schools that came down to play against us. We went up to the secure unit and played football with them.

87. I carried on playing football when I was in care and when I was in Kerelaw I had a trial for [REDACTED] and went to train with them. They scouted me while I was in Kerelaw. I think one of the staff was a scout.

Personal possessions

88. You got pocket money to spend on fags and I remember getting my mum to sign a permission slip for me to smoke from when I was twelve.

Birthdays and Christmas

89. I might just get someone saying happy birthday to me, [REDACTED] Secondary Institutions - to be published. [REDACTED] Secondary Inst. There was no present or a card from the staff. My pals would say happy birthday and we'd disappear and go for a drink down by the river and we'd arrange that before if it was someone's birthday.

90. I think one year I went back to my adopted parents' house for Christmas. Every time I went back to their house, I lasted two weeks before I ran away again. In Kerelaw at Christmas it was doom and gloom. It was just a normal day. There might have been a few bits of tinsel and that was it. There was a Christmas dinner.

Visits / Inspections

91. My mum and dad came in just for the meetings [REDACTED] Secondary Institutions - to be published. I would go and see them on home leave. It didn't last for long, maybe a day or two and I wanted to go back to Kerelaw. The planning meetings in Kerelaw were all fake. It felt staged. There'd be Matt George talking to my mum and being all pally with her, but in the classroom he was totally different. I just wanted out of the place and I wanted them to say I was doing alright so I could get moved on from there. I went along with everything.

92. My social worker didn't visit me in Kerelaw, because I was in there it was fine. She'd appear for my meetings. She didn't take any time to speak to me on my own before the meetings. Kerelaw was telling her what was going on and that's what she was listening to.
93. I didn't see my sister at all. I might see her in the distance if I was in Irvine. When she was seventeen she got her own house.
94. I don't remember any external visitors coming into Kerelaw. I don't remember any inspections in my time.

Healthcare

95. I didn't see a doctor. Even when I was punched on the jaw and my jaw clicked I would just shake it all off. I've always been like that with injuries. If I felt I was getting emotional or someone was giving me a hard time I would go to the day unit to see Sandra who worked there. I was getting bullied by people, and folk were taking my belongings and my chain off me. I couldn't go to see the staff as they didn't care about that sort of thing. If I argued or fought with them I'd get restrained. If I got frustrated I'd run away, either to The Hakes area in Stevenston or do something stupid like I broke into Tesco's and stole a bottle of vodka. That's when my head was a mess.
96. If I needed my inhalers for my asthma I was given them because my adopted mum would get me inhalers. Every time I went on home leave I'd need my inhalers because I was always active. I don't remember Kerelaw providing me with inhalers. I don't remember any medicals in Kerelaw.
97. I don't remember seeing a dentist in there.
98. Quite a lot of the kids in Kerelaw were self-harming. They'd show me their scars. I can't remember how staff dealt with it. I just know there were folk cutting themselves. I don't know the reasons why. I don't think anyone in there got psychological help or

counselling. I just remember there would be incidents and it would defuse, then staff would make a laugh or a joke about it and make the situation not as bad. Staff might butter you up a bit with a rec trip or by giving you fags. Then you'd forget about it, but down the line something else would happen.

Running away

99. In the residential school you could just jump out of the windows. I was built like a rake so I was in and out of the windows really easily. I was never inside. The school was local and I just used to go to The Hakes at the top end of Stevenston and I'd jump out of there and go up to the river and have a wee can with my pals and go back and hang about in Stevenston with my other pals. Boys were smoking weed down by the river.
100. At the end of the night I'd either steal a car and go back or do something stupid and get picked up by the police and taken back. We were already locked up anyway, what else could they do to us? As soon as the police were away staff would come up to your room and be aggressive with you and you'd be aggressive back. The police didn't ask why we ran away and they just thought it was us being bad.
101. We were up on the roofs one time and running about over them. I can't remember what we were up to. Staff were trying to get us down. Eventually they got us down and we knew we were getting battered. They battered us with torches and whacked us over the head. They had to come up on the roof and they were complaining about that and threatening we'd 'get it' for that. We were making it worth our while being up there.
102. When we eventually came down they battered us, restrained us and hit us over the head with their metal torches. They were night staff and they all had torches. It was night time and it was dark. I'm not sure which staff were involved in that. There was certain staff who always did night shift. When I was restrained I couldn't remember much because they were all over me and my face was on the ground and I couldn't breathe and I was freaking out. It was more scary for me because of my asthma.

Abuse at Kerelaw

103. They threatened us with the secure unit quite a lot. The staff used to shout to us that we were a 'waste of space' and 'yous are going nowhere with your life'. If the staff saw us doing something they didn't like they'd shout 'any more like that and you're up in the secure' and they'd threaten us we'd get locked up in there. We told them we didn't care.
104. We got an allowance of six fags a day. That was one of their things that if you wanted an extra fag you'd have to take a punch in the mouth to get it from a big rugby player-type of guy who'd jab you. My jaw would click when they were doing it and it was agony. **KBL** from Fleming unit did that to me and **KBS**, known as **KBS** and he was a boxer. He had belts from his boxing that he showed us. **FSL** would punch you with all his gold rings on his fingers. The 'six inch punch' it was called and that was for a fag.
105. Instead of going on a rec trip they would buy us a twenty deck of fags and take us on a drive in the van. They'd play games like 'running man'. They'd open the back doors of the van and you had to run down Stevenston harbour and try to jump into the van. When you were about to jump in the back they'd slam on the brakes and you'd slam into the back of the van. We all thought it was fun and games, but folk were getting injured and thinking they'd broken their arm. The staff were laughing at that and saying 'you got your fags and you're not happy'. A few of the staff did that, **FSL** was bad for that one at the harbour. I think **KBS** did it too. Everything was made out to be games even though it was sore and violent. You felt like you had to be part of that culture.
106. In the classrooms it was different games with different staff. In the PT hall it would be Matt George and **FSR** the PE teacher, with the golf balls and they were the real balls that they'd fire at you using golf clubs. They'd try and whack you. We were all running about as if it was dodgeball. They made it a game. I wasn't injured when that

happened, as I was quick enough to avoid the balls. Other boys got hit with the balls and injured. To me it happened on one occasion, but I don't know who else it happened to at different times. There'd be holes in the wall. Our punishment was to fill in the holes.

107. While that room was getting fixed and plastered they'd show us into the weight room. This was like my first week in the place when this happened. They made a weight room and were trying to make out that if you behaved you'd get to go there and use it whenever you wanted. Everyone was being macho and wanted to go and do weights. The staff were laughing at you as if they were going to do something. That was encouraging other boys to take the piss and you lash out because you don't like people judging you. It was encouraging other boys to be bullies. You had to be part of the game and blend in with the rest. I was maybe only thirteen at this time and when I was in there it was all mixed ages, and there were some really big boys.
108. Downstairs on the Millerston unit was a rec room and there was a boy with leukaemia who stayed in the end flat. I don't know if he died in Kerelaw. The staff were bullying him and shouting things at him, even though he had no hair from his treatment. I felt terrible for the boy.
109. ██████ was the boy with leukaemia and I met him because his room was next to the rec room. I can't understand why he was in there when he was dying. The staff were taking the piss out of him and shouting and swearing at him to get in his room. They'd say to him 'away you, hobble on' as he walked funny because of how the treatment affected him. There were other boys laughing at him, but I imagine how that wee guy must have felt. The abuse started with the staff shouting and swearing at him and then the other boys carried on with it.
110. Matt George grabbed the inside of my legs. My adopted dad used to grab the inside of my leg and say 'aye, eh' and laughing 'cause it was sore and that. It was alright, my dad doing it. Matt George would do that kind of thing to people in front of the class, and he'd be really up close to you.

111. I was in the car one time on the golf club that he'd taken me to up near to his house. It was just me and him. I couldn't get out of the car. In the car he grabbed my leg and he was telling me to call him 'King George'. It was weird. It was him testing the water with me and seeing what he could do. To me that was normal, 'cause my dad grabbed my leg and it was a laugh and a joke, but Matt George should never have been groping me like that.
112. He would be standing right in front of me and rubbing himself. He did this to quite a lot of people, standing in front of them and rubbing himself. That was in the art room. You could tell that when he was restraining people and talking to certain kids there was a different side to him. He'd happily run up to restrain someone, but to me it was so he could get close to them and grab them in different places. He'd grab young lasses under their breasts.
113. He used to take me to my mum's house for meetings with her about me and he was totally different. He'd pretend to be caring in front of her. He'd turn to me and say 'I could just get you reported like that' as if he had the power and he was using that power. Because Matt George started taking me out to places, the other kids were calling me Matt George's 'love child'. That would get my back up. He didn't do anything sexual to me but I felt as if he could have been. I don't know if other staff knew he was taking me out on my own.
114. He took a group of us back to his house in Largs, maybe six of us. I can't remember who. I remember he came out with a conversation saying 'for all I know, you could make up a story'. Why would he have us sitting in his house and say that? To me, something must have happened to one of the other weans in the house that day. I think he took us to his house to show off. He used to kid on he knew Jiu Jitsu and get you to lie down in certain positions to crack your back like he was a chiropractor. He did that with me a few times as my back has been dodgy. He just liked to touch people and I felt he was a creepy man.
115. Other kids didn't tell me about what was happening to them. I thought they were all really secretive. If something happened to you, you'd shut down and not tell anyone.

My coping mechanism was to run away. If other boys ridiculed me because Matt George took me somewhere and people were talking in the unit about it. I was just going along with whatever I was meant to be doing that day. Because we were already in Kerelaw he'd say 'yous are going nowhere with your life. Yous are already where we want you.' I grew up always thinking about what folk thought of me. I kick off if I feel I'm being belittled or somebody's making me feel small. My reaction was anger and violence.

116. The restraints in Kerelaw involved three or four staff again. Kerelaw was a lot worse. They were hunting you down to get to you. If you were running away, they'd actually chase you rather than letting you come back in your own time. They made it into a game to catch you and drag you back. I'd look out of the windows and see people getting dragged back. Then they'd batter you and everyone was shouting 'leave him alone' out of the windows. They'd whack you over the head with the torches and sweep your legs away from you.
117. That happened every day to somebody. You could get restrained if you were running away or if you weren't complying with what they were telling you or fighting with somebody. The way they were restraining was crazy. There was a difference between restraining someone 'cause they were in a fight and just not doing what they told you to do. What they were doing was too much. People's wrists were getting bent back and I couldn't breathe when I was restrained. Matt George could do Jiu Jitsu and he could choke me and I felt like I couldn't breathe. That freaked me.
118. When you'd calmed down staff made a laugh and a joke about it and gave you a fag. No-one ever talked it through with you.
119. Even the techy and woodwork teacher used to play 'high or low' with cards in the classes. I can't remember his name. He might have been called FRB. He was a bald guy and back then he was in his forties. If you got a red card you'd get a certain number of times with a ruler on the hand. If you got two tens that were red, you'd get 'red hard' and he'd whack you twenty times. He'd tell us to run our hands under the water and wrap tissues round them and then hide our hands on the way out of the

classroom. We'd have blisters on our hands. There might be four or five of us playing the game and he was whacking us with a ruler.

120. At night time when we were going up to our beds, FSL would stand at the bottom of the stairs and punch us as we went passed, in the side of the body or the back of the head. Anywhere on the body, just as long as he made contact. He had all his gold rings on and it would hurt. I remember boys were winded by him. It happened to me too.

Reporting of abuse at Kerelaw

121. My dad phoned me after I'd left home and Kerelaw was in the news and he asked me if I'd been abused there. They'd had the police in talking about situations many times in the past. I denied it at the time as sexual abuse hadn't happened to me. It was much later on that I realised what happened to me in there was abuse. When I was in Kerelaw, at the time, it seemed like fun and games. I told my pals when I was growing up, about all the games at Kerelaw and they knew I was running away for a reason.

Leaving Kerelaw

122. I got out of Kerelaw in 1999 when I turned sixteen. Nothing was done to prepare me for leaving and managing life afterwards. I was on a work placement before I left with while I was in Kerelaw. That was the only stepping stone for employment. I'd told them that was the work I wanted to do.

Life after being in care

123. At first I went back to my adopted parents and lasted two weeks there. I'd kid on everything was alright for me to get home and once I got home I'd try for two weeks and then it'd be back to arguing again and I'd move away.

124. I didn't feel part of the family and I hung about with friends and wherever I felt comfortable. Sometimes they weren't pals they were just acquaintances. I was sleeping wherever I could, in dens. I ran away to Edinburgh and sleeping on the streets. I worked on the shows for a year and I was travelling about with them. I was just surviving. I was sixteen or seventeen.
125. I had no financial support from social work. I had a tent, I stole a BMX and I had a half bottle of Buckfast and a pack of ten fags. I had a feeling that my biological mum was in Edinburgh and I don't know why. It turned out she was there at the same stage but I didn't meet her. When I was talking to my biological family it turned out she was up there for that period when I was in Edinburgh. I didn't get to meet her again and she died. I got some paperwork for tracing my family. I traced my biological dad and I met him once.
126. Anytime I was bad I would get back to the social workers. I think that was Margaret Paterson. I think once I turned sixteen I would go to court and they'd either give me community service or they'd give me a fine. I think Margaret would prepare reports for the court.
127. I moved to Ayr when I was about twenty-one. I was in a relationship for eight years. The lass wanted to be a dental nurse and when she fell pregnant she had an abortion. That messed my head up a bit and we split up. I was off the rails and going to parties and drinking all the time. I [REDACTED] and got eight years for it. It was 2011 that I got my sentence.
128. Since I got released it's been hard with the anger side of things. It's harder now as I've got the Judge's voice in the back of my head saying if I do any more I'll be looking at double figures. I've got to stop myself from reacting to situations. There's an anxiety straight away because my body is telling me one thing and I have to keep it in check.
129. I started a gardening business in 2015 and I put my energy and vision into it before I left prison. I was working on a golf course at Castle Huntly and I studied how to cut

the greens perfectly. I did a work placement and got business cards made up. My business was in the top ten gardening businesses in Ayrshire and got to number one in that list. After a while my mental health and my physical health dipped and I pulled myself away from the business. I think I stopped doing that kind of work in 2019. I do miss it and it kept me really busy. I can't keep a job because of what happened to me in care. My anxiety is bad in the mornings. I wake up in the morning and feel really not well with sickness and that flings me because of the stomach cramps.

130. I have a son to a lassie that I don't see as I was never put on the birth certificate. I've got a daughter who's my youngest as well as three step-children who are aged between ten and seventeen. I'm not in that relationship anymore but I'm still there for them now and support them if they need to talk. I get in trouble sometimes for being involved too much with their lives.

Impact

131. If I'm in a position where I feel trapped then that's when I turn into a caged animal and I lash out. It's the way my body is used to acting. I told myself when I was growing up I wasn't going to let anyone make me feel vulnerable again. That's imprinted in my brain and as soon as somebody does something like that there's no way. Now it's hard every day. I've noticed myself getting snappier with the slightest wee things. I link that back to what I went through at Kerelaw. It's all there bubbling away.
132. I don't trust anybody. I keep my circle small and everybody I do let in seems to let me down. I think that's been through my childhood and my adoption and I feel as if nobody tried to help. I feel I've had to create a face to put on to please all these different people. I'm ok with people in authority if I feel they're going to listen and help. If somebody was arrogant then I'd be arrogant as well. It's only in the last few years I feel people have been listening to me and stopping me going back to prison.
133. I've recently had dreams about what happened to me and waking up sweating. I went to the Anchor Centre because I've always known I struggled with depression and

anger. I've spoken to so many people it's starting to fall into place with things and I've understood myself more. A psychiatrist who works there gave me a diagnosis of Complex-PTSD and they believe it's due to the life I had before going into care and it's a reaction. I'd spoken to my GP about my anxiety and medication. I don't like taking medication. The only thing I take is my inhalers.

134. I think I'd been looking on-line about abuse and how to find help dealing with it and that's how I came across Future Pathways and I contacted them. I think it was Adam Overton from Future Pathways who referred me to the Anchor Centre. He's done a lot of referrals for me. I think he referred me around 2020 or 2021.
135. I'm also in receipt of counselling with SACRO and their justice services. The counsellor, Anita, has been really helpful. She pushes me a lot and I need that sometimes. That's been the first time I've had counselling. I didn't get any counselling or therapy when I was in prison. I tried to explain to them about my anxiety and mental health and they still put me in a double cell. I didn't have any paperwork to proof that. Eventually, once I'd behaved for a while I got a pass job and because I had that I used my contacts to get a single cell. The people on a pass job are entitled to a single cell.
136. I don't drink now. I'd grown up as a teenager who was drinking. It got excessive at some points in my life and I didn't understand where all the anger was coming from. Drinking and fighting and not caring what happened. The drinking was to hide all the pain. I was already lost from the adoption. In Kerelaw I was in the jungle and I had to defend myself. It didn't help that the staff who did it. We were looking up to them and they were meant to protect us, but they were encouraging boys to bully.
137. Being in care impacted my education. I know I can do things myself but if I had the guidance and support back then I would have been a bit further on in my life. The stage I'm at now, if I'd been like that years ago it could have opened up doors for me and I could have benefited other people.

138. In relationships with partners, as soon as I get upset or I feel as if I'm not happy, I get angry. Then I dig my heels in to try and make it work and I end up angrier. If it comes to confrontation I'll lash out.
139. I feel as if I'm really protective of my children. I never want anything bad to happen to my young daughter. The thing I'm scared of is my ex-partner finding a new partner and if anything ever happened, the other side of me would come straight back. I show the children affection all the time because I didn't have that. I want all their lives to be better and I want me to heal, but I can't have a good life if I'm constantly feeling angry or upset all the time. I get up and down and there's never a normal balance.
140. I'm currently waiting to see a psychologist from the local health team. They're from the hospital near me. I'm not sure what sort of support they'll give but I've spoken to them to give a rough idea of my issues. Once an appointment comes up they'll be in contact with me. I'll need to talk about it all again. I'm getting help for a change and people are listening to me and looking at the damage that's been done and I'm not going straight into prison.

Reporting of Abuse

141. I've spoken to lawyers and have been in touch with a couple of them. There was a time bar on any claim, then that got lifted so I approached a different lawyer who told me about the redress scheme. Because I spent more than five years in prison all I'd be entitled to is an apology. That was soul destroying. It nearly tipped me over the edge and I blew a lot of money buying things and giving money to the weans. As if I didn't care about me.
142. I had to give the lawyer an account of what happened to me in care. She told me I'd maybe have to give a fresh statement to the police, but I wasn't going to get anywhere with it so what was the point. The more I speak to counsellors they say the more I speak about it the more it's going to heal. I don't know how that's going to work. Every day I wake up and it's a struggle in case I bump into somebody in the street and I act the way my old self did and I'm back to prison again.

143. Things that happened in Kerelaw are out in public now. It was bad news when I heard there was nothing I could do about it except get my voice heard. It still happened and I'm affected by it every day. I can't live a normal life.

Records

144. I've got some records. I have letters from support agencies in my records. I've got some documents from the social work department in Irvine from my time in care. I think I got them in 2012 when I was in prison. That was when I stopped drinking and started to look into my past. I just got them in the post and there wasn't someone to help me go through them. I was tearful reading through it all and it brought so much back and it's as if I can't let it go and I want to let it go. I don't want to keep all this forever and it feels as if my whole life is just sitting there on paper. I want to set these papers on fire once I have closure on it all. I'm not going to heal until it's all done.
145. Just now I'm waiting for Barnardo's to get the paperwork for me from before I was adopted. I need to sign permission for them to get it.

Lessons to be Learned

146. Don't ever be afraid to talk to people. Don't ever think the adults' voices are louder than yours. There's more folk that listen these days and back then it was all masked and swept under the carpet. I don't believe anyone in a children's home now would get treated in the way we did back then. If abuse is going on I'd prefer it if they would talk to somebody because holding it in just haunts you and damages you.
147. I think it would help a child to speak up listening to other people who've been through the same kind of experience and knowing there is light at the end of the tunnel if you just want to talk to people. I've got a long journey now that's just starting, but I'm talking to people and I'm getting it out there. I think that's the best way for them to talk to people and that's the only way it's going to get sorted. The adults I met in children's homes had never gone through that kind of life so they didn't have a clue. Somebody

who's been through it, they understand it a bit more. I think that would have helped me.

148. When I left care I could have told them anything to just to get out of that door. They didn't care. I was just a number to them. My sister got support and to me that's because she had a wean, but I didn't have any kids or anything. I left Kerelaw and they said I was going back to my mum's and a plan was meant to be in place. I played along with it, but in my head I knew I wasn't going to do it. I'd never stayed there for long before I left care. As soon as I got a chance to go I was away again. I prefer my own company as then it's just me and my own thoughts instead of other influences because I was easily led back then,

149. The social workers could have spoken to me and listened to me more and asked what was going on and asked how my time was in Kerelaw, rather than just putting their views down on paper. As far as I was aware I could have been in a mini prison 'cause that's what people said Kerelaw was.

Hopes for the Inquiry

150. Hopefully at some point the law changes and I will be able to get compensation. I feel as if its unfair just now because I spent time in prison I'm not allowed anything. I'm not just out for that, I'm out for other people and encouraging them to come forward and talk. The more folk that get heard the better the case it's going to build for everybody.

Other information

151. 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..... IJB

Dated..... 12 April 2023

