

Scottish Child Abuse Inquiry

Witness Statement of

Brian HERON

Support person present: No

1. My name is Brian Heron my date of birth is [REDACTED] 1957. I am 59 years old. My contact details are known to the inquiry.

Background

2. The institution I want to tell you about is Geilsland School in Beith, North Ayrshire. I attended Geilsland School between 1971 and 1972. The school was for "troubled boys". I would be aged about fifteen and a half when I attended the school and was there for a year leaving at age sixteen and a half. I was also in detained at Barlinnie Prison and Longriggend Prison while I was a young offender.
3. I am a married man with four children although my eldest daughter died four years ago suffering from schizophrenia. I have five grandchildren. My mother [REDACTED] is still alive and living in Edinburgh. I have very little contact with my mother. My birth father is deceased. [REDACTED]
[REDACTED] I currently work as an employability tutor although my working back ground is in Social Work.

Life before being put into care

4. I was brought up in Gibs Hill in Greenock. My parents separated when I was about nine years of age. My mother went to live in Edinburgh. My father was left with the care of me [REDACTED] My father was in the Merchant Navy and he would farm me [REDACTED] out to different relatives when he was at sea. I remember living with his sisters and his brother.

5. Just after my mother left I started getting into trouble with the social services. I was in trouble with petty crime and being a member of a local gang. I also had issues with the school. No one was able to manage me. I think it is hard for people to look after you when you are dumped on them. My father was very bad for that.

6. [REDACTED]
[REDACTED] I went to stay with my father's sisters, an uncle and an elderly relative. There was not much room in a two bedroom flat.

7. I would also stay at my father's house. He had it rented out and one of the conditions was that the lodgers allowed me to reside at the address in my own room. I was about fifteen when I had a fall out with one of the lodgers and she slapped my face. I ran away and stayed at various places, like pigeon lofts and sheds. I also stayed at my girlfriend's house as her father was a drinker and when he was drunk she would sneak me in. I was homeless for about a month until I was reported to the Police as acting suspiciously. I was taken to the police station and I recall how the young constable could not believe that I had not been reported as missing.

8. When I was fifteen I got into trouble. I was with a group of kids in a café when a rival group came in. It ended up with us assaulting them and chasing them off. One of the rival group was caught and beaten up. We were all arrested and it was decided amongst ourselves with advice from our lawyer that my co-accused [REDACTED] and me would take the blame and plead guilty at court. It meant that the older boys would not have to go to jail if they were convicted. We knew we would end up in residential care.
9. I was sentenced at Greenock Sheriff Court to a year's custody in Geilsland School List D School. I had never been in residential care prior to that.
10. I also spent a short period at Barlinnie Prison and Longriggend Prison. I was in Barlinnie for non-payment of two fines. It was the practice then to award a day's custody for every pound due. I was due £55:00 in outstanding fines so I spent 55 days in jail. I also spent a month on remand at Longriggend Prison for an assault which I was not responsible for. There were a number of us accused and because one of my co-accused had a bad record we were all remanded in custody till the hearing. I had some problems in Barlinnie and Longriggend which I can talk.
11. I learned to play the guitar when I was about eighteen years old and this seemed to have the effect of keeping me out of trouble.

Institution. Life at Geilsland List D School

12. The school is situated in a rural location near Beith in Ayrshire. It is on a site of about five acres. I recall a few workshops and a gymnasium. There was also an old manse house which held the administration offices. The school was run by The Church of Scotland Board of Responsibility.

13. I was told I was lucky to be placed there as it had a good reputation. The boys there were all well-mannered and clean. You had to wear a tie at night and the whole establishment was run like a naval base. SNR ██████████ was EZD ██████████ and he was ex-navy. ██████████ the school based on his Navy background. His nickname was EZD ██████████. To a visitor the school would look great but I was to find out this was not the case.
14. It was an all-boys school. I would estimate that there were a hundred boys at the school at any one time. They ranged in age from fourteen to eighteen. There were three houses and the boys were spread between them. The dormitories varied in size. Initially I was in a four bed dormitory. There were some dormitories with six beds and some with twelve beds in some houses there were single rooms. If you were an out worker and had to get up early you would get a single room.
15. There were three main accommodation buildings. There was the Big Mansion which consisted of the headmaster's office, the administration offices, the dining room, and a billiard room. The billiard room was where all the boys and staff met for meetings. When you first arrived you slept in the dormitory in the Big Mansion. You then graduated to The New Vic building and finally when you had earned it you moved to the White house. There were larger dormitories and also a sick bay at the white house.
16. The period of time you spent there depended on whether you were sent by the court or children's panel. The court sentences were a fixed period of time and the school couldn't keep you beyond that.
17. There was a paint shop, an engineer's shop, woodwork shop, brick building shop, paint shop and gardening area. I remember that the gardeners used to grow large quantities of tomatoes.

18. You would wear denims for work which you had to wash and iron. On Sundays and special occasions you were required to wear a suit collar and tie which was issued to you on arrival. You would also wear it for going to church.
19. You were responsible for your own area in your dormitory. You had to make a bed block which was folding your sheets and towels and laying them out in a prescribed manner for inspection. Once you got the hang of doing it you were not subjected to as rigorous an inspection.
20. I remember my first day. After my appearance at court I was taken to Geilsland by my social worker. It was about tea time and all the boys and staff were in a meeting in the billiard room. I remember thinking that it was strange that the boys were standing to attention. I got settled in and then [REDACTED] sent for me. He usually met with boys late at night. I can't remember if it was through the tannoy system which was in the house or if someone came to fetch me.
21. The first interview was strange as he asked me if I had a girlfriend and was "humping" or "fucking" her. I had never heard adults speak that way before. Despite the fact I was not having sexual relations with my girlfriend I remember thinking that if I said yes I would be safer. He then moved on to other subjects.
22. My first impression was that the whole place was very clean and smelled of polish. I was thankful that it was not being run by a religious order. [REDACTED] appeared to me as a very big man but when I met him in later life he wasn't as big as I remembered. You find ways of avoiding [REDACTED] and they were the best days you spent at Geilsland.

Routine

Mornings and bedtime

23. In the morning you got up at seven o'clock. You would brush your teeth and then do one of the cleaning jobs that had to be done. Once you were finished you would go for breakfast.
24. There would be a meeting then in the billiard room. You would have to stand to attention and listen to what was said. You would then march to your workshop to be dismissed and begin work. The staff would occasionally slap someone for doing something wrong but discipline was mainly handled by EZD [REDACTED]. I remember that the school was assisting in repairing a wall in the area in which I lived in Gibs Hill. For some reason EZD [REDACTED] got it into his head that it was mates of mine from the area that were kicking the wall and damaging it. He told me to speak to my mates and stop this from happening. I did not know anything about it and thankfully it stopped on its own accord. But EZD [REDACTED] was convinced I was responsible.
25. On a Sunday you would have to march to church. It was like being in the army cadets. Some of the boys had two left feet and found marching challenging. They would be punished when they got it wrong. Usually with a slap. You also got a slap for falling asleep during the sermon. I think I had a reasonably easy time at Geilsland compared to others.
26. Every day you were marched back at lunchtime to eat your lunch and after that it was back to the workshops for the rest of the day. You marched back at the end of the day for tea which would be served in your own dining hall attached to your house.
27. You were required to sew your name into all your clothes and when this was done you were able to watch television or play snooker. You had to have ironed creases in your clothes or you would miss out on privileges. There was also a tuck shop where you could buy sweeties and tobacco. EZD [REDACTED] felt that if you were a smoker you were going to smoke anyway so the school might as well control it.

28. Bedtime was between nine and ten. You had to respect the silence but you could get up to go to the loo. When you went to bed you were tired after a day's work so sleeping was not a problem.
29. There were some "bedwetters" but the staff didn't make a big thing of it. The staff would wash your sheets in a laundry and there was no humiliation. You were responsible for washing and ironing your own clothes.
30. There were plenty of showers and toilet facilities and you could have a shower whenever you wanted to. There were no issues in that respect.
31. Leisure time was in the evenings and you were allowed to go to the local cinema. This was a privilege you had to earn by good behaviour. You also had to earn your home leave and on the odd occasion EZD would tell you to pack your bags and go back home for a couple of days. You only got that because EZD decided to give it to you.
32. There were sporting facilities including a gym. The main game that was played was called "murder ball". This was a violent game that involved everyone. There were no real rules and the irony was that if you had played the game in public you would have been arrested and sent to Geilsland.
33. There was no telephone available to use and all letters in and out of the school were read by the staff and censored.

Staff

34. SNR had two assistants . I can only remember the nickname of one of them who was called "GIJ". the teachers and care workers who I dealt with day to day. There was only one teacher who taught maths and English but I never had any dealings with

him. The staff would also double up and do night shift. There was also a nurse and cooking staff.

35. Some of the staff also stayed in houses in the grounds but I don't recall ever having a need to go there. I know that ^{SNR} [REDACTED] had a house quite close [REDACTED]. I think that some of the staff worked night shifts.

Food

36. On the whole the food was quite good although I remember being forced to eat green beans. The beans were grown in Geilsland and ^{EZD} [REDACTED] insisted that everyone eat them. Quite a few of the boys couldn't manage and it used to make them feel sick. ^{EZD} [REDACTED] used to insist on them being eaten. I recently looked at the S1 Beith website which is for all the former pupils of Geilsland and it talks about the green beans.

School

37. The school was vocational rather than educational. I worked in the building workshop and wanted to concentrate on becoming a stone mason. I recall that it was a Mr ^{HEB} [REDACTED] that ran the building workshop.
38. I had missed so much schooling that it was a burden to me and I didn't want to learn academic subjects. I wanted to get into the workshops as soon as possible. It taught me life skills and I have no complaints about that.
39. When I reached sixteen years old I was able to do "out work". I went to work for a local trader called Greys of Beith which was a haulage company. I was a van boy doing deliveries throughout Scotland. I broke my ankle and had a short spell when I couldn't work but then went back to work with them when my ankle healed.

40. There was also an annual black and white minstrel show that the school put on for the local community. There were a lot of rehearsals and the boys could make extra money by taking part. They used to take place in the Beith Community Centre.

Holidays/ Running away

41. There were no holidays. You had to earn days off entitling you to leave to go home. You had to make your own way home and I would go and stay at my aunt's house. There were two occasions when I didn't go back. The first time I was with my girlfriend and just didn't want to go back. A mate of mine phoned the school and negotiated my return. The staff came and picked me up. The second time I was brought back by the Police after being picked up near my house. That was one of the reasons I didn't get Christmas leave.

Pocket money

42. You got pocket money for the work that you did at the school. When I was an out worker I also got wages and was able to save money in my bank. I can remember buying shirts and clothes when I was on leave. You got to keep all the money you earned.

Religion

43. It was a Church of Scotland run institution so you would be marched to the local protestant church in Beith every Sunday. You would be punished if you didn't march properly or you fell asleep in church.

Birthdays and Christmas

44. I only spent one Christmas at Geilsland. I couldn't go back to stay with my aunties for different reasons. I recall that there were Christmas decorations put up in the school. There was also a Christmas tree. We didn't have to work at Christmas time. EZD [REDACTED] cooked the Christmas dinner. I don't remember any gifts. My birthday is in [REDACTED] and I don't remember celebrating that.

Visits/Inspections

45. There was a group of well-meaning people I suppose you would describe as being sponsors who would give money to the school. These people would come and visit on occasions and I remember you would have to get dressed in your best clothes for their visit. I remember one of these visitors was called Reverend Currie. They were nice people who would give you sweets.
46. I remember a guidance teacher a Mr McCarey who used to visit the school with his wife. He took me out on a couple of trips. I remember when Mr McCarey came to the school to visit. I don't know if he was there in his capacity as a volunteer or as a guidance teacher from my school in Gibs Hill. On one occasion I was in SNR [REDACTED] office with EZD [REDACTED] and another boy called [REDACTED]. [REDACTED] was a pupil at Greenock High School who had come on the visit with Mr McCarey. [REDACTED] was also a friend of mine. [REDACTED] joked about the luminous coloured guitar that EZD [REDACTED] used to hit us with. [REDACTED] asked EZD [REDACTED] to use it on him. In front of Mr McCarey EZD [REDACTED] showed us the guitar and forcefully hit [REDACTED] with it. It was not the normal level of force used but was sufficient to have an impact. I was shocked that Mr McCarey didn't do or say anything about it after all he was a guidance teacher. EZD [REDACTED] was as brazen as always but it was very awkward as EZD [REDACTED] now knew that I had mentioned the guitar out with the school setting.

47. I did have visits from some friends including my girlfriend. My aunty came to visit me once.

48. During my stay at Geilsland I can't remember many visits from social workers. I had an appointed social worker called Mrs Swan. I do recall speaking to another social worker called Mrs Stead who tried to persuade me to stay on at Geilsland after my sentence expired as it was keeping me out of trouble. EZD [REDACTED] was aware that if I went back to Gibbshill I would find myself back in trouble. They wanted me to stay at the school voluntarily in one of the houses in the ground. That idea seemed crazy to me to stay there voluntarily. As it happened EZD [REDACTED] was correct and I did get into further trouble.

Medical care

49. There was a nurse who was on duty all the time. I seem to remember a few nurses that were there. When EZD [REDACTED] would kick off he would send the nurses out of the room. You knew something was going to happen. I got good medical care and dental care when I was at the school. I had never bothered much about dental hygiene before I went to Geilsland.

Abuse in Geilsland

50. When I had a broken leg and was unable to work I came up with a plan for keeping all the cleaning equipment that was used to keep the houses clean. I stored it in a cupboard in a certain order. I told SNR [REDACTED] my plan and he told me to go ahead but if there were any errors in the organisation of the cupboard I would be held responsible. He inspected the cupboard and there was a brush out of place. EZD [REDACTED] then slapped me in the face for getting it wrong.

51. On one occasion one of the boys called [REDACTED] who was a new boy at the school complained that his tobacco had been stolen. EZD [REDACTED] made all

the boys line up in the billiard room and asked the person responsible to come forward. EZD told us that unless the guilty person came forward we would all have to stand there and if necessary all night. We would also be made to bend over the billiard table and he would beat every one of us with a piece of plywood shaped like a guitar and painted luminous green. The irony was that even ██████████ who had made the complaint got hit. I think that someone eventually owned up and we were sent to bed.

52. On one occasion I was in the shower when I was summoned to a meeting at the reception room in the White House. I arrived late as the other boys were already there. EZD slapped me in the face for not being there quick enough. I remember crying after that incident.
53. I was slapped on the face several times after we had been to church on a Sunday. EZD would line you up and slap boys for failing to pay attention during the sermon.
54. I once reported a boy called ██████████ who was from Edinburgh for bullying me. We were all taken to the billiard room at the New Vic building. ██████████ was told to take down his trousers and bend over the billiard table. All the boys were then told to turn round. We could hear ██████████ being belted and could hear him crying but we didn't see it happening as we all had our backs turned. That only ever happened once. EZD would normally only use the belt in his office. As far as I know this was all recorded in the punishment book.
55. EZD would use the wooden guitar for punishment. You usually got one hit from it on the backside. I recall on one occasion when he broke the "wooden guitar" whilst hitting one of the boys. He immediately sent for a replacement and the boy had to wait till it arrived to get another hit.
56. At Christmas time EZD took all the boys who had had been resident at the home over the festive period down to the beach at Largs. EZD drove us there in the mini bus. At midnight he told the boys including me that we would have to

follow the traditions and swim in the Clyde. He made us strip off and go into the freezing water. Some of the boys went in naked as they didn't want to soak there underpants and have to put them back on again. It was dark and the water was freezing. Some of the boys swam out but he told them to come back in as they were too far out. It was just another example of his bullying intimidating nature.

57. After the second time I failed to return to the home I was summoned to [EZD] [EZD]'s office sometime between midnight and one in the morning. He asked me to provide an explanation as to why I had failed to return. He then told me to bend over his desk and lower my pyjama bottoms. I started to cry and get very upset. He left me in this position and continued to question me. After a while he told me to pull up my pyjamas and then he gave me a hug. I remember seeing the letter opener on his desk and contemplated using it to defend myself. After hugging me for a short time he let me go. On reflection I don't know if there was any sexual abuse. It was very unusual behaviour to be in his study at that time of night. I was bent over a desk with my pyjamas lowered and then for him to give me a hug. I remember being uncomfortable and embarrassed. The whole incident reminded me of the time when I was aged about seven. My father caught me stealing money from him and belted me on the bare backside. I told [EZD] [EZD] about this and that was the reason that I was getting so upset. I think that is why he let me go and told me to go back to bed.
58. I felt that I had been selected by [EZD] [EZD] to be allowed to grow my hair. All the other boys had severe haircuts which was the norm for the home. On reflection I already looked young and quite feminine. I hated this special treatment and went home on leave and got my hair cut. [EZD] [EZD] went mad at me when I came back with the hair cut. I don't know if he had some sort of sexual attraction to me and I don't want to misrepresent him but on reflection I would have to consider his behaviour as strange. I never saw him sexually abuse another boy and have no evidence against him of sexual abuse.
59. On one occasion [EZD] [EZD] took us to a hotel and paid for a Christmas meal. He asked me which meal I enjoyed the best. He asked me if it was the

Christmas meal that he had cooked or the meal he had bought. I was worried about giving this answer but I thought that the correct answer should be the meal he had prepared. He then summoned all the boys that were in the house and had been for the meal. He went off his head at us accusing us of being unable to socialise. It was very childish behaviour but that was the way he was. He was often illogical in his thinking.

60. It was reported to [EZD] by another member of staff that one of the boys called [] had called him a psychopath. [EZD] confronted the boy in front of all the other boys. He was goading him to lash out. He was angry at being called a psychopath. [EZD] was slapping him and trying to provoke [] into a reaction. He then grabbed [] and hugged him. At the same time he looked at the other boys and said words to the effect that if he was a psychopath would he be giving [] a hug. It was again strange behaviour.
61. There was another boy called [], I can't remember his surname. [] was also provoked by [EZD]. It was the same day as [] was confronted. [EZD] continued to goad [] until he started crying. This was always done in front of everyone to have maximum impact.
62. There were always visitors to the school who would all be impressed by how clean and tidy the place was. They were always impressed at how well-mannered the boys were. [EZD] would lose the plot during inspections of your bed blocks. You had to pass inspection before you would get weekend leave. He would throw the clothes about and rant and rave at you. It was abuse of power and [EZD] was very egotistical.
63. I remember on occasions watching members of staff slapping boys. In particular I remember a painting instructor called Mr [LTV] who slapped [] in the face. There was an atmosphere of fear which is how [EZD] []. You were always aware of the hazards of doing something wrong. He did not like to be crossed. He was allowed to swear but you could not.

64. EZD ██████ could get inside your thoughts he was always demonstrating how he knew everything that was going on. Usually all your mail was censored. On one occasion I was handed a letter by a social worker. The letter was from a friend who was in another institution. The letter contained bad language and gang graffiti. This would not normally be allowed. It looked like it had been unopened but EZD ██████ knew about the contents and he wanted me to know that he knew. I learned that the other social worker had first sought permission from EZD ██████ before he passed it on. It was yet another example of his bullying culture.
65. I was part of the minstrel show and during rehearsals I put my foot through a stage light. I was absolutely terrified that EZD ██████ would find out. I was reassured by one of the teachers Mr HEB ██████ that it would be okay but I spent a long time worrying about the outcome.
66. EZD ██████ once took me to Edinburgh to visit my mother. On route he had to pick up another boy called ██████ who was in Maryhill. He had failed to return to Geilsland. EZD ██████ asked me to sing all the way to keep him awake as he had been working all night and was very tired. I thought at the time how irresponsible this was of him.

Leaving Geilsland School

67. When I had completed my one year at Geilsland I went back to Gibs Hill and stayed with my aunt. The only preparation I had for life after leaving Geilsland was my experience of being an "out worker".
68. My aunt's house was overcrowded with people so I went on to live in my father's house. I had a job as a van boy with Armour's of Gourock. I then got an apprenticeship with Scott Lithgow at the shipyards. It was like being back at school and I didn't like the classroom atmosphere. I had poor time keeping and was paid off.

69. I was then charged with a breach of the peace and fined £30. I got a further fine for £25 for another breach of the peace. I didn't pay the fines and was put before a Means Court. I promised I would make payments but failed to do so. I was then arrested on a warrant and went straight to Barlinnie Prison.
70. I was arrested at my house by the C.I.D. They searched my father's house. They found two clocks and an air pistol which they took possession of. I was interviewed about them but they put them back into my property at the jail. They told me that they, the CID would be waiting for me when I was released. I don't know why I believed that but I did.

Institution – Barlinnie Prison including abuse

Life at Barlinnie

71. I was about seventeen and a half when I entered Barlinnie Prison for non-payment of two fines amounting to £55. I was sentenced to 55 days in jail which was the equivalent of one day for every pound due. I served my time in the Young Offenders Wing of the prison. The young offenders unit house boys aged between sixteen and twenty-one.
72. I recall my first day at prison in A hall which was the young offenders unit. I recall someone mopping up blood off the floor as earlier an inmate had jumped [REDACTED] [REDACTED]. There was someone cutting hair. There was an air of high excitement over the person who had jumped [REDACTED].
73. I was put into a cell on the second floor and shared with other guys. The cells were made for two but there were four of us in the cell. The walls were all covered in graffiti and I recall scratching "Hernie from Gibby" on the wall under the bed. It was my name from gang in Gibs Hill. I was caught when they moved the bed. I could have been in real trouble but all I got was a slap.

74. There were communal showers on the wing and you had to stand in a queue and take your turn. There was an in and out door that took you through the showers. There were always two prison officers on duty there. I remember wondering why some of the prisoners were going in and out very quickly and sort of jumping out the exit door. I realised it was because the prison officers were turning the heat up in the showers causing the prisoners to be scalded and thus to be in and out the showers more quickly. It was another example of the type of regime that operated.
75. I shared a cell with a guy called [REDACTED]. One night [REDACTED] was at our cell window and was having a conversation with another boy called [REDACTED] who was in a cell on the floor above. I was asleep and didn't know anything about it. When they came to open up in the morning the prison officers were all lined up. They made me walk into an empty cell two doors down. There was a senior prison officer in the cell. He had his hat on the back of his head. I thought that he was going to head butt me. He started to question me about speaking out of the window which I knew nothing about as I had been asleep. I tried to tell him this but he started to attack me. I went under a bunk bed in the cell and curled up. He was kicking me. He had difficulty making contact with me.
76. The prison officer then let me leave the cell. I had to run the gauntlet of prison officers back to my own cell. They all kicked me as I made my way there. I also heard it happening to [REDACTED]. The strange thing was it reminded me of a ritual that was held at my school when the new boys came up from primary school to secondary school. The new secondary boys had to run "the lines" as it was known. They were similarly kicked by the secondary school boys as they ran the gauntlet. There were a lot of incidents involving other prisoners but did not involve me.
77. There was a day when we were outside in the exercise yard and one of the prisoners tried to escape by getting on to the prison roof. The procedure then was for all prisoners to be returned to their cells. [REDACTED] and I lay down on our beds. At that time there was a practice where you were required to make your

bed up in the morning and leave the top quilt in a certain manner , either folded up or down. The prisoner was caught and we returned to work. On our return we were aware that there was to be a showing of "Enter The Dragon" which was a martial arts film. When the time came to go to see the film our cell door wouldn't open. We used the buzzer in the cell and the prison officer that came informed us that we had not made up our beds correctly. He gave us a bucket of water and brushes and told us that if we cleaned the cell we would be able to go to the film. The prison officer did not return after we had cleaned the cell and so we again rang the buzzer. The prison officer returned and we told him that we had completed the task. He then kicked over the bucket which spilled water all over the floor. There was no drain. It took a while to clean it up. We managed to do this but the prison officer did not come back. The next thing we heard was the other boys returning from the film. It was just typical of the abusive behaviour we were being subjected to.

78. I remember one boy cutting his throat in his cell. His cell mate was going frantic and was shouting for the prison officers. They were taking a while to arrive as it was a Sunday and they were short staffed. Bizarrely the rest of the boys on the wing were shouting for the boy to die. I remember seeing the boy when he got out of hospital and had a big scar on his neck. There was a lot of self-harm as the boys found it hard to cope with the length of their sentences in jail.
79. The prison officers advised the inmates in the scrap workshop that there was "a beast" being admitted. A beast was a sex offender. Sex offenders were not popular and rumours circulated as to what he had done which included child murder. A prison officer whispered into the ear of one of the inmates that he was being brought in now. I could read the body language and knew what was going to happen and how it had been orchestrated by the prison staff. He was brought to our works table and when he arrived we all just stared at him. One of the other boys at a different table threw a piece of metal which hit him on the head. I remember watching the blood trickle down his face. One of the boys at our table burst into tears and told the boy that he had better go on protection. He was then

taken away by the prison officers. The last time I saw him he was cleaning up excrement from the prison yard where it had been thrown from the cell windows. He was accompanied by a prison officer.

80. While I was working in the scrap metal workshop I cut my finger. I went to the prison sick bay to try to get treatment. I don't know who tended to me but they asked me when I was going to be released. I told them I was due out the next week. The medic told me that I should go and see my own doctor on my release. I went to the accident and emergency department at Greenock Royal Hospital. They kept me in overnight and I was treated for a septic finger. I still bear the scar. The finger was already poisoned when I saw the medic in the prison and I feel I should have been treated there and then.
81. There was a prison officer who took a dislike to me. Every time that officer would come across me he would kick me in the lower legs. On the day I was being released I was walking from the middle landing to the lower landing on a narrow staircase. The prison officers whose name I cannot remember again kicked me. I recall thinking why did he do this. Who could I tell?. Who would believe me if I reported it. It was a helpless situation which reflected the hopelessness of my position.
82. Barlinnie prison was like any other prison and I completed my sentence and was released. You have to be aware we were children in a prison environment where we were being treated like hardened adult prisoners. A lot of the boys found the situation very hard to deal with.

Leaving Barlinnie Prison

83. My cell mate [REDACTED] got out of jail before me. In the cell we had a draught board with no draughts. On the eve of his release [REDACTED] cut all the buttons off his prison clothes and we used them for draughts. The funny thing was that the prison staff thought that it was some sort of symbolic gesture and would check

the clothing of all the prisoners being released. It was nothing more than providing replacement draughts

84. When I was released from jail the two clocks and the air gun were returned to me. I remember being on the bus home and finding myself in possession of an air gun. I planked that air gun under the seat of the bus and left it there. I was paranoid about being arrested again.
85. I went back home and was hanging around with the local gang. I was staying at my father's house. It was during this time that some of my mates were involved in an assault. I was arrested along with them even though on this occasion I was not there and had nothing to do with it. My mates tried to tell the police this but they wouldn't listen. I was remanded to Longriggend Prison prior to the trial.

Institution Longriggend including abuse

Life at Longriggend

86. I spent a month at Longriggend on remand. The only incident that happened to me was when I was in a meeting with the other boys and one of the prison officers caught me whispering to one of the other boys. As we were filing out of the meeting the prison officer kicked me so hard with his prison issue boots that it nearly crippled me. To this day I still don't know if I am permanently damaged.
87. I remember that if you contracted head lice or scabies while you were in jail they would shave your hair. There were three of us who were strangers to each other. The doctor got us to strip naked and paint a solution onto each other. Scabies and head lice were common where I lived. The prison doctor seemed nice until after he had finished treating us and we were leaving his office he shouted after us "there goes some more manky bastards". It was very demeaning.

88. The rest of the stay at Longriggend was like any other prison regime and nothing of note happened.

Leaving Longriggend

89. When I left Longriggend I managed to do voluntary work with the local youth club in Gibs Hill. I got involved with youth committees and became a youth leader. I used to take groups of children on trips away including Wales.
90. The biggest change to my life was learning to play the guitar. I realised that I had to stop hanging about with the gangs. I used to draw the curtains and pretend that I was not in when my mates called at the house. I started being a roadie for a local band and then I joined the band as a guitarist.
91. When I was about 21 years old I joined the Mormon Church. I got my father's house when he re-married and moved in with his new wife in Port Glasgow. I was baptized into the Mormon Church and seemed to settle down.
92. I was married when I was 22 and shortly after had a child. I moved to Port Glasgow. I had three more children. The church gave me a job as a janitor and I worked at that for seven years. I went back to college and passed some exams to enable me to progress in life. I joined the Children's Hearing Panel and enjoyed that work. Once I had passed my exams I went to Jordanhill College and studied for a C.Q.S.W. a social work qualification which I obtained in two years.
93. I worked for fourteen years as a social worker; I was getting frustrated with what was happening in social work. I then had a short spell working for Amazon. From there I went to my current position as an employability tutor in social care. I have been there for ten years.

Impact

94. The major impact of being in Geilsland was the fear of being sent back there once you had served your sentence. I can recall getting into further trouble with the law and being worried about being sent back. I did get into some trouble when I was older and I recall that my only concern was being sent back to Geilsland.
95. In 1991 after I had qualified as a social worker I had to take a boy back to Geilsland School. It was a very strange experience. I remember that SNR ██████████ was a Mr KMJ ██████████. It prompted me to start to make notes of my experiences at Geilsland. I took a few years to make these notes and I passed them on to the police in 2003.
96. I have received counselling to help me cope with stress and depression. I was hypnotised to help me cope with this. I had recurring nightmares where EZD ██████████ slapped two boys within two feet of me. I found this very disturbing. The counselling certainly helped.
97. Most of the anxiety I suffered was not so much what happened to me at Geilsland but more what happened to the other pupils who would struggle to deal with the issues. ██████████ reassured me that nothing happened to him in the three years he was in Geilsland.
98. ██████████ told me about an incident at the school that I didn't witness. It was about a boy called ██████████ who was a pupil. There was a student working at the school and ██████████ had called him a screw. Of course EZD ██████████ found out. EZD ██████████ then forced ██████████ to lick the shoes of the student in front of all the other boys. ██████████ then earned the nickname '██████████', (sounding like ██████████). This was just a demonstration of how the cruelty bred the cruelty.

99. When I was out of Geilsland I would meet some of the other pupils who were always there. We had an expression between us "EZD's looking for you". We would always say to each other. It was a kind of wind up between us. Such was the impact he had on us.
100. There was good stuff done at Geilsland. You would get praise for the work you had done. You would make good friends. Most of the staff were all nice but they didn't do anything to prevent what happened. Nice people can also do terrible things.
101. I have given EZD enough of my time. No one believed me when I would tell people what happened. No one has ever sat down with me like you are doing today and took notes. I used to hate EZD and wanted to punch him. I have been through a whole range of emotions about him but I no longer feel threatened or intimidated by my experiences at Geilsland.
102. I think as a direct result of my experiences I have been over sensitive to things. I am intolerant of people who don't see things the way I do. I realise the importance of talking about things and see people who had similar experiences and have been unable to talk about it. I have been trying to address some of the issues by pursuing a career in social work.
103. I have had an ulcer since I was sixteen. I think that this was caused as a result of my turbulent childhood. I was prescribed medication which dealt with it. It returned recently and I needed surgery to remove it. I have suffered from depression when I was working with social work and I was off work for six months. The depression was attributed to my time at Geilsland. I was seeing a counsellor at this time who recorded the sessions. I tried to source these recordings for the session today but the counsellor told me that they had been lost when he changed computers.

Reporting abuse

104. In 2003 I reported the abuse at Geilsland to the Police. It took three interviews for the Detective to get all the information. They kept changing appointments and I felt they were they were trying to get me to opt out. At the time they informed me that they had a number of complaints about EZD ██████████ and that they would be reporting the matter to the Procurator Fiscal.
105. I had told my wife some of the things that had happened. I had not found it easy ██████████. I have only in the past four years been able to discuss ██████████ stay at Geilsland.
106. On 3rd September 2004, I received a letter from the Crown Office telling me that there was to be no proceedings against EZD ██████████ as he was too infirm to prosecute. This letter only came as a result of me contacting the press and forcing the hand of the Crown Office. I tried to phone the Procurator Fiscal but was told to write and not to phone them.
107. I challenged all the Crown Office findings at the time saying that there was no time bar on proceedings. I gave up thinking that EZD ██████████ was on the verge of passing away.
108. In 2014 I learned through the S1 Beith website that there were other people like myself and that EZD ██████████ was still alive. I contacted the Justice Minister for Scotland Kenny McCaskill. I received a response from the Crown Office on 21st March 2014 that they were looking into the matter. I received a further letter on 26th March 2014 to the effect that a Susan Brown from the Procurator Fiscal Office had ordered the police reports and was looking into the matter. I was updated further on 22nd April 2014 that they were still investigating.
109. I contacted the Fiscals Office when I learned that EZD ██████████ was dead. At some time I also spoke to the police. They told me that there were a number of complaints against him but there would be no further action as he was deceased. I remember the feeling of disappointment.

Records

110. I tried to recover my social work records from Geilsland when I called at the school last year 2015. There was very little information retained apart from the fact that my guidance teacher was a Mr Carey from Greenock High School.

Learning points for the future

111. I feel that there are some lessons that may already be in place. If you put children in care you should be in constant contact with them. You should listen to what they have to say. The police and social work should work together to address problems raised by the child. If the child will not speak to the police there still should be another authority to investigate. People involved in child care should keep accurate records by taking notes and keeping the information on IT systems. The longer the period of time it takes to report things the harder it is to prove them at a later date. Make the reports at the time.

Other information

112. I know that after my time at Geilsland [REDACTED] also ended up there. I have never really spoken to him about it. He was there for three years but he came out unscathed as he was never assaulted. He did witness other boys being assaulted and ill-treated.

113. I know through checking Scottish Government records from 1968 that there had been an inspection at Geilsland School that year. One of the outcomes or recommendations was that SNR [REDACTED] was to stop the practice of cuffing or striking the boys attending the school. I think that EZD [REDACTED] didn't think he was doing any wrong and wouldn't be surprised if he told the authorities that he was cuffing and striking the boys. The school was run on a military basis. I just feel that had they acted on this recommendation I would not have suffered at his hands.
114. I went back to see EZD [REDACTED] at Geilsland. He wasn't there. I'm not sure why I went back. I met EZD [REDACTED] in Gibbs Hill when he had retired from Geilsland and was working for the local community. He was making a presentation and folk weren't listening to his speech. He was becoming agitated; I became agitated as I thought that he was going to "kick off". EZD [REDACTED] was no longer the big intimidating figure he had been he was just a small old man.
115. I was keen to let EZD [REDACTED] know that I had done well with my life. I knew that he worked for a [REDACTED] show and had enjoyed a song I had written. I then started to send him demo tapes and Christmas cards. I also used to write letters to him. In view of what he had done to me I can't explain why I did this but I wanted to prove to him that I didn't turn out as he had expected me to and that I was focusing on all the positives. Despite the abuse I suffered at his hands I still saw him as a father figure in my life. His abusive behaviour was part and parcel of my childhood growing up. As a man of nearly 60 years I have not yet managed to fathom out this relationship. I think that EZD [REDACTED] died about two years ago in 2014.
116. I did go back to Geilsland School last year with my wife. I was seeking access to my records. They didn't have many records about me. There was a freeze on the wall that had been done by the students. I thought it interesting that there was no reference to the time EZD [REDACTED] was there. I did speak to a member of the staff and told him some of the things that went on.

117. One of the biggest learning points for me is "when you speak to young people do what you have said you will do".

118. I would be very happy at this time to provide oral evidence to the Scottish Child Abuse Inquiry. I also have no problems with anonymity and concealing my identity.

119. 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.....



Dated.....

16.03.2017