

Scottish Child Abuse Inquiry

Witness Statement of

GZO

Support person present: Yes

1. My name is GZO. My date of birth is [REDACTED], 1956. My contact details are known to the Inquiry.

Life before going into care

2. I was born in Motherwell. I travelled around a bit when I was older, I stayed in England for two years, but I've mostly stayed in the Motherwell area.
3. My father and mother's names were [REDACTED] and [REDACTED]. They are both dead. I have three sisters and a brother. I see them now and again. Their names are [REDACTED], [REDACTED], [REDACTED] and [REDACTED]. I am the oldest. My father worked, he was in the army then he was a lorry driver. My mother didn't work. We stayed in the same address when I was growing up, [REDACTED], Motherwell and I went to Glencairn primary school.
4. I didn't have a home life. I found out later in life that it was because my mother had mental health issues. When I went to school I was left handed. In those days if you were left handed you were classed as a 'spastic' and a Catholic. I was told only Catholics write with their left hand and I must write with my right hand. I got whipped with the belt over the back of the hand from the day I started school all the time for writing with my left hand. This is where my trouble started. I just would not write with my right hand. It was a Protestant school and the teacher was a Mrs [REDACTED]. She kept shouting, "It's only Catholics that write with their left hand, you shouldn't be

here. You're a spastic". We were a Protestant family but there was never any animosity or fighting about religion.

5. My brother [REDACTED] and sister [REDACTED] are the only two of my siblings that I remember going to that school. [REDACTED] is about ten years younger than me and [REDACTED] is about fifteen years younger. When [REDACTED] was born I was summoned to change her nappy and get up through the night and make her milk and feed her. I was kept off school to look after her in the house and to take care of her when she was a baby. I didn't know where my mum was going, but she had to go somewhere. All that was left in the house for me to eat was a carrot, there wasn't even a grain of salt or a crust of bread. [REDACTED] was just a baby in a cot. When my mum came home I got done in for eating her carrot. She was a manic depressive and she took fits and went crazy. At times she was away for months and I thought she had left and deserted me. They never told me anything. It wasn't until I got older that I was told that she was committed to mental homes. I witnessed this behaviour later in life, but not when I was younger.
6. My father was an army man and so was a very strict disciplinarian. I had red hair in those days and got blamed for lots of things I didn't do. "It was him with the red hair", was said a lot and the police were at the door saying I'd done this and I'd done that. I then got leathered with the belt from my dad. I got whipped for things I didn't do and that's what made me run away. I don't know if the social work department were in touch with my mum and dad at that time. I did do things wrong, but it was to live. I stole food and broke into places to survive and I'd get caught and it just built up more and more. I was charged with breaking and entering and stuff like that. I became uncontrollable. Every time I was brought home I was beaten up.
7. By this time my father was a lorry driver. They sent me to school and I got school dinners, then I was lucky to get a slice of toast for dinner when I got home. I was a skinny wee devil. We had a coal fire but it was never on and I was freezing. I never saw my father as he was always at work. Any time I did see him there was always someone at the door blaming me for something I hadn't done because I had red hair. Even when I was a kid I cut it all off. I'm not blaming my mother but even at the age

of three I was left to run wild. I almost got run over by a train as I was playing on the railways. There was a newspaper article about it. They wrote a story and throughout the script there's not one mention of the police, social work, doctor or anything. If that happened today the mother would be arrested. There was no sign of police or social services. It wouldn't happen these days. My mum showed me the newspaper article when I was forty.

8. I ran away from home and it wasn't for a couple of days, it was months. I lived under the primary school floorboards. I had coats over me and sat at a boiler and fed the rats. I slept underneath the janitors office. I'd look through the cracks in the floorboards and see him. I heard him telling people that he hadn't seen any rats, that he had caught them all. I would lie in a corner with coal sacks over me and the rats came over and lay beside me and I would feed them. I found my own way to survive.
9. When I was caught I was taken to Hamilton Sheriff Court. I think there was social work involvement, but I can't remember. I can recall police and suited people who were asking questions and taking notes, so they may have been social workers. The police put handcuffs on me as they were terrified I would run away. In court they took them off me but when they came in to take me away the handcuffs were on again. I was sent to a remand home called Bushy Hills in Blantyre, before going back to court to be sentenced. I was put there until they decided what to do with me. The police took me there directly. I was there for six months.
10. That particular day I went to court I think there were four or five other boys who were in the mini bus that went to court. I don't know what happened to them. When I was sentenced I was put into Dr Guthrie's school for boys for three years when I was nine years old. I was there until I was twelve. I left there and went to a local secondary school for six months and ended up in Aberdeen, at Oakbank school for boys. I was there for two years until I was fifteen.

Bushy Hills Remand Centre, Blantyre

11. Bushy Hills was a council run establishment. It was a big place and there were quite a few boys in there. There were about forty boys, aged between nine and eighteen. I was one of the youngest. We were in dormitories. I think it was all around my age group in the dorm. I didn't have a clue where my brother and sisters were. As far as I knew they were still at home. Someone at Bushy Hills told me I had to go back to court. I kept asking when I was going back but it was six months later that I went to court and was sentenced.
12. The place was secure. It was an ancient building, I think it was built in the seventeenth century, a castle sort of thing. There was a big wooden prefab extension sort of thing bolted on to it. I think they needed that because they changed it into a remand home.
13. I think there was four to a dormitory, they were small. There was a big dining room where everybody ate together. The food was alright, we weren't forced to eat it. There were no issues. We were all woken up at the same time but I was a fidget so they got me up early and I would help get the breakfast ready, boil eggs or put cornflakes in bowls.
14. My usual job in the afternoon was to peel about a hundred weight of potatoes. They kept me busy as I was hyper. If I wasn't busy my brain would go into escape mode, but I was happy and I felt safe. I had a bed and I was fed.
15. I can't remember any of the names of the staff there. They didn't wear uniforms. There was a teacher who was a bit of a devil in a funny way. I was cleaning upstairs and he came up to me. I was there with my big mop and he said, "How are you doing son? I was just like you". I asked if he used to run away and he said, "Yes I used to run away, I was a wee devil, just the same as you, but I've changed my ways now. I'm working with young people and trying to look after them". He asked if I smoke and I told him I did. He gave me a cigarette, so there was me leaning on my mop, having a cigarette and he was standing at the end of the corridor watching for any

staff that might come up. He was an older man but he was a laugh a minute. He was against the norm. He didn't do anything to me, he was just a nice chap.

16. There wasn't a school at Bushy Hill, you just read books, newspapers or comics. We played table tennis, chess and cards. I remember fights happening and the boys involved would disappear for a day or two, so I don't know if there was a punishment area where they went to calm down. I wasn't hit there. They had a football park, but it was secure and all fenced in. They were a hard bunch, they had us out in the snow with nothing on our feet, not even socks, and we had to run ten laps round the field. We played football like that too, but it was only ten minutes each way. When you ran inside your feet were blue with the cold.
17. My mum visited me once when I was there, my dad didn't come at all, nor my siblings. Nobody else came to speak to me.
18. I remember the judge and lawyers and me standing in the box. I just answered yes to everything. I don't think I was in there five minutes. I did break into the school and I did steal pints of milk, so I was found guilty and I was sentenced to one to three years in an approved school. They took me back to the remand home, then put the handcuffs on me again and put me into a jailers wagon with these men. They were all chained together. They took me to Barlinnie prison because all the men were going there. So we got there and the men went in and I was left in this van myself, handcuffs on and chained to the wall of the van. I can't remember seeing my parents at the court. I don't think I had legal representation, all the questions were directed at me.
19. I was always a good reader because I loved comics as a nipper. I could read and write by the time I started school. I wouldn't say I was brilliant, but if someone put a book down to me I could read it unless I came across a big word. I don't remember being upset in the remand home at all. From where I came from, living under the school with the rats, going to a place where I had a nice bed, nice food, the odd sweetie and the odd fag was really good. I was happy, I was on cloud nine. As far as I was concerned that old teacher was my best buddy. I never got into trouble and I

got on well enough with the other boys. We would share books and do things together. I didn't go back to the same place when I was sentenced because you were only in remand homes until they found something more permanent. They were short term until the court sentenced you, but I was there for six months. I was sent to Dr Guthrie's in Edinburgh.

Doctor Guthrie's School for Boys, Liberton, Edinburgh

20. My first impression of Dr Guthrie's was that I was quite surprised at the size of it. It looked huge. I think it schooled about a hundred and twenty boys. There were four dormitories with about twenty-five to thirty in each. There were baby dorms downstairs. It was for younger kids who slept in bunk beds. The place was only for kids up to twelve years old. At twelve you got kicked out to your local high school. If you didn't do well there you were sent to a senior approved school. They took on twelve to fifteen year olds and as soon as you were fifteen you were out to get a job, but they tried to train you for work. They taught you how to cook, real chef work, joinery, gardening work and forestry. It was a place called Oakbank up in Aberdeen. I was a chef and I wanted to do this but I ended up being a blacksmith. When I was there I was up at six in the morning making the breakfast, a huge pot of porridge, this was after Guthrie's.
21. There was a very large dining room where the one hundred and twenty boys went to eat. There were four lines of tables representing the four houses. I was in Belhaven House. There was also Stone House, D.L. House and Argyle. When it came to athletics days we competed against each other.
22. There was a giant big hall where we all went in the morning for assembly. We sang a hymn, somebody played the organ, I can't remember who, praised the lord then went to school. Some of the boys did lessons like English, maths and geography. There was another subject but I can't remember what it was. The other boys did joinery, worked in the kitchen, the laundry room, some learnt to be artists, they were teaching art. That was your day.

23. There was a gym and a swimming pool. Hearts and Hibs players used their gym and their pool. They would be in the pool and we would jump in and try to land on top of them because we all supported Motherwell and Rangers. The staff had their own private offices. The only person who stayed overnight was SNR [REDACTED] Mr GZP [REDACTED]. He stayed there with his wife. I know he had two daughters and I think one son. You walked down a big hall and there was a [REDACTED] [REDACTED] [REDACTED] [REDACTED] [REDACTED]
24. There was a football field within big grounds, which were surrounded by an eight foot stone wall. The gate was left open and you could have ran away any time. I began to settle down a bit but that was at the start. By the time I left I thought, thank God I'm out of there.
25. I made friends there. I remember a young boy who slept on my left, [REDACTED]. He got called [REDACTED]. On my right was a boy called [REDACTED]. His nickname was [REDACTED]. He was called that because he looked like a little panda, with big dark eyes and really dark hair. My nickname was [REDACTED]. I had a bad eye, it was called a lazy eye in those days. Those two were there the whole time I was there. We ate together and slept next to each other. They both came from Fife. They were my best buddies, I hung around with them all the time.
26. We used to smoke tea leaves. They put it into big cotton bags and tied it. That's what the tea was made in. I would steal the tea and roll it in the see through toilet roll that you had in those days. It was disgusting. We would buy tobacco but they were always searching you and if you were caught with it you were punished. So it was easier stealing tea leaves and toilet rolls.

Routine at Doctor Guthrie's School for Boys, Liberton, Edinburgh

First day

27. When I went to Dr Guthrie's the first person I met was the matron. I can't remember her name. I didn't know what to expect. They just told me I'd been sentenced to one to three years and I was there my full sentence.

28. When I arrived they took all my clothes off me. I was stripped naked and given a uniform. All the clothes had a number on them. Mine was [REDACTED]. Shoes, socks, pants, vest, even the hanky and your bedding had your number on it. The uniform was brown corduroy shorts and jerkin with a shirt and tie. You didn't have to keep the tie on but you were given one. They checked me for nits with a bone comb. I showered before I put the clothes on. I think there were ten showers in a line.

Mornings and bedtime

29. There was a night watchman in each wing and he slept at the side of the dorm. He would get you up in the morning by clapping his hands and telling you to get up. He would go from dormitory to dormitory. One side you would have Belhaven and D.L. and on the other you would have Stone House and Argyle. There were two different night staff on, one on each side. If you got up during the night for the toilet you knew he was sleeping if his door was shut, so you would go down to the toilet without saying anything.

30. We got up about seven o'clock. We came out of the dorm, turned right and there were seven stairs down. It was then a flat corridor all the way to the next wing. If you went seven stairs up you were there. As you went downstairs on the right hand side was the shower room and the toilets. On the other side was where the young ones were. Both wings had their own showers. It was an exact replica. We got up, pyjamas off, towel over the shoulder and lined up then ran down to the showers. All the showers were going but they were freezing cold. You had to run through the showers and out the other end. You then had to brush your teeth, your toothbrush

had your number on it too. After you cleaned your teeth you went back up to your dorm and put your uniform on. We didn't have other clothes, you were in your uniform every day. I think your pants, vests and socks got laundered two or three times a week.

31. We went on parade every morning before breakfast. We were all in line and marched like soldiers. We were trained to march. Sometimes the headmaster took the parade, sometimes one of the night staff. I can't remember how they did it, but they had a head count. We had an assembly every morning where we just sang one hymn. That must have been before breakfast, because after breakfast you would zoom to your class.
32. The doors were locked at night. There were no bars on the windows but they were quite high up. I had to stand on my bed to see outside. The dormitories were on the second floor. Bed time was about eight thirty. We had a hot shower with shampoo and hot soapy water before bed. Lights out would be at the back of nine.

Mealtimes / Food

33. The food was alright, you couldn't complain. You sat at a table in your houses. There was someone at the top of the table then the rest down the sides. The best presented table got to eat first. You had to sit up straight with your arms folded until they shouted, "Eat". There were no issues with not eating the food, but everybody always ate. If you finished there was always extra food. It was left on trays and in pots, so if it was mince and potatoes or macaroni and chips we would eat quickly and they would shout, "Anyone want extras?". We would run to the food and slap it on our plate.
34. We had porridge or Corn Flakes in the morning, there were no Rice Krispies or Coco Pops in those days. There was toast and tea as well. The food was fine. At ten o'clock you got a break and had tea or water and they gave out chits, which were for half a slice of bread. You would ask for one chit or two and get half a slice or a slice

of bread. You would go to the dining hall for lunch then the parade yard for about half an hour. The bell would then go and you ran to school classes.

Washing & bathing

35. Everybody had a cold shower in the morning. The ten showers were all running and we ran through them and got dried at the other side. We got a hot shower at night before bed, where we washed our hair using shampoo and hot soapy water.

Clothing / uniform

36. We had a brown corduroy uniform of shorts and a jerkin and you wore long socks, a shirt and tie, although you didn't have to wear the tie. We had Sunday best that we wore to church. This was grey shorts and brogues. I wore those to the panel I went to after I'd been there for eighteen months.

School

37. The school was in a different block from the dormitories and it was only ten paces away. It was trained teaching staff. They reminded me of my primary school staff, but a lot better. I was in a class of boys my age. I stayed with the same boys for my three years there. We went into our class and the teachers came to us, we didn't move around classes. Mr **GFG** was my English teacher. He was a nice guy. My spelling wasn't too good and he took the time to teach me. He never gave me a bollocking or hit me. He just took time and he had an understanding.
38. I don't know if Mr **GFG** was allocated to look after me. You always remember the bad things and the really good things, but you can't remember the in between things. He was always checking on me. I couldn't swim and I was picked up by the gym teacher and thrown in the pool. I nearly drowned and panicked trying to get out. That's how I learned to swim, I was thrown in. When that happened I went away crying, but after that I could swim like a fish. The next day when I went into class Mr **GFG** asked me what happened the day before and I told him I was crying. He said

he would speak to the gym teacher and I saw him speaking to him and pointing his finger at him. I don't know if he was giving the gym teacher a hard time.

39. He used to take me to his mother's house in Edinburgh. She looked after me like I was one of her own. She was an old woman. She stayed in a big mansion, I don't know where in Edinburgh it was. She had servants downstairs, that's how much money she had.
40. The art teacher was called LYI [REDACTED]. You walked into his class and he didn't even look at you. He would just say, "Morning", without looking up. He didn't teach you anything. We had to call the teachers sir, they would call you by your first name. You knew when you were in trouble if you were called by your number. LXT [REDACTED] was another teacher. He taught us everything we needed to know on how to survive. He was an [REDACTED]. Don't ask me what he was meant to teach. We communicated with him in Morse Code. We did that better than we could read. That guy was out of this world. He had a big giant sword, he showed us it in the class. He was a brilliant teacher. We went to school for five days a week.
41. The gym teacher was called GIC [REDACTED]. I can't remember his surname. He was an alcoholic. He got the nickname GIC [REDACTED] because one night he was locking up the gym and he was coming back to the dormitories. He was doing a night shift to look after us and he had a half bottle of whisky in his back pocket. He slipped, fell and smashed the bottle and had to be rushed to hospital with glass in his backside. If you did anything wrong he would punch you in the face, head, anywhere. It wasn't a clip around the ear, it was a really hard punch. He wore trainers and he would kick you up the backside. Not a little kick, he booted you. I saw that happening all the time. He was bad tempered and I think it was due to the alcohol. You could smell it from him. He was an older guy. He was the one that threw me in the pool. He was also one of the guys that did the night shift. I remember him in his room with his flask, piece box, a half bottle and a glass. He didn't try to hide it really. He would turn the bottle round so that you didn't see the label, but you saw it was a whisky colour.

42. I never saw the teachers using the belt once. I thought they were brilliant and I took everything in. There was a lesson on how to write a letter. Mr GFG would tell us how to do this, how to present it well and make sure it was right. I think he enjoyed looking after boys. If you wrote home you had to give it to Mr GFG and he would read it and shout you up and ask if you were sure you wanted to put everything in it, like if you had mentioned you had been fighting or misbehaving, things like that. He would make you rewrite it until it was perfect. That's what I liked about him, he had the patience to teach you. I thought the main teachers were excellent.
43. I ended up leaving the classroom and they put me in the kitchen as they saw I was getting unsettled again. I worked in the kitchen full time. I was up at six o'clock in the morning making the breakfast, until after supper time at night. I loved it, I done everything, even washed all the dishes. I went into school occasionally. The little woman in the kitchen, I can't remember her name, told me I'd have to go to school some days because the inspectorate were coming. This happened every six months or so. I would go into Mr GFG class and he would give me a wink to thank me. A group of people would come in and watch us, see what we were doing and ask questions, then go. I would then go back into the kitchen. Not everyone had jobs.

Leisure time

44. You could go to the gym, swim or go to art class in your own time. There was no scouts or Boys' Brigade. We used to play murder ball, sixty aside. If you got the ball, you would get rid of it right away or you would have a pile of boys on top of you. There were one or two who got broken legs just because of everyone on top of them. I can't remember who they were. There were plenty of books to read too.
45. They would take us on cross country runs. We ran to Gilmerton and somewhere near some cliffs or hills. I had been doing it for over two years and there were a lot of new people. I led for quite a bit and got to a certain corner and pointed to the rest to go a wrong way. The teachers went mad, I was back for ages before the rest of them.

46. The headmaster's office area, the matron's office and another office, maybe an admin office, were out of bounds. I don't remember if we got pocket money. I don't think we did. When I worked in the kitchen there was a little set of shops over the road. I would run over, jump the wall, get sweeties then back over. I had to go and get the newspaper for the headmaster in the morning and I'd get a sweet then.

Trips / Holidays

47. Sometimes they had camping trips or hill walking, or potato picking at weekends. There was always the gymnasium and swimming pool. You would learn trampolining, basketball and badminton. We played basketball against other schools. We did quite well and I loved basketball.
48. We went on holiday for four weeks every summer, camping in Dunbar. We stayed in old army tents and slept on the grass. Some boys went other places but most went to Dunbar. They actually owned the place. They had a big kitchen, canteen place. We went sheep shearing and hung up the fleeces. They showed us how to wrap them and tie them. We picked whelks from the rocks. We had big cans. Everything in the school came in big gallon cans and we poked holes in them. We picked the whelks and boiled them. We didn't need our dinner. We would get a call every morning from the coastguard and they would tell you if it was safe to pick the whelks. They could even tell you if they were unwell.

Birthdays and Christmas

49. I spent Christmas at the school. They had a party and a big Christmas tree. All the staff were there with their wives. We got a present of a big selection box and a book.
50. On your birthday they just sang happy birthday to you. Every morning the teacher would ask if it was anybody's birthday and if it was everybody would stand up and sing to him. GFG done that sort of thing. There was no card, present or cake. I didn't ever get anything from my parents while I was there.

Visits / Inspections/ Review of Detention

51. I never saw my parents when I was there and I had no contact with any of my siblings. When the Inspectorate came to visit they would ask how you were getting on. They asked if you liked it there and if they were good to you at the school. It wasn't like they do now and just drop in, it was always announced.
52. I had a review after I'd been there for eighteen months. I was sent to the headmasters office and he told me there was a meeting. I went with him to a big office and there were six people there, like a parole board. They sat round this table and asked me lots of questions. They were there to assess me as to whether I could go back to my parents and the local school. They asked if I would like to go back and live with them and I said no. That was the end of it. They knew if I went home I would run away again. That was the only panel in the three years I was there.
53. I got home the odd Saturday. I got the bus home then the train back to Dr Guthrie's the next day. I done it about half a dozen times. My friend [REDACTED] and I were kept at the home most weekends because I didn't like going home and [REDACTED]'s father had Huntingdon's disease and could be a bit violent, without meaning to be. So they preferred to keep both of us in the school. They had a big walled garden and I lost myself in it at the weekend. It was secure but they gave me food and a flask and I would plant carrots and things. I loved it.

Healthcare

54. I can't remember ever seeing a doctor or a dentist while I was there. I was always fit. The matron looked after you for any minor injuries or ailments. If anyone had something wrong they would be confined to bed. I think they had a wee room with four or five beds in it for kids who got the measles or things like that. I think some boys went to a dentist, I don't know where.
55. One of the things I hated about the matron was that every six months you had to queue up naked outside her room. She would shout you in three at a time and use

this six inch paint brush and a bucket with what we just called white paint, but it was disinfectant or something like that. She put the white stuff all over you. We would shower, run down the stairs, get this done, wait until it dried then run up and put our pyjamas on. I never found out why this was done.

Religious Instruction

56. The only time I saw a minister at the school was at Christmas. We went to church every Sunday. It was just round the corner from the school.

Running away

57. If you ran away, you would stick out like a sore thumb with your brown school corduroy suit on. I did run away once with [REDACTED]. He came from Motherwell too. We were going back to the school on the train on a Sunday, having been home for the night and he said he didn't want to go back. So we ran away into Edinburgh, but we were sick of running about back gardens and houses so we went back to the school. It was about midnight. Everybody was in their bed and we had to knock on the door. We said our train was late and the buses weren't running so we had to walk. We saw the headmaster the next day and got a roasting. It was very rare if someone ran away. You were well looked after.

Bed Wetting

58. I didn't wet the bed but some boys did. The staff never gave them a bollocking, but they were embarrassed. We would be on parade outside every morning and whoever done the parade would shout, "Any bed wetter's?". The bed wetter's would be at the back of everyone so that nobody would see them and they would put their hands up. They would then have to go and get rubber sheets and come out on to the parade ground with the rubber sheet over their shoulder. Their sheets would be laundered. There were full time laundry staff on.

Abuse at Doctor Guthrie's School for Boys, Liberton, Edinburgh

59. It was always ^{GZP} [REDACTED] that belted you. If any teacher had an issue they would report you to ^{GZP} [REDACTED], they didn't belt you. The way he belted me he should have got the jail. It was a thick leather belt. When I first got it, I would get a double hander and I got it three times over the hands.
60. When ^{GZP} [REDACTED] assaulted me it was six of the best, that's what he called it, over the bare backside. I knew I was in trouble, he had said he wanted to see me after my shower, when I had my pyjamas on. I had to go down to his office. It was a sports day and I had called a guy a cheating bastard and ^{GZP} [REDACTED] had heard me swearing. I got six of the best over the bare backside, then he began interfering with me, almost immediately after whacking me. He touched my privates. I was in floods of tears and was crying all over his desk. ^{SNR} [REDACTED] was Mr ^{GZP} [REDACTED]. It was so sore. When I went up to bed I could hardly walk. I remember the janitor was the night watchman that night. He was another lovely little man. He asked me what happened and I told him about the belt, but I couldn't tell him what else happened. He asked to see and I showed him. He looked like he was upset and he tucked me in. I had to lie on my belly, I couldn't lie on my back. I know he was upset but I don't know if he reported it. It had happened about three or four times before the sports day incident. Mr ^{GZP} [REDACTED] just leathered you like a piece of meat.
61. It was always ^{GZP} [REDACTED] and I was always on my own. On that last occasion I heard these funny noises coming from him, like when you are turned on, like a pleasurable groan. This was as he belted me and as he interfered with me. I don't know how nobody heard him. He grabbed my private parts and rubbed himself up against my backside. He had an erection and he put his fingers up my backside. This happened on four occasions. He tried to get me to give him oral sex, his trousers were down but I pretended I was going to be sick. After this he said, "Right, pyjamas on and bed". The next day, when we were on parade he looked at me and gave me a bollocking for no reason. He shouted, "^{GZO} [REDACTED], pay attention". I was standing to attention and being as still as I could.

62. GZP [REDACTED] thrashed me over the bare backside on two occasions when I had been caught smoking tea leaves. He just said, "Oh, it's you again", and it was down with my pyjamas again. My mate [REDACTED] told me he had been belted but not like me. That last night, when I went up and told them and they asked to see it, I showed them. The next morning all the boys saw the marks on my backside in the showers and were asking what happened. I told them I got the belt for swearing. I wasn't aware of Mr GZP [REDACTED] reputation before I went into his office. Even the teachers didn't like him because he was so strict. He died the night after he assaulted me. He died in his sleep, I don't know the cause.
63. The only other person that hit me was 'GIC [REDACTED]', who punched me in the face. I thought my jaw was broken. He would do this any time you misbehaved, or booted you up the backside, which really hurt.
64. The music teacher's name was GVI [REDACTED], we called him 'GVI [REDACTED]'. We hated him. I learned to play the flute in his class. He would lean over your shoulder when you were playing and breath in your ear. He had two or three boys that were his favourites and they were called his 'bum boys'. They were always with him. I can't prove anything but we were all sure there was something going on.
65. I was placed in a padded cell for 2 weeks. There was nothing in the room, not even a bed. There was a window but I was too short to see out of it. The walls, floor and ceiling were padded and when I walked on the floor, it was so thick I bounced a little. I slept on the floor in my pants. The only person I saw in the two weeks was the lady that brought me my meals. I was given a jar to use when I needed the toilet. I can't remember why I was put in there. I'm not sure if it's because they thought I would run away.

Reporting of abuse at Dr Guthrie's School for Boys, Liberton, Edinburgh

66. My good friend [REDACTED] was the only one I could talk to. He was at school with me in Motherwell and he followed me to Oakbank. I told [REDACTED] about the abuse but I can't remember telling anyone else. I was terrified to tell people. I thought Mr GZP [REDACTED]

would kill me if he found out. Another reason I didn't tell anyone was because if I ever told my dad someone had done something to me he would call me a liar. It was a combination of everything, you are embarrassed to tell people, you don't think you would be believed and it terrifies you.

67. After I'd ran away from home for about six months I was at home in bed and a doctor came to see me. I don't know his name. My parents had taken all my clothes off in case I ran away again, so I was in bed naked. The doctor checked me over, he took my heart beat and things and my mum and dad were standing at the bedroom door. I heard the doctor saying, "Your son is", and he put his finger to his head meaning I had mental health problems. Nobody believed you.
68. At the panel in Dr Guthrie's I couldn't tell anyone. GZP was with these people in the room. I had already been belted and molested by him.

Leaving Dr Guthrie's School for Boys, Liberton, Edinburgh

69. On my twelfth birthday, or a week or two later, I signed a form in an office, got my bus fare, new trousers and shoes and I left. They took me into the office and told me I was of an age to leave and go home and go to secondary school. I think it was the headmaster that told me. I went home, went to secondary school for six months then that was me. They locked me up again in Aberdeen. I couldn't mix, it just wasn't the same atmosphere.
70. One of the problems when I went home was that it was the same situation. There was never anybody there. My mum would disappear for a couple of weeks at a time. I didn't know she was bi-polar and would get locked up. I thought she didn't love me. I would come home and she wasn't there and my father was working. I had to run to the other side of Motherwell to my grandfathers to get school dinner money for [REDACTED], [REDACTED] and me. There was no money in the house, you couldn't even make a sandwich. My grandpa gave me half a crown and that paid for our three school dinners.

Oakbank School for Boys, Aberdeen

71. I came to the attention of the police again and because I had just been released from a previous place I went in front of the magistrates again. They locked me up until I was fifteen. I was sent to Oakbank School for Boys in Aberdeen. They took me up in the back of a van. I think it was a prison van but there were no adults in it this time. There was one little window in it. I think it was the police that took me, they had what looked like police uniforms on. I never saw my parents before I went and I don't remember any lawyer representing me.
72. Oakbank was boys only and there were about sixty there. It was ages from twelve to fifteen year olds. There was Dr Guthrie's and Oakbank and there were other institutions in Scotland that were Roman Catholic homes. It was a jail type thing because you were there to do your two years. You were locked up there and all the gates were locked. I can't really remember any of the staff names. There were boys I'd went to school with that were there. There was a [REDACTED] who was a bit of a gangster. I haven't seen him for years. I think he is still alive, and still a gangster. There was a headmaster there but I can't remember his name.
73. On the ground floor there was a large dining hall, next to it was the kitchen, the laundry room and a sewing room. There was a giant room with about twenty showers and another with about thirty sinks for washing. They didn't have numbers on your clothes but they did on your toothbrush. The dormitories were upstairs. There were toilets there too, just urinals, the showers were downstairs. There was a shoe room too, all your shoes were kept in these cages.
74. The staff were all casually dressed. You could wander around the place but certain rooms were locked. The store room was always locked but one time they left it open. There were cigarettes and even alcohol kept in the place. We went daft with the stuff.

Routine

First Day

75. Oakbank was virtually the same as Dr Guthrie's. They gave you a change of clothing, pants, socks, a pair of jeans and a jumper. It wasn't a uniform. They had a kind of store and you picked what you wanted. They also had a sewing room. If you burst anything the sewing woman would mend it. Dr Guthrie's was regimented, Oakbank was wild. It was like a jigsaw puzzle with all the different colours of clothing. My own clothes were taken from me. The stuff they gave me was ok. It didn't look new but it was alright.
76. A member of staff met me and showed me the dormitories. I can't remember who this was. It was a weird set up. It was like one of those modern houses. The bedrooms were triangle shaped. I don't know why, it was weird. You could walk into the dormitory, right round it and come out the other side. The room I had had three other boys in it. There was a shelf to put books and bags and things on and a rail underneath to hang up jeans and jumpers and things. There was another shelf underneath the rail.

Mornings and bedtime

77. You got up in the morning and got dressed, went downstairs, got undressed and had a shower, cleaned your teeth and into the dining room for breakfast. There were about ten members of staff on duty. They were strict in keeping an eye on you. I ended up in the kitchen there because I'd been in the kitchen at Dr Guthrie's.
78. When you got up in the morning your bed had to be made perfectly. Every sheet, pillow and cover had to be folded without a crease. It was the same in Dr Guthrie's. If it wasn't right, you would be sent back upstairs to do it again and they had thrown all your bed stuff all over the dormitory.

79. I knew what to expect, how they would react, what they wanted you to do, like the beds and sitting up straight at mealtimes and waiting to be told. The young guys that were there serving their time would take the new guys through the ropes. If you did something wrong the staff would tell you to go and see someone to learn what was expected. They wouldn't send you to a teacher, it would be to another boy.
80. After breakfast you were on parade in the yard. They did a head count then. We all said a number right down the line, one, two, three, four and so on. They would then allocate you a job and what you were doing that day. Some did boat building, there was engineering, gardening and working in the kitchens. I spent my whole time there in the kitchen. I was happy there.
81. You weren't locked in your dormitory at night. There was a night watchman on duty and he had a room outside the dorm in the corridor. The toilet was next to his room. I think bedtime was about ten o'clock. I don't think there was a TV but there were plenty of books. There was a little pool table or table tennis table in the dormitories because of the shape of them. There was never any hassle if you wanted a game of pool or table tennis before bed, but if you were still making a noise at the back of eleven they would chase you into your bed. It wasn't as strict as Dr Guthrie's.

Mealtimes / Food

82. The food was alright. The plates seemed to be a bit bigger at Oakbank. Soup plates, dinner plates and even the cutlery was bigger. Maybe it was because they were for older boys. You had to sit quietly until you were told you could eat then everyone came up individually and I served them. If I liked them I would give them more. The food was good. The staff had silver plated breakfast, lunch and dinner every single day. It was like a five star hotel how the staff were treated, the best roasts and everything. They ate different stuff from us.
83. I had my lunch before everyone else, then the boys and the staff got theirs. It was the same at dinner time. I did everything from cooking to cleaning up and washing

dishes. They had these industrial dishwashers, everything was spotless. There was no scrubbing pots or anything, except the great big ones.

84. At supper time you got a sandwich and a hot chocolate or cocoa every night. If you didn't want the cocoa you could get a glass of water or juice.

Washing / bathing

85. They were particular about your cleanliness and you had a shower every night. There was a teacher standing outside making sure you showered and cleaned your teeth but they weren't staring at you.

School

86. School was a funny place and I only remember two classes, a boat making class and an English class. They would build fishing boats and canoes and sell them. This was you learning a trade. You would be reading at times, but it would be books on engineering. You could learn gardening or learn to cook for a hundred people. There was nothing to pass exam wise, but you would learn a trade and if you applied yourself you became very skilled.
87. The only thing I didn't like about it was that they tried to put a work ethic into you but a group went potato picking and worked for four weeks and were told they would be paid each week. They did this for the four weeks and got nothing. The school said at the end of it that they were never told they would be paid. They did the same with me. I went grouse beating and was promised I would be paid. There were about twenty of us. We were told we would get ten pounds a week and it lasted a fortnight. Prince Charles and his father were shooters. We didn't get paid at all for two weeks work.

Leisure time

88. School was boat building, engineering and kitchen work. You were asked if you wanted to keep working at the weekend or do your own thing. They had an outside gymnasium with a fifteen foot fence round it and barbed wire at the top. You could play basketball, badminton or tennis on the concrete playing area. I liked playing basketball and badminton. They liked you to run around and keep fit. They knew you were looking after yourself if you done that. There wasn't a swimming pool.
89. You could smoke there but only at certain times, after meals and before bed. There was a boy there who was allowed out to work at a hotel as a chef doing an apprenticeship and he brought cigarettes in. I can't remember his name. You could buy cigarettes at the shops when you went out. If your parents sent you money it was kept with the school, like a bank account and you could take money from there. The only place I got money from was my parents, but it was few and far between. It was ten pence for twenty cigarettes back then.
90. I saw bullying at the normal secondary school but I never witnessed one piece of bullying in the five years I was at Guthrie's and Oakbank. Everyone stuck together. I never saw a fight there once. The boys came from all over Scotland. There was a lot of swearing, especially if we were watching football on the big screen in the dining room, but there was no fighting. There was no punishment for swearing. If they heard you they would just 'tut'.

Trips / Holidays

91. I stayed at Oakbank during school holidays, it never closed. I didn't like going home. I was happy because I was working. We didn't go any trips or holidays there, apart from the grouse beating and those that picked potatoes. There was always a teacher with us but I can't remember who it was. In my opinion Oakbank would have been paid for us doing those things. We went in the school bus. If I remember correctly it stayed with us and our food was in the boot. There was a camping stove at the back of the bus. We were there all day and didn't get back until about six o'clock.

92. They had a movie room, well it was the dining room. They had a big screen and they would close all the curtains and brought the big screen down from the ceiling to the floor. It was absolutely brilliant. I saw a film with Burt Lancaster, or Kirk Douglas, it was Spartacus.

Healthcare

93. I remember there was a matron there but something tells me she was a doctor. I can't remember her name. She always had a stethoscope round her neck. She wore a nice outfit, but not a uniform. She was always smart. She was middle aged nice woman. I was never hurt or injured while I was there.
94. I remember there was an outbreak of measles and the place was on lock down. Nobody was allowed in or out. I think it was in the newspapers, it was a major outbreak of measles in Aberdeen. I'd had measles when I was younger.

Birthdays and Christmas

95. Christmas was celebrated there. I helped cook two Christmas dinners. It was giant turkeys and Christmas puddings. Everybody seemed to enjoy themselves. When it was your birthday obviously you knew and you were dying to tell someone but all that happened was one of the teachers might tap you on the shoulder and wish you a happy birthday. There wasn't a present or card.

Visits / Inspections/ Review of Detention

96. I was never warned of any visit from the inspectorate at Oakbank. Now and again you would see the headmaster with about six people following him around, taking notes and asking questions, but I was never alerted to an inspection.
97. I didn't get visits from my parents when I was there. I went home once and I didn't want to go again because it was a four hour bus journey. The bus belonged to the

school and the janitor drove it. My parents asked me how I was doing and I told them I loved it and that I wouldn't be back until I was fifteen. I don't know if there are reasons for it, but I got no support to encourage me to go home again while I was at Oakbank. I was picked up by the bus again in Glasgow. They picked about ten of us up there, then others on the way up. I had no review or meeting. When I went there I believe it was just to get me off the streets, to look after me and make sure I was alright.

Religious Instruction

98. I never went to church once while I was there. There was a church near the place, but it was voluntary whether you went or not. I can't remember the name of it. If you went you had to get properly dressed for it.

Running away

99. There were very few people who walked out of the place.

Discipline

100. I never got the belt once at Oakbank. I think a couple of people did but it was never spoken about. If you were messing around playing football or something you might get a little clip around the ear and told to pack it in. It was nothing much.
101. I can't recall ever being abused at Oakbank. The only thing I can think of was the false promises, the wages and promising holidays and things. The only chastisement I got was a bollocking. I got into a fight and I was swearing. They took me in and gave me a severe bollocking. It frightened me to the point that I thought back to Mr GZP and what happened to me at Dr Guthrie's, it all flashed back. I quietened down and behaved myself after that. I would say Oakbank was a positive experience. The first school was difficult to appreciate and understand why you were put in there and you would get brutally punished for trivial things like swearing. It just goes right through you and you're scared it followed you to Oakbank.

102. Oakbank was just a good place to learn a trade and get a job when you left. There was a young boy who left and got a job as a chef in a top hotel in Aberdeen. I can't remember the name but it was a posh hotel. Another boy actually got a live-in job as chef at a top hotel, at fifteen years old.

Leaving Oakbank School for Boys, Aberdeen

103. The staff at Oakbank just congratulated me when it was my time to leave. I was leaving on my fifteenth birthday, but they had to wait until the Friday. I got an interview and started work on the Monday. My parents didn't know I was coming home. The school gave me a fiver to help me out. They took me down to Glasgow Central train station in the bus then I got the train to Motherwell. I had a letter from the school to give to my parents, it was sealed and I was told not to open it. I went to the interview first then I went home. I gave them the letter and said I'm starting work on Monday.

Life after being in care

104. I started as an apprentice blacksmith on the Monday. I did a five year apprenticeship and thought that was me a journeyman but I was then told I had to do a further two years of improvement. So it took me seven years to get my papers as a tradesman.
105. I stayed at home for a year and did a stupid thing. I just couldn't stick it in the house and ended up getting married as a sixteen year old. I was married for ten years before we both realised we were too young. She was the same age as me. We set up home in Wishaw.
106. When I was married I didn't see my parents for years and years. I was twenty-two or twenty-three when I finished my apprenticeship. My wife and I then moved down to England and I got a job down there. We were there for a couple of years and she became homesick. We moved back up and I got a job with the same firm I'd worked with before I left. I stayed with them for a while.

107. I had two boys from my marriage. One died last year, he was forty-three years old. His name was [REDACTED]. My other boy [REDACTED] was like me, he hated school. He joined the army at fifteen. They educated him for a year then he became a soldier. He retired last year after twenty-six years. He got a golden handshake and a forty grand pension and he's only forty-five years old. He's working back in the army down in England training young soldiers how to shoot and kill. So he got a golden handshake, a big pension and now he's got another salary.
108. Before [REDACTED] joined the army every grandfather as far back as I remember, right up to my dad, had been in the army, until me. I applied to join before I'd finished my apprenticeship and my wife said she would post my application for me. She told me twenty years later, after we had split up, that she never sent it, she had put it in the bin.
109. I was always working as a blacksmith, mostly with companies and I was self-employed for a while. I am now in a relationship with [REDACTED], she is very nice.
110. I looked after my mother for her last four years, she had dementia. My father died years before my mother. She was on her own and had bi-polar disorder all her life then dementia when she was older.
111. My sister [REDACTED] ended up in Doctor Guthrie's school for girls. It didn't happen until she was in secondary school. All she wanted to do was leave school like me and get a job. She kept getting into trouble, she had red hair too. She left Dr Guthrie's on a Friday and started work on the Monday at [REDACTED] in Wishaw. She was there for twenty-five years.

Impact

112. I used to think when I got out everything would get back to normal. I don't know if that's the right term and I don't know what normal is. I consider myself as unorthodox, I'm a bit of an anarchist, but I try to think, what is normal? I have to think

what I say to people. I take my time, I have to answer them in the right way. When I'm in company I talk my head off. I speak all the time but I'm a nervous wreck. I have low mood swings and I shut down and shut everyone out.

113. I'm still waking at the crack of dawn to get a paper, like at Dr Guthrie's, but I get mine delivered. When I was fit I would be up every morning at six to get my paper then back up the road again.
114. Everything is regimental in my kitchen. All my tins are lined up. When I was at school working in the kitchens, in the larder everything was in order, in a line. I knew where everything was. Even in the freezer in my house everything is all organised.
115. I was awfully strict with my boys before I split up with their mother. I was a disciplinarian, but I never hurt them once and never lifted a belt to them. I would give them a bollocking but then try to talk to them. [REDACTED] was a builder and [REDACTED] is in the army. He lost a couple of friends in Iraq and Afghanistan. When I tried to console them I think of Mr ^{GFG} [REDACTED], who would put an arm round you and talk to you and reassure you. So when I was talking to [REDACTED], consoling him, I'd put an arm round him and tell him to show his men, he was a sergeant then, and I told him to show his men he was a strong sergeant and strong for them.
116. I have flashbacks and dreams. It's just flashes and as I get older they have slowed down. It was the belt coming down. I don't know if it was the belt at primary school for being left handed or the double handers or over the backside. Even my dad used his army webbing belt on me. That's all I've been tortured with since I was young.
117. I'm too scared to speak to the doctor about things like that. I've been diagnosed with cognitive impairment. I was tested for dementia but found to have that. I had a brain haemorrhage when I was in my forties and they think that had something to do with it. I was at a friend's fortieth birthday party and she was showing us holiday photo's out in the garden. I passed out and landed in a rose bush. I ended up in hospital with a brain haemorrhage.

118. I have been in contact with Future Pathways for about six months, since I applied to the Inquiry. I've saw Lynne ever since.

Reporting of Abuse

119. I've never reported what happened to me to anybody. I haven't ever spoken to anyone about it. I've told the Inquiry all these things and I don't know if I will be believed or not. That's why I haven't told anyone.

Records

120. I have a referral in with BirthLink to access my records. It's being activated at the moment. I would like to know if there was social service involvement.

Lessons to be Learned

121. I just wish the people in authority would listen to young people before they condemn them, before they make decisions. If you're in doubt, you'll always be in doubt. You've got to be positive. Now I'm always doubting everything people tell me. It's hard to trust people. I have a lot of worries how people will take what I'm saying, whether I've upset people, or will I be believed. Nobody ever sat down and spoke to me right throughout my childhood.

Other information

122. 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..... 7/9/2020